Chapter 1

THE NATURE OF CURRICULUM

The intent of this introductory chapter is essentially to provide the reader with a general overview of the curriculum field and a set of concepts for analyzing that field. To accomplish these related goals, the discussion that follows focuses on these outcomes: defining the concept of curriculum, examining the several types of curricula, describing the contrasting nature of curriculum components, and analyzing the hidden curriculum. In this manner, some fundamental concepts essential for understanding the comprehensive field of curriculum can be established at the outset. Questions addressed in this chapter include the following:

- What is curriculum and why is it important?
- What are the types and components of curricula and how have they changed over the years?
- What are mastery, organic, and enrichment curricula, and what roles do they play in the development of curriculum?
- Why is knowledge of the “hidden curriculum” important to curriculum leaders?

Key to Leadership

Curriculum leaders should review and monitor curriculum policies to make sure that the policies align with curricular goals and that they support student learning.

THE CONCEPT OF CURRICULUM

In a sense, the task of defining the concept of curriculum is perhaps the most difficult of all, for the term curriculum has been used with quite different meanings ever since the field took form. Curriculum, however, can be defined as prescriptive, descriptive, or both. “Prescriptive definitions provide us with what ‘ought’ to happen, and they more often than not take the form
4 FOUNDATIONS OF CURRICULUM

of a plan, an intended program, or some kind of expert opinion about what needs to take place in the course of study” (Ellis, 2004, p. 4). Analogous to prescriptive curriculums are medical prescriptions that patients have filled by pharmacists; we do not know how many are actually followed. “The best guess is that most are not” (Ellis, 2004, p. 4). This is parallel to the prescribed curriculum for schools where the teacher, like the patient, ultimately decides whether the prescription will be followed. In essence, “the developer proposes, but the teacher disposes” (Ellis, 2004, p. 4).

To understand the nature and extent of curriculum diversity, it might be useful at this juncture to examine the prescriptive and descriptive definitions offered by some of the past and present leaders in the field. The prescriptive definitions in the list below, which are arranged chronologically, have been chosen simply for their representativeness.

- Curriculum is a continuous reconstruction, moving from the child’s present experience out into that represented by the organized bodies of truth that we call studies...the various studies...are themselves experience—they are that of the race. (John Dewey, 1902, pp. 11–12)
- Curriculum is the entire range of experiences, both directed and undirected, concerned in unfolding the abilities of the individual; or it is the series of consciously directed training experiences that the schools use for completing and perfecting the unfoldment. (Franklin Bobbitt, 1918, p. 43)
- [The curriculum is] a succession of experiences and enterprises having a maximum life-likeness for the learner...giving the learner that development most helpful in meeting and controlling life situations. (Rugg, 1927)
- The curriculum is composed of all the experiences children have under the guidance of teachers...Thus, curriculum considered as a field of study represents no strictly limited body of content, but rather a process or procedure. (Hollis Caswell in Caswell & Campbell, 1935, pp. 66, 70)
- [The curriculum is] all the learning experiences planned and directed by the school to attain its educational goals. (Ralph Tyler, 1957, p. 79)
- A curriculum usually contains a statement of aims and of specific objectives; it indicates some selection and organization of content; it either implies or manifests certain patterns of learning and teaching...Finally, it includes a program of evaluation of the outcomes. (Hilda Taba, 1962, p. 11)
- Curriculum is a sequence of content units arranged in such a way that the learning of each unit may be accomplished as a single act, provided the capabilities described by specified prior units (in the sequence) have already been mastered by the learner. (Robert Gagne, 1967, p. 23)
- [Curriculum is] all planned learning outcomes for which the school is responsible...Curriculum refers to the desired consequences of instruction. (James Popham & Eva Baker, 1970, p. 48)
- The word curriculum means output of the curriculum development process that is intended for use in planning instruction. (Michael Schiro, 1978, p. 28)
- Curriculum is a plan for providing sets of learning opportunities for persons to be educated. (J. Galen & William Saylor in Saylor, Alexander, & Lewis, 1981, p. 8)
- The curriculum is not a tangible product, but the actual day-to-day interactions of students, teachers, knowledge and milieu. (Catherine Cornbleth, 1990)
• [Curriculum] refers to a written plan outlining what students will be taught (a course of study). Curriculum may refer to all the courses offered at a given school, or all the courses offered at a school in a particular area of study. (J. L. McBrien & R. Brandt, 1997)
• Curriculum is a prescribed body of knowledge and methods by which it might be communicated. (Alan Block, 1998)

The descriptive definitions of curriculum displayed below go beyond the prescriptive terms as it forces thought about the curriculum, “not merely in terms of how things ought to be . . . but how things are in real classrooms” (Ellis, 2004, p. 5). Another term that could be used to define the descriptive curriculum is experience. The experienced curriculum provides “glimpses” of the curriculum in action. Several examples of descriptive definitions of curriculum are listed below:

• All the experiences children have under the guidance of teachers. (Hollis Caswell & Doak Campbell, 1935)
• Those learnings each child selects, accepts, and incorporates into himself to act with, on, and upon, in subsequent experiences. (Thomas Hopkins, 1941)
• All experiences of the child for which the school accepts responsibility. (W. B. Ragan, 1960)
• The set of actual experiences and perceptions of the experiences that each individual learner has of his or her program of education. (Glen Hass, 1987)
• The reconstruction of knowledge and experience that enables the learner to grow in exercising intelligent control of subsequent knowledge and experience. (Daniel Tanner & Laurel Tanner, 1995)

The definitions above for prescriptive and descriptive curricula vary primarily in their breadth and emphasis.

It would seem that a useful definition of curriculum should meet two criteria: It should reflect the general understanding of the term as used by educators; and it should be useful to educators in making operational distinctions.

Curriculum Tip

The following definition of curriculum is offered and will be used in this work: The curriculum is the plans made for guiding learning in the schools, usually represented in retrievable documents of several levels of generality, and the actualization of those plans in the classroom, as experienced by the learners and as recorded by an observer; those experiences take place in a learning environment that also influences what is learned.

Several points in this definition need to be emphasized. First, it suggests that the term curriculum includes both the plans made for learning and the actual learning experiences provided.
Limiting the term to the plans made for learning is not enough, since, as will be discussed below, those plans are often ignored or modified. Second, the phrase “retrievable documents” is sufficiently broad in its denotation to include curricula stored in computer software or shared on the Internet. Also, those documents, as will be more fully explained below, are of several levels of specificity: Some, such as curricular policy statements, are very general in their formulation; others, such as daily lesson plans, are quite specific. Third, the definition notes two key dimensions of actualized curriculum: the curriculum as experienced by the learner and that which might be observed by a disinterested observer. Finally, the experienced curriculum takes place in an environment that influences and impinges upon learning, constituting what is usually termed the hidden curriculum.

