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ABSTRACT

This paper describes some of the historical background for current practices in local curriculum development, the major participants and their roles in local curriculum development, some of the processes involved, and the major conditions necessary for successful local development. Using a broad literature base of both published and unpublished sources, the paper suggests that teachers, as user-developers, are the most important participants in the process of local curriculum development, though the leadership of consultants and principals also is crucial. A configuration of factors that can be grouped under the labels of commitment, time, and support is necessary for sound and productive processes of local curriculum development. A 67-item bibliography is appended. (Author)

RASSLING WITH THE BEAR: THE ONCE AND FUTURE CHARACTER OF LOCAL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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Let me begin with a story from the past. In December, 1941, much of the world was at war. Hitler had invaded Poland, and the Luftwaffe and RAF were fighting for control of the skies over England. (For those who read or watched Herman Wouk's Winds of War, this was about the time that Natalie Jastrow and Byron Henry were married.) One of the many issues in that war was whether Europe - and perhaps the world - would be ruled by fascist regimes, as were Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy, and - to some degree - Stalin's Russia, or whether it would not.

E. B. White, then a journalist, essayist, frequent contributor to the New Yorker magazine, and columnist for Harper's, later to become the author of children's classics Charlotte's Web, The Trumpet of the Swan, and Stuart Little, had to go to the doctor on a December Tuesday, to get relief from a cold. While waiting to see the doctor, White bought a copy of Anne Morrow Lindbergh's book The Wave of the Future and read it "sitting in the truck." That book, now more a curious artifact than anything else, was written by the wife of Charles Lindbergh, more famous for his solo flight across the Atlantic than for his later work in the "America First" organization, a group that supported Hitler by trying to keep the United States out of the war in Europe. Both Lindberghs

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apparently became a bit overwhelmed by the enormity of war and somewhat confused about the realities of fascism as practiced by Hitler and his allies.

According to White, Ann Lindbergh seemed to feel that the "dream of the future," an ultimate answer to poverty, unemployment, and depression, was to be fulfilled through the forces of fascism, as then displayed in Germany, Italy, and Russia. White's judgment of the book, after reading it twice, was that he "couldn't make out what it is she believes in" and that he "did not think it a clear book or a good one." He went on to add, "...I think she wants a good world, as I do, but that she has retreated into the pure realm of thought, leaving the rest of us to rassle with the bear." (White, 1966, p. 178, emphasis mine).

I have always admired the work of Andy White. His words form the disciplined images of poetry, while his vision is that of a salt-water farmer in Maine. The picture that I have of him in my mind (since I have never seen him) is that of a somewhat cantankerous old gent in a thick flannel shirt covering the top of his "long john" underwear, wearing a battered and dirty felt hat, scattering thunderous truths among his quiet comments on the regular events of life in a New England town. There is nothing pretentious or esoteric about the writing of E.B. White, no retreats into the pure realm of thought. He rassles the bear of reality with the rest of us, sometimes successfully, sometimes not so, but always trying to add to his understanding of life by building images and vocabulary for dealing with the actors and events that appear there daily. I think it would be safe to say that White distrusted panaceas and schemes for living, preferring instead to view life as a process that

could be enriched by carefu? thought and efforts to understand, rather than to predict and control by forcing conformity to abstract theories.

I like especially White's image of "rassling with the bear" as it applies to my own work of trying to teach about the process of curriculum development and of trying to work with school districts as they do it. Rassling with a bear would present quite a problem, I think. Bears have sharp teeth and knife-like claws, either of which could produce mortal wounds. They are powerful creatures that could send you reeling with a blow from a paw or hug the wind from you. They are heavy animals, capable of pinning you with their weight or offering great resistance with their inertia. But they also can be startlingly swift, changing positions in an instant. They are unpredictable. And finally, they are problematic because the particulars of bear-rassling are largely unknown. You have to do it before you understand.

Those of you who work regularly with the curriculum development process in your local districts probably can appreciate readily my applying White's image to the realities of local curriculum development. It became meaningful to me over the course of the past several years, as I worked with school districts ranging in size from a modestly-sized rural community, to rapidly-growing suburbs with populations streaking toward 100,000, to large urban districts. All were encouraged to curriculum development by the impetus of a state-mandated testing program. All went beyond a minimal focus on state-mandated objectives to more general efforts at curriculum development, driven by a variety of forces, but all attributable in some way, I think, to the press toward "tighter coupling" of the components of the educational system in local districts

occasioned by accountability, minimum competency testing, technological change, budget pressures, and legal tests, among others. All used some form of committee to develop curriculum, an arrangement that has existed for decades, and one that has been mentioned often in curriculum literature but seldom studied. All had some person in charge of the development process, with the standard dilemma of responsibility for the task with little authority to accomplish it.

