

**Teachers' Beliefs and Practices about Implementation of Updated Curriculum:  
A Qualitative Case Study in one Mainstream School of West Kazakhstan**

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October 2020

Dear Albina Kalenova,

This letter now confirms that your research project entitled: **“Teachers’ beliefs and practices about implementation of updated curriculum in a mainstream public school of West Kazakhstan”** has been approved by the Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee of Nazarbayev University.

You may proceed with contacting your preferred research site and commencing your participant recruitment strategy.

Yours sincerely

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**CITI training certificate**



### **Acknowledgments**

So, I am already completing a two-year academic journey. It seems like recently I was very happy to become a member of the GSE community. During this two-year trip, I was able to inherit the experience of the best educators at Nazarbayev University that I really appreciate. Each professor has a different teaching style, invaluable knowledge and motivating qualities. I was very pleased. The consistent and systematic courses of master's program guided us to write scientific papers successfully.

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### **Abstract**

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan began to gradually reform the education system to the level of the most developed countries in the world. In other words, after gaining the independence, the education system has experienced many challenges, for example, the content of the old curriculum focused on memorization rather than the formation of life skills for school leavers. As a result, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the main problems of education system in Kazakhstan were revealed, as the lack of equal access to quality education for students, limited independence of educational institutions, low levels of funding and lack of effective student lending. To address these issues, the introduction of an updated content program in Kazakhstan began in the 2016 academic year.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the secondary school teachers' beliefs and practices of implementation of the updated curriculum in one mainstream school of West Kazakhstan. In-depth study of teachers' practice in implementing the new curriculum, individual interviews were conducted with each participant, their opinions were discussed in detail, and common beliefs were identified. As each participant had different working experience, they had different opinions about the content of the new program, so it made possible to study their beliefs in more detail.

Based on study findings, it was found out that teachers basically have a positive attitude towards the updated curriculum. In particular, the results of the interviews show that with the implementation of the program, teachers had opportunity to participate in various professional development courses, improved their knowledge, developed in all directions, aspired to be inquisitive and innovative. It was also discovered that the program has a positive effect on students. For example, a student taught based on a new content program can gain all the life skills necessary for the 21st century: critical thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, the ability to express themselves freely. However, it was also clear that the lack of the necessary educational resources, increased paperwork, the lack of the necessary technical equipment in some classrooms, and the ineffectiveness of active-learning methods with a large number of students hindered the implementation of the new program.

*Key words: updated curriculum, curriculum changes, teachers' views and beliefs.*

**Убеждения и практики учителей относительно внедрения обновленной учебной  
программы в одной из средних школ Западного Казахстана****Аннотация**

После распада Советского Союза Казахстан начал постепенно реформировать систему образования до уровня самых развитых стран мира. Другими словами, после обретения независимости система образования столкнулась с множеством проблем, например, содержание старой учебной программы было ориентировано на запоминание, а не на формирование жизненных навыков у выпускников школ. В результате, по данным Организации экономического сотрудничества и развития (ОЭСР), были выявлены основные проблемы системы образования в Казахстане, такие как отсутствие равного доступа к качественному образованию для студентов, ограниченная независимость учебных заведений, низкий уровень финансирования. и отсутствие эффективного кредитования студентов. Для решения этих проблем в 2016 учебном году в Казахстане началось внедрение программы с обновленным содержанием.

Целью этого качественного исследования было изучение убеждений учителей средней школы и практики внедрения обновленной учебной программы в одной общеобразовательной школе Западного Казахстана. Для углубленного изучения практики учителей по внедрению новой учебной программы, индивидуальные интервью были проведены с каждым участником, их мнения подробно обсуждались, и были выявлены общие убеждения. Поскольку у каждого участника был разный опыт работы, у них были разные мнения о содержании новой программы, что позволило более подробно изучить их практики.

По результатам исследования выяснилось, что учителя в целом относятся положительно к обновленной учебной программе. В частности, результаты интервью показывают, что с реализацией программы учителя имели возможность участвовать в различных курсах повышения квалификации, совершенствовали свои знания, развивались во всех направлениях, стремились быть любознательными и новаторскими. Также было обнаружено, что программа положительно влияет на студентов. Например, учащийся, обучающийся по новой содержательной программе, может получить все жизненные навыки, необходимые для 21 века: критическое мышление, принятие решений, решение проблем, способность свободно выражать



свои мысли. Однако было также ясно, что отсутствие необходимых образовательных ресурсов, увеличенное количество бумажных волокитов, отсутствие необходимого технического оборудования в некоторых кабинетах и неэффективность методов активного обучения с большим количеством студентов препятствовали реализации новой программы.

*Ключевые слова: обновленная учебная программа, изменения в учебной программе, взгляды и убеждения учителей.*

**Батыс Қазақстандағы жалпы орта білім беретін мектеп мұғалімдерінің  
жаңартылған оқу бағдарламасын іске асырудағы сенімдері мен тәжірибелері****Андатпа**

Кенес Одағы ыдырағаннан кейін Қазақстан мемлекеті білім беру кешенін әлемдегі ең дамыған елдердің деңгейіне дейін дәйекті реформалауды бастады. Басқаша айтқанда, Қазақстан тәуелсіздік алғаннан бастап, білім беру жүйесі көптеген қиындықтарды басынан кешірді, мысалы, ескі оқу бағдарлама мазмұны мектеп түлектеріне өмірлік дағдыларды қалыптастырудан гөрі, жаттанды дағдыларға бағытталған болатын. Соның салдарынан, Экономикалық Ұнтымақтастық және Даму Ұйымы (ЭЫДҰ) зерттеулері бойынша қазақстандық білім беру жүйесінің негізгі проблемаларының қатарында студенттер үшін сапалы білімге тең қол жетімділіктің болмауы, білім беру ұйымдарының дербестігінің шектеулілігі, оларды қаржыландыру деңгейінің төмендігі және студенттерге тиімді несие беру жүйесінің жоқтығы анықталды. Осы мәселелерді шешу үшін 2016 оқу жылынан бастап, Қазақстанда жаңартылған мазмұнды бағдарламаны енгізу қолға алынды.

Бұл сапалы зерттеудің мақсаты - Батыс Қазақстанның жалпы орта білім беретін мектебіндегі мұғалімдердің жаңартылған оқу бағдарламасын жүзеге асырудағы сенімдері мен тәжірибелерін зерттеу. Мұғалімдердің жаңа бағдарламаны енгізудегі тәжірибелерін терең зерттеу үшін, әр қатысушымен жеке сұхбат жүргізіліп, олардың пікірлері толық талқыланды және ортақ сенімдері анықталды. Әр қатысушының еңбек тәжірибесі әртүрлі болғандықтан, жаңа бағдарламаның мазмұны туралы ой пікірлері де әртүрлі болды, сол себепті олардың сенімдерін жан жақты зерттеуге мүмкіндік туды.

Зерттеу тұжырымдамасына сүйенетін болсақ, жалпы мұғалімдердің жаңартылған бағдарламаға деген көзқарастары оң екені анықталды. Әсіресе олардың бағдарламаны енгізумен қатар, әртүрлі кәсіби даму курстарына қатысып, өз білімдерін көтергендерін, жан жақты дамып, ізденімпаз болуға, жаңашыл болуға ұмтылғандарын сұхбат нәтижелерінен көруге болады. Сонымен қатар, бағдарламаның оқушылар үшін де жақсы әсері бар екені анықталды. Мысалы, жаңа мазмұнды бағдарлама бойынша білім алған оқушы бойынан 21 ғасырға қажетті барлық дағдыларды кездестіре аламыз: сыни тұрғыдан ойлау, тез шешім қабылдай алу қабілеті, мәселені шешу жолдарын анықтай алуы, еркін өз ойын жеткізе алуы. Алайда,

қажетті білім беру ресурстарының тапшы болуы, қағазбастылықтың көбейіп кетуі, кейбір сынып бөлмелерінің қажетті техникалық құралдармен қамтамасыз етілмеуі, белсенді әдіс тәсілдерді көп санды оқушылармен өткізудің тиімсіздігі жаңа бағдарламаны енгізуге кедергі болатыны да мәлім болды.

*Түйінді сөздер: жаңа мазмұнды бағдарлама, бағдарлама өзгерістері, мұғалімдердің пікірі мен сенімдері.*

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1. Introduction**

The school curriculum is a path to academic success for teachers and students, because it involves all learning processes, outcomes in a particular subject matter. As we live in a constantly changing world, the demands of life go on changing, so education system changes as well.

Education system of the country has faced many challenges, such as curriculum was outdated and overloaded, secondary school graduates struggled in finding jobs, due to the lack of basic skills. The curriculum from the Soviet Union focused on memorization, not on life skills, so it was necessary to introduce an updated program.

In 2001 the first President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev noted in his Address to the people that the 12-year-old school should be fully operational by 2020. The main goal of the transition to 12-year education is to teach children 5-6 years old in grade 0 and the introduction of a standard preschool education program.

In his 2005 message, the first President of Kazakhstan said that in order to be competitive with other countries and to make the economy grow rapidly, it is necessary to make changes in the field of education, as the competitiveness of the population is reflected in the level of education (Yakavets & Dzhadrina, 2014). Since, the key documents were developed and educational reforms were initiated regulating state policy in the context of education.

Troudi and Uztosun (2015) stated that curriculum change aims at developing program. There are several stages of curriculum development process: curriculum design, program implementation, and evaluation. Any changes in school program are focused on improving

the quality of secondary education, although some schoolteachers doubt this and are reluctant to accept new curriculum changes.

### **1.2. Background of the study**

Education in Kazakhstan is a continuous process of education targeting the formation of professional competence through improving cultural awareness, intellectual and physical abilities. The education system plays the main role for the economic diversity of the country (OECD, 2014). However, despite all the efforts of the state, it has an ongoing function to be accompanied by numerous difficulties. Among the main problems of the Kazakhstani education system, the OECD organization indicates the lack of equal access to quality education for different categories of students, the limited independence of educational institutions, their low level of funding, and the lack of an effective student loan system and so on.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan launched a consistent reform of the entire educational complex to the level of the most developed countries in the world. However, after 1991, the quality of education in the country began to deteriorate rapidly due to lack of funding. It was difficult for the authorities to keep the positive sides of education system from the Soviet Union during the economic and social changes in the newly developing education country.

The educational program acquired from the Soviet Union was characterized as centralized, not adaptable and over-loaded (Yakavets, 2014). During the 1990s, instruction policymakers in Kazakhstan needed to 'nationalize the educational plan to indicate the social and ethnic history, while at the same time there was a focus on "internationalizing" the nation to be ambitious in a world economy. The problems in the education system have been arisen from the shortage of materials, resources, ideas, from the loss of some positive practices of



Soviet model, and from the lack of international encounters. Therefore, it was necessary to make the content of curriculum adaptable in the framework of market economy and the partnership with foreign institutions. Kazakhstan is now experiencing a major change in searching a progressive model of training from global model of education. Thereby, the school curriculum has been one of the areas that recognized for modernization and it was widely discussed in the strategic policy documents and analytical reports, as in OECD, 2014; NUGSE, 2014; World Bank, 2014. The new national educational program is aiming to build up students' soft skills, like critical and analytical thinking, management and leadership, functional literacy, decision making and so on. These are the skills that are highly valued in the modern enterprise, to be collaborative with others, presenting ideas and communicating. Accordingly, the enhancement of children's competence requires teaching to be shifted from teacher-centered to student-centered or to individualized learning. The adaptable school program takes into account personal characteristics and it tends to be responsive to individual needs and interests. It allows to change the procedures to suit the new conditions as well. (Mohanasundaram, 2018).

The school curriculum has already been adapted nowadays, updated content has been tested and implemented in Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS) and 30 pilot schools across the country.

The actions that have been already taken in the country - the expansion of schooling up to 12 years - mostly by 2016 and to the entire framework by 2019; introduction of new textbooks; introduction of State Compulsory Educational Standards; comprehensive program for in-service teacher training courses aiming innovative pedagogical necessities. (through Centers of Excellence); introducing new curriculum and assessment system to mainstream schools from the teachers' experience of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools; presenting trilingual education to experimental schools first, then to mainstream schools.