Although the definition, for the sake of brevity, does not deal explicitly with the relationship between curriculum and instruction, an implicit relationship does exist. Instruction is viewed here as an aspect of curriculum, and its function and importance change throughout the several types of curricula. First, in the written curriculum, when the curriculum is a set of documents that guide planning, instruction is only one relatively minor aspect of the curriculum. Those retrievable documents used in planning for learning typically specify five components: a rationale for the curriculum; the aims, objectives, and content for achieving those objectives; instructional methods; learning materials and resources; and tests or assessment methods.

Instruction is a component of the planned curriculum and is usually seen as less important than the aims, objectives, and content at the actualized level; when the planned or written curriculum is actually delivered, instruction takes on a new importance. The supervisor or administrator observing the curriculum as the total learning experiences of that classroom seems to focus on instruction—how the teacher is teaching.

**THE TYPES OF CURRICULA**

The definition stipulated above suggests that there is a major difference between the planned curriculum and actualized curriculum. Yet even these distinctions are not sufficiently precise to encompass the several different types of curricula. Goodlad (Goodlad & Associates, 1979) was perhaps the first to suggest several key distinctions. As he analyzed curricula, he determined that there were five different forms of curriculum planning. The ideological curriculum is the ideal curriculum as construed by scholars and teachers—a curriculum of ideas intended to reflect funded knowledge. The formal curriculum is that officially approved by state and local school boards—the sanctioned curriculum that represents society’s interests. The perceived curriculum is the curriculum of the mind—what teachers, parents, and others think the curriculum to be. The operational curriculum is the observed curriculum of what actually goes on hour after hour in the classroom. Finally, the experiential curriculum is what the learners actually experience.

While those distinctions in general seem important, the terms are perhaps a bit cumbersome and the classifications are not entirely useful to curriculum workers. It seems to be more useful in the present context to use the following concepts with some slightly different denotations: the recommended curriculum, the written curriculum, the supported curriculum, the taught curriculum, the tested curriculum, and the learned curriculum. Four of these curricula—the written, the supported, the taught, and the tested—are considered components of the intentional curriculum. The intentional curriculum is the set of learnings that the
school system consciously intends, in contradistinction to the hidden curriculum, which by and large is not a product of conscious intention.

The Recommended Curriculum

The recommended curriculum is the curriculum that is recommended by individual scholars, professional associations, and reform commissions; it also encompasses the curriculum requirements of policy-making groups, such as federal and state governments. Similar to Goodlad’s “ideological curriculum,” it is a curriculum that stresses “oughtness,” identifying the skills and concepts that ought to be emphasized, according to the perceptions and value systems for the sources.

Curriculum Tip

Recommended curricula are typically formulated at a rather high level of generality; they are most often presented as policy recommendations, lists of goals, suggested graduation requirements, and general recommendations about the content and sequence of a field of study, such as mathematics.

Several influences seem to play key roles in the shaping of recommended curricula. First, societal trends seem to have a strong influence on policy makers. The prevailing conservative mood of the 1980s in the United States and the concern about competing with Japan were undoubtedly factors that influenced many of the reform reports of that period. Second, advancements in technology also play a role. The widespread use of technology in the nation’s schools has influenced several of the professional associations to include aspects of technology across the curriculum in their recommendations. Advancing excellence in technological literacy in our schools is vital because citizens of today must have a basic understanding of how technology affects their world and how they coexist with technology. Attaining technological literacy is as fundamentally important to students as developing knowledge and abilities in the traditional core subject areas. Students need and deserve the opportunity to attain technological literacy through the educational process. (Dugger & Nichols, 2003, pp. 316–317)

Professional associations and individuals also seem to have an impact. First, the professional associations representing the several disciplines, such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and those that represent school administrators, such as the National Association for Secondary School Principals, have been active in producing recommended curricula. Also, there seems to be a network of opinion shapers in the profession, who through their writing and consulting have a strong impact on recommended curricula as they attempt to translate the latest research into recommendations for content and methodology. Also, as will be discussed in Chapter 4, federal and state legislation and court decrees play a significant part. Public Law 94–142, requiring the “least restrictive environment” for handicapped
pupils, and Public Law 107–110 H.R.1, as well as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), charter schools, home schooling, school choice, and vouchers have had a profound influence on all those developing recommended curricula for this group of learners.

Over the past several years, national educational organizations have launched a series of ambitious projects to define voluntary standards for science, mathematics, art, music, foreign languages, social studies, English language arts, and other subjects. These efforts have served as catalysts in a wide-ranging national conversation about the needs of students and the instructional approaches of their teachers. This also adds to the national dialogue by presenting the consensus that exists among thousands of educators about what all students in K–12 schools should know and be able to do in the various subject fields. The authors endorse the act of defining standards by the national organizations because it invites further reflection and conversation about the goals of public schooling. Those recommended curricula serve some useful functions. First, as recommendations about policies and requirements, they identify important boundaries, emphases, and endpoints for curriculum planning: All high school students should study one semester of computer science. Second, they promote equity and excellence for all students: learning how to learn; equal access to resources; adequate staffing; and safe, well-equipped schools. Finally, as we reviewed the standards set forth by the various learned societies, it was concluded that curriculum specialists and teachers should consider the following points:

- Standards are not a national curriculum.
- Standards are an attempt to define what students should be able to know and do.
- The standards are informed by the latest theory and research regarding the various curricula.
- Standards are field based; they build on past success of teachers and students.
- Standards can be met through a variety of teaching styles and strategies.
- The standards project emphasizes that all students can learn and achieve at high levels if their background, needs, and interest are considered.
- Standards should be a source of professional conversation and critique about what to do and how to do it.
- Teachers are members of a professional community, and a variety of professional organizations are available to support teacher growth.
- The literacy demands of the 21st century will require students to construct meaning with a variety of tools and texts. (Wilhelm, 1996, pp. 2–13)

The recommended curriculum by the learned societies raises the sights of curriculum workers and teachers by suggesting what the curriculum ideally might become.

Since the late 1980s, raising standards in the core curriculum subjects has gained momentum in states and districts across the country. States have begun to use academic standards to make clear what students should learn and what teachers should teach. The recommended curriculums by the learned societies will help curriculum coordinators and teachers make decisions about developing their instructional programs.

The Written Curriculum

Generally similar to Goodlad’s “formal curriculum,” the written curriculum seems intended primarily to ensure that the educational goals of the system are being accomplished;
it is a curriculum of control. Typically, the written curriculum is much more specific and comprehensive than the recommended curriculum, indicating a rationale that supports the curriculum, the general goals to be accomplished, the specific objectives to be mastered, the sequence in which those objectives should be studied, and the kinds of learning activities that should be used. Note, however, that Glatthorn (1980) questions such comprehensiveness; he recommends that the written curriculum should be delivered to teachers as a loose-leaf notebook, containing only a scope and sequence chart, a review of the research, a list of course objectives, and a brief list of materials to be used. This simpler format, he believes, would make the written curriculum more likely to be used.