The pattern seemed typical. But as I searched my curriculum books and journals for help with the problems facing my colleagues in the school districts, there seemed to be little information about the real world of local curriculum development as accomplished by a committee of teachers and a local consultant. There were plenty of diagrams and abstractions and rationalizations and idealized pictures, but these seemed to exist largely in the "pure realm of thought."

Occasionally, there were pieces that shed light on the character of local curriculum development. And the more I looked, the more the information began to form into patterns. My search for understanding came to organize itself about two questions:

1. What are the commonly recurring characteristics of local curriculum development?
2. Why do they occur as they do?

Those questions, along with a third, provide the focus for this lecture. The third question is:

3. What are some of the problems and prospects for the near future in local curriculum development?

Before proceeding, it is important to note some caveats. The questions

that guided my survey of the literature and my own research and experience were attempts to understand better the processes of local curriculum development. This lecture reflects that. The lecture has no solutions, no procedures displayed as clear diagrams. At best it reports some ideas that may prove useful in making decisions or anticipating problems. Many of my understandings are incomplete and some may be wrong. If the explanations you hear sound like common sense, they probably are successful. If they don't make sense, there will be a time to set me straight in the discussion after the lecture.

Historical Perspective: The One Time Character of Local Development

Historical prespective is helpful in understanding the once and future character of local curriculum development. To quote Ralph Tyler, "The locus of responsibility for curriculum development has changed considerably in the last eighty years " (Tyler, 1981). In the early 1900's, state education agencies prepared lists of subjects to be taught in elementary schools or delegated that responsibility to the cities or counties within the state. Those lists of subjects, in sequence, were considered to be the curriculum.

Between 1910 and 1920, the effects of the child-study movement and studies in the psychology of school subjects became manifest in some new textbook series featuring, for example, a sight-word (as opposed to single-letter) approach to reading. Policy discussions also were evident, as exemplified by the Seven Cardinal Principles developed by the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education. But there was little change in local curriculum development procedures, except as new content infiltrated classrooms through the use of new textbooks (Caswell, 1978).

The early 1920's, however, saw two early examples of large scale local curriculum development. Denver and St. Louis both had citywide projects to modify the elementary curriculum to accommodate more closely the abilities and interests of school children. These projects were initiated by administrators with great interest in curriculum development and accomplished by committees of teachers (Kliebard, 1979a). Then, as now, such local development activities required substantial and continuing amounts of psychological and financial support to develop materials and the abilities to use them. And, when the men who initiated these projects left for other jobs, the effects of their efforts faded (Cuban, 1979).

The depression of the 1930's brought new pressures for curriculum reform as both children and their parents were bewildered by rapid economic and social change. Many adolescents who would have skipped high school in favor of work now stayed, increasing the school population dramatically with students who needed something other than a college preparatory curriculum or a highly selective vocational one (Kliebard, 1979b).

In response to these pressures, cities and states worked on new programs. Virginia and Kansas even tried statewide curriculum development projects that built on the earlier Denver and St. Louis models. Since these earlier projects had found that teachers who had helped develop materials were able to use them as planned, while others were not, both Kansas and Virginia utilized committees of teachers as curriculum developers on a wide scale. Again, however, the support required by these projects was too great for the available resources, and eventually the projects ended.

One of the most famous curriculum reform efforts - the Eight Year

Study - also occurred during the 1930's (Saylor, 1982). Unlike the St. Louis and Denver, Virginia and Kansas projects, the Eight Year Study relied more on expert consultants than on large committees of teachers to develop curriculum. The experience of that project contributed to the recurrent finding that most teachers failed to use the plans drawn either by experts or by representative committees, and that summer workshops and other meetings designed to demonstrate the new methods and materials helped only some. Thus it seemed that, by the late 1930's, the realization that teachers who helped to develop materials used them while nondevelopers didn't was known to many educators, but apparently was not widely recorded.

Entry into World War II diverted attention from curriculum development, losing such knowledge as had accumulated about the process of local curriculum development along the way.