(NUGSE, 2014) The 12-year education scheme is based on the 0 grade + 11 grade principles. The updated educational program has been gradually introduced in accordance with the schedule: (1) 2016 – 1<sup>st</sup> grade; (2) 2017 – 1 and 2, 5 and 7 grades; (3) 2018 – 1 - 3, 6 - 8 grades; and (4) 2019 – all grades 1-11.

### **1.3.Statement of the problem**

The content of course books, teaching resources, recommendations and methodologies for teachers have been changed respectively with the development of school program (MOES, 2016). In addition, all the mainstream school teachers began to be sent to the in-service trainings to be introduced with the content of updated curriculum and to implement it in their classrooms. As a result, school teachers started to apply new teaching approaches in their lessons, some Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS) were opened in different regions of the country on the basis of a new methodology for integration with the best international pedagogical backgrounds. Correspondingly, these intellectual schools are the main centers for transferring the international experiences for other mainstream schools.

However, despite the progress in introducing new school curricula, the experts and policy makers discovered that mainstream school teachers are still challenging in implementing the upgraded program effectively, they struggle with the assessment system, which reflects the students' priorities and the principles of the education system (MOES, 2014, p.24). In addition, I noticed this problem by myself, when I had opportunities to observe English lessons at mainstream schools. Teachers were struggling especially with developing assessment criteria and assessment tasks. I also realized some English teachers still find it difficult to understand and to implement the changes of school program. Although there is a lot of research in the global arena about the influence of program changes to school teachers and about their perspectives about the curriculum, but I realized that in the context of our country, the number of investigations on public school teachers' practices of the

updated program is limited.

Therefore, this study aims at examining teachers' practices about the implementation of school curriculum with an updated content in the context of Kazakhstani educational reforms, namely in the western part of the country.

#### **1.4. Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore secondary school teachers' beliefs and practices of implementing the updated curriculum based on their teaching experiences in one mainstream school of West Kazakhstan. Teachers are the implementers of the updated curriculum and therefore it is necessary to investigate their beliefs and practices of the updated curriculum.

#### **1.5. Research Question**

This study poses the following specific research questions:

Main research question:

What are the secondary school teachers' beliefs and practices of implementing the updated curriculum in a school in west Kazakhstan?

Subsidiary questions:

1. What do teachers view about implementation of the updated curriculum?
2. How do they implement the updated curriculum?
3. What are the factors that affect teachers to implement the updated curriculum?

#### **1.6. Significance of the study**

The study can be significant for several reasons; first, it may discover teachers' beliefs and practices about implementation of updated curriculum, consequently teachers' strengths and weaknesses in using curriculum will be identified. In addition, teacher's voice can be

heard to different stakeholders, such as policy makers, school administrators and professional development trainers to support them in teaching process. According to Hargreavers 1996, (cited in Hanushek, 2011) there has been a shortage of teacher voice in education decision-making. Although, teachers are the people, who know most about school practices, who will improve learning, but unfortunately, they are like the objects of reform, not its' participants. Second, the study might contribute to the literature and discussions about the importance of teachers' perspectives on the implementation of new curriculum reform, as the research on this topic is not extensive in Kazakhstani context (MOES, 2014, p.24). Finally, by doing a research I can professionally develop and improve my analytical and research skills.

### **1.7. Outline of the study**

The thesis includes six chapters. *Chapter 1* presents the background information about the research topic and states the problem of the research, defines the purpose and the research questions that guided me to study the topic. *Chapter 2* introduces the reviewed literature and studies related to the topic. It also gives information about the concepts of the study and discusses the nature of curriculum development followed by the analysis of the factors that affect teachers' implementation of the curriculum. *Chapter 3* discusses the methodology of the research by describing the design, site of the research and sampling procedures. Ethical considerations are also mentioned in this section. *Chapter 4* focuses on the study findings that revealed from the analysis of the data collection. *Chapter 5* presents the discussion of the results. The last chapter summarizes the whole study, considering the recommendations and suggestions for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature review**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to review the literature related to the research topic. Especially, it defines the main concept of the study, discusses the nature of curriculum development and provides an analysis of the factors that affect teachers' implementation of the curriculum. The last paragraph provides a summary of the chapter.

### **2.2. What is curriculum?**

The main concepts of the study are related to teachers' perceptions and practices of implementing the updated curriculum. Teachers' perceptions of the curriculum derive from teaching experience. The concept 'curriculum' is understood in limited and in broad sense. Some teachers equate it with lesson plans, subject discipline or syllabi, but the broader meaning of curriculum is much more than a statement about the knowledge-content, it does not say about what schools should teach, but it seeks the answer for 'why students should be taught'. For this reason, Bobbitt (1918, p.42) defines 'curriculum' as "a series of things which children and youth must do and experience, by way of developing abilities to do the things well that make up the affairs of adult life".

The main difference between the concepts 'curriculum' and 'syllabus' is that the 'syllabus' is focused on a specific subject, i.e. the list of topics or units are created by an educator or a professor, while 'curriculum' includes the overall content for a particular course which designed by government or institution.

### **2.3. The nature of curriculum development**

The curriculum development is a planned, a dynamic and a systematic procedure to make positive upgrades in the educational framework. There are changes and advancements every time around the world that influence the school educational programs, hence there is

a need to update curricula addressing to general public needs (Mohanasundaram, 2018). This idea is also supported by Aktan (2018) that the curriculum has to meet the needs and interests of the region, the schools and the students. In fact, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries have begun to switch to such an updated content of school education since 1988. And in 1997, countries agreed on a common measurement standard for updated content. In other words, authors Nan-zhao and Mu-ju (2007) claimed the advancement of the program should be guided by the need for changes in organizational, cultural, economic, methodological, legal and socio-psychological relations that have developed in the field of education.

Yakavets (2014) states the curriculum modification in Kazakhstan has been a significant issue in education, especially after gaining independence. The training framework insufficiently mirror the new instruction standard, which focused on personalization and enhancement to enable them to make decisions between academic learning and professional courses. Similarly, Chinese education relied on centralized curriculum, which had less flexibility for many decades (OECD, 2016). Therefore, a qualitative reform of education could be possibly carried out in the context of dynamic socio-economic changes in society and there was a need for detailed strategy. A strategy takes into account the real situation in the education field and potential paths for the development of society and the state. In this case, a flexible program, which is adaptable to rapidly changing real conditions, had developed based on such a strategy (OECD, 2014). In addition, (McKnight, 2018) described curriculum planning, as it is essential to think about the ways how to include modules or activities rather than just thinking about what to include in it. For instance, teacher should ask the questions by himself like *are the activities practical for students? Where can I negotiate something different with students? How do my curricular choices demonstrate my respect and care for my students?* In the same manner, curriculum

experts Wiggins and Mc Tighe, (2005) consider the pedagogical approach and methods that guide teachers to provide practical support.

Development of curriculum should be functional and relevant to society's needs, it is a setting for new educational goals to achieve, new evaluation tools to assess and the development of social, physical and emotional skills in terms of the intellectual aspects of a learner. According to Richards (2001), curricular change includes some stages, such as 'needs and situation analysis', 'developing goals and objectives', 'course structure' and 'teaching approaches and materials'.

Furthermore, in the context of Kazakhstan, the country is now experiencing a major change in searching a progressive model of training from global model of education. Thereby, the school curriculum has been one of the areas that recognized for modernization and it was widely discussed in the strategic policy documents and analytical reports, as in OECD, 2014; NUGSE, 2014; World Bank, 2014. The new national educational program aims at building up students' soft skills, like critical and analytical thinking, management and leadership, functional literacy, decision making. These are the highly valued skills in the modern enterprise, to be collaborative with others, presenting ideas and communicating. Accordingly, the enhancement of children's competence requires teaching to be shifted from teacher-centered to student-centered or to individualized learning. Mohanasundaram (2018) believes adaptable school program takes into account personal characteristics and it tends to be responsive to individual needs and interests. It also allows changing the procedures to suit the new conditions. Additionally, it is worth mentioning about the world that belongs to the GRIN technologies: genetics, robotics, information and nanotechnology (Garreau, 2005 as cited in Hord & Sommers, 2008). Therefore, modern school teachers have to meet the requirements of the modern world. Similarly, Benjamin (1939), describes the changes by

giving an example of fish grabbing with the bare hands. The author clearly explains the needs for making amendments in the curriculum depending on the necessary life skills for students.

Altinyelken (2010) in his study relates teaching methodology to children's activities rather than teachers' activities, because it enables to get students well performed and well participated in learning. Likewise, the development of strategic directions for education reforms in Kazakhstan for 2015-2020 highlighted that "a) educational program, b) assessment, c) textbooks should be evolved together by the same goals and values, otherwise they will undermine each other" (NUGSE, 2014, p. 24).

a) In terms of educational program, Shamshidinova, Ayubayeva, and Bridges (2014) defined the purpose of the standard curriculum as: achieving the goals and objectives presented in the form of expected learning outcomes; preparing the educational activities taking into account the individual and age characteristics of pupils; building spiritual, moral and socio-cultural skills based on national traditions and universal values; creating psychological and pedagogical conditions of education and training; creating equal opportunities for educating preschool children in the organization of primary education; developing students' communicative, cognitive, creative and motor skills, self-learning skills, including young children's;

b) Correspondingly, the aim of the assessment is believed by Altinyelken (2010) to be diagnostic and remedial. It is considered that appropriate and immediate feedback would help teachers to see the students' strengths and weaknesses in their academic achievement. As a result, assessment process is functioned on a daily basis; teachers may stimulate some students' learning or provide support to others in accordance with learning objectives. Likewise, the scholars Karunasinghe, Ganasundara (2000) mentioned about the continuous classroom-based assessment as the best technique, which helps teachers to encourage comparative student achievement.



c) The basic skills that students practice according to the textbooks have to be required by market economy, because students are to get the necessary knowledge from the course books to apply at current jobs. For instance, students may suffer because of deficiency of skills in the sphere of business marketing, banking, entrepreneurship and so on. Therefore, some schools in the country are experiencing various kinds of educational program advancement; each of them strives to build up its own arrangement of student books (NUGSE, 2014).

What is more, the content of textbooks shapes the learner's identity as well. For instance, Nazarbayev University professors presented the findings from different course books how the relationship between gender and schooling depicts learner's identity. However, this research is still being investigated, and recent results showed that males are represented more in all texts and their images are given more than women's across the different subjects, like English, Kazakh, Russian and Algebra. The percentages of gender were provided by six categories/activities, such as leadership, domestic, health, sport, business and science. It became apparent that in our country all the areas are associated with the male domain except domestic. The same situation can be found in all textbooks of other countries as well. It can be proven by the scholars Palandjian, Silova, Mun and Zholdoshalieva (2018) how they examined textbooks of different countries, and discovered that women position is mostly given in texts as both nurturers and reproducers of the nation in comparison with men roles as heroes or protectors of the nation. Accordingly, these gender indicators in textbooks may also affect the future professions of students. For example, male students may prefer going to business or science and girls to nursery spheres.

The content of textbooks or school curriculum can also shape the national identity of learners. Having compared two scientific papers, it became obvious that there is a great influence of neighboring countries on the national identity. For instance, Kyrgyzstan,

Uzbekistan and Russia affected the Kazakhstani education, while Pakistani education was influenced by India and Afghanistan. Therefore, the main concern was the relationship between identity and religion. According to Durrani and Dunne (2010), Indian leaders used Islamic unity as a weapon to destroy Pakistan's identity.

In the context of Kazakhstan, national identity is mostly represented in Kazakh textbooks, but it is not good, because there are different nationalities and religions in our country, and young people are mostly focused on the books with English or Russian instruction, where the content does not represent national identity sufficiently.

