



BCTF Research Report

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The politics of curriculum making

Understanding the possibilities for and limitations to a “teacher-led” curriculum in British Columbia

This paper aims to deepen our understanding of the opportunities for, as well as challenges to, teacher-led curriculum change. Drawing on interviews with teachers who served on Provincial Curriculum Development Teams, the paper explores how teachers have navigated the curriculum development process in four key moments:

- (1) framing the work
- (2) curricular knowledge
- (3) the question of implementation
- (4) politics and expertise

The findings illustrate that it is impossible to separate what has been produced as the redesigned curriculum from either the complex politics at the heart of curriculum development work, or the conditions that will shape what implementation looks like.

Thank you to the teachers who took the time to share their experiences and perspectives for this project.

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Introduction

Teams of teachers have worked with the Ministry of Education to redesign British Columbia's K–12 curriculum.¹ While teachers had been involved in previous curricular revisions, this was the first time that the curriculum was revised at all grade-levels and all subjects at the same time. It was also the first time that teachers involved in the revisions were encouraged to speak openly about their work throughout the processes, including actively gathering feedback from colleagues before the curriculum was finalized.² This approach is a unique opportunity for teachers to use their professional judgement to shape the direction of what is taught in schools across the province. At the same time, these teams have operated in complex political contexts, tasked with navigating potentially diverse expectations as to curricular approach, form and content. As the curriculum process moves from development to implementation, the insights of Provincial Curriculum Development Team members can deepen our understanding of opportunities for, as well as challenges to, teacher-led curriculum change. This understanding is crucial to strengthen continued advocacy for curriculum change as an ongoing process necessitating adequate time, resources and support.

¹ Teachers were appointed by the British Columbia Teachers' Federations (BCTF), the Federation of Independent School Associations BC (FISA), and the First Nations Schools Association. This research project focused solely on BCTF-appointed teachers.

² In the previous province-wide curricular revision known as the Year 2000, for example, teachers involved in writing the curriculum were required to sign non-disclosure agreements during the development stage.

Background: The development of BC's redesigned curriculum

BCTF members joined curriculum development teams in 2013. However, Ministry documents, as well as correspondence between the Ministry and the BCTF, illustrate that a substantial amount of curriculum development work happened prior to 2013. Understanding this timeline is important to help situate the experiences of curriculum team members that will be discussed in this paper.

In 2010, the Ministry began a “process to transform education in BC” (BC Ministry of Education, 2013b, p. 3). While multiple factors certainly shaped this vision,³ a case study produced by the Global Education Leaders’ Program (GELP) points to the importance of discussions that began at the 2009 International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI), held in Vancouver. One of the presenters was Valerie Hannon, a co-founder of the UK-based Innovation Unit⁴ and a founding member and co-chair of the Global Education Leaders Partnership (GELP).⁵ According to the case study, her presentation “struck a cord with the BC Ministry” and “a series of high level meetings took place which resulted in a radical vision for transforming education in British Columbia” (Global Education Leaders’ Program, n.d., p. 1). Another key influence on the vision to “modernize” the curriculum, according to a 2018 interview with Rod Allen, was John Abbott, the director of the 21st Century Learning Initiative⁶ (Tucker, 2018). In 2011, this vision solidified in BC’s Education Plan as a “more nimble and flexible [education system] that can adapt more quickly to better meet the needs of 21st century learners” (BC Ministry of Education, n.d.-b). Despite sustained critiques that the paradigm of 21st century learning has been strongly influenced by corporate interests and may be in tension with the fundamental values and goals of public education (Ehrcke, 2013; Hyslop, 2012; O’Neill, 2010), it has served as a rallying call for the vision of educational transformation in BC. As stated in the Ministry’s introduction to the revised curriculum, this vision centers on “education for the 21st century,” and “one focus for this transformation is a curriculum that enables and supports increasingly personalized

³ According to a Ministry email cited in a 2012 news article, “There isn’t one moment in time when the research began, or research started with one specific organization—this has been an ongoing process. The ministry is always reviewing new and exemplary practices in B.C. and other jurisdictions across Canada and around the world that support students” (Hyslop, 2012).

⁴ See: <https://www.innovationunit.org/>

⁵ See: <http://gelponline.org/>

⁶ See: <http://www.21learn.org/staff/john-abbott/>

learning, through quality teaching and learning, flexibility and choice, and high standards” (BC Ministry of Education, 2015).

By 2011, work was underway to revise BC’s curriculum. However, this initial curriculum development work happened without BCTF involvement because the BCTF, facing government’s “net zero” bargaining mandate and restrictive legislation, was in Phase 1 job action.⁷ BCTF participation in Ministry committees was suspended, and the BCTF advised members not to volunteer or accept district appointment to Ministry committees.⁸ In a letter from November of that year, Susan Lambert, then the president of the BCTF, requested that the Ministry “extend its work timelines to acknowledge the constraints of job action on teacher involvement in the development of, and in response to, drafts and proposals for new directions in education.”⁹ The Ministry responded that they were “not able to delay the timelines for the completion of this work”¹⁰ and proceeded to form a Curriculum and Assessment Framework Advisory Group to consider curriculum structure, design and delivery as well as assessment and reporting.¹¹ Other work during this time included “research to gather current thinking from around the world about: global trends in curriculum design (and) how students learn and develop generally and in specific discipline areas,” consulting with “provincial educators, academic experts, and subject-area specialists” (BC Ministry of Education, n.d.-c), and working with researchers to develop “draft working definitions of the cross-curricular competencies [now called “core competencies”]” (BC Ministry of Education, 2013a). Consultation included a series of 12 regional working sessions that were organized through the BC School Superintendents’ Association (BC Ministry of Education, 2012). The overall result was “guiding principles for the future development of provincial curriculum” as well as a “curriculum prototype with five design elements” (BC Ministry of Education, 2013b, p. 3). The Ministry summarized this phase of curriculum development in a document entitled “Enabling Innovation: Transforming Curriculum and Assessment” (BC Ministry of Education, 2012).

With the BCTF still in job action, the Ministry’s next step was, in the summer and fall of 2012, to convene “teams of educators and

⁷ The documents presented in this paragraph directly contradict Rod Allen’s claim (in Tucker, 2018) that work on the curriculum progressed with union involvement from 2012–2013.

⁸ BCTF Records: Ellen Ellis, Memo to the Executive Committee, “Education Plan,” December 7, 2011.

⁹ BCTF Records: Letter from Susan Lambert to George Abbott, November 21, 2011.

¹⁰ BCTF Records: Letter from George Abbott to Susan Lambert, December 2, 2011.

¹¹ BCTF Records: Letter from Rod Allen to Susan Lambert, “Curriculum and Assessment Framework Advisory Group”, November 15, 2011.

academics” to “provide advice to the Ministry of Education on the proposed structure of the new provincial curriculum in a number of subject areas” (BC Ministry of Education, 2013b, p. 5). These subject areas were: Arts Education, English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Health, Career and Physical Education. These teams “discussed a conceptualisation for each area of learning and identified goals, rationale, and skills and competencies for the subject” (p. 7). They also “identified potential areas of focus and topics for each grade level” (p. 7). The resulting “draft prototypes had features that were written and interpreted differently from subject to subject” (p. 7). While the Ministry recognized these differences as part of the “unique nature of each area of learning,” the differences were also a “potential barrier for planning cross curricular units and activities” and necessitated “a common approach that applies to all curricula” (p. 7). The Ministry identified this approach as focusing on “what students are expected to know, understand and be able to do.” As will be discussed in detail in this paper, this “know-understand-do” model set the terms for curriculum work going forward.

The next phase of development sought to “broaden the involvement of educators in the field” (BC Ministry of Education, 2013b, p. 13) and, with the BCTF no longer in job action, the Ministry sent a letter to BCTF in February 2013 asking for assistance identifying teachers to revise the K–10¹² curriculum in seven areas of learning: English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Arts Education, Math, Health and Physical Education.¹³ Key considerations included “a balance of diversity, gender, Aboriginal and regional representation” with “both specialist and generalist views on each team.” Team members would be “asked to work with other colleagues in the field to solicit feedback and to share draft material widely.” The Ministry also stated that “ideally, one or more of these team members will be active members of the relevant PSA [Provincial Specialist Association], enabling them to share and solicit advice and feedback from their PSA membership.” The BCTF advertised these positions through local presidents, the PSA Council, the BCTF Professional Issues Advisory Committee and professional development chairs in local unions.¹⁴ BCTF members applied by completing a CV form on the BCTF website and the BCTF provided the

¹² The teams were originally convened for K-10. By November 2014 the Ministry was referring to K-9 teams. This paper uses the divisions of K-9 and 10-12 to reflect the final form of the curricular documents.

¹³ BCTF Records: Letter from Rod Allen to Susan Lambert, “Provincial Curriculum Development,” February 8, 2013.

¹⁴ BCTF Records: Email from Susan Lambert, “BCTF reps to Ministry curriculum development teams,” February 13, 2013.

names of the selected members to the Ministry in March 2013. During this time, the BCTF also appointed four members to the Provincial Standing Committee on Curriculum, a group formed to “provide ongoing dialogue and advice on provincial curriculum.”¹⁵

In November 2014, the Ministry was “gearing up for the next round of curriculum redesign work”¹⁶ including revisions to the K–9 curriculum and forming 10–12 teams. The bulk of this work was scheduled to begin in January 2015, and the Ministry’s revision and development schedule varied by subject area. For example, “due to feedback from educators about potential changes to the K–9 topic sequence,” the Ministry requested that the 10 to 12 Social Studies team meet concurrently with the K–9 team, and that five members from the K–9 team who teach secondary, join the 10–12 team. In Physical and Health Education, by contrast, the Ministry was not beginning K–9 revisions due to “the brief time the draft K–9 curriculum has been posted and the lack of feedback in this area,” instead choosing to focus on 10–12 development. The BCTF recruited members for these postings by circulating the request to current team members, as well as sending out a member-wide posting for the 10–12 curriculum development teams. In 2015, the Ministry also convened the Applied Skills, Design and Technology (ADST, called “Applied Skills” at the time) and Career Education for the first time. Broadly, teams continued to meet through May 2018 and all curriculum is expected to be posted online summer 2018.