While the post-war and cold war years were filled with rhetoric from critics, little happened to impact the insular curriculum and the textbook-dominated classroom until the launch of Sputnik and the subsequent years of federally subsidized curriculum development, dominated by scholars from the disciplines and produced in the Research-Development-Diffusion-Adoption mold. Local development seemed the antithesis of the press of the times; centralization was the direction of movement (Atkin, 1981).

Centralization, along with bureaucratization and a concurrent diversification have marked the patterns of curriculum control in the last two decades. All of these forces have been bolstered by social events. Federal and state court actions and federal and state legislation have provided new sources of mandates for the school curriculum and removed some policy

power from local districts " (Short, 1982a). More recently, unions and other teacher organizations with collective bargaining power have impacted local curriculum development through contract negotiations that set rules for participating in curriculum policy decisions and development. In addition, parents, students, and other groups attempt to influence curriculum development. Curriculum mandates thus come from top down, bottom up, and even inside out. But they all end up in the laps of the local districts, the "LEA's" as the government bureaucracies have labeled them.

The inescapable fact that, no matter what the source of the mandate, the local district is the most important agency of curriculum has been underscored in the past few years both by federal policy decisions and by research evidence. (I should note here that I intended absolutely no relationship between federal policy decisions and research evidence. The words just happended to be written close together). All of us have seen or experienced the thrusts of the Reagan Administration's fiscal and educational policies, so I won't belabor the point except to repeat that the overall effect has been to increase the responsibilities of the local districts.

It is only fair to say, however, that at least in the sense of curriculum development and implementation, that is as it should be. The large-scale studies of federal curriculum projects such as the Rand Studies, the National Science Foundation studies, studies commissioned by the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, and others, have given us enough data to build and compare models of curriculum development and implementation. Let me do that briefly by presenting the models described by Ed Short in the recently published Encyclopedia of Educational Research.

Short (1982b) talks about three models of curriculum development: the scholar-dominated pattern, the milieus expert-dominated pattern, and the balanced-coordinated pattern of participation.

The scholar-dominated pattern is, of course, the pattern that characterized the curriculum projects funded by the federal government in the late 1950's and 1960's. These projects employed a process that included stages of research, development, field testing, revision, dissemination, and adoption. Research and Development centers produced these "products," based on the recommendations of scholars in the disciplines, with lesser input by educators and virtually none by practitioners. The products then were intended to be implemented as designed. They weren't.

The milieus expert-dominated pattern is a bit less well-known in the general curriculum literature than the scholar-dominated pattern. This pattern usually is directed toward some targeted population outside the "mainstream" of the school program: potential dropouts, handicapped, learning disabled, speakers of English as a second language, and so forth. In this pattern, an external agency generates a curriculum that may be adapted, within limits, by local districts. Experts in the social and cultural "milieus" of schooling and the target group dominate this pattern, and hence its name. Though the strategy parallels that of the scholar-dominated pattern to a great extent, there is an intentional flexibility to adapt the curriculum to local circumstances.

The balanced-coordinated pattern, which Short also labels the "site-specific/balanced-coordinated/open adaptation" strategy, is the process used by many local districts which do curriculum development. It is the pattern I think of when I say "local curriculum development." Here

curriculum development is done in the setting where it is to be used, at least in the district, ideally in the building. Teachers who are to use the curriculum actively help to develop it. What Short calls "cooperative interaction among the relevant experts" is used to make curriculum decisions, with a leader keeping the process pointed toward its aims.

Said another way, these variations sometimes are described by the role of teachers in them: teacher-proof, teachers as active implementers, or teachers as user-developers. In any event, evidence, experience, and common sense all indicate that "site-specific" curriculum development - local curriculum development - with teachers serving as user developers is an optimal form of curriculum development and implementation in terms of actual impact in the classroom (Short, forthcoming). And it is that form to which this lecture now turns.

The Present Character of Local Curriculum Development

Recently I heard Economist and social scientist Kenneth Boulding state one of the great truisms of social science, a principle unfortunately too seldom recognized or followed. That truism is this: "If you're clear about the world, you're living under an illusion." Even in what most of us consider the abstract and pristine world of mathematics, Boulding reported, mathematicians have created the charming concept of "fuzzy sets" to denote cases where the elements of one set spill over into others. Certainly ambiguity, illusion, and "fuzzy sets" all exist with respect to curriculum development. In Decker Walker's words: "Anyone who speaks of 'the curriculum' of American schools assumes a unity that does not exist " (Walker, 1979). But with that caution, it is possible to sketch some of

the features of the character of local curriculum development. These sketches are only that, not full portraits.