To sum up, the studies show that the curriculum development in all nations is focused on how to develop students' awareness and capacity of life learning, how to educate qualified citizens (Nan Zhao & Muju, 2007). The purpose of any curriculum reforms is promoting the quality of basic education focused on cultural, economic and socio-psychological relations.

#### **2.4. The factors that affect teachers' implementation of the reform**

The curriculum reform is an inseparable process, which includes all learning opportunities. Hence, the learning process should cater to the needs of learners, teachers and society. Thereby, teachers are regarded as the key agents to implement any changes of the curriculum. However, as many studies around the world have shown, there are different challenges that some teachers face in implementing the program successfully. There is an evidence confirming the notion that Stockwell (cited by Rahman et.al., 2018) pointed to as several factors that impacted the curriculum change process concerning teachers, such as the personal characteristics of teachers, and teacher development. On the one hand, there has been an inconclusive debate about whether schoolteachers are ready or qualified enough to accept program innovations. On the other hand, it is believed by Nsibande (2002), understanding the curriculum changes successfully depends on the teacher's ability. Teacher should have good knowledge, skills and passion for teaching. Nevertheless, Handler (2010)

claims that professional development of teachers is an important factor contributing to the success of the curriculum development and implementation. The government in China regularly provide renewal courses on teachers' qualification to improve the quality of teachers (OECD, 2016). In this manner, in 2016 Ministry of Science and Education in Kazakhstan created a schedule for teachers' training on the basis of updated program: 366,574 –teachers, 19,314 – heads of secondary schools, 4,080 methodologists of education departments and specialists of subordinate organizations of the Ministry got introduced with the content of updated curriculum (MoSE, 2016).

However, Ostovar-Namaghi (2017) believes that what often makes education change difficult is a disagreement between policy-makers and teachers. His findings lend support to the belief that the collaborative planning of the curriculum improves the implementability of any educational reform. Accordingly, Grossman, Onkol and Sands (2007), support this idea and state that curriculum implementation is better achieved if more people are involved in and committed to it. It would result in using curriculum effectively by sharing own teaching practices, up-to-date teaching materials and provide with relevant resources. Therefore, where there is no collaboration, teachers have different perspectives on the curriculum implementation process. In other words, teachers can also contribute to the development of practice in their schools by involving their colleagues in research work, thereby becoming active participants in the reform process, and not just an object of the reform (McLaughlin, McLellan, Frost & Turner, 2013).

Naturally, different teachers perceive any changes of curriculum differently, as Rahman, Pandian and Kaur (2018) highlighted, teachers are people who bring the educational changes into practice in the classroom. It is obvious that they do it in different ways. Therefore, it is necessary to know teacher's voice about implementing the curriculum. Hargreaves 1996, (cited in Hanushek, 2011) claims, there has been a shortage of teacher

voice in education decision-making. Although, teachers are the people, who know most about school practices, who will improve learning, but unfortunately they are like the objects of reform, not its' participants. In other words, they can also contribute to the development of practice in their schools by involving their colleagues in research work, thereby becoming active participants in the reform process, and not just an object of the reform (McLaughlin, McLellan, Frost, and Turner, 2013). In addition, Gyurko (2012) highlights in his study three main categories on teaching and classroom-related issues about teacher's educational voice: pedagogy and curriculum; student progress and assessment; professional development and classroom management.

In addition to the above mentioned factors, which influence teachers to implement programs, there is another category of teachers who really find it difficult to work with a school curriculum with updated content. They are the teachers who start working in schools immediately after graduating from pedagogical universities. As Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2007), mentioned in their paper that tens of thousands of beginning teachers have had little or no fundamental information about schools, children and curriculum. Shamatov (2005) also observes that one of the pressing challenges for beginning teachers in Kyrgyzstan is curriculum change, because they may get insufficient support from experienced colleagues. As a result, this may create the teachers' reluctance of accepting any reforms in education. This indicates that there is no connection between pre-service teaching centers and secondary schools. For this reason, universities in Turkey train future schoolteachers based on the methodology of real schoolteachers (Grossman et.al., 2007).

All things considered, it is noticeable that the future of each individual is formed from the foundation of the school. Many scholars believe that any educational reforms should be first introduced to teachers, as they may reflect on them and give feedback from the classroom practitioner's perspective. The effectiveness of educational change relies upon

practitioners; therefore, they should be involved in the curriculum development process as well (Bas & Senturk, 2019). After that, the reformers probably get the right understanding and give a correct direction to educate the younger generation.

### **2.5. Summary**

Having reviewed the literature, I understood the significance of the concepts related to my study and examined the importance of curriculum development in general. I also found out what possible factors can influence teachers to incorporate curriculum changes into the teaching process. The following chapters present the methodology and findings of the study.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

#### ***3.1. Introduction***

This chapter presents the methodology of the research that enabled to study secondary school teachers' beliefs and practices of the curriculum with an updated content, to find out the factors that affect the curriculum implementation in Kazakhstan. It includes three sections: the first section clarifies the design of the research, the research site and participants selection. The following section describes the research procedures, instruments and methods in details, which were used for data collection and analysis. The last one discusses the ethical considerations and summarizes the chapter.

#### ***3.2. Research design***

To address the research questions, I employed qualitative research design. Qualitative research happens in natural settings, where human behavior and events occur. The qualitative research focuses on participant's perceptions and experiences, the way they perceive their lives (Frankel & Wallen, 1990; Locke et.al., 1987 cited in Creswell, 2014). My study aims at exploring the teachers' beliefs and practices of the implementation of the new curriculum.

Within qualitative approach, I used the case study in which I can develop an in-depth analysis of a case. Case study is an inquiry design in many fields that enables to do in-depth examination of a phenomenon, often a program, event, process or individuals (Creswell, 2014, p.43).

The rationale of the case study is that it relies on realistic perspectives of the practitioners to provide the effectiveness of implementing the curriculum changes further.

***Research site***

The study was conducted in one of the mainstream schools in the west part of Kazakhstan. Mainstream schools of the country have been implementing the updated curriculum for almost four years, which is a very short period of time. As mentioned above, Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS) across Kazakhstan have been using advanced curriculum, which was used as a basis for the curriculum reform for all schools of Kazakhstan. These NIS schools have become models for other mainstream schools in terms of transferring the international innovative approaches. Since, the updated program was experienced at NIS first, only then it was transmitted to the other educational institutions. This means that NIS project is a great facilitator in modernizing the educational system. Moreover, the most NIS teachers have been trained abroad to bring the international experience into Kazakhstani classrooms. Moreover, each NIS schools work with two mainstream schools to support with all the changes, and these schools are called “pilot schools”. The teachers of those schools are helped and guided to implement the program by NIS teachers. The NIS teachers have a team-teaching lesson with the teachers of ‘pilot schools’, they meet each other beforehand to make a lesson plan together. However, this study is conducted in a mainstream school, which is not one of the pilot schools, because I planned to see how the new curriculum is being implemented in a typical school that is not receiving any additional support.

***Sampling***

Participants were recruited on a voluntary basis according to certain criteria for a sampling procedure. Creswell (2012, p.206) claimed, “the research term used for qualitative sampling is purposeful sampling. In purposeful sampling researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn the central phenomenon”. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), in purposive sampling researchers build up a sample based on their specific

needs (p.115). So, this type of sampling strategy helped me to choose the participants based on their experience and the appropriate site. Within purposeful sampling strategies, I used maximal variation sampling. As Creswell (2012) suggests that maximal variation sampling enables a researcher to identify the characteristic and then find sites or individuals that show the shape of that characteristic. In my case, maximal variation sampling facilitated to find the teachers of different grades, different ages and different language of instruction.

The following specific criteria were used to select participants:

1. Secondary schoolteachers of different grades (5-11 grades) and subjects (science and language).
2. Their teaching experiences had to be more than 3 years as the new curriculum has been implemented in mainstream schools since 2016.
3. Voluntary participation, I asked those teachers who were really interested in my research topic.

Correspondingly, the research involved five teachers of different subjects (see Table 1.) and seven interviews for this case study:

**Table 1. Information about the participants**

<i>Names of the participants</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Work experience</i>	<i>Number of interviews</i>	<i>The First Year of implementing the program (still using)</i>
Aiym	English	6 years	2	2018
Menslu	Biology	12 years	1	2016
Akgul	Kazakh language	15 years	1	2017
Nurlan	History	15 years	1	2018



Zhanslu	English	26 years	2	2017
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*Note: The names of participants are not their real names.*

### ***3.3. Procedures of the research***

The first step for conducting my research was the Submission the Ethics Application Form (October 9, 2020), then after getting Ethics Approval I started to negotiate with the school, for this I made an appointment with a gatekeeper in the beginning of November 2020 to gain the school principal's permission to conduct my research in the school. It was not hard to meet the school principal for me. I knew a teacher, who works at that school, and she was pleased to help me for that and she introduced me with the principal. So, I explained my situation by handing him a support letter from NUGSE (Appendix A), where the purpose and duration of my study, sampling and data collection procedures were presented. In addition, I also mentioned about the ethical norms and rules which I would follow during my researching activities. Thus, I got the principal's permission to conduct the study.

Then, for recruiting participants and creating the list of participants, I spent approximately two weeks (November 10, 2020 – November 25, 2020). I asked school administrators to provide me with the email addresses of schoolteachers in order to send them an invitation letter (Appendix B) with the criteria for participation in my study. In the invitation letter, I politely asked teachers to contact me by email or phone call if they were interested in my research. The invitation letter looked like a recruitment flyer. I sent a recruitment flyer to the mail of the school staff with criteria to attract participants to my study. Since the program with updated content was introduced in Kazakhstan for only four years, I needed a teacher who had been practicing for 4 years, but not less. And of course, teachers of any subjects and teachers of middle classes were welcomed. I also asked for a

response by a certain date, and as a result, only five participants wished to participate on a voluntary basis.

Having received their agreement, I shared the informed consent form (Appendix C) with participants. Those teachers who wished to participate signed the two copies of the informed consent letters. One copy was for me as a researcher, another one was given to each participant.

Data collection procedure took almost two months (from the early December, 2020 to the end of January of 2021). The interviews were mostly conducted online because of pandemic situation, and only two teachers welcomed to see me personally, they have decided the time and place for being interviewed.

By signing the informed consent letter, where the participants were informed that I would maintain anonymity and confidentiality, they felt comfortable and confident to answer the interview questions. What is more, participants were asked a permission to be recorded for the purpose of transcription. Additionally, during the process of data collection, I asked some of my interviewees to show me personal documents such as their professional individual plans or short-term lesson plans, which helped me to understand their beliefs and practices of curriculum implementation better.

### ***3.4. Data collection***

As the main instrument for collecting data I used semi-structured interviews. Interviews could yield detailed information about personal feelings and different opinions on the issue. As mentioned earlier, because of lockdown time the interviews were conducted via video-conferencing. Leavy (2016) states video-conferencing and skype interviews make it possible to talk to people whom a researcher might not be able to reach in person (p.142). In addition, participants' own words were recorded as a primary source with their

permission. The reason why I used a semi-structured interview, as it involves a series of open-ended questions based on the topic that I want to cover. I developed a list of interview questions and I asked probing and follow up questions during the interviews as well. According to Leavy (2016), participants are free to use their own language and provide long and detailed responses. The interview questions are provided below (Appendix D). Not all interviews were recorded, as two participants did not want their words to be recorded. In that case, I had to write down the key points of their responses, so I found note-taking process useful for me. Later I used those notes in analyzing the interviews.

I enjoyed to talk with them naturally, most of them were open and friendly, and during the interviews I also discovered that less experienced teachers were very positive about updated curriculum than more experienced ones. Overall, I had administered 7 interviews of 40-50 minutes with each participant. Most of the participants preferred their native language, which is Kazakh, only one teacher was interviewed in English.

At the end of each interview I expressed my gratitude to each participant.