Curriculum Tip

The written curriculum is the curriculum embodied in approved state and district curriculum guides.

Written curricula are both generic and site specific, to use two concepts proposed by Walker (1979): Generic curricula are those written for use in various educational settings. During the 1960s, numerous generic curricula were produced by federally funded research and development laboratories; now, more typically, they are produced by a state curriculum office and intended for use throughout the state, with some local leeway provided. Site-specific written curricula are those developed for a specific site, usually for a local school district or even for a particular school.

Site-specific written curricula are influenced by several different sources. First, as will be explained more fully in Chapter 4, federal and state legislation and court directives play a role. The passage of PL 94–142 with its requirement that schools provide the “least restrictive environment” for handicapped learners undoubtedly precipitated much local curriculum work to help teachers work toward “inclusion.” The textbooks and standardized tests in use in the district seem to influence decisions about the inclusion and placement of content. The expectations of vocal parent and community groups seem to have at least a constraining influence on what can be done.

In general, however, the guides seem to reflect the preferences and practices of a local group of elites: a director of curriculum, a supervisor of that subject area, a principal with a strong interest in curriculum, and a small group of experienced teachers used to playing a leadership role. They, in turn, seem most influenced by the practice of “lighthouse” districts: There is much well-intentioned plagiarizing going on as they meet during the summer to produce the new guide.

The chief functions of written curricula seem to be three: mediating, standardizing, and controlling. They first mediate between the ideals of the recommended curriculum and the realities of the classroom; in this sense they often represent a useful compromise between what the experts think should be taught and what teachers believe can be taught. They also mediate between the expectations of administrators and the preferences of teachers. The best of them represent a negotiated consensus of administrative and classroom leaders.

They also play an important role in standardizing the curriculum, especially in larger districts. Often they are produced as a result of directives from a superintendent who is concerned
that students in School A are studying a social studies curriculum or using a reading series quite different from those in Schools B and C.

Standardizing and centralizing curriculum is often used by district and school administrators as management tools to control what is taught. This control function seems to be perceived differently by administrators and teachers. Administrators believe that controlling the curriculum is an important management responsibility; they point to the research on school effectiveness that seems to indicate that in schools with higher pupil achievement there is a principal actively monitoring the curriculum to ensure that the written curriculum is being delivered. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003), in *Balanced Leadership: What 30 Years of Research Tells us About the Effect of Leadership on Student Achievement*, compiled more than three decades of research on the effects of instruction and schooling on student achievement and found a substantial relationship between leadership and student achievement (see Exhibit 1.1). The results of this study have provided practitioners with specific guidance on the curricular, instructional, and school practices that, when applied appropriately, can result in increased achievement.

However, as Walcott (1977) discovered in his ethnographic study of a district monitoring plan, most teachers view such attempts to control the curriculum as intrusive and counterproductive and will work hard to subvert such plans.

Predictably, written curricula, especially site-specific ones, are of uneven quality. The best of them seem to represent a useful synthesis of recommended curricula and local practice; they seem well conceptualized, carefully developed, and easy to use. Too many, however, lack those qualities. Careful reviews of a large number of such curriculum guides reveal that they suffer from some common faults: The objectives are often not related to the stated goals; instructional activities are not directly related to the objectives; the activities do not reflect the best current knowledge about teaching and learning; and the guides are generally cumbersome and difficult to use.

The Supported Curriculum

The supported curriculum is the curriculum as reflected in and shaped by the resources allocated to support or deliver the curriculum. Four kinds of resources seem to be most critical here: the time allocated to a given subject at a particular level of schooling (How much time should we allocate to social studies in Grade 5?); the time allocated by the classroom teacher within that overall subject allocation to particular aspects of the curriculum (How much time shall I allocate to the first unit on the explorers?); personnel allocations as reflected in and resulting from class-size decisions (How many teachers of physical education do we need in the middle school if we let PE classes increase to an average of 35?); and the textbooks and other learning materials provided for use in the classroom (Can we get by with those old basals for one more year?).

The patterns of influence bearing upon the supported curriculum seem rather complex. First, the state seems to exercise a strong influence on the supported curriculum. State curriculum guidelines often specify minimum time allocation, and some state-approved lists of basic texts restrict the choice of textbooks to a relatively small number.

The local school board, under the leadership of its superintendent, seems to play a key role. In many districts, boards will adopt curriculum policies specifying minimum time allocations to the several subjects, will approve district-purchased texts, and will make major budget
### Exhibit 1.1 Principal Leadership Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>The extent to which the principal . . .</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>establishes a set of standard operating procedures &amp; routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>protects teachers from issues &amp; influences that would detract from their teaching time on focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>provides teachers with material &amp; professional development necessary for the successful execution of their roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum, instruction, &amp; assessment</td>
<td>is directly involved in the design &amp; implementation of curriculum, instruction, &amp; assessment practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>establishes clear goals &amp; keeps those goals at the forefront of the school's attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of curriculum, instruction &amp; assessment</td>
<td>is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, &amp; assessment practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingent rewards</td>
<td>recognizes &amp; rewards individual accomplishments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>establishes strong lines of communication with teachers &amp; among students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>is an advocate &amp; spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input</td>
<td>demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers &amp; staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmation</td>
<td>recognizes &amp; celebrates school accomplishments &amp; acknowledges failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers &amp; staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change agent</td>
<td>is willing to &amp; actively challenges the status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimizer</td>
<td>inspires &amp; leads new &amp; challenging innovations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideals/beliefs</td>
<td>communicates &amp; operates from strong ideals &amp; beliefs about schooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitors/evaluates</td>
<td>monitors the effectiveness of school practices &amp; their impact on student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>adapts leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation &amp; is comfortable with dissent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational awareness</td>
<td>is aware of the details &amp; undercurrents in the running of the school &amp; uses this information to address current &amp; potential problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual stimulation</td>
<td>ensures that faculty &amp; staff are aware of the most current theories &amp; practices &amp; makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture</td>
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decisions that impact strongly on the personnel and material support provided. At the school level, principals also seem to have a major influence. They usually have some discretion in the allocation of funds for texts and other learning materials. They often are given some latitude in their requests for additional staff. The school master schedule is the major means for translating school priorities into decisions about curricular support.

Of course, the teacher plays a crucial role. Elementary teachers exercise a great deal of influence in determining how much time is allocated to particular subjects, despite the attempts of principals to limit such autonomy. All teachers have much autonomy about how time is allocated to given units or aspects of the curriculum.