In sketching those features, I'm going to recognize that the concept "curriculum development" incorporates several distinct functions, including curriculum policy making (establishing limits, criteria, guidelines) and sometimes generic curriculum development (such as the production of state guides). But I'm also going to avoid talking about those parts, except as they interact directly with the actors, events, and processes of site-specific development.

Actors and their roles. Once general policy outlines are set, local curriculum development depends on a fairly restricted set of players. I'll deal with four who have had their roles reasonably well documentd - teachers, principals, local consultants or facilitators, and external consultants or facilitators.

The most important are teachers, who serve as the user-developers. As far as I can tell, it is virtually impossible to find anything written by researchers or practitioners in recent years that does not recognize the centrality of teachers to successful local curriculum development (e.g., Connelly & Ben-Peretz, 1980; Connelly & Elbaz, 1980; Hood & Blackwell, 1980). The rationales for involving teachers directly in curriculum development are several, though they may not always be transparent. The perhaps fatalistic, but nonetheless real reason frequently given is that teachers are the final arbiters of curriculum anyway. (Doyle & Ponder, 1977). Their decisions about materials, about which content to emphasize, and about instructional method provide the final form of the curriculum as delivered to kids. Another reason often given

for involving teachers directly is that their involvement in curriculum development increases their sense of ownership and understanding of the curriculum, and therefore increases the probability that real change in the intended direction will occur (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Bulach, 1978; Kelly, 1977). There is, in other words, a greater chance for congruence between the written, taught, and tested curriculum (English, 1980). Finally, there is the rationale that the returns from teacher participation in curriculum development could be substantial, both in enhanced knowledge, ability, and understanding on the part of the teacher, and in the discovery and enactment of curriculum potential, transformation and development of new materials, and devising new alternatives for policy development and implementation. This last makes teachers intentional and full partners in the complete process of curriculum development, from policy decisions to adaptation and revision. It is also consistent with the positive and hopeful image of teachers as practitioners and decision-makers that has been so pervasive in research on teacher decision-making in the last several years (Porter, 1979; McCutcheon, 1980; Schwille, et al, 1980). I should note that while I fully support that idea, we have a long way to go to get there from here.

Whatever the rationale for involving teachers directly in local curriculum development, once involved, their work and its effectiveness is affected by a number of factors. Many of these can be grouped under the conceptual labels of commitment, time and support. Clearly they are interrelated, and the functions can become very complex. Let me offer just a few swipes to illustrate something of the character of teacher involvement in curriculum development.

To begin, for teachers to become involved in curriculum development at a level beyond the classroom requires some role adjustment. Teachers quite naturally are oriented more toward the classroom, where they have more direct responsibility and control, than toward district policy, where they have little (Ben-Peretz, 1980; Young, 1977, 1979). Placing teachers in a policy-making position produces some interesting effects, if I may aggregate several pieces of research without synthesizing it. Elementary teachers, especially, seem receptive (or should I say sensitive?) to pressures to change the content of the curriculum, whether the pressure for change comes from parents, other teachers, the building principal, textbooks, or test results (Porter, 1979; Sabar, 1980: Ross, 1980; Schwille, 1980). Secondary teachers, while certainly aware of community concerns (such as recent flaps over values education), and receptive to some negotiation over content elements in the curriculum, are far less willing to make large changes in their courses (Mason, forthcoming), at times choosing deliberately to fly in the face of expressed community and administrative wishes (which they can do with relative safety in a loosely-coupled system) (Glatthorn, 1981).

Teachers are not particularly "rational" in their curriculum development procedures, either. At least not in the sense that development proceeds "rationally" according to the Tylerian model or some variant of it. Instead, teachers as curriculum planners go through an iterative process, focusing first on content decisions, then on activities, giving relatively little thought to broad goals, sequencing, or evaluation (Clark & Yinger, 1977; Sharelson & Stern, 1981; Yinger, 1979). They are usually willing to allow the content of standardized tests or a list

of objectives as stated in the teachers' edition of the textbook influence heavily their content decisions. And according to my experience, one of the first decisions teachers like to make when they plan curriculum for their district is what the format of the curriculum guide is to be.

These are not idle or misdirected decisions. To the contrary, they are very practical ones. I believe they reflect at least an intuitive, if not conscious understanding of the cost/benefit ratio as it applies to schooling (Doyle & Ponder, 1977; Ponder, 1982). Wishing to economize, teachers as curriculum developers try to maximize the benefit they receive (knowledge and understanding of what they are to teach and how they are to teach it, along with a usable format for the curriculum guide) while minimizing their investment (effort and time expended) and risk (the potentially negative reaction of their students and other teachers not involved in the development activity).