¹⁵ BCTF Records: Memo from Susan Lambert to the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee, the Professional Issues Advisory Committee and the Provincial Specialist Association Council, February 28, 2013.

¹⁶ BCTF Records: Letter from Rod Allen to Jim Iker, “Provincial Curriculum Development,” November 13, 2014.

Methodology

This study is part of a five-year research project (2017–2021) that aims to develop a unique, in-depth and contextualized exploration of contemporary curriculum change in BC from the perspective of teachers. Reflecting the values of the BCTF, the project deploys a social justice lens to (1) situate teacher experiences and perspectives within the broader historical and socio-political context; (2) engage knowledge as socially constructed and mobilize knowledge for social change; and (3) explore and disrupt the often implicit ideologies that guide dominant understandings of curriculum change. To engage the perspectives and experiences of BCTF members who served on Provincial Curriculum Development Teams through this lens, this study used the method of semi-structured interviews. Here, interviews are understood as “accounts” of sense-making within particular moments and contexts, rather than “reports” of some internal truth or objective reality (Talmy, 2010). This approach draws attention to complex, multiple and often shifting ways that people make sense of the world, as well as how the researcher is implicated in these understandings through the conversational space of the interview.

Between August and October 2017, Andrée Gacoin, BCTF Senior Researcher, conducted 19 interviews with BCTF members who served on curriculum revision teams. To recruit participants, an email was sent out through BCTF Provincial Curriculum Development Team list-serv.¹⁷ The email described the purpose of the study and invited team members to contact Andrée directly if they were interested in participating in an interview.¹⁸ Andrée provided all participants with an informed consent form prior to the interview. The interviews took approximately 60 minutes each and were conducted either in person or via telephone/electronic platform.¹⁹ The interview covered topics such as experiences navigating the process of curriculum change, understandings of frameworks and assumptions guiding curriculum change, and decisions related to curricular content in a subject area. These topics reflect the three key research questions that guided this project: (1) How do teachers appointed to Provincial Curriculum Development Teams understand a teacher-led process of curriculum change? (2) What are the opportunities for, and challenges to, teacher-led

¹⁷ The list-serv includes BCTF members who have served, or are currently serving, on subject-specific curriculum development teams. As of May 2018, there were 142 people subscribed to the list-serv.

¹⁸ The original research design included a follow-up interview for team members who were still actively meeting, however these have not occurred to date due to time constraints (e.g. conducting, transcribing and analyzing multiple interviews).

¹⁹ Participants choose to use Skype or GoToMeeting.

curriculum change within a collaborative curriculum revision structure?
(3) How do teachers experience and navigate potentially diverse expectations in relation to curricular approach, form and content?

The 19 team members who participated in the interviews represent 10 curriculum development teams: English Language Arts (ELA), Applied Design, Skills and Technology (ADST), Arts Education (Arts), Maths, Science, Français Langue, Core French, Français Langue Première, Social Studies, and Physical and Health Education (PHE). There were no participants from Careers or other core language teams, although one participant from the Core French team also worked with other language teams. While BCTF members participated in the Provincial Curriculum Development Team in a public capacity, there was the potential risk that speaking publicly about participation could impact ongoing relationships with other team members or colleagues. To mitigate this risk, this paper uses pseudonyms for all participants, and any identifying information has been changed or removed.²⁰ BCTF research transcribed all interviews, and participants had the opportunity to review their transcripts. Data was coded for key themes using the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA.

It is outside of the scope of this paper to provide detailed analysis of subject-specific comments. Rather, the themes identified in this paper are facets of what is termed the politics of curriculum making. This begins from the view that curriculum is a contested, relational and situated practice (Chambers, 2012; Kanu, 2012; Pinar, 2015). Curriculum change, in turn, refers to both explicit and implicit shifts within a historical moment as to what is taught (e.g. curricular content) as well as how teaching happens (e.g. increasing reliance on technologies). The discussion that follows explores how teachers have navigated the curriculum development process across four key moments (1) framing the work, (2) curricular knowledge, (3) the question of implementation and (4) the politics of “teacher-led” expertise.

²⁰ With one exception, participants choose their own pseudonyms. Based on initial review of this paper, two decisions were made to improve readability. Firstly, only first names are used when the pseudonym included two names (the full names are in Appendix A). Secondly, one pseudonym, which included a string of letters and numbers, was changed to a common first name.

Navigating a “teacher-led” curriculum in BC

Framing the work

According to several curriculum team members, teachers’ engagement in the curriculum revision teams was framed as being able to “start from nothing” (Bob, Arts K–9),²¹ “de partir un peu de zero” (Matilda, Français Langue Première K–9) and have a “clean slate” (Bruce, PHE K–9 & 10–12) as to what curriculum could look like in BC. In many ways this been a positive experience, described as “by teachers, for teachers” (Jane, Core French), and many team members described in the interviews how teacher perspectives were valued and central to deciding curricular content. However, as discussed in the previous background section, BCTF members joined teams in 2013 after the Ministry had already put substantial work into a curricular framework. The interviews highlighted multiple tensions between the stated focus on teacher-led development and the implicit curricular framework that was already at play.

You (don’t) “start from nothing”

Multiple team members spoke about the difference between the freedom they had in relation to the curricular content and the mandate of a specific curricular framework. For example, Bruce (PHE K–9 & 10–12) described how after one or two initial team meetings, in which the conversations were very broadly focused on “where do you want to go,” the Physical Education and Health team was told “Okay, here’s the framework that we need to try to fit this [content] into.” While some team members, such as Bruce, felt they never really knew “where it came from,” Jane (Core French) said her team was told it was at least partly based on *Transitioning to concept-based curriculum and instruction: How to bring content and process together* by US-based educational consultants H. Lynn Erickson and Lois A. Lanning. In that book the authors present a “concept-based model” of curriculum design: Know-Understand-Do (Erickson & Lanning, 2014). Following our interview, Jane added via email that “the first chapter on curriculum

²¹ Throughout this paper, pseudonyms are followed by the team and grade level (if the team met in two groups).

design appears to have been very influential on the MOE.” Although the Ministry does not site Erickson and Lanning for their model, the language is certainly reflective of the “common approach” the Ministry describes as “what students are expected to know, understand and be able to do” (BC Ministry of Education, 2013b). Broadly, this model of curriculum design “is idea-centered and moves students from factual knowledge to conceptual understanding” (Erickson & Lanning, 2014, p. 7). The model differentiates between “what students must Know factually, Understand conceptually, and be able to Do in processes, strategies, and skills” (p. 11). Team members were told that a know-understand-do model was “in place” (Sam, ELA K–9), a “done deal” (Jane, Core French) and that their work had to “fit within that particular frame” (John, Core French). Ted, who was on the Science 10–12 team, described agreement with the framework as a condition for “accepting this posting” to the team, adding that it “could not be questioned.”

No team member directly mentioned the Ministry documents from early 2013, produced before the teams met, that describe the work leading up to the curricular model (e.g. BC Ministry of Education, 2013a; BC Ministry of Education, 2013b). Instead, asked about where the curricular model may have come from, team members gave multiple potential sources. For instance, Mark (Science 10–12) said that “prior to us using this stuff, there was obviously a . . . some bigger think tank, probably in the Ministry.” Another team member, who had been on a Ministry-convened team in 2012, described how Peter Seixas’ work on historical thinking guided the development of the Big Ideas, even though Seixas’ work is not cited in the Ministry documents. There was also the potential influence of other jurisdictions. Bruce (PHE K–9 & 10–12) described his team getting stuck when they needed to fit the “content” into the “framework,” and how he thought “it was Rod Allen that came in and gave a PowerPoint presentation, and kind of, you know, ‘Here’s- here’s what we’re thinking.’” adding, “but it really wasn’t explained well. I- it- and someone finally said, ‘I think it came from Alberta.’” At the same time, across the interviews, team members described beginning their work by looking at examples from multiple countries, including: New Zealand, Australia, Finland, Belgium, Latvia, England, Singapore, Hong Kong, Sweden, Norway, and the Netherlands. For several team members, the lack of clarity resulted in feeling that there was an unstated agenda within the Ministry, even as Stanley (ADST) commented that the feeling of a “hidden agenda” might have come from the fact that “there wasn’t really a good sense . . . of where [the Ministry] was going with [curriculum].”

Part of this uncertainty seems to have come from the lack of a clear conceptual framework describing the theoretical underpinnings of

the model. Several team members expressed frustration that they were not presented with research evidence related to the curricular model. For example, Bruce (PHE K–9 & 10–12) said “they explained how it’s supposed to work, but they never ex- kind of said, well, where it come from, like ‘There was research that was done.’” Similarly, part of Audrey’s reason for joining the Français Langue 10–12 team was to be part of a “learning environment” for a “research-based” curriculum, which perhaps made her frustration more acute when there was “absolutely no research” on why changes were made. Matilda (Français Langue Première K–9) echoed this frustration and described seeking out research based-evidence with colleagues. Ted (Science 10–12) extended this critique of the need for “research-based” curriculum to the overarching framework of “21st Century Learning,” arguing that the information provided through the Ministry is more “propaganda” than “research.” To date, there is still no conceptual framework publicly available. If, as educational reform expert Michael Fullan (2017) argues, a key element of the success of any educational initiative is “clarity and specificity about what the main concepts behind that initiative actually mean,” the continuing uncertainty around the curricular model can be seen as a key challenge for implementation.