Obviously the supported curriculum needs to be examined. The data are clear that several aspects of the supported curriculum have a major bearing upon what and how much is learned. First, time seems to be an important factor. In her review of the research, Stallings (1980) concludes that, “The body of knowledge emanating from the research on teaching in the 1970s suggests that teachers should allocate more time to academic subjects, keeping in mind ability levels, and students should be kept engaged in the tasks” (p. 12).

Berliner (1984) cites some examples of the dramatic differences in the way time is allocated in elementary school classrooms. One fifth-grade teacher devoted only 68 minutes a day to reading and language arts; another teacher, 137 minutes. Karweit (1983), however, questions one aspect of this concern for time. In a review of the research on time-on-task, Karweit noted that “by a variety of criteria for the importance of an effect, the most outstanding finding relating the effects of time-on-task to learning is that the effects are as small as they are” (p. 46).

Second, does class size make a difference?

In a study of 20,000 fourth- and eighth-graders in 182 school districts across the country, the Educational Testing Services Policy Information Center found that fourth-graders from classes of 20 students or less scored higher on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) than did their peers in larger classes. (Chambers, 1999, pp. 1–2)

Several studies have been conducted regarding class size. The results reveal the following conclusions: The Tennessee class size experiment demonstrated that students learn better when class sizes are reduced (Mosteller, 1995; Finn & Achilles, 1990). Achilles (1997) has shown that a ratio of 15 students per class, especially in the first grade, has the greatest effect on student achievement. Farber and Finn (2000) found that fourth graders who had experienced small classes through the third grade were more engaged in learning than those who had experienced [larger] classes with teacher aides (Danielson, 2002).

A doctoral study titled Serendipitous Policy Implications From Class-Size-Initiated Inquiry: IAQ? found different behavior patterns between teachers who had small classes (15–17) and regular classes (20–28). The findings revealed that as the day wore on, teachers in regular classes became irritable, edgy, and tired. “They wiped their eyes, sat down, and slowed or regimented instruction, often neglecting students’ indiscipline, lassitude, and off-task misbehavior. All [teachers] seemed hassled” (Achilles, Finn, Prout, & Bobbett, 2001, p. 2). In contrast, teachers with small classes “remained full of energy all day. Time-on-task stayed high and constant with students remaining well behaved, engaged, and energetic. Student and teacher behavior were reciprocal, but positive” (Achilles et al., 2001, p. 2). Another factor that the study revealed was carbon dioxide (CO2) levels. “CO2 is related to
the number of persons in a space, is cumulative, and causes drowsiness and lethargy that may influence teaching and learning. Class size and time of day seemed to be key variables” (p. 2).

Finally, the quality of the textbook and other learning resources as an aspect of the supported curriculum seems to play a central role. After noting that the textbook constitutes the basis of many teacher lectures and that seatwork with worksheets represents as much as two thirds of the time in elementary classrooms, Doyle (1983) noted several deficiencies of textbooks that researchers have discovered. For example, many textbooks present information in a confusing manner; the instructional procedures in the teacher’s manual are often unnecessarily complicated for students; textbooks provide little explanation and direct instruction, but a great deal of practice and assessment material; and the overlap of textbooks and standardized tests is very low. Allington (2002) noted that “many students in grades 5–12 struggle to learn from content-area textbooks that don’t match their reading levels” (p. 16). As Chall (as cited in Allington, 2002) noted, the demands of reading increase dramatically for students in fourth grade as their learning begins to rely more on textbooks. For example, “the vocabulary for fourth graders is less conversational and less familiar, with more specialized, technical terms (delta, plateau, and basin) and abstract ideas (democracy, freedom, civilization).” In essence, “the syntax of texts becomes more complex and demanding” (pp. 16–17). Also, “the reasoning about information in textbooks shifts, with a greater emphasis on inferential thinking and prior knowledge. (For example, what stance is the author taking on industrial polluters? Is there another stance that others might take?)” (p. 17). As Baumann and Duffy (as cited in Allington, 2002) indicate,

Schools have typically exacerbated the problem by relying on a single-source curriculum design—purchasing multiple copies of the same science and social studies textbooks for every student. This one-size-fits-all approach works well if we want to sort students into academic tracks. It fails miserably if our goal is high academic achievement for all students. (p. 17)

It should be noted that elementary school reading series contain several flaws: Stories written for use in the primary grades do not give enough insight into characters’ goals, motives, and feelings; many of the so-called stories do not actually tell a story; textbooks lack a logical structure, often emphasizing a trivial detail rather than a fundamental principle. Harder textbooks, unfortunately, have captured the attention of educators and policy makers who want to raise academic achievement. Allington (2002) parallels the harder textbooks to one’s own experience, for example, building a Web site. “Do you reject many of the books because they are too easy? Do you say to yourself, ‘Gosh, only 11 words on this page I can’t pronounce—not hard enough for me!’” (p. 18). With that thought, there needs to be a rethinking of what curriculum and instruction should look like.

Carol Ann Tomlinson (as cited in Tomlinson et al., 2002), noted curriculum author, indicates that the supported curriculum can also involve the use of flexible options and the formation of a parallel curriculum model. She notes in her book, The Parallel Curriculum, that parallels can be used to develop or support curriculum for individuals, small groups, and entire classes. The term parallel indicates several formats through which educators can approach curriculum design in the same subject or discipline. Tomlinson refers to the four parallels as: Core Curriculum, Curriculum and Connections, Curriculum of Practice, and Curriculum of Identity. These parallel processes can be deductive or inductive and can be used as a catalyst to discover student abilities and interests or in response to student abilities.
and interests. Tomlinson believes that these parallels act as support for thematic study and help connect content that might otherwise seem disjointed to learners. Using her model, a teacher might establish a definition of change, identify key principles related to change, and introduce students to key skills as well as specify standards that need to be covered. Tomlinson's parallel model for curriculum development is only one of the many approaches that can be used to help support curriculum.

The supported curriculum plays a central role at several stages of the curriculum cycle. First, in developing curricula, educators should give specific attention to the supported curriculum, paying special attention to time allocations and the materials of instruction. Second, in implementing the curriculum, administrators should be sure that adequate support is provided. Next, as Chapter 11 indicates, those involved in aligning the curriculum should assess to what extent there is a good fit between the written, the supported, and the taught curricula. Finally, any comprehensive evaluation of the curriculum should assess the supported curriculum, since deficiencies in support will probably be a major factor in student achievement.

The Taught Curriculum

The extent to which there is consonance between the written curriculum and the taught curriculum seems to vary considerably. At one extreme are those school systems that claim to have achieved a high degree of consonance between the two by implementing curriculum alignment projects. At the other extreme are schools where a state of curricular anarchy exists: Each teacher develops his or her own curriculum, with all sorts of disparate activities going on across the school.