Curriculum development that results in real change requires a considerable personal investment for teachers, and here is where the variables under the categories of commitment, time and support operate. Again let me illustrate briefly. One of the variables apparently most related to real curriculum change is that of teacher commitment. Commitment is required to begin the process of curriculum development, and commitment is required to sustain it. Beginnings require that teachers have personal and professional value systems that contain large amounts of pride in their work and a belief that, as individuals, they can contribute significantly to the broader scope of their work. Some of the standard indicators of that kind of value system include the number of professional meetings, conferences, and university courses regularly attended and the

number and kind of professional journals read regularly (Katz, 1981; Loucks & Cox, 1982).

Real change also takes time. It takes time to make decisions and time to codify them into curriculum guides and materials. It takes time to learn to use the materials, time to evaluate them, and time to revise them. And, for the teachers who serve on curriculum development teams, it takes time to talk to others about their decisions and materials. All of this time means increased investment, and increased investment means that the conditions necessary to sustain commitment must be present.

Those conditions result from support. Certainly adequate money and material support needs to be available, although the amounts considered "adequate" vary widely. There must also be sufficient reward and support from colleagues to sustain commitment. Highly negative reaction to a new curriculum can be a mortal blow, while positive opinion from across the district facilitates the subsequent stages of adaptation, evaluation, and revision (Louis, et al, 1981; Crandall, et al, 1982a; 1982b; Corbett, 1982). Interestingly, my own experience and some research evidence indicates that teachers acting as developers also actively develop their own support groups among other teachers serving as developers and among compatible colleagues (Loucks & Cox, 1982). These support groups exist especially within a building, but they also can develop throughout the district.

Commitment begins the process for teachers as developers. Support sustains the commitment, and commitment affects the time devoted to change. As the amount of time invested increases, commitment deepens, as long as support continues. But positive strokes from colleagues are not sufficient

to sustain the commitment. That requires support and aid from the other actors in the local curriculum development process: building principals, local consultants, and external consultants.

Next to the teachers serving as developers, principals are among the most important people in the process of local curriculum development. Some studies have discussed their role as "gatekeepers" of change, controlling access to the school program (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977). Others have discussed their management and leadership styles and the effects of those styles on the school program. My own experience and research confirms forcefully that principals are necessary ingredients in local curriculum development. While they do not often initiate new curriculum, they may take a leading role in its accomplishment. Certainly they can thwart it, and for that reason, districts that are successful at curriculum development are careful to involve principals appropriately, whether that means recruiting them as leaders, getting them to advise and consent, or just keeping them informed and educated.

What kinds of characteristics and behaviors of principals contribute to successful curriculum development? Like teachers, one of the most important of these variables is that of commitment (Bauchner & Loucks, 1982). If principals do not value curriculum development as a productive activity, and if they don't believe in the goals of the particular process, they won't support it. Their responsibility, after all, is running the school, and any activity that demands the attention of their faculty and promises to result in change is potentially disruptive (Rutherford, Hall & Newlove, 1982). So principals must come to believe in curriculum development, and that is why districts that are successful developers spend time

attending to protocol and educating principals. [That statement needs qualifying. School size impacts principal commitment significantly, in that principals of larger schools have trouble even knowing about many of the things that go on in their building, much less being committed to them (Bauchner & Loucks, 1982; Crandall, et al, 1982b).]

Principals who do value planned change demonstrate their commitment in a variety of ways. Foremost among these is internal communication [communication with staff (Bauchner & Loucks, 1982).] They talk with their faculty, send notes to them, and sometimes listen to them. They may even cajole or pressure them. They also plan, schedule, and organize so faculty can have time for development and implementation, they provide resources, provide support, and sometimes they attend planning sessions, training sessions, and meetings (Bauchner & Loucks, 1982). And there are other ways they support curriculum efforts, from handling paperwork to planning for protecting and expanding the new program, to making recommendations to the school board (Royster & Madey, 1980; Ross, 1980; Hord & Goldstein, 1982).

Interestingly, while supporting activities such as these are necessary for successful development and implementation, they often are invisible to the teachers they are intended to benefit. When asked, principals can be quite specific when enumerating the things they do to support teacher/developers. Teachers, however, lump together a broad variety of activities into the general category of "principal support" (Huling, Hall & Hord, 1982).