### ***3.5. Data analysis***

The analysis of the collected data included three stages. In the first step, all audio recordings were transcribed into a text document. The typing process took a long time. However, interview transcriptions allowed me to do In Vivo coding where I highlighted statements, words, or chunks as key points in the participants' responses relying on interview questions. This was the second phase of data analysis. The last step was to rearrange the codes according to the suitable themes. Themes were created based on research and interview questions. Consequently, some themes were merged into categories and interpreted in the 'findings chapter'.

### ***3.6. Ethical consideration***

The most important aspect of conducting research that a researcher should know is adherence to ethics during the research. To do this, the researcher have to get ethics approval from the NUGSE Ethics Committee in order to conduct the research. However, there were several steps, which I had to cover to get an ethics approval. The first step was to complete a Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative Program (CITI program) in order to get aware of all the ethical regulations for conducting research. By completing the program successfully, I received certificates of program completion. Only after that, I prepared my Ethics Application and by sending it to the Ethics Committee I had a chance to get an Ethics Approval from NUGSE Committee (Appendix E).

Fortunately, everything went better than I thought, having received the approval immediately, I confidently went to the research site to make a negotiation with a gatekeeper. During the data collection process I promised my participants to keep the ethical standards. The details of researching process were given in the informed consent form including anonymity and confidentiality. The participants were free to choose any of three languages to be interviewed (Kazakh, Russian and English), which was most suitable for them. Even, one of English language teachers preferred to be interviewed in native language, which is Kazakh. This surprised me a little, since I conducted my research in English, so it would be a little easier for me to analyze and draw conclusions in English. Additionally, it took time to translate her words afterwards. Each participant was interviewed individually and in different dates, thus they did not know each other who participated in the study, although they were from the same school.

However, there was a risk that the study participants might be known by other school members. Therefore, I created conditions not to harm the personal life and work of the participants. For example, I used pseudonyms and coded numbers instead of their real names

and the information shared by them was confidential, also their audio recordings are in a protected file of my laptop with a password. In addition, the participants were informed that the data provided by them would be destroyed by the researcher after defending the thesis. Glesne (2011), suggests to get rid of any copies of the data collection after the research completion.

At the end of each interview, I expressed my gratitude and respect for my participants' time dedicated to my study. Accordingly, they felt free to skip some interview questions or not to answer if they felt uncomfortable, they had rights to withdraw their own answers or any information if they wished.

On the other hand, my research was a chance for them to gain experience in participating in the study. In addition, they probably contribute to their professional development through the analysis of research experience. I believe, a discovery of teachers' beliefs and practices of program change will help different stakeholders, such as policy makers, school administrators and in-service training institutions to support mainstream school teachers in terms of teaching and learning process. Since, nowadays despite the recognition of stakeholders, the voices of researchers and politicians prevail, and the voices of teachers, who play an important role in school performance, are ignored in policy-making (Hanushek, 2011).

### *Summary*

The chapter introduced the procedures of my research in details, the design, the sampling, the regulations that I followed, and the main instruments that I used to explore school teachers' beliefs and practices of the updated curriculum in one mainstream school of West Kazakhstan.

## Chapter 4: Findings

### 4.1. Introduction

This section of the thesis illustrates the findings obtained from individual interviews with the secondary school teachers about their beliefs and practices of implementing the updated curriculum. This chapter presents the results of individual interviews based on the following themes: i) Teachers' views on implementing the updated curriculum; ii) Teachers' views on benefits of the updated curriculum; iii) Teachers' views on difficulties of implementing the updated curriculum. The last paragraph summarizes the chapter.

### 4.2. Teachers' views on implementing the updated curriculum

In general, all the participants have a positive attitude towards the updated curriculum, but it is true that two teachers out of five were struggling a lot to implement it in the first and second years. Some teachers reported that they had a lot of fear while implementing the new curriculum. One of the teachers who had fear had over 26 years of work experience, while another teacher had six years of experience.

This shows that the teachers irrespective of their work experience, no matter whether they are more or less experienced, they are likely to face difficulties while accepting changes. In addition, it can be clearly seen from the words of an experienced teacher Zhanslu (pseudonym),

*It was a big change in my teaching practice. I was not ready for that. Because, you know when your teaching experience is 26 years and someone tells you to change something in teaching, it seems impossible to you. I've been teaching since 1991, and I got used to what I did throughout my teaching practices.*

Accordingly, Aiym also proved her initial fear when she was asked to implement the updated program, in the following words:

*When I was introduced with the new program and began to implement it, I was so afraid of doing something wrong, because at that time I had only two years of work experience. After all, as a beginning teacher, I was just getting used to the school culture and I was unhappy when some changes were made in the school curriculum.*

The other three teachers claim that any curriculum needs to be revised and updated regularly. The first experience of working with the updated program for them was a great desire for something. For example, Nurlan, a history teacher, said that he accepted the new change as a normal thing, and Akgul, a teacher of the Kazakh language stated that getting to know the new program was not a problem for her; on the contrary, she started to learn new teaching methods that she had never heard before. *“The program with the updated content for biology teachers was an opportunity to learn a foreign language”* - said a biology teacher. Hereby, I can conclude the teacher's innovation depends not only on the teacher's experience, but also on the personal qualities, interests and motivation.

What is more, the majority of participants noted the learning resources as the main difference between the previous program and the updated one.

*Based on the previous program, students were taught by using only one course book. At the beginning of the school year, all students were given special textbooks, according to their grades, and respectively they were limited to completing assignments and reading the texts of one textbook. As a result, the student did not learn anything more except the information in the textbook. (Nurlan, history teacher)*

The language teachers also came to the same idea that students were regularly given a traditional home assignment: read the grammar rules given in a textbook and write an exercise, memorize new words. In addition, by working with old subject program the teacher talked 80% of the lesson to explain the new topic to students, which means that the teacher's

talking time is longer than the student's talking time. Therefore, students were less active; they were just listeners and writers.

Another important difference that the participants mentioned is interaction patterns. Previously, children worked mostly independently during the lesson, that is, they receive assignments and complete them, the teacher checks and evaluates. This is fine at some degree, especially for introverts as they love to work individually. But, there were also less able students in each class, who find it difficult to perceive new material, they sat for hours to complete one task. And the teacher did not often take an individual approach to such students. For now, according to the new program, students can work in pairs, in groups discussing issues, helping each other to learn the material quickly. This is proved by an English teacher Zhanslu, who is more experienced than other participants: *Students mostly did written tasks, for example each student worked on your own, there were no pair works or group works, they did not discuss anything as a whole class, they basically completed grammar exercises.* This idea is also supported by the Kazakh language teacher: *when students see a new topic of the lesson on the board, they may discuss with each other and guess what the topic is about, and this is good for the teacher as well, not only the teacher speaks, but also students encourage each other to understand the material.*

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the teachers' practice of implementing the new curriculum shows that the new program is mainly focused on the content rather than on grammar aspect. According to language teachers, constant discussion of various issues, description of pictures or watching video materials and asking or answering different questions negatively affects the ability of students to write and speak grammatically correct. This means that teachers do not have enough time to explain grammar topics and make students practice grammar exercises. However, teachers improve learners' critical thinking and decision-making skills.



One more thing that all participants pointed out as a main difference between two curriculums is a big change in the system of student assessment. In addition, teachers highlighted several advantages and disadvantages of the new assessment system of student academic achievement. This will be discussed in more detail in the following subtopics.

#### ***4.3. Teachers' views on benefits of the updated curriculum***

The benefits of the new program can be explained from two perspectives depending on the responses of the participants. This is because this program has proven to be very useful for both students and teachers.

##### ***4.3.1. Benefits to students***

As mentioned above, the new curriculum allows students to work collaboratively, that is, in pairs or in groups. It is useful for some students to learn in this way, as advanced students always lead or guide less able ones. As a result, all learners may have the same interest and pace of learning. For example, as a Biology teacher noted: *Group work has increased students' creativity, and even my less active or shy students have been able to express their opinions more confidently. In addition, now students are able to evaluate own progress and each other's performance.* According to young teacher Aiym, her students get used to develop success criteria for each lesson by reading the lesson objectives (LO). She just asks her students to tell what skills they are going to practice or what types of tasks they are going to have. Aiym commented:

*I first taught them to look at key words of the lesson objectives. For example, LO: 'use appropriate subject-specific vocabulary and syntax to talk', the key word here is: talk, which means 'practice speaking skills', so the assessment criterion: 'use topical vocabulary appropriately in speaking'. By doing this, my students create assessment criteria for the lesson by themselves, which sometimes make my life easier.*

The teacher of Kazakh language also mentioned about the new system of assessment and compared the criteria-based assessment with the previous five-point assessment system. She provided an example from her school experience. Akgul:

*In the past, if a teacher put a grade 4 or 3 to evaluate our performance, she or he would not explain the reason why we got it, also we were not particularly interested to ask about it. Accordingly, we did not know how to improve our skills, what aspects to focus on, and how to prepare ourselves not to make mistakes next time. But, now the specific criteria will help students to identify the areas for improvement.*

She also talked about some criteria for the writing assignment as an example, 'if a student is asked to use 6-7 topical words and 4-5 linking words or make no more than 2 spelling errors, respectively student will take these criteria into account when writing an essay'. This shows the effectiveness of the new assessment system for student progress.

#### **4.3.2. Benefits to teachers**

To begin with, before the introduction of this program, there has been a lot of discussion about professional development of teachers. Even teachers who have never been abroad have gained experience from foreign teachers. This means that teachers have already benefited a lot from the implementation of the new program. In addition, thanks to this program, teachers of all secondary schools had a great opportunity to participate in school and regional seminars, to exchange experiences. They did not only develop themselves professionally, but also gained some knowledge for themselves. *The updated program requires us to be versatile and innovative, thus, we have learned not only to master our subject, but also to integrate it with other disciplines.* (Nurlan, History teacher)

Another benefit of the program for teachers is that they have been introduced with the concept "reflection". Most of the participants in this study noted that one of the main

differences from the old program is reflecting on your actions (let it be a lesson, a workshop or a meeting), which is a good change. *In the past, we would not reflect on our previous lesson. The lesson is over, everything is over, we did not even think about it, which means, we did not work on our mistakes, and when we checked the students' test papers, we could not understand why they made mistakes. Since that might be our guilt, but we always demanded from the students, instead of looking for a reason from ourselves* (Shanslu, an experienced English teacher).

Thanks to reflection, teachers began to study the lesson. They create focus groups of 3-4 teachers and observe each other's lessons, afterwards discuss the procedure of the lesson and give comments to improve teaching process. In addition, students' activities are also observed, their levels, their pace of learning, and accordingly the ways in which a teacher makes different approaches to achieve the lesson objectives. According to Akgul (Kazakh language teacher), last year she was involved in Lesson Study process and it helped her a lot in planning and teaching lessons successfully.

*I appreciate the contribution of my colleagues in it, they did not only help me grow professionally, but also taught and guided how to study a lesson and how to do reflection.*

#### ***4.4. Teachers' views on challenges of implementing the updated curriculum***

As already mentioned above that most of the participants did not really find it difficult to implement the new program, although there were some moments in which they struggled somehow.

#### ***Finding suitable learning resources to cover the lesson objectives***

According to teachers, some of the proposed links to resources do not open in the medium-term plan, so teachers will have to independently find materials that are relevant to the topic and purpose. For example, a History teacher says, *when you are looking for materials for a lesson, studying information from different sources by surfing the internet,*

*you can just get stuck there and spend a lot of time. Nevertheless, sometimes you may find many interesting and useful materials for children.* The English teacher Aiym also highlighted about the difficulties in finding suitable learning materials for the lesson. She says that when too many resources are given in the middle-term plan for one lesson, it is difficult for her to find assignments that fit the objectives of the lesson, because some websites are not acceptable. She sometimes can find several appropriate tasks to cover the learning objectives, so she can choose from them, or sometimes she finds nothing suitable. She has provided an example from her own experience, once she could not find listening task where the students were supposed to find the inconsistency of the authors' ideas (that was the listening objective).