Team members were, overall, not critical of the framework per se. However, they did raise several issues that point to the influential role the framework played in shaping their work. For instance, several team members described extensive conversations within their team around understanding the framework. While this is perhaps a result of the lack of a clear research-based conceptual framework, it also points to how the curriculum development process itself gave team members the time and space to engage in what can be a “paradigm shift for a lot of teachers” (John, Core French). As Bruce (PHE K–9 & 10–12) noted, this is compounded by the fact that that the framework can be hard to explain “because it is someone else’s...framework.” Secondly, as Blake (ADST) said, the framework shaped “how the curriculum was supposed to be written,” including word choices related to curricular competencies. As development proceeded, in some cases team members felt this “framework” was transformed into a restrictive “template” (Mark, Science 10–12). For example, Stanley, who was on the ADST team, expressed his frustration with the web-based form of the curriculum in which everything had to look the same and be formatted in the same way for online access. Likewise, Blake, also on the ADST team, described how he and other members of the team felt that they were forced to “write our curriculum in that framework. We just can’t- w- we’ve tried it, we’ve fought it” but then, ultimately, “we had to re-edit everything.” It is possible that these constraints were more acute for ADST given that the team did not begin meeting until 2015

and was under pressure to complete work as quickly as possible. More broadly, however, they point to how any framework will inevitably set the conditions for what curricular content is included.

Alongside these concerns is the question as to what extent the process of curriculum revisions in BC has actually aligned with a concept-based model of curriculum design, particularly in terms of (a) how a teachable curriculum is developed, (b) implications for assessment, and (c) the explicit assumption that curricular change requires pedagogical change. In terms of what is a teachable curriculum, Erickson and Fanning (2014) firmly position high-level curricular documents (such as the provincial curriculum) as a framework and “not teachable curricula for the classroom” (p. 17). A key part of the model of concept-based curricula is that local school districts, or individual schools, will “develop classroom curricula aligned to conceptual, factual, and skill expectations” laid out with the provincial framework (p. 17). While teachers were instrumental to creating the provincial curricular framework, the development of localized teachable curricula seems to have been completely left out of the Ministry’s process. One explanation for this approach is that, as described by Emma (ELA 10–12), the curricular framework was designed to leave content decisions “up to the field,” depending on “where you’re teaching, who you’re teaching, and your own expertise.” However, as Audrey (Français Langue 10–12) pointed out, this development requires significant time and resources: “it’s not having Pro-Ds one day here, one day there. It’s not having curriculum implementation days, one day here, one day there. It’s having a week... to sit down with colleagues and collaborate.” Without a co-ordinated and province-wide plan for the necessary time and resources for this work, this “teachable curriculum” depends entirely on the leadership within individual districts and/or schools and will result in unequal and inequitable access and opportunities for both teachers and students across the province.

The second key tension between the model and how it has been taken-up is in relation to assessment. Introducing the concept-based curriculum model, Erickson and Fanning argue that “it is clear that the call for evidence of deeper understanding in education today requires changes in traditional assessment practices” (p. 11). As will be discussed more fully later in this paper, curriculum team members were repeatedly told that “assessment” was not a part of their curriculum development work: assessment was “a totally different area that we didn’t really know a lot about” (Blake, ADST). Besides causing frustration for the curricular team members, such as being silenced when they questioned “how are we going to assess this” (Bruce, PHE K–9 & 10–12), the lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment has been

a massive source of tension across the province and has resulted in an increased workload for many teachers (BCTF, 2017).

The tension around assessment and implementation has been exacerbated, in turn, by the third issue: the implicit assumption that concept-based curriculum will necessitate pedagogical change for many teachers. In other words, the “paradigm shift” for teachers is not only about understanding what the concept-based model is. In working with a concept-based curriculum, a teacher is expected to take up “concept-based instruction” (Erickson & Fanning, 2014, p. 59). While many teachers may find this approach meets the needs of their students, any model of curriculum change that is reliant on a particular pedagogical approach is in direct tension with a teacher’s right to professional autonomy.²² This was a second key area that came up in the interviews in relation to how curricular work was framed.

“There needs to be a shift in pedagogy”

Since the curriculum revisions began, the Ministry of Education has been heavily promoting pedagogical approaches which, while not new, were outside of the Ministry’s usual scope of responsibilities. This has led to a conflation between “curriculum change” and “pedagogical change” among teachers, as well as the broader public. While some of the resulting confusion can be linked to substantial change-over between different ministers of education and deputy ministers since 2010, each of whom have had a different approach and understanding of the curriculum change process, the conflation can also be understood as a result of the curricular model. In other words, the distinction between “curriculum” and “pedagogy” is a false one when the curricular model is premised on a pedagogical approach, as discussed in the previous section. This puts the pedagogical demands of the curriculum directly in tension with how the curriculum development work was framed, as well as how the curriculum itself is being promoted.

Emma (ELA 10–12) spoke directly to this tension. Talking about the conversations within her team, she said that “a lot of discussions were about pedagogy. Right? Because, the curriculum, to work well, it- there needs to be a shift in pedagogy, but we can’t mandate pedagogy.” To work with this tension, Emma described her team working carefully on “phrasing” so “that it invites” what she framed as the “better

²² The BCTF defines professional autonomy as a teacher’s right to exercise their judgment and act on it. See: <https://bctf.ca/IssuesInEducation.aspx?id=29583>

pedagogical approaches.” The comment that these are “better” points to an underlying philosophical agreement with the pedagogical approach promoted in and through the redesigned curriculum. This was a philosophy shared by Bob (Arts K–9), who said that “good teachers have been doing this all the time anyway,” as well as John (Core French) who stated that “good teaching is good teaching” in relation to what the curriculum expected from teachers. A discussion of what constitutes “good” teaching is outside of the scope of this paper. What is relevant is how notions of “good” teaching are directly linked to the expectations of the redesigned curriculum. It is possible that teachers were more likely to be involved in the teams because there was an alignment between their own philosophies of education and the curricular framework. It is also possible that in-depth engagement with the framework, through the work of the team, shaped what they saw as “good” teaching. In either case, what is key, is that how these team members spoke about their support of the curriculum was inseparable from how they saw that curriculum fitting with what they understood as “good” pedagogical practice.

Previous BCTF research has highlighted a stark divide between those who support and those who are critical of the direction of curriculum change in the province. Analysis of comments from the *2017 Curriculum Change and Implementation Survey* illustrates that one of the reasons for this divide is how teachers perceive that the curriculum aligns with their own philosophy of education, including their pedagogical practice (BCTF, 2017). Within the interviews, while most teachers were broadly supportive of the direction of curriculum exchange, there were a few exceptions, including Ted, a member of the Science 10 to 12 team. Ted described applying to the team because “I was really terrified of what I was seeing come through with the junior curriculum; and I felt like, you know, if, basically, if I felt that strongly about it, I needed to stand up and say what I had to say; and get involved.” Even after being involved Ted continued to have “grave concerns” about the curriculum, particularly at the senior level where “it needs to be clear to the teacher what [curricula] look like” (e.g. the previous curriculum’s use of Intended Learning Outcomes). It is overly simplistic to dismiss Ted’s concern as too “traditional” or saying that Ted does not want to change. Ted was deeply engaged in the curriculum process, working closely with the model, and is still “resistant” to change. Starting from a view that resistance is inseparable from relations of power (Foucault, 1982), Ted’s resistance can be seen as an active negotiation of what forms of knowledge are privileged within the curriculum, as well as what kind of teacher that curriculum expects Ted to be. Ted’s resistance draws on a view of what teachers think is best to “help their kids,”

just as someone who is supportive of the curriculum, like Emma (ELA 10–12), feels it meets the needs of the “kids in front of you.” In other words, these opposite perspectives on the curriculum are both based on core beliefs about what teaching and learning are. For teachers like Ted, resistance can then be seen to illustrate a fundamental tension between the pedagogical assumptions implicit within the curricular model, and the teacher’s right to exercise their professional judgement. The question must then shift from how “resistant” teachers can “buy-into” the curriculum, to whether the curricular model allows space for the diversity of pedagogical decisions and approaches that make up the richness of teaching and learning in BC.

Rather than critically engage with this question, the mandate of the curriculum teams was “really clear that it was to design curriculum, not pedagogy” (Mark, Science 10–12). This mandate could be seen to align, as Mark said, “with what the BCTF was after as well.” However, and considering the tensions raised above, it is possible that this mandate is precisely what has allowed the conflation of pedagogical and curricular change to go unchallenged. In other words, the mandate potentially shut-down spaces to meaningfully engage with the pedagogical implications of the curricular model. As Bruce (PHE K–9 & 10–12) said, whenever his team brought up “how is it going to be taught,” they were told not to worry about “what it’s going to look like in the classroom.” The key question then becomes: if “successful” implementation of the curricular model requires pedagogical change, what happens to teachers who do not find space for their pedagogical practice and decisions within BC’s redesigned curriculum? This is a question that runs across K–9 and 10–12, and whose answer is further complicated by the mandate to align all grades across the curricular framework.

Following “the same path:” K–9 and 10–12

Within the interviews, it was clear that part of the mandate for the curriculum development work was continuity between K–12, even as the teams met separately in primary and secondary groupings in most cases. For instance, Emma (ELA 10–12) said that as the Ministry wanted “11 to 12 to follow the same path as K–9, we are already had a basis for what it looked like.” Likewise, Ted described being required to sign a document to agree that “I will go with whatever you guys have” when the 10 to 12 Science team was convened. That path was set through the Know-Understand-Do model, as discussed in the previous sections, that provided what Mark (Science 10–12) called the “template” for K–12.