That is not to say that teachers don't recognize or appreciate support from their principals. In fact, one of the findings from A Study of Dissemination Efforts Supporting School Improvement indicates that the

things teachers perceive that principals do to help "...significantly affects the number of benefits teachers attribute to the program on which they are working" (Crandall, et al, 1982a). So, principal support can increase teacher commitment and the level of perceived benefits.

It also seems sensible to infer that greater levels of internal communication (which indicate greater levels of principal attention) "tighten the coupling" of the system and encourage greater usage of the curriculum (Davis, 1977; Boyan, 1982). As with many things, however, that "zone of tolerance" for the principal's involvement is a matter of degree (Rosario & Lopes, 1982). If principals become too concretely involved with the process of development and implementation (by offering materials directly or by training teachers), they may be seen as pushy, inflexible, and less receptive to input by the teachers, resulting in lowered commitment on the part of the teachers (Bauchner & Loucks, 1982).

Two important actors remain. I'll try to be brief with them. But I don't want to understate their roles, because both are what people who study organizations and systems call linkers, and without linkers there is no change, no real process of local curriculum development. I'll begin with external facilitators or consultant.

External consultants can aid local development that results in real change. In many cases they may be crucial to it. External facilitators provide links between the local districts and new knowledge. Usually this new knowledge relates to the content of the curriculum being developed. But sometimes external facilitators also are expert in the process of development as well, and thus can provide substantial assistance in anticipating problems and generating support.

Some profiles of the activities of external consultants indicate that many do, in fact, spend a large part of their time talking with key administrators to muster district or building level support for the particular development activity or, in some cases, to legitimate a tack the district wanted taken anyway (Crandall & Loucks, 1982). As might be expected from those kinds of activity profiles, external consultants intervene more in earlier stages than later, providing information and technical assistance to help begin the process (Cox & Havelock, 1982). Their impact on teachers is restricted, unless they actually are present for the development activities and work through the processes with the teachers (as is sometimes the case with curriculum development activities done under the auspices of coursework or workshops conducted by university faculty in local districts).

I should also note as punctuation that external facilitators can contribute to significant organizational impact. In districts attempting large scale change, where high levels of technical assistance are needed, that "high assistance presence" can move the "client systems away from loose coupling as a(n organizational) way of life" (Huberman & Miles, 1982).

For the final actor in this section, let me turn briefly but pointedly to the role of the local consultant. Local consultants (or supervisors) serve as planners, organizers, advocates, writers, errand-runners, and in seemingly endless other ways. Someone must provide focus, direction, and leadership for curriculum development, and that often is the consultant's role, to lead without power.

To do those things requires special people, with good "people skills,"

a high tolerance for ambiguity and confusion, yet an underlying sense of organization, calmness, and persistence. If I can project some inferences from a study of consultants and their roles done as part of A Study of Dissemination Efforts Supporting School Improvement (Loucks and Cox, 1982), local consultants who are successful in accomplishing curriculum change share several common characteristics. They are very active professionally, attending around a dozen professional meetings or conferences each year. In that same "average" year, they took between 1-2 college courses and attended about five training events related to their jobs. They also read about four professional journals regularly. Now those characteristics would be expected, to some degree, given the nature of a consultant's job. But that list of characteristics may sound like social butterflies make the best consultants.

That is not the case. Knowledge gained from meetings, coursework, and reading would do no good if it weren't disseminated and used. So successful consultants not only spend time acquiring knowledge, they also spend considerable amounts of time working in schools with teachers and administrators, finding out what they need and providing assistance.

The major roles of local consultants appear to be three: that of "cheerleader," drumming up support for curriculum change among teachers, administrators, and others, including school board members; that of "linker," in the verbiage of those who study organizations, finding and bringing in new knowledge or expert help and introducing new ideas and practices to teachers and administrators; and that of "troubleshooter" providing continuing support and resources and solving problems that arise during the later stages of implementation and revision.

Happily for the many members of ASCD who are consultants or supervisors and who do lead curriculum development activities, research evidence indicates that the efforts exerted as cheerleader, linker, and troubleshooter do pay off, and they pay off in direct change in school practice. They pay off primarily by fostering and maintaining teacher commitment and by nurturing change until it has been translated into procedure.