#### ***Spending a lot of time on planning lessons***

Teachers also noted that it sometimes takes several hours to create a plan for one lesson. For example, when they do not find a suitable learning material for the objectives of the lesson, they create their own tasks or find materials from different sources and combine them. Additionally, in the case of summative assessment, they have to formalize tasks in accordance with the format of assessment specification. This can be proven by biology teacher Menslu:

*Although the lesson takes 40 minutes, but we sometimes prepare one lesson for 2-3 hours. So, this indicates the mismatch of the offered resources with the learning objectives in the mid-term plan.*

#### ***Accepting new changes in the curriculum***

In addition, there was a tendency for some teachers not to accept innovation or change in the curriculum. It was a big change, especially for experienced teachers. The assessment system, using different learning materials (hard copies or online resources), and

even the style and methods of teaching made it difficult to admit everything. This is confirmed by the words of an experienced English teacher, Zhanslu:

*My first experience was awful. I didn't understand how to teach according to this program. I got lost in planning the lesson when you are given too many learning and lesson objectives to cover in one lesson. I didn't know how to assess my students based on criteria, how to use the learning resources which are given in the curriculum (middle-term course plans). I had no idea.*

In addition, according to biology and history teachers, it is sometimes impossible to use active learning in the big size classes. During active learning, students have to work in groups or in pairs, and the teacher cannot control almost everyone when there are 25 students in the class. Therefore, teachers claim that the topic of the lesson is not always well-conveyed and the lesson does not reach its goal. Since, they prefer teacher-led lessons rather than learner-centered, they explain the topic themselves, ask questions to the class, and describe the scenarios themselves and so on. Although, active learning is demand for modern teachers currently.

One more surprising fact that I also became aware that there were some teachers in the pre-retirement age who showed a reluctance to accept the new program content. So, it can be predicted that they endured the first 2-3 years to retire without even using the updated curriculum.

***Increased workload (electronic diary, short-term plans, side meetings)***

What is more, three out of five teachers said that their workload has increased with the update of the program, especially paperwork, and more time spent in front of the computer. For example, they transfer the progress of each student to 'kundelik.kz' platform after each lesson, (which means 'electronic diary') and for each summative assessment task, they put down the grades in an electronic journal, and prepare rubrics for parents in order to

make them understand own child's achievement results better. Except planning the short-term plans, the school administrators has increased the number of side meetings. In terms of paperwork, for each lesson, teachers should print out several worksheets for classroom activities according to the number of students in the class, since there is no specific coursebook, they find teaching materials and print them out for each child.

#### ***4.5. Teachers' views on how they deal with challenges***

Teachers often ask each other for help when they find it difficult to find suitable resources. For example, as the young specialist Ayim said:

*Sometimes my colleagues find materials for me from the list of used resources in the previous years or sometimes we work together to create own tasks taking into account the levels of students. It is very effective when we make short-term lesson plans together, helping each other understand some aspects of the new program.*

In this way they can also reduce the time they spend planning one lesson. In terms of difficulties with accepting new things in the curriculum, the more experienced teacher Zhanslu shared with her solutions:

*Fortunately, in the English department, the majority of teachers are young, more innovative and more ambitious. Thanks to them, I somehow found a way out of the situation. We planned lessons collaboratively, participated in various in-service training workshops and discussed together. Thus, we could discover the positive sides of the new program.*

Now, she has been already using the updated program for 5 years and she finds it easier to work with different resources and plan the lesson, it even becomes more interesting for her now. However, teachers approaching retirement age, although they are not very interested in the updated program, but they are always supported and respected by their colleagues. At the same time, there is no pressure on older teachers from the administration

either, that is, they are not particularly forced to introduce new teaching methods. Perhaps, this is a reflection of the culture of our nation.

And to prevent paperwork, teachers still cannot find a good way, so teachers sometimes show the tasks through a overhead projector (OHP), although in some classrooms there is no such equipment, and ask learners to complete them in their note-books, and one more way not giving out hard-copy worksheets to students is teachers dictate the questions or tasks, learners have to take some notes. Moreover, about the side meetings, the History teacher Nurlan told:

*In the initial years of the implementing the new program, there were a lot of school meetings, parental meetings (at least four or five times a week), because the teachers and parents had a lot of questions in terms of updated curriculum. Now, teachers observe each other's lessons, attend in-service or online courses for teachers, thus, they try to find resolutions to their questions or issues themselves.*

#### ***4.6. Summary of the chapter***

In conclusion, this chapter introduced the interpretation of the qualitative data made by analyzing the interviews results with the study participants from one mainstream school. The findings shows the schoolteachers' beliefs and practices of updated school curriculum. According to my participants' statements, it was obvious that the program with updated content always encourages them to be innovative and adapt students to the modern world, if they can overcome some difficulties, such as spending much time for searching suitable learning resources, for planning the short-term lessons and the ability to work properly with learning or lesson objectives. In addition, one surprising fact that was discovered, more experienced teachers are more struggling to adapt to changes in the curriculum compared to young or beginning teachers.

The findings of this study are going to be discussed in the following chapter by being correlated with the reviewed literature on this topic.



## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

### ***5.1. Introduction***

The aim of the chapter is to present the correlation of the reviewed literature with the findings of the study and to discuss them within research questions. The chapter includes three main sections: i) teachers' beliefs and practices of updated curriculum in general; ii) the benefits of the new curriculum; iii) the challenges that face teachers during the implementation. And the summary of the chapter is provided.

### ***5.2. Teachers' beliefs and practices of the new curriculum***

In general, most of the participants have a positive attitude towards curriculum with the updated content. After all, the new program is focused on the needs and interests of students. For example, some students are creative, while others are close to science. Therefore, the students of secondary schools after 9<sup>th</sup> grade are divided into separate classes according to specialized subjects in the country. As Aktan (2018) noted in his work, the program should meet the needs of not only students, but also schools and society. Accordingly, the teachers reported dramatic changes in their practices. Previously, they assigned the tasks that are in the course books, but now they think about what is the purpose of the task? How useful it will be for the students, and they also began to wonder if they can adapt the task or activity depending on the level of the students. This description of teaching practices corresponds to the description given by McKnight (2018). As he described, it is crucial for teachers to think about how to convey the material for learners rather than giving a list of assignments to be completed.

When the updated curriculum was presented, one of the participants in my study was a beginning teacher with two years of teaching experience. As she was just getting used to school culture, she had to implement a new curriculum and adapt her lessons. Although she

was a young teacher, she was not frustrated, moved forward and strived to be innovative. According to Shamatov (2005), young teachers do not always receive sufficient support from experienced teachers. Similarly, my young participant completed the qualification course and mastered the content of the new program faster than more experienced colleagues. Subsequently, my research suggests that experienced teachers, even though they are well-educated and skilled, but they tend to adapt to new changes slowly. This is consistent with Stockwell's (cited by Rahman et.al., 2018) statement that the acceptance of curriculum change depends on the individual characteristics of the teacher. This claim is also supported by Nsibande (2002), who said that one of the factors that influences the perception of changes in the curriculum relies on the ability or passion of the teacher.

It should be also noted that some teachers feel as they must achieve all of the learning objectives outlined in the curriculum. They are likely to have a sense of guilt if they do not cover required content of the curriculum. That is why, they try to find the learning tasks that fit the learning objectives and present them to their students. In other words, they strive to find the ways to eliminate their guilt. This situation is called by Hargreaves (1995) as the *teachers' guilt trap* and *guilt trip*. Since, teachers have to develop more interesting materials and approaches on their own.

### ***5.3. The benefits of the new curriculum***

In the past, teachers of the secondary schools are sent to in-service teacher training centers once in three years. But currently, the preparation of teachers for the implementation of the new program in our country has intensified. For this, the Ministry of Education and Science prepared a special schedule and organized the training courses for all teaching staff in the country. The socio-economic situation in the country is changing, and the need for specialties is changing due to the rapid development of modern technology. Teaching should meet the requirements of the curriculum and curriculum is created based on requirements of

the market. (MoES, 2016). Similarly, the government of China has also updated the content of teacher professional development courses at the same year as Kazakhstan (OECD, 2016). The scholar Handler (2010) viewed professional development as a positive factor for successful implementation of curriculum change. Surprisingly, his view has also reflected in my research. According to the study participants, the teacher training courses had a great impact on gaining more experience and skills in teaching field.

What is more, in terms of methodology teachers began to pay more attention to teaching strategies during the implementation of the new curriculum. The reason for that is the use of effective methods stimulated the desire of students to learn and increase their active participation. As the biology teacher highlighted that different interaction patterns like group work or pair work and active learning has increased the interest of shy and inactive students in the lessons. According to Altynelken (2010), the methodology should be focused on the actions of students, not teachers. What is interesting, the content of the thematic curriculum in Uganda that Altynelken (2010) mentioned in his article is similar to the program with updated content of Kazakhstan. This means, the program of both countries is also known as inter-disciplinary curriculum, which is focused on integrated teaching. In other words, students combine their knowledge of other subjects with another ones and perceive the material better. Additionally, both programs refer to life-long learners who can better adapt to the world of work and become more democratic. Learner-centred approach makes traditional methods turn into communicative way of teaching, which helps to develop students' soft skills.

#### ***5.4. The challenges that face teachers during the implementation***

It is true that any change in education will initially cast doubt on most teachers. After all, people are not always ready for change. Usually, they ask different questions: what is wrong with the program we are using, why do we need to change the way we are teaching

or why is it necessary to implement new topics, new resources in the program and so on. This kind of situation was encountered in my research as well. One of my participants was initially reluctant to accept the new program. Having introduced with the content of the new curriculum, she was wondering whether she had not taught properly for 26 years, what was the reason to change the teaching materials, the assessment system. Her ideas were contrasted to what Benjamin (1939) said: "it was no longer possible to catch fish with the bare hands" (p.42). By saying that, he implies that it is necessary improve the necessary life skills of children by making changes in the curriculum. Furthermore, as Shamshidenova and et al. (2014) presents the purpose of a standard curriculum in their study as the following: to reach the learning outcomes means to achieve the learning objectives and to prepare learning materials according to the child's abilities and age. However, some of the study participants mentioned how they sometimes struggle in finding appropriate tasks to cover the learning objectives. They spend too much time on searching the materials on the websites or different course books. Accordingly, they look for ways to deal with their difficulties like consulting with colleagues, working collaboratively on creating assignments, planning the lessons. The one of the reasons for having this problem for teachers is the discrepancy between the learning objectives and the suggested learning resources in the curriculum. The fact that teachers sometimes get stuck in this was agreed by the researcher Ostovar-Namaghi (2017), he claims that this can happen due to a lack of agreement between policy makers and teachers, which makes it difficult to implement any changes. There is no doubt that teachers are practitioners who bring changes to the classroom, so program makers may not realize that such difficulties will arise. Therefore, the best solution for this might be only the collaborative work of the team.

The next challenge concerns mostly core subject teachers, as students in the class are not divided into subgroups, but they are educated as a whole class. For example, in geography,

history, math and science. No matter how well they are resourced or how well teachers are educated, they find it difficult to use child-centered learning. Because there are so many children in the class, it is difficult for the teacher to monitor and observe each child, and not all children have the same capabilities. The authors (Westbrook et al., 2013) also proved this type of difficulties that teachers have during the practice of implementation. They claimed that 'teachers were trying to implement more student-centered practices and often failing, where conditions made it impossible to succeed' (p.38).

### ***5.5. Summary***

The key findings of the study are presented in this chapter. Namely, the teachers' practices of new curriculum, as well as the ways how they benefited from the updated curriculum, and the factors that impede the implementation. In addition, this chapter discussed the main findings by correlating the reviewed literature within the research questions.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

### ***6.1. Introduction***

This chapter provides a summary of the study on teachers' beliefs and practices about the implementation of updated curriculum in one of the mainstream schools in West Kazakhstan. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore secondary school teachers' beliefs and practices of implementing the new curriculum based on their teaching experiences. There are three sections in this chapter. The first section illustrates the general results relying on the research questions, while the second one presents the research implications and recommendations. The final section proposes limitations of the study and accordingly, gives suggestions for the future research.