Curriculum Tip

The taught curriculum is the delivered curriculum, a curriculum that an observer would see in action as the teacher taught.

How does the taught curriculum, regardless of its fit with the written curriculum, become established? The question is a complex and an important one that can best be answered by synthesizing several studies of teachers' thinking, planning, and decision making.

Thus, teachers' decisions about the curriculum are a product of many interacting variables. Rather than being mindless choices or acts of willful rebellion, those decisions instead seem to represent the teacher's considered judgment about what compromises will be best for that teacher and a particular class.

The Tested Curriculum

The tested curriculum is that set of learnings that are assessed in teacher-made classroom tests, in district developed curriculum-referenced tests, and in standardized tests. To what extent are these several types of tests related to the taught curriculum? The answers seem to vary. First, teacher-made tests tend not to correspond closely with what was taught. In general, teachers are
not highly skilled test developers and tend to be somewhat selective in what they include in unit examinations. For the most part, their tests concentrate on assessing students’ comprehension and memory of objective information, and their attempts to measure understanding of concepts result in multiple-choice items that really assess students’ guessing ability.

The evidence on the congruence between curriculum-referenced tests and instruction suggests a somewhat different picture. In districts using curriculum-referenced tests as a means of monitoring teacher compliance, the test seems to drive instruction. The result is a closer fit. Yet here the congruence is not reassuring to those who value higher-order learning. An examination of a curriculum-referenced test used in a large district’s alignment project indicated that the test items were concerned almost exclusively with such low-level objectives as punctuating sentences correctly, spelling words correctly, and identifying the parts of speech.

Finally, the research on standardized tests suggests that there is not a good fit between widely used standardized tests and what most teachers teach. Currently, teachers are using online-based programs to provide testing as well as data analysis of student strengths and weaknesses as they relate to state and national standards. Online testing programs provide pre- and posttests and analysis charts, as well as possible teaching strategies in order to address specific areas of need.

The consequences of such mismatches are serious. First, as Berliner (1984) points out, the research suggests that achievement is lower in schools where there is not a close fit between what is taught and what is tested. Second, students are put at a disadvantage when the teaching and testing do not match. Their grades and scores would probably not be a valid measure of what they had learned. Finally, there may be serious legal consequences when poorly fitting tests are used to make decisions about promotion and graduation. The courts have ruled that when tests are used for purposes that may deny constitutional guarantees of equal protection or due process (as in retention or denial of graduation), schools must provide evidence that those tests assess skills and concepts actually taught in the classroom.

**Curriculum Tip**

Components of the curriculum determine the fit between what is taught and what is learned.

It might be useful at this juncture to note again that the four curricula discussed above—the written, the supported, the taught, and the tested—might be seen as constituting the intentional curriculum, which comprises that set of learning experiences that the school system consciously intends for its students.

**The Learned Curriculum**

The term learned curriculum is used here to denote all the changes in values, perceptions, and behavior that occur as a result of school experiences. As such, it includes what the student understands, learns, and retains from both the intentional curriculum and the hidden curriculum. The discussion here focuses on what is learned from the intentional curriculum; the last part of the chapter analyzes what is learned from the hidden curriculum.
What, then, do students learn and retain from the intentional curriculum? Obviously, the answer varies with the student, the teacher, and the curriculum. However, there are some subtle transformations, especially between the taught curriculum and the learned curriculum, that occur in most classrooms, regardless of the specific conditions. (The discussion that follows draws primarily from Doyle’s 1983 review of the research on academic work.)

To begin with, the students seem especially sensitive to the accountability system at work in the classroom and take seriously only that for which they are held accountable. Regardless of what objectives the teacher announces or what the teacher emphasizes, the students seem to assess the importance of classroom transactions in relation to their value in that accountability system: “Will this be on the test?”

In order to achieve success in that accountability-oriented classroom, the students invent strategies for managing ambiguity and reducing risk. They will restrict the output they provide teachers, giving vague and limited answers to minimize the risk of making public mistakes. They also attempt to increase the explicitness of a teacher’s instructions, asking the teacher for more examples, hints, or rephrasing of the question. Furthermore, they pressure teachers to simplify curriculum complexity, strongly resisting any curriculum that forces them to think, inquire, and discover.

In sum, students learn what is assessed and remember those learnings as discrete answers to questions; their learning is somewhat disorganized and unconnected.

COMPONENTS OF THE CURRICULUM

Although several texts in the field seem to treat curriculum development as if it were one undifferentiated process, the realities are quite different. The concept subsumes several distinct entities that might best be described as components of the curriculum. They are as follows. Each of these will be analyzed briefly below and then discussed more fully in the chapters that follow.

Curricular Policies

The term curricular policies, as used here, designates the set of rules, criteria, and guidelines intended to control curriculum development and implementation. As Kirst (1983) notes, there are macropolicies, such as a board policy on courses required in high school, and micropolicies, such as a set of recommendations for a curriculum unit in mathematics. Policy making, as he notes, is essentially the “authoritative allocation of competing values” (p. 282). Thus, as a board makes a policy requiring 3 years of science in the high school curriculum, but does not require any study of art, it is perhaps unwittingly according a higher value to science as a way of knowing than it does to aesthetics. Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis (1981) make a useful distinction between de jure policy making (as implemented in court decisions, state legislative acts, and local agency regulations) and de facto policy making (as carried out by community networks, testing bureaus, accrediting associations, and advisory boards).

Curriculum Tip

Educators, administrators, and teachers are well advised to reexamine policies affecting curriculum and the accepted practices at their schools.
The decisions that a school makes regarding established policies and practices can affect students enormously. For example, teachers’ instructional decisions influence students’ feelings about (and success with) the curriculum, but the policies and practices in both classrooms and in the entire school provide the context for teacher-student interactions around instruction (Danielson, 2002).

Schools have multiple policies and practices that can and do affect curriculum development. Some policies are deliberately set in place while others evolve with time.

**Curricular Goals**

Curricular goals are the general, long-term educational outcomes that the school system expects to achieve through its curriculum. Three critical elements are included in this definition. First, goals are stated much more generally than objectives. Thus, one goal for English language arts might be: “Learn to communicate ideas through writing and speaking.” One objective for fifth-grade language arts would be much more specific: “Write a letter, with appropriate business-letter form, suggesting a community improvement.” Second, goals are long-term, not short-term outcomes. The school system hopes that after 12 years of formal schooling, its students will have achieved the goals that the system has set for itself.

Finally, curricular goals are those outcomes that the school system hopes to achieve through its curriculum. Here it is important to make a distinction between educational goals and curricular goals. Educational goals are the long-term outcomes that the school system expects to accomplish through the entire educational process over which it has control.