Several factors seem to have contributed to how this “path” played out. For one, even though teams met separately, the K–9 teams included secondary teachers, and the Ministry request for the 10–12 teams asked that there be “some continuity of representation from the K–9 teams.”²³ In general, team members spoke positively about this continuity when it occurred. Mark (Science 10–12), for instance, described how Science 10–12 team members who continued from the K–9 team were able to answer questions about why they had made decisions. This included sharing a “Story of Science,” written during the K–9 development work, that laid out a vision from K to 12. At the same time, some team members expressed concern that there was not more continuity from K–12. For example, Bob (Arts K–9) described raising questions as to what 10 to 12 would be like and being told that was “somebody else’s job.” Eva (Maths K–9) directly critiqued the lack of continuity between the K–9 and 10–12 teams, feeling that it led to a lack of understanding of “why [the K–9 team] did what we did,” particularly as those who applied for the secondary Maths team did so, in Eva’s opinion, because “they didn’t like what was happening with the revision.” Eva felt this led to a “really big disconnect between 9 and 10.”

Another potential factor influencing the extent to which K–9 and 10–12 are aligned is how the Ministry has scheduled curriculum implementation. K to 9 was “mandated” in 2016–17 while the 10–12 teams were still meeting, resulting in a “final” K–9 curriculum operating alongside a “draft” 10–12 curriculum. This has limited the 10–12 teams ability to review K–9 content, in light of decisions made from 10–12. For example, even though ADST was developed by one team for K–12, Stanley said that as work has continued there need to be opportunities to come back and “take a look at [K–9]” again. Furthermore, some team members expressed concern that the “final” K–9 curricula do not reflect what was actually produced in the K–9 teams. Bruce (PHE K–9 & 10–12) for instance described how the K–9 Physical and Health Education team finished their work after one year, at the same time as there was change-over between the Ministry staff responsible for the team and who led the “edits” on draft curricula. Since he served on both teams, Bruce was able to see that the K–9 curriculum that was presented to the 10 to 12 team “isn’t our work.” Bruce, who is a secondary school teacher, described unsuccessfully asking to have a primary colleague added to the team. The 10 to 12 team then “had to rework the K to 9 stuff, and it was really hard to do without those primary people there.”

²³ BCTF records: Letter from Rod Allen to Jim Iker, “Provincial Curriculum Development,” November 13, 2014

There were also changes to how teams were organized as development proceeded. A member of one of the original 2012 Ministry-convened teams explained that those teams were for K–12 and speculated that the split might have been made to make the work more manageable when teams were re-formed with BCTF appointed teachers in 2013. In Science K–9, Carl said that the team’s original mandate was for K–10, which was then narrowed to K–9. While it is not possible to speculate exactly why these changes took place, they point to how curricular change is embedded in broader conversations such as what the graduation program in BC should look like.²⁴

Overall, team members had different opinions as to the appropriateness of how the K–9 and 10–12 work was approached. Some, such as Emma (ELA 10–12) and Carl (Science K–9), felt that building from K to 12 worked well. Others, such as Audrey and Lulu, both on the Français Langue 10–12 team, felt that a backwards design would have been better, critiquing what they both saw as unrealistically difficult content in Grade 9 French Immersion. At the same time, across these opinions, many team members recognized that elementary and secondary teachers often have different perspectives on a curricular area. Joy (ADST) described how, when the Ministry decided to include Kindergarten in the ADST curricular area, elementary school teachers were added to the team to bring “the philosophy of how elementary should be taught.” Gary, a secondary teacher who was on both the K–9 and 10–12 Science teams, spoke about how his primary colleagues have a “beautiful lens to view the K–9 through” specifically because they “weren’t necessarily science specialists.” The 10–12 team, in contrast, included more “content specialists” and Gary felt that this changed the tenor of the work so that the team “didn’t always have that conversation of possibility.” Similarly, even though Carl (Science K–9) was broadly supportive of the development process, he added that he didn’t “know if they new curriculums 10 to 12 make sense” because, in his own teaching at a secondary level, he wants more of a focus on skills: “something real and tangible.” Some team members directly linked these differences to broader educational systems and structures. Sam (ELA K–9), for example, said that “you can’t make elementary schools and high schools look the same because the kids are different, developmentally different.” Bob (Arts K–9), in turn, recognized the pressures that post-secondary requirements put on the 10–12 content, arguing that “10s to 12s and post-secondary should be sitting down at the same time.”

²⁴ See BCTF (2016b) for the BCTF’s recommendations for BC’s graduation program.

Overall, these comments illustrate that the “path” from K to 12 is far from linear or simple. It is a “path” formed through the curricular framework, potentially diverse pedagogical approaches as well as broader educational systems and structures. It is also a path that is inseparable from the curricular content it makes spaces for.

Curricular knowledge

The key question at the heart of any moment of curriculum change is deceptively simple: “what knowledge is of most worth?” (Pinar, 2015, p. 32). While it is outside of the scope of this paper to discuss subject-specific knowledge, this question was central to two key tasks all teams engaged in: incorporating feedback and integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the curricular areas.

“So many different opinions”

In general, team members discussed three different ways that feedback was gathered during the revision process: through the Ministry, through the BCTF (particularly PSAs) and through team members engaging directly with other teachers.

Most team members discussed Ministry-gathered feedback, but from these descriptions the Ministry does not appear to have had a standard process for providing this feedback to the teams. This may have contributed to different opinions as to what extent the feedback provided was clear and transparent. For example, Emma (ELA 10–12) described seeing emails sent directly to Ministry staff, while Blake (ADST) said his team received a 10 to 15-page print-out listing “statements from people.” In several cases, team members expressed uncertainty as to whether feedback had been summarized and/or was fully represented. For instance, one team member described how they themselves submitted feedback from a group of 55 teachers, only to be told by the Ministry that only 10 people had submitted feedback. This was echoed by Bruce (PHE K–9 & 10–12), who described his team being concerned that they “weren’t sure if [feedback] was watered down or if that was, you know, the way it was.” Furthermore, although feedback may have been summarized for multiple reasons, including ease-of-use and confidentiality, the summaries could be perceived as decontextualized. Alex (Social Studies K–9 & 10–12) framed this as a major problem with the process within his team, saying “they’ve never

actually shown me any of the data” related to where feedback came from or how prevalent it was. Similarly, while Emma spoke positively about the feedback process in general, she was critical of the lack of a clear methodology for giving and presenting feedback. This led her to ask: “how do you know when one voice is the lone voice, versus the many? And then, how do you account for silences?”

Team members did have more control over the second two feedback processes, either through BCTF structures or directly through colleagues. Some, such as Emma (ELA 10–12) and Blake (ADST) described giving presentations at Provincial Specialist Association-sponsored events and then soliciting feedback. Interestingly, although the BCTF gathered a large volume of feedback, summarized in a 2016 discussion paper (BCTF, 2016a), only one team member described receiving feedback from the BCTF directly. More common was for team members to approach their colleagues directly, through presentations, staff meetings and other events. Some took on this proactive role because they felt that they had not received enough feedback, or that the feedback did not represent a diversity of potential options. Bruce (PHE K–9 & 10–12), for instance, described how he would “track some teachers down on the street of my town” to get feedback.

Once the feedback was received, team members described carefully paying attention to it, even if the process for doing so varied. Within English Language Arts, Emma (10–12) described how her team would talk about all of the feedback, asking themselves the question “how do we address this concern in the curriculum,” and Sam (ELA K–9) said feedback was “very closely listened to” and the curriculum “did change dramatically from draft to draft.” John (Core French) described how his team “went through every. Single. One. And we sorted it out based on trends.” Mark (Science 10–12) described working until midnight sorting feedback so that the team could “look at themes that were more broad throughout the province.” Gary (Science K–9 & 10–12) said that the process his team used for feedback evolved over the course of the work, moving from soliciting feedback generally to more guided questions such as asking “What do you think about this component? We’ve been thinking this.” Overall, Gary echoed the perspective of many participants when he said: “I hope our colleagues realize that there was some really tough conversations that happened in that space, and those tough conversations were happening for their benefit.” He added: “I think our colleagues did a really admirable job of trying to fight with those questions in a respectable way.”

Several factors influenced the questions that team members struggled with. For one, teachers in BC are a diverse group with multiple and often conflicting perspectives on how curriculum can best meet the needs of children within their classrooms. As seen in Emma's (ELA 10–12) question as to "how do you account for silences," there were concerns as to how "representative" feedback was, particularly given that there are "so many different opinions" (Mark, Science 10–12). As Gary (Science K–9 & 10–12) said, there are "binary polar positions on some things" and a "primary challenge is trying to incorporate all the multiple perspectives."

Secondly, decisions related to feedback had to "fit" within the overall curricular framework (as discussed in the previous section). In ADST, for instance, Blake described how feedback often resonated with concerns that team members themselves: "it was like, yes, these are all valid concerns, and we've voiced these concerns in our meetings. But we can't write our curriculum in that framework. We just can't, we've tried it, we've fought it, and then we had to re-edit everything."

Finally, team members had different thoughts as to why it was difficult to engage more teachers in the feedback process. One explanation, given by John (Core French), was that teachers did not understand the revision processes. Specifically, because previous revisions had been "top-down," John felt that teachers "have an idea that perhaps this was developed in a vacuum." In direct contrast to this perspective, Ted (Science 10–12) perceived that teachers are "so sick of giving their feedback," and that "it is so heart-breaking to them, to be presented with a draft and then told, 'Oh yeah, we're changing it.'" Still another potential explanation as to why it was challenging to get feedback, was workload and lack of time. Some teachers may not have found time for email feedback, which led Stanley (ADST) to wonder whether "a vocal forum" would have worked better, even as he recognized that that in itself would be "time for people." For Bob (Arts K–9), the lack of time, alongside being unused to providing feedback on draft documents, contributed to the team only really receiving feedback "when these documents hit the classroom."