### ***6.2. Revisiting research questions***

#### **6.2.1. What do teachers view about implementation of updated curriculum?**

Generally speaking, the results of the interview show that the majority of teachers are positive about the updated program, because they have been using the good sides of the new curriculum to their benefit over the past five years, especially they find the learning resources and teaching methods provided in the program very useful in their practice. In addition, teachers are not limited with the subjects they teach, but also they integrate the topics of the lesson with the topics of other subjects. In this way, they expand the horizons and develop students' and their own thinking. It should be noted that since the introduction of the updated program, teachers have been sent in-service training courses massively by the school administration. In result, it was a great professional achievement for a teacher. However, it was difficult to immediately switch to an updated program for experienced teachers, who have been working with one program for several years. Namely, they were struggling in searching learning materials by surfing the internet websites or using several textbooks to

make a lesson plan, as they got used to stick on one course-book the whole academic year. In addition, the assessment system has changed, and creating the assessment criteria in accordance with the lesson objectives seemed like a big job for them.

#### ***6.2.2. How do they implement the updated curriculum?***

According to findings, each teacher implements the updated program based on what they have learned and understood during the in-service training courses. At the same time, they see the benefits of working together. Collaboration achieves the intended goals, for example, by creating effective lesson plans, sharing experiences with each other, observing and analyzing each other's lessons, giving feedback, thus they guide each other to implement the new curriculum. In addition, there is no denying that effective teachers know the ways of how their students can be successful, they carefully organize materials, activities and adapt the curriculum according to the students' needs.

However, experienced teachers consult with young professionals on innovations as well, because young teachers are more passionate to acquire new things. For instance, the most difficult aspect within the framework of the updated program for them was to identify the assignments that are suitable to cover the learning objectives. However, teachers, who are at their pre-retirement age simply teach learners by using their own methods, which they have been experiencing for a long time, and they are not very interested in the new program.

#### ***6.2.3. What are the factors that affect teachers to implement the updated curriculum?***

According to the results of the current study, teachers benefit from updated curriculum in two ways, as the content of the program has an influence on teachers as well as students. For example, active learning is a great way to<sup>3</sup> increase students' active participation in the classroom. Teachers, on the other hand, would not have been able to implement the updated program at all without professional development, and also the positive impact of Lesson Study project was highlighted. Moreover, the concept 'reflection'

was first recognized within the framework of updated program and teachers could effectively reflect on their activities.

However, some difficulties in the program were also mentioned that hinder to implement the program: a lot of time was spent to find the necessary materials for the lesson, especially when searching them from different sources, it is difficult to choose the appropriate tasks, so it takes at least three to four hours to make per lesson plan. Sometimes the resources found do not correspond to the objectives of the lesson, and the links to the resources provided in the medium-term plan of the updated curriculum are not opened. Additionally, teachers' workload was increased with the updated program, too much paperwork, as a result they spend most of their time in front of the computer. In terms of using active learning methods in the lesson successfully is hard for science teachers especially, because of big size classes. It is difficult to divide the class into groups or ask students to do some mingling activities. The classroom becomes very noisy and this does not allow to focus on learning or teaching activities.

### ***6.3. Research implications and recommendations***

The study was directed to understand the beliefs and views of school teachers on changes in education system in the country, to see how effectively they are implemented. In this regard, the reformers will be informed about the experiences of teacher-practitioners. Accordingly, the research provides some recommendations and some implications for stakeholders.

*The resources provided in the medium-term plan should be reviewed and updated.*

Teachers would save time if they had available resources on each topic and had access to them. In addition, learning objectives and resources should be presented in a consistent manner. This is because even if teachers use the ready materials from



the plan, they may not cover or meet the learning objectives. In addition, teachers would not spend much time on creating one lesson plan if they were given a specific number of learning objectives in the plan. As the most teachers mentioned that there are so many learning goals are given to achieve, and they sometimes confuse which ones to include in the short-term lesson plan.

*Reduce paperwork.*

According to the teachers, at every lesson they prepare handouts with assignments and give them out to each child to complete during the lesson, so a teacher uses approximately 30-40 sheets of papers for each lesson. What sometimes upsets teachers, not all students collect and keep their handouts in the folders, but some of them just throw away. In addition, it is obligatory for all teachers to print out the lesson plans for each lesson, although they are kept in a personal computer or a laptop. It would be a good solution to this problem if the teaching materials based on the updated program were collected in one handbook and distributed to students. As a result, teachers may use these books every academic year.

*Make the number of students in each class the same.*

After all, science teachers informed that they could not effectively use active learning methods in their lessons because of big size classes. Teachers will be able to successfully use innovative methods if the number of children in each class is equal, or if learners are divided into two subgroups.

*Introducing the content of the updated program to the future teachers in higher education.*

One of my participants said that she was a new specialist when the updated program was introduced, noting that the knowledge she gained at the university did not correspond to the practices at school. Therefore, I guess there is a need for teachers

of universities and schools to work collaboratively to form an intellectual nation and human capital, which is an integral part of building a competent society.

*Patience and support for pre-retirement teachers.*

It is highly suggested to support elder colleagues in creating lesson plans or introducing innovative teaching approaches, because they get used to the teaching style from Soviet Union times. Therefore, they find hard to adapt to new style of teaching, like shifting from teacher-centered to learner-centered.

*The content of the program should be systematic.*

The participants' suggestions on what to expect from the curriculum reform in future: most of them wished the program to be consistent and systematic. As they reported that some unit topics are not related to each other in the medium-term plan, making it difficult for students to move from one unit to another.

I hope that the results of this study will provide a good perspective on the experiences and beliefs of school teachers in implementing the updated program.

#### **6.4. Research limitations**

Each study has its own limitations, so I cannot say that the results of this current study show that all school teachers in western part of Kazakhstan have the same practices and beliefs about the new program. This is because, only one mainstream school and five participants are involved in the study.

In addition, the study looked at the practices, perspectives, and beliefs of only school teachers in the implementation of the program with updated content, but this issue can be studied extensively, as there are other stakeholders, such as school administration, policy makers and also it would be important to know the views of university educators about the school program as they prepare future school teachers.

Furthermore, as mentioned before, the findings of this study were limited to five participants, and only two of them were science teachers and three - language teachers. Therefore, I believe, the greater the number of participants in the future studies, the more accurate conclusions would be drawn.

To sum up, it is noticeable that the future of each individual is formed from the foundation of the school. Therefore, any education reform is first introduced at secondary schools, and modern teachers have to accept those changes, reflect on them and give feedback from the classroom practitioner's perspective.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Support letter from NUGSE



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«Назарбаев Университеті» Дербес білім беру ұйымы  
Жоғары білім беру мектебі  
010000, Қазақстан Республикасы, Нұр-Сұлтан қаласы  
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Телефон: +7 (7172) 70 66 28  
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The autonomous organization of education «Nazarbayev University»  
Graduate School of Education  
Republic of Kazakhstan, 010000, Nur-Sultan city  
53, Kabanbay Batyr ave.,  
Tel.: +7 (7172) 70 66 28  
e-mail: gse@nu.edu.kz

**«14» 12 2020**

**№ 19-36/361**

**«№49 Жалпы орта білім беретін  
мектеп» коммуналдық мемлекеттік  
мекемесінің директоры**

**Н.О. Алпысбаева**

**Құрметті Нұржан Орынқұлұлы!**

Біз осы хат арқылы Сізге және Сіздің мекемеңізге жалғасып келе жатқан өзара ынтымақтастық үшін алғысымызды білдіреміз. Сонымен қатар, Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары білім беру мектебі Master of Science in Educational Leadership бағдарламасының студенті Альбина Каленова ағымдағы жылдың желтоқсан айында сіз басқарып отырған мекемеден зерттеуге қажетті ақпарат жинауға рұқсатыңызды беруді сұраймын. Зерттеу тақырыбы «Батыс Қазақстан облысындағы жалпы мемлекеттік мектеп мұғалімдерінің жаңартылған оқу бағдарламасын енгізу туралы сенімдері мен тәжірибелері». Зерттеу жұмысы Жоғары Білім Беру Мектебінің Ғылыми этика комитетінің тексерісінен өтіп, зерттеу құралдары мен сұрақтары қолданылуы құпталған. Зерттеуге қажетті қатысушылар жайлы ақпарат қосымшада тіркелген.

**Құрметпен,**

**Декан**

**А. Сагинтаева**

Орынд: А.Сиргебаева.

Тел: +7 (7172) 70 93 11, Email: [Aidana.sirgebayeva@nu.edu.kz](mailto:Aidana.sirgebayeva@nu.edu.kz)

**Подпись:**

**АВТОНОМНАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ "НАЗАРБАЕВ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ"**

**САГИНТАЕВА АИДА КЫСТАУБАЕВНА**

**Декан ВШО**

Дата подписания: 14.12.2020 16:59:40

## Appendix B

### *Invitation Letter*

#### **Volunteers Needed for Research Study on the School Curriculum!**

1. Are you a schoolteacher?
2. Is your teaching experience more than 3 years?
3. Have you experienced the updated curriculum?



#### **If, YES**

Then, you are welcome to join my research as a **participant** of the study. My name is Albina Kalenova. I am a master student at Nazarbayev University; I am kindly requesting your participation in my study that I am conducting titled “*Schoolteachers’ beliefs and practices in implementing the updated curriculum*”.

The study involves only 2-3 semi-structured **interviews**. Participation is completely **voluntary** and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The study is completely **anonymous**; therefore, it does not require you to provide your name or any other identifying information. By participating you may have a chance to expand your knowledge about the research topic, as well as you may contribute to your professional development through the analysis of research experience.

If you would like to participate in the study, please get in touch with me.

My contact information: [albina.kalenova@nu.edu.kz](mailto:albina.kalenova@nu.edu.kz)

My phone number: 87071889195

Please, let me know about your wish to participate by **November 20, 2020**

Kind regards,

Albina

*Шақыру қағазы*

Мектептегі Оқу Бағдарламасын зерттеу үшін **Еріктілер**  
қажет!

1. Сіз мектеп мұғалімісіз бе?
2. Сіздің педагогикалық жұмыс тәжірибеңіз 3 жылдан асады ма?
3. Сіз жаңартылған оқу бағдарламасымен таныссыз ба?



Егер, **ИӘ** десеңіз

Менің зерттеу жұмысыма **қатысушы** ретінде қосылуға шақырамыз. Менің атым Альбина Каленова. Мен Назарбаев Университетінің магистрантымын; Мен сізден «жаңартылған оқу бағдарламасын іске асырудағы мектеп мұғалімдерінің сенімдері мен тәжірибелері» атты зерттеу жұмысыма қатысуыңызды сұраймын.

Зерттеу тек 2-3 жартылай құрылымдалған **сұхбаттан** тұрады. Қатысу **ерікті** және сіз кез келген уақытта бас тартуыңызға болады. Зерттеу толығымен **жасырын**, сондықтан сіздің атыңызды немесе басқа да сәйкестендіретін ақпаратты беруіңізді талап етпейді. Қатысу арқылы сіз зерттеу тақырыбы бойынша біліміңізді кеңейтуге, сондай-ақ ғылыми тәжірибені талдау арқылы кәсіби өсуіңізге үлес қоса аласыз.

Егер сіз зерттеуге қатысқыңыз келсе, менімен байланысыңыз.