How do curricular policies and curricular goals interrelate? In a sense, the policies establish the rules of the game (“take three years of health education”) and the goals set the targets (“at the end of those three years, you will adopt constructive health habits”). In this sense, they should determine in a rational system the form and content of all the other components that follow. As will be evident throughout this work, however, educational organizations are usually not very rational. Typically, policies are not related to goals, and goals are not related to fields and programs of study.

**Fields of Study**

A field of study is an organized and clearly demarcated set of learning experiences typically offered over a multiyear period. In most school curricula, such fields of study are equivalent to the standard school subjects: English language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and so on. At the college level, fields are more narrowly defined: thus, students pursue majors in history, or anthropology, or sociology—not “social studies.”

**Programs of Study**

A program of study is the total set of learning experiences offered by a school for a particular group of learners, usually over a multiyear period and typically encompassing several fields of study. The program of study is often described in a policy statement that delineates which subjects are required and which are electives, with corresponding time allocations and credits. Here, for example, is a typical program of studies for an elementary school:

- Reading and language arts: 8 hours a week
- Social studies: 3 hours
Mathematics: 4 hours
Art: 1 hour
Music: 1 hour
Health and physical education: 1 hour

At the college level, a student’s program of studies includes all the courses he or she will take or has taken.

Courses of Study

A course of study is a subset of both a program of study and a field of study. It is a set of organized learning experiences, within a field of study, offered over a specified period of time (such as a year, a semester, or a quarter) for which the student ordinarily receives academic credit. The course of study is usually given a title and a grade level or numerical designation. Thus, “third-grade science” and “English II” are courses of study. At the college level, courses of study seem to be the most salient component for both students and faculty: “I’m taking Economics I this term”; “I’m offering Elizabethan Literature this quarter.”

Units of Study

A unit is a subset of a course of study. It is an organized set of related learning experiences offered as part of a course of study, usually lasting from one to 3 weeks. Many units are organized around a single overarching concept, such as “Mythical Creatures” or “The Nature of Conflict.” Not all teachers think about units as they plan. Many high school teachers simply aggregate lessons: “I’ll have a spelling lesson tomorrow and a grammar lesson on the next day.” As college instructors conceptualize their courses, they often seem to think about a sequence of lectures rather than a unit of study.

Robert Marzano (as cited in Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001), noted author and researcher, believes that when developing units of study at any level it is best to view the process as a series of phases. The planning phases of unit development include the following:

- At the beginning of a unit, include strategies for setting learning goals.
- During a unit, include strategies
  - for monitoring progress toward learning goals
  - for introducing new knowledge
  - for practicing, reviewing, and applying knowledge
- At the end of a unit, include strategies for helping students determine how well they have achieved their goals.

Marzano’s intent is for teachers to systematically utilize strategies that work. These are best-practice approaches. Basically, teachers should present students with the components and subcomponents of the unit process and then structure tasks to emphasize a specific component or subcomponent.
Lessons

A lesson is a set of related learning experiences typically lasting for 20 to 60 minutes, focusing on a relatively small number of objectives. Ordinarily a lesson is a subset of a unit, although, as noted above, the unit level is sometimes omitted by teachers while planning for instruction.

These distinctions among the several components of curriculum have an importance that transcends the need for conceptual clarity. Each seems to involve some rather different planning processes. Thus, to speak generally about “curriculum planning,” without differentiating between planning a program of studies and planning a course of studies, is to make a rather serious mistake.

Improving and enhancing lessons based on current brain research and curriculum design is becoming a critical component in the search for best practices. With that in mind, Marzano et al. (2001) identified nine categories of strategies that have a strong effect on student achievement. They are as follows:

- Identifying similarities and differences
- Summarizing and note taking
- Reinforcing effort and providing recognition
- Homework and practice
- Nonlinguistic representations
- Cooperative learning
- Setting objectives and providing feedback
- Generating and testing hypotheses
- Questions, cues, and advance organizers

As can be seen from analyzing Marzano et al.’s nine strategies, students need a fair amount of guidance when learning complex processes. Classroom teachers therefore need to realize that curriculum planning should emphasize metacognitive control of all processes. These processes are similar to skills in that they often produce some form of product or new understanding.

THE MASTERY, THE ORGANIC, AND THE ENRICHMENT CURRICULA

One additional classification system first proposed by Glatthorn (1980) has proved useful, especially in developing and improving fields of study.

Curriculum Tip

Curriculum leaders should distinguish between the three types of learning in each field of study. The three types of learning are: mastery, organic, and enrichment.
The three types of learning result from the following analytical steps. First, divide the learnings in that field between those that are basic and those that are enrichment. Basic learnings are those that, in the views of knowledgeable educators, are essential for all students (all, in this use, refers to the top 90% of learners, excluding the least able and those with serious learning disabilities). Enrichment learnings are the knowledge and skills that are interesting and enriching, but are not considered essential: they are simply “nice to know.” Thus, in fifth-grade social studies, curriculum workers might decide that the early settling of the Vikings in Iceland would be interesting enrichment content.

Once the first division between basic and enrichment is made, then further divide the basic learnings into those that require structure and those that do not require structure. Structured learning, as the term is used here, has four characteristics:

1. Sequencing
2. Planning
3. Measurable outcomes
4. Clearly delineated content

Nonstructured learning, on the other hand, includes all those skills, knowledge, and attitudes that can be mastered without such careful sequencing, planning, testing, and delineation.

These two analytical steps yield the three types of curricula depicted in Exhibit 1.2: mastery, organic, and enrichment. Mastery learnings are those that are both basic and structured. An example of a mastery objective for language arts, Grade 2, is the following:

Use a capital letter for the first word in a sentence.

Organic learnings, however, are those that are basic, but do not require structuring. They are the learnings that develop day by day, rather naturally, as the result of numerous interactions and exchanges. They tend not to be the focus of specific learnings. They are just as important as the mastery outcomes (if not more so), but they do not require sequencing, pacing, and articulation. Here is an example of organic learning for language arts, Grade 2:

Listen courteously while others speak.

The teacher might emphasize that learning on every occasion, not devote a specific lesson to it. And enrichment learnings, as noted above, are those learnings that simply extend the curriculum; they are not considered basic.

This tripartite division is more than an interesting intellectual exercise. It has significant implications for curriculum development. In general, district curriculum guides and scope-and-sequence charts should focus solely on the mastery elements. The nurturing of organic components can be enhanced through effective staff development; such outcomes do not need to be explicated fully and carefully in guides. The enrichment components can be included in a supplement for those teachers who want to share enrichment activities.