Processes and Events

Successful local curriculum development occurs as the result of the "interplay" among the "constellation of key actors" -- the teachers, principals, external consultants and local consultants (Crandal, et al, 1982). This interplay produces a set of identifiable processes and events that characterize local development efforts. Let me describe a few. These few are again illustrative, and by no means exhaust the list of processes and events. Nor do they even begin to address the interpretations and analyses of these phenomena that could be made from sociological, psychological, organizational, or anthropological perspectives.

To begin at the beginning, local curriculum change requires an impetus, an impact of new knowledge. That impetus -- a new legislative mandate, pressure from parents, reports of test scores, an article the superintendent or curriculum director read, etc. -- sets policy decisions in motion. Once the decision is made to "go" with the new curriculum, a series of events begins that characterizes districts that value local development. All of these events involve information and its acquisition, circulation, and transformation.

Local districts that are curriculum-oriented are, first of all, active knowledge seekers. They initiate contact with some relevant external source

(usually a person who can serve as a consultant, but sometimes an organization or information service) far more often than some implementation officer from the state education agency, for example, has to contact the LEA. One ratio from the study of dissemination efforts (Cox & Havelock, 1982) indicates that the ratio of initiation by the local district is about 2:1. The local consultants, and sometimes teachers from the local districts are the most frequent representatives of the local district in seeking needed information.

Two modes of contact provide most of the meeting grounds between a local district representative and the information sources. A conference, especially an awareness conference, is the most common meeting ground. The telephone is the second. Here consultants may call a consultant known to have expertise in the area, or they may use their "informal colleague networks" developed over time at "job-alike" sessions, conferences, or through other professional contacts (Loucks & Cox, 1982; Hall & Loucks, 1981). These networks are, in my view, an extremely important, but much understudied part of the information flow within and between districts and other levels of educational governance and policy-making.

Formal as well as informal networks contribute to the next major process that marks development-oriented districts, the process of information circulation. In my own study of consultants and curriculum directors (Ponder & Hinely, in process), I have been impressed by the frequent occurrence together of districts in which curriculum development is a priority and formalized mechanisms for the exchange of information. This mechanism often forms a part of Monday morning staff meetings, a part set aside for sharing information gleaned from reading or attending conferences. Informa-

tion flow appears to be important both for generating and sustaining change in loosely coupled systems. More information sustained over longer periods of time emphasizes the importance of curriculum development efforts and helps them happen.

Information flow certainly is important to the complex interplay between the actors in local curriculum development. The principal emerges from research data as a key link in curriculum change within districts. He or she plays a large role in within-building changes in instructional practice resulting from curriculum development processes, and the leadership and management styles of principals appear as positive predictors of organizational change. Schools that have principals perceived as "in charge provessional(s) -- One(s) who know what's happening and (are) directing it" do not run loosely-coupled schools (Bauchner & Loucks, 1982). Their commitment to curriculum development is essential for its success, and their influence can serve to spread commitment to other building administrators. But their commitment depends on the information flow surrounding them, an information flow that can give them a stake in the process. As one curriculum director told me in an interview, "I almost 'bathe' the principals in information and positive strokes to get their support."

Commitment and leadership on the principal's part are necessary for success in developing and adapting curriculum. To continue with my theme of information utilization, they are necessary for teachers to accomplish transformation of the information generated in the process of curriculum development. Whether we use the framework of the "Levels of Use" perspective developed at the University of Texas Research and Development Center for Teacher Education (Hall, et al, 1975) or that of the "mutual adaptation"

perspective that appeared in the Rand Studies of Federal Projects, or some other perspective, for change to occur and to continue at the classroom level, teachers have to move from a level of mechanical use of the new materials and procedures to an understanding of them. That takes time and particular interactions. Both their actual written planning processes and their mental planning processes need stimulating by questions, suggestions, comparisons, and the like, until, ideally perhaps, they accomplish more holistic conceptions of the new curriculum, even in metaphor and analogy (Connelly & Ben-Peretz, 1980; Connelly & Elbaz, 1980; Katz, 1981; Elbaz, 1981; Dugan & Anglin, 1982). They must make their own meaning of the new curriculum rather than having it transmitted to them. And they must grow in their "practical knowledge" of the thing -- how it works in practice and the demands it makes -- by the personal tests of planning and teaching, again over time and with appropriate stimulus for thinking about it (Doyle & Ponder, 1977; Elbaz, 1983).