Менің байланыс ақпаратым: [albina.kalenova@nu.edu.kz](mailto:albina.kalenova@nu.edu.kz)

Менің телефоным: 87071889195

Өтінемін, 2020 жылдың 20 қарашасына дейін қатысуға тілегіңіз туралы хабарласаңыз

Ізгі ниетпен,

Альбина

## **Appendix C**

### **Interview questions:**

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. When have you been introduced the updated curriculum?
3. And when have you started to implement the updated program in your own teaching practice?
4. What were your teaching practices (experience) before the implementation of new curriculum?
5. How do you think the current school program, which you are using, is different from the previous one?
6. Could you tell me about your first experience of using the upgraded curriculum?
7. What aspects of the updated curriculum can you find useful in your teaching practice?
8. Have you ever faced any challenges in implementing the updated curriculum? If yes, what difficulties? How did you overcome them?
9. Have you attended any pedagogical trainings or workshops according to the updated curriculum?
10. How does the updated curriculum affect your beliefs and practices? What factors support you to implement the program effectively? And what factors affect you negatively in using the updated curriculum?
11. Do you discuss the content of the updated curriculum with your colleagues? Do you plan the short-term lesson plans collaboratively? How does it help you?
12. What are the roles of school management in implementing the new curriculum?
13. What do you think about the objectives of new school curriculum reform in our country?
14. What do you expect from the updated curriculum reform?

**Жеке сұхбат сұрақтары:**

- Сіздің мұғалімдік жұмыс өтіліңіз?
- Жаңартылған оқу бағдарламасымен ең алғаш қашан таныстыңыз?
- Сіз қашан жаңартылған бағдарламаны өзіңіздің педагогикалық тәжірибеңізге енгізе бастадыңыз?
- Жаңа оқу жоспарын енгізуге дейінгі оқыту тәжірибеңізді сипаттаңыз.
- Сіз қолданып жүрген қазіргі мектеп бағдарламасы бұрынғыдан несімен ерекшеленеді деп ойлайсыз?
- Жаңартылған оқу бағдарламасын пайдаланудағы алғашқы тәжірибеңіз туралы айта аласыз ба?
- Жаңартылған оқу бағдарламасының қандай аспектілерін өз тәжірибеңізде пайдалы деп таба аласыз?
- Жаңартылған оқу бағдарламасын жүзеге асыруда сізде қиындықтар болды ма? Егер болса, қандай қиындықтар? Оларды қалай жеңе алдыңыз?
- Сіз жаңартылған оқу бағдарламасы бойынша қандай да бір педагогикалық тренингтерге немесе семинарларға қатыстыңыз ба?
- Жаңартылған оқу бағдарламасы сіздің сеніміңіз бен тәжірибеңізге қалай әсер етеді? Бағдарламаны тиімді жүзеге асыруға сізді қандай факторлар қолдайды? Жаңартылған оқу бағдарламасын пайдалануда сізге қандай факторлар кері әсер етеді?
- Жаңартылған оқу бағдарламасының мазмұнын әріптестеріңізбен талқылайсыз ба? Қысқа мерзімді сабақ жоспарларын бірлесіп жоспарлайсыз ба? Бұл сізге қалай көмектеседі?
- Жаңа оқу бағдарламасын жүзеге асыруда мектеп әкімшілігінің рөлі қандай?
- Біздің елдегі жаңа мектеп бағдарламасын реформалаудың міндеттері туралы не айтасыз?
- Оқу бағдарламасының жаңартылған реформасынан не күтесіз?

## Appendix D

### Informed Consent Form

*Schoolteachers' beliefs and practices of implementing the updated educating program: A  
Qualitative Case Study in one mainstream school of West Kazakhstan*

#### DESCRIPTION:

Dear Colleague!

You are kindly invited to participate in a case study that aims at exploring the beliefs and practices of teachers in the implementation of the updated curriculum. The purpose of the study is to study the implementation of the updated curriculum, based on the teaching experience. The results of the study can be used to make policy-makers hear the voices of mainstream schoolteachers about the practices of upgraded program. Accordingly, there will be opportunities to support them. Data for the research will be collected voluntarily through semi-structured interviews with schoolteachers.

**TIME INVOLVEMENT:** In November-December 2020, 2-3 online or face-to-face semi-structured interviews, each interview lasts about 50-60 minutes.

#### RISKS AND BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH:

**Possible risks:** As the research is going to be conducted with teachers from the same school, there is a risk that the identity of the participant may be revealed by other school members. Therefore, the researcher creates conditions so as not to harm the personal life and work of the participant. For example, only the researcher knows the information shared by the participant, and this information is stored on the researcher's personal computer with a password. Pseudonyms or coded numbers are used instead of the real names of the participants.

**Benefits:** Participants can expand their knowledge about the research topic, as well as they may contribute to their professional development through the analysis of research experience. In addition, exploration of schoolteachers' practices in the implementation of the updated curriculum can help policymakers, school administrators, or in-service professional development institutions support various stakeholders in terms of teaching and learning. However, the voices of researchers and politicians are now dominant, and the voices of teachers, who play an important role in school outcomes, are still overlooked in policymaking (Hanushek, 2011).

#### RIGHTS OF THE PARTICIPANT:

Dear Participant,

If you are interested in participating in the research, you will be asked to inform the researcher to send more information about the research procedure. We would also like to inform you that you may refuse to participate in the research at any time or you have also rights to withdraw any information provided by you. You can also suggest a convenient time and place where you would like to be interviewed.

You are free to choose any of three languages, which is most suitable for you. In addition, you may not to answer any questions during the interview that you feel uncomfortable.

It is also necessary to inform you that the results of this research may be presented or published for academic or professional purposes.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

If you have any questions or complaints regarding the process, risks, and benefits of your research, you can contact the investigator or supervisor through the following contacts:

Researcher, Albina Zhumabaevna Kalenova - 8 707 188 91 95;

Academic Supervisor, Professor of the Graduate School of Education of Nazarbayev University - Duishon Shamatov, [duishonkul.shamatov @ nu.edu.kz](mailto:duishonkul.shamatov@nu.edu.kz)

**PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION:**

If you are not satisfied with the research results, have questions or complaints, you can contact Nazarbayev Research Institute of Higher Education by e-mail:

[gse\\_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz](mailto:gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz)

If you agree to participate in the study, sign the form provided.

- I have read the consent form carefully;
- I was provided with detailed information about the purpose of the research and its procedures;
- I fully understand that the collected and confidential information is available only to the researcher;
- I understand that I can refuse to participate in the study at any time without giving reasons;
- I consciously accept the above information and agree to participate in this research.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to keep an audio recording of the interview

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**ЗЕРТТЕУ ЖҰМЫСЫ КЕЛІСІМІНІҢ АҚПАРАТТЫҚ ФОРМАСЫ**

*Батыс Қазақстандағы бір жалпы білім беретін мектеп мұғалімдерінің жаңартылған білім беру бағдарламасын іске асырудағы сенімдері мен тәжірибелерін анықтайтын кейс-стади зерттеу жұмысы*

**СИПАТТАМА:**

Құрметті Әріптес!

Сізден жаңартылған білім беру бағдарламасын іске асырудағы сенімдері мен тәжірибелерін анықтауға бағытталған зерттеу жұмысына өз еркіңізбен қатысуыңыз сұралады. Зерттеудің мақсаты – жалпы білім беретін мектеп мұғалімдерінің сабақ беру тәжірибесіне сүйене отырып, жаңартылған оқу жоспарын іске асыру бағыттарын зерттеу. Зерттеу жұмысының нәтижелері арқылы мұғалімдердің дауысын бағдарлама жасақтау өкілдеріне жеткізу, егер қажет болса саясаткерлер тарапынан мектеп мұғалімдеріне қолдау көрсету. Зерттеу жұмысына мәліметтер мектеп мұғалімдері арқылы ерікті түрде сұхбаттар немесе іс-қағаздар арқылы жиналады.

**ӨТКІЗІЛЕТІН УАҚЫТЫ:** 2020 жылдың Қараша-Желтоқсан айларында өткізілетін онлайн немесе бетпе-бет жартылай құрылымды 2-3 сұхбат, әр сұхбат шамамен 50-60 минутқа созылады.

**ЗЕРТТЕУ ЖҰМЫСЫНА ҚАТЫСУДЫҢ ҚАУІПТЕРІ МЕН  
АРТЫҚШЫЛЫҚТАРЫ:**

**Қауіптер:** Зерттеу бір мектептің мұғалімдерімен жүргізілетін болғандықтан, қатысушыны мектептің басқа мүшелері біліп қалуы мүмкін. Сондықтан зерттеуші қатысушының жеке өмірі мен жұмысына зиян келтірмеу үшін жағдай жасайды. Мысалы, қатысушы бөлісетін ақпаратты зерттеуші ғана біледі және бұл ақпарат зерттеушінің жеке компьютерінде парольмен сақталады. Қатысушылардың нақты аттарының орнына бүркеншік аттар немесе кодталған сандар қолданылады. Қатысушылар өздерін жайсыз сезінетін кейбір сұхбат сұрақтарына жауап бермеуге немесе жауаптың таспаға жазылуы қауіпті деп ойласа, бас тартуға ерікті. Алайда барлық жазбалар мен қатысушының шынайы есімдері тек зерттеушіге ғана мәлім болады.

**Артықшылықтар:** Қатысушылар зерттеуге қатысу арқылы тақырып бойынша өз білімдерін арттыра алады және зерттеу тәжірибесін талдау арқылы кәсіби дамуына да ықпалы бар. Сонымен қатар, мектеп мұғалімдерінің жаңартылған бағдарламаға деген сенімдерін анықтау саясаткерлерге, мектеп әкімшілігі немесе біліктілікті арттыру мекемелері сияқты әр түрлі мүдделі тараптарға оқыту мен оқу үдерісі тұрғысынан қолдау көрсетуіне көмек бола алады. Дегенмен, қазіргі уақытта зерттеушілер мен саясаткерлердің дауыстары басым болып келеді, ал мектеп нәтижесі үшін маңызды рөл атқаратын мұғалімдердің дауысы саясатты құруда көп ескерілмей жатады. (Hanushek, 2011)



**ҚАТЫСУШЫ ҚҰҚЫҚТАРЫ:**

Егер де Сіз ұсынылған келісім формасымен танысып, зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға қызығушылық танытсаңыз, Сізден зерттеу жұмысының үдерісі туралы толығырақ мәлімет жіберу үшін зерттеушіге хабарлауыңыз сұралады. Сонымен қатар, өз қалауыңыз бойынша кез келген уақытта зерттеу жұмысына қатысудан бас тартуға болатынын немесе берген мәліметіңізді кері қайтаруға толықтай құқығыңыз бар екенін хабарлаймыз. Сіз сондай-ақ сұхбат алғыңыз келетін ыңғайлы уақыт пен орынды ұсына аласыз.

Сіз өзіңізге ыңғайлы үш тілдің кез келгенін таңдауға құқығыңыз бар. Сонымен қатар, сұхбат барысында сіз өзіңізді жайсыз сезінетін сұрақтарға жауап бермеуіңізге де болады.

Сондай-ақ, бұл зерттеу жұмысының нәтижелері академиялық немесе кәсіби мақсаттарда баспаға ұсынылуы немесе шығарылуы мүмкін екенін білгеніңіз жөн.

**БАЙЛАНЫС АҚПАРАТЫ:**

**Сұрақтарыңыз:** Егер жүргізіліп отырған зерттеу жұмысының процесі, қаупі мен артықшылықтары туралы сұрағыңыз немесе шағымыңыз болса, келесі байланыс құралдары арқылы зерттеушімен немесе ғылыми жетекшімен хабарласуыңызға болады.

Зерттеуші, Қаленова Альбина Жұмабайқызы – 8 707 188 91 95;

Ғылыми жетекші, қауымдастырылған профессор, *Назарбаев Университетінің*

*Жоғары Білім Беру Мектебі*, - Дүйшөн Шаматов, [duishonkul.shamatov@nu.edu.kz](mailto:duishonkul.shamatov@nu.edu.kz)

**ДЕРБЕС БАЙЛАНЫС АҚПАРАТТАРЫ:** Егер берілген зерттеу жұмысының жүргізілуімен қанағаттанбасаңыз немесе сұрақтарыңыз бен шағымдарыңыз болса, Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары Білім беру мектебінің Зерттеу көрсетілген байланыс құралдары электрондық пошта арқылы хабарласуыңызға болады: [gse\\_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz](mailto:gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz)

Зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға келісіміңізді берсеңіз, берілген формаға қол қоюыңызды сұраймыз.