Curriculum-referenced tests should focus only on mastery elements; organic elements should not be tested. One district that ignored this important distinction wasted a great deal
of time trying to develop a test for courteous listening before it was forced to give up in frustration. The distinction also has implications for the purchase of texts: Textbooks should focus on the mastery objectives; the teacher can nurture the organic without the aid of textbooks.

Finally, the distinction helps resolve the issue of district versus teacher control. In general, the district should determine the mastery curriculum, to the extent of specifying objectives. The district emphasizes the important outcomes, but gives the teacher great latitude of choice in nurturing them. In addition, the enrichment curriculum is the teacher’s own: Here the teacher can add whatever content he or she feels might be of interest to the students.

In addition to the discussion of basic versus organic structure of curriculum, it is also important that teachers be aware of brain research and how students learn. According Patricia Wolfe (2001), an educational author and consultant, learning is a process of building neural networks. She notes that children construct networks in the cortex of the brain that contain information about an unbelievable variety of concepts. She lists three levels of learning: Concrete Experience, Representational or Symbolic Learning, and Abstract Learning.

Concrete Learning, according to Wolfe, is pretty much what the word implies. It is a combination of repeated experiences and visualizations that allow the brain to store, network, and recall when necessary.

The second level, Representational or Symbolic Learning, is based on the brain linking and cross-referencing information. All sensory data are linked through association and become part of memory. With concrete experiences available, sensory data can be “activated” when remembered. Without the concrete experience, the representation or symbol may have little meaning, no matter how much someone explains it to the student.
The third level, Abstract Learning, involves the brain’s using only abstract information, primarily words and numbers. With a strong neural network formed both by concrete experience and representations, it is possible for children to visualize in their “mind’s eye.” An understanding of terms, sets, and similarities depends on a child’s developmental age and on a teacher’s ability to give sufficient examples that relate to the student’s experiences. It is also important for the teacher to involve students in experiences that make the abstract concepts understandable.

Curriculum Tip

The key to enriching curriculum is to involve students in real-life problem solving scenarios.

Using real-life problem-solving scenarios assists in the process of developing the strongest brain networks that will be formed by actual experience. As a result, most schools are now using critical-thinking and problem-solving skills and strategies as a major part of the curriculum development process.

THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

The hidden curriculum, which is sometimes called the “unstudied curriculum” or the “implicit curriculum,” might best be defined in the following manner:

Those aspects of schooling, other than the intentional curriculum, that seem to produce changes in student values, perceptions, and behaviors.

As the definition suggests, students learn a great deal in school from sources other than the intentional curriculum. Although the term hidden curriculum is often used with negative connotations, those learnings can be both desirable and undesirable from the viewpoint of one aspiring to optimal human development. In examining the specific nature of the hidden curriculum, it seems useful at this point to distinguish between what might be termed the constants—those aspects of schooling that seem more or less impervious to change—and the variables—those aspects that seem susceptible to reform.

Curriculum Tip

Hidden curriculum might be seen as those aspects of the learned curriculum that lie outside the boundaries of the school’s intentional efforts.
The Constants of the Hidden Curriculum

Certain important aspects of the hidden curriculum are so intrinsic to the nature of schools as a cultural institution that they might be seen as constants. The depiction of those constants presented below has been influenced by a close reading of several authors: curricular conceptualists such as Apple (1979), Pinar (1978), and Giroux (1979); sociologists such as Dreeben (1968); and educational researchers such as Jackson (1968) and Goodlad (1984). One of the constants of the hidden curriculum is the ideology of the larger society, which permeates every aspect of schooling. Thus, schools in the United States inevitably reflect the ideology of democratic capitalism.

A key component of the school as an organization is the classroom, where the most salient aspects of the hidden curriculum come into play. The classroom is a crowded place, where issues of control often become dominant. Control is achieved through the differential use of power; the teacher uses several kinds of power to control the selection of content, the methods of learning, movement in the classroom, and the flow of classroom discourse. Control also is achieved by the skillful use of accountability measures; teachers spend much time evaluating and giving evaluative feedback. In such a classroom, students unconsciously learn the skills and traits required by the larger society; they learn how to be punctual, clean, docile, and conforming. They learn how to stand in line, take their turn, and wait. Even though the above features of the hidden curriculum are presented here as constants relatively impervious to change, it is important for curriculum leaders to be aware of their subtle and pervasive influence.

The Variables of the Hidden Curriculum

Several other important aspects of the hidden curriculum can be more readily changed by educators. The most significant of these can be classified into three categories: organizational variables, social-system variables, and culture variables.

Organizational Variables

The term organizational variables is used here to designate all those decisions about how teachers will be assigned and students grouped for instruction. Here, four issues seem worthy of attention: team teaching, promotion and retention policies, ability grouping, and curriculum tracking. The evidence on the effects of team teaching on student achievement is somewhat inconclusive. Even though many school systems during the 1980s were implementing “promotional gates” policies that promoted students solely on the basis of achievement, several syntheses of the research indicate that social promotion results in better attitudes toward school, better self-image, and improved achievement.

Grouping practices in the schools have often been attacked by critics as one of the most baleful aspects of the hidden curriculum. Here the indictment of Giroux and Penna (1979) is perhaps typical:

The pedagogical foundation for democratic processes in the classroom can be established by eliminating the pernicious practice of “tracking” students. This tradition in schools of grouping students according to “abilities” and perceived performance is of dubious instructional value. (p. 223)
Two problems surface with such an indictment. The first is that the authors seem to ignore a rather important distinction made by Rosenbaum (1980) between ability grouping—sorting students into ability-based groups for instruction (such as high, average, and low ability)—and curriculum grouping: sorting students into such curricular tracks as vocational, general, and college preparatory. The other, more serious problem is that the empirical evidence available does not support their assertions.

The practice of curriculum grouping or tracking, in which students follow a predetermined career-oriented program, such as college preparatory or vocational, seems to be a more complex matter. Here Rosenbaum’s (1980) review of the research seems most enlightening. He first notes that there is no clear finding from the research on whether ability or social class is the primary determiner of track placement. According to several studies, the guidance counselor plays a key role in track selections. Many students, according to Rosenbaum, are in curricular tracks that are inconsistent with career choices. The lack of congruence is complicated by the fact that curricular tracking is relatively stable, and there is more movement from college preparatory to general and vocational than the other way around.

The chief problem with curriculum tracking, according to researchers, is the lack of challenge in the general curriculum. Secada (1992) concluded that tracking or ability grouping generally benefited only those students placed in high-end groups while having a detrimental effect on students placed in low-end groups. Evidence of other negative results exists due to tracking students based on ability.

- Minorities and low-income students are disproportionately represented (Century, 1994).
- Experiences in mathematics and science differ between minorities and low-income students compared to their more advantaged white peers during elementary school (Oakes, Ormseth, Bell, & Camp, 1990).
- Students in low-ability tracks tend to receive lower-quality instruction (Secada, 1992).
- Students in lower-ability tracks have difficulty in moving up to higher-ability tracks (Century, 1994).