Overall, if curriculum implementation is understood as an ongoing process, it is when "documents hit the classroom" that feedback becomes even more important. While it will always be impossible to reconcile the diverse perspectives of teachers across BC (and this diversity is part of the richness of teaching and learning in the

province), it is crucial that there are ongoing mechanisms for feedback that are clear, inclusive and transparent. This may include, as Stanley (ADST) said, opportunities to “realistically look at what’s been written. And how it’s being used...And how to have the ability to actually make some changes.” One of the key areas for ongoing feedback and engagement is the infusion of Aboriginal ways of knowing.

The struggle “not to fall into the trap of tokenism”

While much of the curriculum is not “new,” the focus on integrating Aboriginal knowledge and perspectives in a “meaningful and authentic manner” is (BC Ministry of Education, n.d.-a). As stated by the Ministry, this is a shift from curriculum “about Aboriginal people” to engaging with “how Aboriginal *perspectives and understandings* help us learn about the world and how they have contributed to a stronger society” (p. 1, emphasis original). The BCTF strongly supports the infusion of Aboriginal content and perspectives throughout the K–12 curriculum,²⁵ and curriculum team members broadly reflected this support. However, team members also raised substantial concerns with how they were able to engage in this work, and how “not to fall into the trap of tokenism” (Jane, Core French).

The first issue relates to the degree to which team members felt supported to themselves meaningfully engage with Aboriginal perspectives and understandings as they developed the curriculum. Team members who felt supported mentioned a number of ways that this support occurred, such as having one or more representatives from First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) on the team (e.g. English Language Arts, Science), presentations by the Aboriginal Education Branch at the Ministry or FNESC (e.g. Science, Core French), feedback from Indigenous teachers not on the team (e.g. Social Studies) and teachers who were specifically appointed to represent Aboriginal perspectives on the team (e.g. the home economics sub-group within ADST). Crucially, how and when this support was provided seems to have varied drastically between the teams. For example, Lulu (Français Langue 10–12) was concerned that Aboriginal peoples were not represented on the team working on French Immersion. Audrey, who was on the same team, described the result as feeling that Aboriginal perspectives were just “thrown in there.” The ADST team, in turn, provides an example of how this support could

²⁵ See <https://bctf.ca/AboriginalEducation.aspx> for more about the BCTF’s work in the area of Aboriginal Education.

vary within the same team. The team member who was in the home-economics sub-group said that working with the teacher who had been appointed to bring Aboriginal perspectives to the team brought “background knowledge” and helped the team members engage respectfully with those perspectives. In contrast, Blake, who was on a different sub-group within the ADST team, critiqued a process whereby “we had one person come in, and talk to us about it, for about an hour.” He described the infusion of Aboriginal perspectives as one of his biggest concerns with the redesigned curriculum, stating that “we didn’t do anything with it.”

This issue of support is closely related to the second issue raised by team members: what it means for settler²⁶ teachers to respectfully, and meaningfully, engage with Aboriginal perspectives. Several team members described engaging with Aboriginal perspectives as some of the most challenging conversations within the teams. For instance, Mark (Science 10–12) described “huge discussions” around how do you “bring in First Nations or Aboriginal perspectives in subject areas without making it look like tokenism.” Likewise, Emma (ELA 10–12) spoke about how the FNEESC representative working with the English Language Arts team guided the team to challenge their “beliefs and stances” through questions such as: “We’re in this time of reconciliation, how is the curriculum going to represent it? And how are we going to give it prominence?” Team members, like Gary (Science K–9 & 10–12), who had the time and space for these conversations described them as some of the “richest” they had. These comments point to how, while these conversations were framed as a way of achieving the mandate of the team (integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum) they simultaneously provided the necessary time and space for team members to themselves interrogate often deeply held worldviews.

Having the time and space for teachers to meaningfully engage with Aboriginal perspectives and knowledge points to the third issue raised through the interviews: the curriculum is only the beginning. Echoing the concern about being tokenistic in the curriculum development work, team members recognized the many questions and fears that teachers may have as they take-up the curriculum in their classrooms. For example, Bob (Arts K–9) described this as “people are kind of walking around on eggshells there because, you know, do you actually...you know, is this something I can actually do? Or is it something that I need to involve the First Nation and have them come

²⁶ A settler identity, in this context, refers to non-Indigenous persons in Canada. Following Regan (2010), a settler Canadian identity has been formed within, and continues to draw on, colonial relations of power over Indigenous peoples.

in?” Jane (Core French), who described herself as a “white visitor to Indigenous Lands” and is exploring what it means to teach her subject area on those lands through graduate studies, framed this as a “super messy time,” adding “I understand people’s fears, I have them myself.” Jane described the curriculum as only the first step in “a dialogue” with Aboriginal education support workers as well as local Indigenous communities:

I think where a lot of us were a few years ago, when we first started this, was, ‘Oh, we’ll find a book about Pocahontas or about Louis Riel, in French, and we’ll sort of crowbar it into the curriculum and then we can tick off the box that said we did Indigenous content.’ And we’ve learned since then that that is quite an insult and the wrong way to teach. But to find content that is relevant and local, is really the challenge. So, what it says, what we wrote into the curriculum, and I think you know all the teams wrote this in, is that, you have to go to your local Ab Ed department; you have to go to your local Elders, and Knowledge Keepers and teachers, and say, “Here is a book I found. Can you vet it for me?” And, they will say whether or not they want it taught in the classroom. And if they don’t, then you don’t do it.

Since the curriculum revisions began, the BCTF has advocated for locally developed and readily accessible in-service and learning resources reflective of all 198 First Nations in BC. The issues raised through the interviews underscore the importance of these opportunities and resources. They also resonate with research in the Canadian context that has highlighted how integrating Aboriginal ways of knowing is a space of “new and difficult” knowledge for many settler teachers (Kanu, 2011, p. p. 166), and that engaging this knowledge requires challenging often deeply held beliefs related to identity and knowledge, including teacher identity (Donald, 2009; Madden, 2016). Crucially, the perspectives and experiences of team members directly contradict the Ministry’s claim that “Indigenous worldviews, perspectives and content have been *built into all* new and redesigned curricula (K–12)” (BC Ministry of Education, 2018, emphasis added) Even for the subject areas where team members did describe this work as “done,” the work of reconciliation, and meaningfully engaging Aboriginal ways of knowing across the K–12 system, is only just beginning as the curriculum moves into implementation.

The question of implementation

In July 2013, Jim Iker, then the president of the BCTF, sent a letter to Peter Fassbender, then the minister of education, to raise “issues of concern” that arose during the initial curriculum team meetings:

Our members report that when the subject of implementation has come up in the curriculum meetings, members have been told that it is not their mandate, rather it is only to write the curriculum. There is concern among members that there will be no funding available to support implementation.²⁷

The interviews with curriculum team members reinforce these concerns and illustrate how implementation was consistently framed as separate from curriculum development in multiple domains, including assessment and reporting, professional development and resources. At the same time, team members repeatedly described how their team did discuss multiple aspects of “implementation” despite these constraints and had strong opinions as to what was necessary to support teachers across the province as the curriculum is implemented.

“Assessment wasn’t part of it”

Team members highlighted “assessment and reporting” as a major challenge for implementation. This challenge was made more acute by the lack of opportunities for curriculum development team members to directly engage with assessment and reporting. For instance, Blake (ADST) said “assessment was a totally different area that we didn’t really know a lot about.” Likewise, Sam (ELA K–9) felt “a huge concern for the implementation was, of course, assessment and reporting” but the Ministry “was not letting us deal with” it. Some team members described actively tried to bring assessment into the conversation, only to be met with resistance. For instance, Bruce (PHE K–9 & 10–12) described how even though his team was told “assessment wasn’t part of it, from, like day one,” the team felt “it does make sense for us to talk about [assessment] at some point.” However, these conversations were met with the response: “it’s not your concern.” Even Ted (Science 10–12), who felt that conversations related to assessment were not “shut-down,” described these conversations as “minimal” and “informational.”

²⁷ BCTF records: Letter from Jim Iker to Peter Fassbender, July 3, 2013.

Team members offered multiple ideas for how this work could have been done differently. Alex (Social Studies K–9 & 10–12), for instance, suggested that separate curriculum and assessment teams should have been working more closely with one another, saying that “the classroom assessment is so far behind everything and it doesn’t make sense to me why we’re not parallel.” Likewise Mark (Science 10–12), described how “[assessment and reporting] got really dragged out, and it never really came together, and we were kept waiting for that piece.” For Audrey (Français Langue 10–12), the assessment work should have happened *before* the curriculum development work. Expressing frustration about how “[the assessment] team is not connecting with the team that’s writing curriculum,” she asked, “I don’t-how do you even write a Grade 12 curriculum without the- knowing what’s on the exam?” Likewise, Ted (Science 10–12) felt strongly that the BCTF “should basically tell the Ministry not to implement anything until [assessment] had been figured out; and they figure out all the kids they missed.”