The Future Character of Local Curriculum Development

The actors and processes that I have described as characteristics of the present character of local curriculum development are rosy. The studies and pieces of my own experience on which I drew were loaded toward successful practices and successful people in successful districts and filtered through my own perference for optimism. The picture in truth is neither so clear nor so bright. There are far more school districts, I would guess, whose idea of local curriculum development is, to borrow John Goodlad's words, "fussing around the edges every other Wednesday from 3:30 to 5:00" than there are districts who place a high priority on curriculum development (Goodlad, 1981). And there are Research and Development Centers

around the country that once developed curriculum with federal subsidies. What about them? And what about the state agencies' input into curriculum development? And the federal government's role? Those factors and more muddy the picture of the future character of local curriculum development.

I have no special insights. But in this final section of the lecture, let me address a few features gleaned from the spate of papers commissioned by the Department of Education at the end of the 1970s as recommendations for federal policy regarding curriculum development in the 1980s. Two pieces especially serve as my data base here: Decker Walker's "Approaches to Curriculum Development," published in 1979, and John Goodlad's "Curriculum Development Beyond 1980," published in 1981. I would summarize those two representative pieces this way.

If a major lesson from the externally developed curriculum projects of the 1960s and 70s is that local development is a better alternative, saying it will not make it so. Teachers can't accomplish decent curriculum revision in an after school meeting every other week. They need more time, a "tenth month" Goodlad says, either lumped at the end or spread throughout the year, thus potentially making the school year ten months long and teachers' salaries 11% higher. But school districts are strapped for money. And curriculum development activities are generally unattractive to private venture capital, as Walker says, unless and until the work has demonstrated commercial potential. So there will continue to be a need for money to finance pilot development efforts.

If the money was there, there still would be problems with policy decisions. With the concurrent decrease in the centripetal force of the

federal government and the increase in assertive efforts by parents, teacher organizations, professional associations, state agencies, and others, the pressures for program diversification and local idiosyncrasy may be increased to the point of chaos. The force of the marketplace might override these pressures to ensure that local curricula are stocked with generic materials produced for mass markets. Or the press of accountability and minimum-competency testing may encourage at least a common core of content spread widely across the country.

And if problems with money, time, and policy could be resolved, there still is the problem of expertise. Teachers and other local district personnel are neither highly trained nor highly practiced in curriculum development, and as the process expands from classroom to building to district, problems increase geometrically. Consequently, if teachers are to be expected realistically to develop sound curriculum, current professional development practices need changing dramatically.

There are hopeful signs, I think. As Walker said it, "We are steadily learning how to make educational institutions work and how to control our curricular and instructional policies and actions." Microcomputers, interactive video discs, and computer-delivered curriculum hold considerable promise as means for developing and adapting local curriculum. Public demands for accountability and teacher evaluation may have clashed with cries for fairness from teacher organizations long enough for the intimate relationship between curriculum development and instructional practice to become obvious and inescapable.

But to exert control, to realize the potential of technology, and to integrate teachers and administrators fully into the ongoing processes

of curriculum development, the future character of local curriculum development will have to be marked by effective collaborative relationships. Walker and Goodlad both support that notion, and I agree. Groups and individuals with something to offer should be able to contribute to local development, be they teachers, parents, businesspeople, or university professors. University coursework structures, institutes, "quality circles," externally funded pilot projects, and other structures with potential for collaborative efforts should be explored for their appropriateness for accomplishing local curriculum development. Longstanding models of coordination between generic and site-specific development such as the Developmental Economics Education Program (DEEP) of the Joint Council of Economic Education and the Federation for Unified Science (FUSE) (Walker, 1979) also hold the promise of tested principles and histories.

There are many possible scenarios of the future character of local curriculum development. None is clearly more likely than another at this point. What does seem clear is that we are at a watershed point. The lessons from the recent past and those more distant say strongly that teachers should not be limited to a technocratic role in delivering curriculum. Common sense says they cannot develop curriculum alone, nor should they, from a policy standpoint. Rassling with the bear of curriculum development takes many different folks, all with dirty hands.

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ABSTRACT

Rassling with the Bear: The Once and Future Character of Local Curriculum Development

(Originally presented as a master lecture at the 1983 meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Houston, Texas.)

This paper describes some of the historical background for current practices in local curriculum development, the major participants and their roles in local curriculum development, some of the processes involved, and the major conditions necessary for successful local development. Using a broad literature base of both published and unpublished sources, the paper suggests that teachers, as user-developers, are the most important participants in the process of local curriculum development, though the leadership of consultants and principals also is crucial. A configuration of factors that can be grouped under the labels of commitment, time, and support is necessary for sound and productive processes of local curriculum development.