- Мен берілген формамен мұқият таныстым;
- Маған зерттеу жұмысының мақсаты мен оның үдерісі жайында толық ақпарат берілді;
- Жинақталған ақпарат пен құпия мәліметтерге тек зерттеушінің өзіне қолжетімді екенін толық түсінемін;
- Мен кез келген уақытта ешқандай түсініктемесіз зерттеу жұмысына қатысудан бас тартуыма болатынын түсінемін;
- Мен жоғарыда аталып өткен ақпаратты саналы түрде қабылдап, осы зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға өз келісімімді беремін.

Қолы: \_\_\_\_\_

Күні: \_\_\_\_\_

Мен сұхбаттың жазбаша мәтінін алу мақсатында аудио жазбасының жүргізілуіне  
келісемін

Қолы: \_\_\_\_\_ Күні: \_\_\_\_\_

Зерттеушілердің қолы: \_\_\_\_\_ Күні: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Форма информированного согласия**

*Исследование кейс-стади определяющее убеждения и практики учителей в реализации обновленной образовательной программы в одной общеобразовательной школе Западного Казахстана*

#### **ОПИСАНИЕ:**

Уважаемый учитель!

Приглашаем Вас принять участие по желанию в тематическом исследовании, целью которого является изучение убеждений и опыта учителей в реализации обновленной учебной программы. Цель исследования - изучить реализацию обновленной учебной программы, основанной на опыте обучения учителей общеобразовательных школ. Результаты исследования могут быть использованы для того, чтобы разработчики школьных программ услышали голоса учителей о методах усовершенствованной программы. Соответственно, есть вероятность поддержать учителей средних школ. Данные для исследования собираются школьными учителями добровольно с помощью полу структурированных интервью или бумажной работы.

**ВРЕМЯ УЧАСТИЯ:** 2-3 онлайн или интервью лицом к лицу в ноябре-декабре 2020 года, продолжительность каждого интервью примерно 50-60 минут.

#### **РИСКИ И ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВА УЧАСТИЯ В ИССЛЕДОВАНИИ:**

**Возможные риски:** Поскольку исследование будет проводиться с учителями одной школы, существует риск того, что участник исследования может быть известен другим членам школы. Поэтому исследователь создает условия, чтобы не навредить личной жизни и работе участника. Например, только исследователь знает информацию, которой поделился участник, и эта информация хранится на персональном компьютере исследователя с паролем. Вместо настоящих имен участников используются псевдонимы или закодированные номера.

**Преимущества:** Участники могут расширить свои знания по теме исследования, а также внести свой вклад в свое профессиональное развитие посредством анализа исследовательского опыта. Кроме того, определение доверия школьных учителей к обновленной учебной программе может помочь политикам, школьным администраторам или учреждениям профессионального развития без отрыва от производства поддержать различные заинтересованные стороны в плане преподавания и обучения. Однако голоса исследователей и политиков сейчас преобладают, а голоса учителей, которые играют важную роль в школьных результатах, часто игнорируются при разработке политики (Hanushek, 2011).

#### **ПРАВА УЧАСТНИКА:**

Если вы заинтересованы в участии в исследовании, вам будет предложено сообщить исследователю, чтобы он отправил дополнительную информацию о процедуре

исследования. Мы также хотели бы сообщить вам, что вы можете отказаться от участия в исследовании в любое время или вы также имеете право отозвать любую предоставленную вами информацию. Вы так же сами можете предложить удобное время и место, где вы хотели бы пройти собеседование.

Вы можете выбрать любой из трех языков, который вам больше всего подходит. Кроме того, вы можете не отвечать во время собеседования на какие-либо вопросы, которые вы желаете отвечать.

А также стоит Вам сообщить что результаты этого исследования могут быть представлены или опубликованы в академических или профессиональных целях.

### **КОНТАКТЫ:**

Если у вас есть какие-либо вопросы или жалобы относительно процесса, рисков и преимуществ вашего исследования, вы можете связаться с исследователем или руководителем с помощью следующих средств связи.

Научный сотрудник, Каленова Альбина Жумабаевна - 8 707 188 91 95;

Научный руководитель, профессор Высшей школы образования Назарбаев Университета - Дуйшон Шаматов, .duishonkul.shamatov @ nu.edu.kz

### **ЛИЧНАЯ КОНТАКТНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ:**

Если вы не удовлетворены результатами исследования, у вас есть вопросы или жалобы, вы можете связаться с Назарбаев научно-исследовательским институтом высшего образования по электронной почте: gse\_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz

Если вы согласны участвовать в исследовании, подпишите предоставленную форму.

- Я внимательно прочитал форму;
- Мне была предоставлена подробная информация о цели исследования и его процессе;
- Я полностью понимаю, что собранная и конфиденциальная информация доступна только исследователю;
- Я понимаю, что могу отказаться от участия в исследовании в любое время без объяснения причин;
- Я сознательно принимаю вышеуказанную информацию и соглашаюсь участвовать в этом исследовании.

Подпись участника: \_\_\_\_\_ Дата: \_\_\_\_\_

Я согласен вести аудиозапись интервью

Подпись участника: \_\_\_\_\_ Дата: \_\_\_\_\_

Подпись исследователя: \_\_\_\_\_ Дата: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample of transcripts**

**Interview transcript**

**Date:** 24.12.2020,

**Time:** 17:30

**Location:** Online

**Interviewee:** Language Teacher

**Interviewer:** Albina K

	Interview transcripts	Codes
1	<p><b>Albina K:</b> <i>When have you started to implement the updated program in your own teaching practice? What was your first reaction to that?</i></p> <p><b>Interviewee:</b> I started to implement the upgraded program at the same year when I was first introduced. It was in 2017. It was a big change in my teaching practice. I was not ready for that. Because, you know, when your teaching experience is 26 years and someone tells you to change something in teaching, it seems impossible to you. I've been teaching since 1991, and I got used to what I did throughout my teaching practices.</p>	<p><b>CODE 1:</b> the prime reaction to change</p>
2	<p><b>Albina K:</b> <i>What were your teaching practices (experience) before the implementation of new curriculum?</i></p> <p><b>Interviewee:</b> Before new curriculum, we strictly used textbooks that we had in the library, and we did not even think about other learning resources that we could use it in the lesson and give the children additional information. According to the textbook, as you know, students mostly did written tasks, for example each student worked on your own, there were no pair works or group works, they did not discuss anything as a whole class, they only completed grammar exercises, and they asked to learn topical words by heart. But, we didn't practice those topical words much, I mean in speaking and writing, that's why they forgot them quickly, also we, teachers didn't ask the definitions of words, just translations were enough for us.</p>	<p><b>CODE 2:</b> using only textbooks</p> <p><b>CODE 3:</b> Grammar-translation method</p>
3	<p><b>Albina K:</b> <i>How do you think the current school program, which you are using, is different from the previous one?</i></p> <p><b>Interviewee:</b> Oh, there is a big difference between two programs. Previous program asked teachers to use traditional methods of teaching, which is a teacher-centered lesson. Current program requires active participation of learners in studying. In addition, one big difference is current school program identifies learners weaknesses and the ways to improve it.</p>	<p><b>CODE 4:</b> Current program vs previous program</p>
4	<p><b>Albina K:</b> <i>Could you tell me more about your first experience of using the upgraded curriculum?</i></p>	

	<p><b>Interviewee:</b> As I said, my first experience was awful. I didn't understand how to teach according to this program. I got lost in planning the lesson when you are given too many learning and lesson objectives to cover in one lesson, to assess my students based on criteria, even I didn't know how to use learning resources which are given in the curriculum (middle-term course plans).</p>	<p><b>CODE 5:</b> challenges in lesson planning</p>
5	<p><b>Albina K:</b> <i>What aspects of the updated curriculum can you find useful in your teaching practice?</i></p> <p><b>Interviewee:</b> One aspect that I find useful is this program is based on real life. That is, students can share their opinions according to the topic from own experiences, background. Another thing that I am happy – 4 skills are practiced equally. For example, having worked with previous program, we asked learners to do grammar exercises or reading the text and learn new words. But, now we decide, for example, we make learners practice 2 skills (speaking, listening) in one lesson and in another lesson we have to take other 2 skills on the same topic. One more important thing, which is useful for teachers, we can differentiate tasks according to our students' needs.</p>	<p><b>CODE 6:</b> Real life + students' learning</p> <p><b>CODE 7:</b> 4 skills are practiced</p> <p><b>CODE 8:</b> Differentiated instruction</p>
6	<p><b>Albina K:</b> <i>Have you ever faced any challenges in implementing the updated curriculum? If yes, what difficulties? How did you overcome them?</i></p> <p><b>Interviewee:</b> Yes, we faced many difficulties, especially lesson planning was challenging for us, as I mentioned. There are too many learning objectives in course plans (middle-term), we have to reveal the lesson objectives from those learning objectives, then create assessment criteria according to lesson objectives, also we should find tasks and resources, which are appropriate not only on our topics, but also these tasks should cover the lesson objectives.</p> <p>However, we tried to overcome these difficulties. One way that helped us - Collaboration. Language teachers of the same grades discussed together the topics of units and identified the lesson objectives. Searching for suitable resources, creating tasks. We did everything together, by consulting with each other we come to one decision.</p> <p>What is more, school administration organized trainings, workshops to support teachers, on working with updated curriculum effectively.</p>	<p><b>CODE 9:</b> covering the lesson objectives</p> <p><b>CODE 10:</b> solutions for overcoming difficulties</p>

### List of codes

- CODE 1: the prime reaction to change
- CODE 2: using only textbooks

- CODE 3: grammar-translation method
- CODE 4: current program vs previous program
- CODE 5: challenges in lesson planning
- CODE 6: real life + students' learning
- CODE 7: 4 skills are practiced
- CODE 8: differentiated instruction
- CODE 9: covering the lesson objectives
- CODE 10: solutions for overcoming difficulties

### **Themes / categories**

#### **Updated program (UP)**

##### **Differences between UP and previous one**

- CODE 2: using only textbooks
- CODE 3: grammar-translation method
- CODE 4: current program vs previous program

##### **First experience of using UP**

- CODE 1: the prime reaction to change
- CODE 5: challenges in lesson planning

##### **Useful aspects of UP**

- CODE 6: real life + students' learning
- CODE 7: 4 skills are practiced
- CODE 8: differentiated instruction

##### **Challenges and solutions**

- CODE 9: covering the lesson objectives
- CODE 10: solutions for overcoming difficulties



**Interview transcripts (cont'd)**

4. Have you attended any pedagogical trainings or workshops according to the updated curriculum? *Oh, yes. As mentioned before, there were many seminars in the school, and I was sent to in-service training centers.*
5. How does the updated curriculum affect your beliefs and practices? What factors support you to implement the program effectively? And what factors affect you negatively in using the updated curriculum? *My co-teachers encourage me to implement the program effectively, every time I find something new for myself at each lesson planning. As I am a language teacher, this program is not just a program for language subjects, it is an integrated program. That's why I learn by myself some scientific areas with the help of this program. However, there some negative factors that influence on implementing the program. They are too many assessments, summative, formative, after each unit, after each lesson, after each term. Sometimes I find my students stressed and pressured.*
6. Do you discuss the content of the updated curriculum with your colleagues? Do you plan the short-term lesson plans collaboratively? How does it help you? *Sure, we share our opinions on different topics according to the subject, on tasks, on objectives. We support each other. Some young teachers are very helpful sometimes, they have better understanding of new things, and they are more creative.*
7. What are the roles of school management in implementing the new curriculum? *School management always support teachers in terms of implementing new program, sometimes they conduct surveys to identify the teachers' weaknesses in implementing the program to provide some help.*

8. What do you think about the objectives of new school curriculum reform in our country? *To prepare young generation to be educated, to be competitive in international level. The formation of functional literacy of the child.*
9. What do you expect from the updated curriculum reform? *In future, I expect this program will make some amendments to focus on national values, traditions, culture and beliefs. However, I am sure that with this program, we are entering the world civilization.*