There are several ways of understanding why curriculum development might have been framed as separate from work on assessment and reporting. Despite curriculum and assessment being linked in initial Ministry documents related to educational transformation in BC (BC Ministry of Education, 2012), assessment and reporting, and broadly being treated as separate “phases” of this transformation. For example, the Grade 10 to 12 implementation guide states that there are “no planned changes to the Grades 10–12 reporting policy for 2018/19 or 2019/20” but that changes might occur after this point (BC Ministry of Education, 2018, p. 10). It is not possible to say whether this “phased” approach has been in place since 2012, or whether it has developed as a response to the scale of the changes. It may also be linked to the politically-charged nature of assessment and reporting in BC. In 2013–14 the BCTF worked collaboratively with BC’s public education system’s partner groups in the Advisory Group on Provincial Assessment (AGPA). Teachers, school administrators, district management, school trustees, and university education departments discussed the purposes of assessment and arrived at an agreed-upon set of principles to inform a new provincial assessment program.²⁸ When the government at the time failed to act on these principles, the BCTF withdrew member participation in the assessment teams. A team member who had originally been assigned to the assessment team described understanding why she was asked not to participate but found that “not having a voice there is problematic.” Perhaps unsurprisingly,

²⁸ See: https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/agpa_report.pdf

another team member who decided to stay on the assessment team spoke about how participation on multiple teams made it “easier to figure out” the overall picture.

The curricular model may also have contributed to a phased approach through the idea that, as Emma (ELA 10–12) reported being told by the Ministry, “curriculum should drive evaluation, or assessment, and assessment should not drive curriculum.” Within a concept-based curricular model, the focus is on “assessing for deep understanding,” or “assessing the conceptual understandings, critical content knowledge, and key skills through thoughtfully aligned performance tasks” (Erickson & Lanning, 2014, p. 87). However, as Erickson and Lanning stress, curriculum and assessment are not separate “phases” but rather complimentary parts of the same model. As Audrey’s (Français Langue 10–12) reference to the “exam” earlier illustrates, BC still operates within a system of “exams” that may or may not align with the redesigned curriculum. A potential consequence, as Bob (Arts K–9) recognized, that there is “a real disconnect between what... between the philosophy of this new curriculum, and what we’re still being asked to do.” This resonates with findings from the 2017 BCTF Curriculum Change and Implementation Survey which found that a large majority of respondents felt that there were not clear or helpful guidelines in relation to student assessment (71%), student self-assessment of the core competencies (74%) or student reporting (76%) (BCTF, 2017). Survey respondents specifically commented on the need for clear reporting and assessment guidelines aligned with the redesigned curriculum. The frustration evident in these comments was echoed by members of the curriculum development teams. There was also substantial concern over the unmet need for in-service and professional development opportunities.

“You need to scaffold for the teachers too”

A second key area that team members described discussing, or trying to discuss, was training and support for teachers specifically on the redesigned curriculum. Emma (ELA 10–12) reflected the views of multiple team members when she said that “there has to be a tremendous amount of support for teachers,” including training and opportunities for “really meaningful ProD.” She added “if you’re scaffolding for your students, you need to scaffold for the teachers too.” This statement can be understood as both, an approach to supporting teachers, as well as an indication of how support for teachers is inseparable from the curricular model. According to Erickson & Lanning (2014), “concept-based curriculum *requires* that

teachers can speak knowledgeably about its defining characteristics, how it differs from traditional curriculum models, and why this shift is occurring” (p. 82, emphasis added). This resonates with Michael Fullan’s model of educational change, where a key part of “implementation” is space and time for teachers to engage with the purpose of the change (Fullan, 2016). As such, a critical part of the “scaffolding” is providing spaces for teachers to work with the curricular model in the context of their own pedagogical practice and decisions. This is key for maintaining the principle of professional autonomy during a period of intense educational change in BC.

A key element of professional autonomy relates to teacher-control over professional development days. John (Core French), for instance, said that “I think if you want to do this right, you need to actually give people time to plan, to develop, and to work with those resource- the new curricula.” John stressed that this time needed to be provided by the Ministry: “this isn’t Pro-D; this is the in-servicing.”²⁹ While the Ministry has provided some dedicated in-service days, Alex (Social Studies K–9 & 10–12) described these as “hit or miss depending on what district you’re in.” Furthermore, Audrey (Français Langue 10–12) critiqued the timing of these days within the curriculum development timeframe, asking “we actually don’t have a curriculum, but we’re expected to do curriculum implementation?” Audrey suggested that a better approach would be “having a week...to sit down with colleagues and collaborate” and that this was not just “district collaboration” but also opportunities for “province-wide collaboration.” These calls for collaboration resonate with Eva (Maths K–9) and Torres (ADST) views that there is a key need for mentorship opportunities across the province. For instance, Eva felt that you don’t support teachers by saying “OK, well, this is what this means.” Instead, “we’d support them by giving them examples and permission. Okay? That’s how we support them. And, that needs to be public support, that needs to be personal support, that needs to be, you know, district-wide.”

Perhaps the strongest argument for adequate in service and professional development opportunities is the impact that curriculum development work had on team members themselves. While team members had diverse experiences, and work within the teams could be challenging, multiple team members described the positive impact

²⁹ The BCTF differentiates between Professional Development and In-Service. Professional development is teacher-controlled, and all local union provisions recognize the professional autonomy of members to plan and pursue their professional growth. In-service, in contrast, refers to employer-led training, held during working hours, that should not require the use of teachers’ professional development funding or time. See: <https://bctf.ca/NewTeachers.aspx?id=31859>

that being on the team had on them professionally. For example, Emma (ELA 10–12) and Eva (Maths K–9) referred to their participation in their teams as “the best professional development” they have had, and Joy (ADST) echoed that it was a “great professional development opportunity.”

A number of factors may have shaped this impact on team members, including the relationships within the teams. Carl (Science K– 9), for instance, felt that the team was the “best committee I have ever worked on” with “wonderful people to work with.” Importantly, this is not only about relationships between teachers on the team, but also about the relationship with Ministry staff who facilitated the team. Gary (Science K– 9 & 10– 12) directly praised the Ministry staff who worked with his team, arguing that they “did a fantastic job of facilitating this conversation and making sure [the team] stayed in the space that they needed to stay in. And that [the team was] given the time and honour and value in those spaces.” Likewise, Sam (ELA K– 9) praised the “participatory process” in which it was valued that “teachers are experts in teaching.” Compare these positive experiences with Audrey (Français Langue 10– 12) who had one of the few negative experiences among the team members who participated in the interviews. Audrey felt strongly that the Ministry facilitator pushed an agenda and most of the team “really wasn’t listened to.” Because of this, Audrey stated: “I don’t take ownership of this curriculum.” Taken together, these different perspectives highlight the importance of how teachers work was positioned with the team.

Another key aspect of the professional development for team members was having the time and space to engage with Aboriginal ways of knowing. As discussed in the previous section, the extent to which teams engaged with Aboriginal ways of knowing varied greatly in relation to expertise within the teams as well as support from the Ministry. However, the impact on team members when this time and space was provided illustrates its crucial importance. Gary (Science K–9 & 10–12) saw the most impactful aspect of his experience as the engagement with Aboriginal ways of knowing: “that was one of the most profound professional development parts of this—was having that conversation of: what does it mean to indigenize the curriculum.” This was echoed by Jane (Core French 5–12) who felt that the learning that happened within her team was a “living embodiment of the Indigenous First Peoples’ Principles of Learning.” For these teachers, the team was not only integrating Aboriginal ways of knowing into the curriculum, but also provided a space for team members to engage with those ways of knowing in their own views of what curriculum is and can be.

The team “couldn’t list any resources”

Previous BCTF research has consistently highlighted how teachers implementing the redesigned curriculum need access to a wide range of resources (BCTF, 2014, 2016a, 2017) and curriculum development team members were acutely aware of this need for resources. In Science, for example, Carl (K–9) described how “a number of us asked the question on the first day: if we’re doing a new curriculum, are we also going to do new resources? And what we were told is that the Ministry...had no budget for new resources for this.” Similarly, Alex (Social Studies K–9 & 10–12) described how he stressed with the Ministry that a decreased reliance on textbooks did not eliminate the need for fully funded resources: “we’re trying to emphasize the use of primary sources and other secondary sources in the classroom, where are they? What are you going to do?” Alex said Ministry staff responded: “I can’t promise you that.”

The Ministry’s guiding focus on a “flexible” curriculum, centered around “student need and local context” (BC Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 3), offers one way of understanding why teams “couldn’t list any resources” (Jane, Core French). As Jane explained, the idea was that the curriculum should not be “prescriptive” and resources should be developed locally. Gary (Science K–9 & 10–12) described this as a “paradigm shift” for many teachers. Unlike previous curriculums, which had detailed content, the curriculum development work was focused around “the idea of something that can breathe, and evolve, and change” (Bob, Arts K–9). At the same time, Bob’s account of the vision for what this might have looked like, versus the reality, points to how this “paradigm shift” can not be separated from the broader political and economic environment. Bob described how his team was presented with a vision for an online source of resources: “the idea was, is that this website was going to become populated with related teaching resources. And teaching ideas. And now, for myself, I did contribute some resources and ideas to the website. Or, or like, to- to the Ministry. But I’ve yet to see them appear on the website.” This comment resonates with the Ministry’s plans for “implementation links,” as laid out in the 2013 framework document (BC Ministry of Education, 2013b). When asked why these may not have materialized, Bob was hesitant to offer a reason, but he speculated that it might have to do with a lack of funding and support. Bob felt his own team had “run out of time” for resource development and felt that “no process can be completed without resources and time.” Or, as Emma (ELA 10–12) said, “it all comes down to funding.”

As team members advocated for resources, several recognized that they were able to have limited impact because of how educational funding is decided: “the Ministry person who is in charge [of the curriculum development team]...is not the person setting the budget” (Emma, ELA 10–12). Likewise, Stanley (ADST) described his frustration when questions related to funding were met with the response that “that’s not our issue.” Stanley added that this was reinforced by the very structure of the team, where there was never “an actual deputy minister of anybody there who could give you a real answer to those kinds of questions.” However, this does not mean that teams did not actively engage with the question of resources in the curriculum development work. Gary (Science K–9 & 10–12), for instance, described how the issue of resources continued to “bubble up every time—often.” The team’s response, according to Gary, was to apply a “resource lens” to their work: asking whether a lesson required “specialized science equipment” (for secondary schools) or “just everyday household items” (for elementary schools). The struggle over resources was also clearly described by members of the ADST team. Blake, for instance, described how his team tried “in vain” to write specific resources into the curriculum (e.g. a hoist in an auto shop) but being told that “absolutely nowhere can you have a mandatory requirement for shop.” He added that “basically they said like, ‘Well where’s this money going to come from for people to build an Auto Shop at a school that doesn’t have one?’” Joy, who was also on the ADST team, recognized this as a critical challenge for curriculum implementation, particularly at a secondary level when “stuff” (such as “food” or “wood”) is not “free.” She said a colleague in Home Economics “put it perfectly” when that colleague said “I feel like you guys are designing curriculum to get rid of our job.”

The separation between curriculum development and budgeting to meet curricular demands is extremely problematic. The vision for educational transformation was formed under a government that underfunded public education for over 15 years. While it is overly simplistic to reduce the curricular framework to fiscal imperatives, it is

worth questioning how the curricular model may be used to justify a lack of adequate funding for resources. Any “vision” without adequate attention to resources is also completely out of touch with the realities of classrooms across the province. Speaking to the ongoing challenges of implementation, Ted (Science 10–12) stressed that “to be really clear, we need resources. I know the Ministry line is that, that will basically pigeon-hole people’s thinking, and that they can go on-line” but “that’s a really nice theoretical philosophical approach. That’s great. When you got to teach, like, a class, with 30 kids; and you’re new to the subject area, you need something to hold onto, and it has to be better, than what is coming out now.” That might be textbooks, as Ted felt were still necessary, or the wide range of resources that Alex (Social Studies K–9 & 10–12) spoke about. In either case, Audrey (Français Langue 10–12) pointed to the time and funding needed for this work when she described her own role as a helping teacher in a large urban district, saying “we’ve spent a lot of time working on—how do we find resources to help support the teachers?” This support and guidance must be available to all teachers across the province.

Overall, speaking of her teams struggles in relation to resources, Joy (ADST) said “I feel like they heard us, but they didn’t listen to us.” This seems to capture many team member’s concerns related to implementation and the discussions they were able to have within their teams. As Joy explained, implementation is where the “vision” of the curriculum might not match-up with the complex landscape of public education in BC:

[O]ne of the discussions we had, you know: imagine your dream school. Imagine, you know, in your dreams what would be happening when you walked in? And we’re like, “Ok, yeah, this is great. But in reality it’s not going to happen.” Right? There might be the occasional private school that can do that, and it’s great if that school can, but we can’t work for- we can’t plan for things for that one private school, we have to plan things for every school in the Province, public and private.

The politics of “teacher-led” expertise: “Hey, we’re just teachers”

As seen throughout the previous sections, the development of BC’s redesigned curriculum has happened within a complex political context. This includes the timeline of the development work, the curricular framework, struggles over what knowledge is included in the curriculum as well as what has (or has not) happened in terms of implementation.

In navigating this context, there seems to have been an explicit attempt in many cases, by both team members and Ministry staff, to separate “curriculum” from “politics.” This was perhaps intensified, and indeed made necessary, by the adversarial political relations that existed between the BC Liberal government and the BCTF at the time this work began. For example, Jane (Core French) described beginning work on a curriculum team approximately a month after province-wide strike action ended. Setting the stage for their work together, Jane said a Ministry staff person greeted the group by saying “We are not the politicians, we are the educators!” and that this set the tone for a collegial working relationship. Likewise, some team members also positioned themselves, and their work, as explicitly a-political. Eva (Maths K–9), for example, said that it was necessary to “leave those [political] conversations aside when we’re down to the nitty-gritty, and getting back to what is good for kids, what is good for students, and schools, and teachers.” While it can be argued that “what is good for kids” is inherently political, this self-positioning can also be interpreted as an active attempt to delineate between the “work” of curriculum and the broader political environment. Eva saw the “people on the floor,” especially Ministry staff, as having a “very fine line to walk” in navigating these politics.

At the same time, politics were both explicitly and implicitly embedded within the curriculum teams’ processes and discussions. A team member who was on the 2012 Ministry-convened team, for instance, felt that it was the BCTF that politicized the process, and the curriculum became “less visionary” when the BCTF “took over full control” in 2013. This concern about the influence of the political agenda of the BCTF was echoed by Bruce (PHE K–9 & 10–12) who described attending a meeting at the BCTF offices when his team was formed. In response to what he felt was an overly politicized agenda, he responded “we’re not here for that. We’re here for curriculum.” Likewise, Ted (Science 10–12) critiqued the framing of the interviews, saying “I do not agree that it is a teacher-led curriculum reform. I think it is a [BCTF]-led curriculum.”

While BCTF-appointed members were on the teams as representatives of the BCTF, this comment speaks more broadly to Ted's concern with the impact of the BCTF's political agenda (e.g. advocating for the elimination of provincial exams) and how that agenda did not necessarily resonate with what Ted felt was best for students.

Team members also spoke to how the process of curriculum development was politicized at the level of the Ministry. Mark (Science 10–12), for instance, perceived that the push for a “new” curriculum, and the rushed timeline to complete it, was part of the BC Liberal's political agenda. Likewise, Blake (ADST K–12) observed that there was a “real push at the beginning” of the process in 2015 but elections in 2017 put the project into a “kind of limbo.” Given the change in government, Carl (Science K–9) expressed concern that all the work previously done by team might be thrown out. Furthermore, while most team members spoke positively about the facilitator role that most Ministry staff took on, Audrey (Français Langue 10–12) expressed concern at what she felt was a directive and politically motivated role by the Ministry.

The role of teachers, including the notion of a “teacher-led” curriculum, was inevitably entangled in these politics, and can be explored in terms of how team members negotiated the idea of “expertise.” Broadly, the way in which team members spoke about curricular content reified a distinction between curricular “content” based on “research” and teachers working for “what we wanted for our students” (Emma, ELA 10–12). In other words, teachers were often framed as “experts” in teaching, but not necessarily as experts in curricular content. This was then taken-up in different ways. Within some teams, members felt that people “brought forth their resources, their experts, that they look to as they're teaching” (Emma, ELA 10–12). Team members could then mobilize this “expertise” to justify curricular decisions. For example, Bruce (PHE K–9 & 10–12) described how his team faced resistance from a staff member at the Ministry towards including outdoor education in Physical and Health Education. The team had “research” to show “getting kids outside was a good thing,” and they used this to push for the inclusion of outdoor education. Bruce described this use of research even as he framed the team itself as “hey, we're just teachers,” illustrating how “teacher-led” may have drawn on “expert” knowledge at the same time as it positioned itself as distinct from that knowledge.

For other team members, in contrast, “expertise” remained an explicit gap within a teacher-led team and this gap could have been filled in several ways. In Science, for instance, Ted (Science 10–12) was frustrated not to have academic (vs teaching) expertise in a specific subject area,

saying that “there are people with knowledge and experience, and expertise, and I understand that [the Ministry] probably didn’t want them to take over the discussion, but I wanted my work proofed.” Ted described being relieved when a teacher with content expertise was added to that subject-area sub-group. Another source of “expertise” was having participated in previous revision processes. Bob (Arts K–9), for example, felt that “more experienced colleagues” who had been through the Year 2000 revisions made a valuable contribution to the work of the Arts K–9 team. For yet other team members, such as Eva (Maths K–9), “expertise” was understood as academic (or “University”) knowledge. In each of these examples, “expertise” is positioned as something external to “teacher-led.”

Separating “teacher-led” from “expertise” had several potential effects as the teams developed curricula in their subject areas. Some team members may have felt like they could not insist on specific approaches or decisions because, as Sam (ELA K–9) said, “none of us were experts in...English Language Arts development, except for that fact that we’ve been teaching a long time.” It also left some team members questioning their role on the team. For example, while Matilda (Français Langue Première K–12) recognized the expertise and experience that many team members had, she also questioned the appropriateness of this small group of teachers to shape the direction of curriculum for the whole province:

[L]es gens qui sont le comité, y avait toute sorte de gens, avec des connaissances, des compétences, l’expérience, une éducation vraiment diverse qui vraiment est bien, mais en meme temps « qui sont nous pour déterminer ce qui va être le plus important pour nos élèves, pour les 10 prochaines années ? » C’est à ce niveau-là j’avoue qu’il manquait un peu un côté, basé sur la recherche ou basé sur des recherches.

This overarching question of who is the “expert” in curriculum is also a key potential source of tension as the curriculum is implemented. Eva (Maths K–12) framed this in terms of how “teachers, for the most part, teachers know what works, and what doesn’t, but they don’t have the vocabulary, the research, the understanding of why that practice works” and that this is needed to “lend validity when you go out afterwards.” This may lead to some teachers questioning the validity of a “teacher-led” curriculum, as Stanley (ADST) experienced when he gave a presentation on the curriculum to a group of teachers. At that presentation, a teacher told Stanley “I don’t like what I’m seeing here, and I think I would have done a better job than you’re doing with this.” While Stanley experienced this personally as “pretty much an attack,” it

can also be read as a moment of resistance to what knowledge counts, and who is framed as an “expert” in relation to this knowledge. In other words, it is an ongoing conversation as to what a “teacher-led” curriculum means.

These negotiations were also present when discussing the interview protocol. As part of this protocol, participants choose a pseudonym. This was done in recognition that some teachers had already felt personally attacked by others because of their role on a curriculum development team. However, two team members felt that this decision did not recognize their expertise. During the interview Torres (ADST) exclaimed “I have a name!” while Sam (ELA K–9) felt that real names should be used to illustrate that the process was teacher, not Ministry, led. While this paper uses pseudonyms to maintain the confidentiality of all participants, these interactions illustrate the ongoing negotiations of what a teacher-led curriculum means. Was it about the individual expertise of Torres, or about the expertise of the ADST team as a whole? In what ways might broad descriptions of “teacher-led” both resist the potential perception that this is a top-down curriculum, as well as mask the influences that the Ministry did have on the curricular framework and content?

Taken together, all these moments of negotiation as to what “teacher-led” means, and how it interfaces within dominant understandings of “expertise,” raise ongoing questions as the curriculum moves from draft to finalized versions. A key part of many teachers’ identity is, as Blake (ADST) said, wanting to “know what it is you’re talking about before you go up and talk about it.” Within the teams, teachers actively negotiated what they felt they knew, and didn’t know, during the revision process. The centrality of knowledge to teacher identity may have contributed to Blake’s (ADST) unease when presenting on the curriculum to peers, which he explained as coming from not feeling like an expert. If team members, who had dedicated time and space to engage with the curricular framework and content changes, still do not feel like they “know” the curriculum, what are the implications for teachers who are given (if lucky) a few days of in-service and told to just get to it?

This leads to a second question: what does “implementation” assume teachers already know? In his critique of education change initiatives, Richard F. Elmore (2016) critiques the term implementation, stating that *implementation* “is something you do when you already know what to do” whereas *learning* “is something you do when you don’t yet know what to do” (p. 531). While team members such as Mark (Science 10–12), Lulu (Français Langue 10–12) and Matilda (Français Langue Première

K–9) expressed concerns that “junior” or new teachers would be lost without more guidance as to what the curriculum entailed, it can be argued that the curriculum has invited *all* teachers to negotiate what a teacher-led curriculum might look like within their own classroom. Meeting this invitation requires allowing teachers to risk their own conceptions of expertise, as well as the expectations of others. Sam (ELA K–9) framed this as a “validating of teachers,” the need to explicitly say: “*You* are the experts in teaching, you can take this and you can do *that* with it, and you *know* what works for your kids, and your community, and your classroom, and so take it and go.”

Conclusion

Members of the curriculum development teams offered specific suggestions for how the BCTF could support the curriculum going forward. Besides the need to advocate for fully funded in-service time and curricular resources, as discussed in the previous section on implementation, these suggestions included: having provincial or local curriculum implementation teams (Emma, ELA 10–12), “creating some resources in conjunction with Indigenous leaders” (Jane, Core French), promoting and building existing resources such as TeachBC (Mark, Science 10–12), and re-looking at certain parts of the curriculum, such as the lack of engagement with Aboriginal perspectives within the ADST curriculum (Blake, ADST).

Cutting across these suggestions was a concern for how the BCTF could, as Emma (ELA 10–12) put it, “bring it to the members in a really good way.” In a process that has often been confusing and frustrating, many members do not know how the curriculum changes came about, or what exactly has been the role of the BCTF. John (Core French) for example, felt that the BCTF “needs to say a little bit more about how the process of the curriculum re-write happened.” This echoes Sam’s (ELA K–9) concern that some people feel that the process has been top-down, or that their feedback was not listened to. Sam stressed: “the BCTF really needs to say ‘This is what teachers in the province thought was important for kids in British Columbia.’” Foregrounding the perspectives and experiences of curriculum team members, as this paper has attempted to do, is one way to begin this conversation with members.

At the same time, the discussions throughout this paper speak to the impossibility of separating what has been produced as the redesigned curriculum from either the complex politics at the heart of curriculum development work or the conditions that will shape what implementation looks like. As they began work, team members engaged a curricular framework that was already embedded in a broader vision of educational “transformation” for the province. Working within that framework, team members continually negotiated the key curricular question of “what knowledge is of most worth” (Pinar, 2015, p. 32), such as working with feedback and infusing Aboriginal ways of knowing. Despite being told it wasn’t their role, team members actively engaged with, and advocated for, the conditions that would support curriculum implementation. All this work was part of a “teacher-led” curriculum in BC. Respecting the central role that teachers have had in this process requires making

explicit how teachers on curriculum revision teams were actively navigating the incredibly complex landscape of public education in British Columbia. When curriculum development work is presented as separate from this landscape, the risk is that “teacher-led” can become “blame the teacher.” As Sam (ELA K–9) said:

I mean, the paranoid conspiracy theorist in me is that we just—you know, this is, like, they gave it to us, like, when it doesn't work, we're gonna go back to an IRP, because we needed 'experts' to tell us how to teach. *We* are the experts, we do know this. So, I hope that it doesn't *fail*.

What happens next to the re-designed curriculum, and how this story of teacher-led curriculum is understood, hinges on the Ministry taking responsibility for an implementation process that is responsive to the multiple knowledges, experiences and needs that make up teaching and learning in British Columbia.

Appendix A: Participants by curricular area

The following table lists participants by curricular area. For confidentiality, potentially identifying details are not listed by pseudonym. Broadly, team members were experienced teachers, with 9 of the 19 teachers interviewed having more than 20 years of experience. Participants represented both rural districts (10 participants) and urban districts (9 participants). Some participants also had leadership roles within their districts, such as helping teacher, department head and curriculum co-ordinator. The list indicates which team (K–9 or 10–12) a member served on, unless only one team met.

Applied Design Skills and Technology (ADST): K–12 team formed in 2015

- Blake *shortened from “Blake O’Shaughnessy”
- Joy
- Stanley
- Torres

Arts Education (Arts): K–9 team formed in 2013

- Bob (K–9)

Core French: 5-12 team formed in 2014

- Jane
- John

English Language Arts: K–9 team formed in 2013; 10–12 team formed in 2014

- Emma (10–12)
- Sam (K–9)

Français Langue—Immersion: 10–12 team formed in 2014

- Audrey (10–12)
- Lulu (10–12)

Français Langue Première: K–9 team formed in 2013

- Matilda (K–9)

Maths: K–9 team formed in 2013

- Eva (K–9)

Physical and Health Education: K–9 team formed in 2013; 10–12 team formed in 2014

- Bruce (K–9 & 10–12) *shortened from Bruce Wayne

Science: K–9 team formed in 2013; 10-12 team formed in 2014

- Carl (K–9) * changed from CX-7842
- Gary (K–9 & 10–12)
- Mark (10–12) *shortened from Mark Eastwood
- Ted (10–12) * shortened from Ted Smith

Social Studies: K–9 team formed in 2013; 10–12 team formed in 2014

- Alex (K–9 & 10–12)

Appendix B: Interview information and consent form

Stories of curriculum change: Learning from the experiences of BCTF-appointed members of Provincial Curriculum Development Teams

Primary Contact

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This research is being conducted by Andrée Gacoin as part of a project that aims to develop a unique, in-depth and contextualized exploration of curriculum change in BC from the perspective of teachers.

What is this interview about?

As a member of a Provincial Curriculum Development Team, I would like to learn from your experiences navigating potentially diverse expectations in relation to curricular approach, form and content within the Team. As the curriculum process moves into implementation, your insights can deepen our understanding of opportunities for, as well as challenges to, teacher-led curriculum change. Your feedback can also help the BCTF better support members who participate in curriculum change processes and structures.

What will I be expected to do if I participate in the interview?

The interview will take approximately one hour and will be arranged at a time that is convenient for you (in person or via Skype). The interview is an opportunity for you to share your experiences as a Provincial Curriculum Development Team member, such as your thoughts on the overall process, working relationships, and decisions related to curricular approach, form and content. I will ask you if I can tape record the interview. Within two months of the interview, I will invite you to review and give feedback on the interview. If you are a part of a Provincial Curriculum Development Team still actively meeting, I will ask if you would be willing to do a follow-up interview in approximately 6 months time.

What are the potential risks to me of participating in the interview?

You have participated in the Provincial Curriculum Revision Team in a public capacity as a BCTF member. At the same time, speaking publicly about your participation could potentially impact your ongoing relationship with other team members or colleagues. To mitigate this risk, you will be asked to choose a pseudonym (a fake name) and any identifying information will be changed or removed for presentations or documents that result from this project. All interview transcripts will be anonymized as necessary to protect the confidentiality of other team members.

What are the potential benefits to me of participating in the interview?

The interview is an opportunity for you to share your experiences and opinions around the possibilities for, and challenges-to, teacher-led curriculum change. The insights you share are crucial for strengthening continued advocacy for teacher-led curriculum change.

How do I know my right to privacy is upheld?

Your privacy is very important to us. All physical materials (e.g. interview transcripts and consent forms) will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for the duration of the project. All digital materials (e.g. audio files and electronic notes) will be password protected and transferred from my computer to storage on compact disks. Once the project has been completed, copies of physical and digital material will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and/or a secure digital folder in our document management system for 5 years before they are destroyed.

How will I learn about the results of this research?

At the end of the project I will provide you with a Project Summary Report. You will be asked to provide an address (postal or email) if you would like to receive this document.

How else will the results from the research be used?

The results of this study will be used by the BCTF for continued advocacy for curriculum change as an ongoing process necessitating adequate time, resources and support. Report formats may include public reports, presentations and articles for professional and/or other publications.

Who do I contact if I have questions or concerns?

If you have any questions or want further information about this project before or during your participation in the interview(s), you can contact me at 604-871-2254 or agacoin@bctf.ca.

If you have any concerns about your experience while participating in this project, please contact the Larry Kuehn, Director of Research and Technology, at 604-871-2255 or lkuehn@bctf.ca.

What does it mean to give consent for this interview?

Your agreement (consent) to take part in an individual interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw consent at any time.

By signing this form, you consent to participate in the interview(s).
I will give you a copy of this form.

Signature

Date

Printed name of participant signing above

Pseudonym (Optional)

Please provide your contact details if you would like to receive a copy of the summary project report:

Physical address

OR

Email

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