Another option in ability tracking is between-class grouping. Students participating in this arrangement find themselves grouped at different ability levels for each subject, depending upon their ability in that subject area. Secada (1992) finds the negative results plaguing full-time grouping also to be a problem here.

Most researchers agree that grouping is beneficial for gifted students. Advocates of grouping and opponents alike maintain the necessity to continue grouping gifted students together and that any reforms introduced to tracking in a school not necessarily affect gifted and talented programs (Century, 1994). Nevertheless, high-end grouping practices must include regular entry evaluations for students to ensure that these gifted tracks are open to all.

A better alternative to tracking would be the regular use of cooperative learning groups. Cooperative learning groups within a heterogeneous classroom have been shown to result in higher achievement, little or no psychological harm to the students, and reduced segregation (Slavin, 1987). Students also gain experience in individual accountability and responsibility, as well as acquiring skills in working with others.

The weight of the research evidence suggests educational leaders interested in improving the organizational variables of the hidden curriculum might focus their attention on promotion policies and curriculum tracking as the key variables. They should ensure the general curriculum is neither dull nor trivial.
Other organizational variables might include class size, breakfast and lunch, noncategorical special help, special programs like reading recovery, better libraries and better access to books, better assessment, as well as extended day and after school programs (Cunningham & Allington, 1994).

Much discussion takes place as to the impact of class size on curriculum planning and implementation. Many authors and researchers believe that smaller class sizes facilitate better teaching and more personalized instruction. Some authors and researchers do not. The key is that smaller class size may facilitate, but does not necessarily ensure better teaching and learning. Most individuals do agree, however, that class size does effect how the curriculum is delivered and thus the curriculum’s nature can be implicit.

Breakfast and lunch may lie outside the boundary of curriculum, but they still may have an important impact on planning. For example, classes have to be scheduled around these activities, especially if the breakfast- and lunchroom is located in the gymnasium. Children having to eat late or not having proper nutrition may also have a hidden factor on when and how the curriculum is delivered.

Noncategorical special help has a substantial and yet hidden impact on a school’s schedule in that staff may have to adjust classes in order to compensate for students’ being out of the room. Teachers also have to adjust their classroom organization to accommodate students’ arriving back into a classroom after receiving special help in another setting.

Special programs such as Reading Recovery and Read Well are now important components of the classroom after the passage of the NCLB Act in 2002. The hidden aspect of these special phonics-based programs is that primary teachers must now schedule their units and lessons around these intensive reading programs to accommodate high-risk children. There is little doubt about the impact of these special programs on how the curriculum in the classroom is being delivered.

Schools with better libraries and/or that provide students with better access to books may have an advantage over schools that do not. Getting reading and informational materials to students in a timely matter can be a key to learning. Albeit hidden, the ability of a teacher to have access to books and materials will make a big difference on how that teacher will teach.

Assessment and accountability are becoming bywords with the advent of the No Child Left Behind Act. Although perhaps not obvious to some, assessment and data analysis are now becoming major determiners of what is taught, when it is taught, and how it is taught. Entire curricula are being changed based on the collection of assessment data and student test scores.

Although the impact of assessment is not totally understood or noticed, extended days and after-school programs appear to be having a major impact on curriculum planning and implementation. Teachers are now being paid extra for extended days to complete inservice and staff development requirements. Additional staff development opportunities often mean that teachers will be learning new material and trying different approaches in their classrooms. The impact of this change on curriculum may be hidden to some, but is often immeasurable in scope.

**Social-System Variables**

The term social system as an aspect of school climate was first used by Tagiuri (1968) to refer to the social dimension concerned with the patterned relationships of persons and groups in the school. Anderson’s (1982) review of the research on school climate indicated several social-system factors associated with positive student attitude and achievement. Several of these had to do with administrator-teacher relationships: The principal was actively involved
in instruction; there was good rapport and communication between administrators and teachers; teachers shared in the decision-making process; and there were good relationships among teachers. Others were related to teacher-student relationships: Teacher-student interactions in general were positive and constructive; students shared in decision making; and there were extensive opportunities for student participation in activities. Obviously, all these factors can be influenced through effective leadership by both administrators and teachers.

Curriculum Tip
Social and economic issues can affect aspects of the hidden curriculum.

Social and economic related programs such as Head Start and Even Start are designed to assist economically challenged preschool children. Head Start is a federal program that has been around since the 1960s. Some school districts are designing their school operation to have Head Start on campus. This allows a good transition for the Head Start children to matriculate into a kindergarten program. Having Head Start onsite in a school district also enhances opportunities for staff development as well as offers a way to improve staff relations. Head Start teachers and administrators have an opportunity to plan their curricula so that it threads unnoticed into the district curriculum. Onsite Head Start teachers are thus better able to understand the goals and objectives of the school district and are better able to correlate their program with district primary teachers.

Even Start is a family literacy program that includes preschool children and their parents. Both children and parents go to school. Parents work to complete their high school education or receive adult literacy instruction. The implicit aspect of this program is that children are provided with an enriched preschool curriculum. Parents also learn more about parenting, including ways to involve their children in reading and writing (Cunningham & Allington, 1994).

Another social aspect of curriculum that may be hidden is the involvement of parents and community. Although parents may not directly create a change in curriculum, their approval or disapproval can have a tremendous impact on how a school is operated, what is taught, and how it is taught. An example might be the involvement of parents at the primary level and their support of technology. When parents are in the school at the primary level and see the impact that technology is having on their child, they often become major supporters of educational technology. This support is generated in the passage of special levies and bonds that effect the use of technology at all grade levels—even high school.

The involvement of the community can also have an impact on curriculum development in much the same way. If members of the community feel positive about what is happening in their schools, they are much more apt to support the schools financially. This financial support might include more staff, improved facilities, materials, and/or staff development. The connection to the curriculum may not be readily apparent or even hidden to some, but it is definitely a major factor in the success of the school.

Culture Variables
Tagiuri (1968) defined culture variables as the social dimensions concerned with belief systems, values, cognitive structures, and meaning. According to Anderson’s (1982) review,
several key factors here play an important role in the hidden curriculum. All of the following are associated with either improved achievement or improved attitude:

1. The school has clear goals that are understood by all; those goals are supported by a strong consensus among administrators and teachers.

2. Administrators and teachers have high expectations for each other, and both groups are strongly committed to the importance of student achievement.

3. Administrators and teachers have high expectations for students, and these high expectations are translated into an emphasis on academics.

4. Rewards and praise are publicly given for student achievement; rewards, and punishments are administered in a fair and consistent manner.

5. The school emphasizes cooperation and group competition, rather than individual competition.

6. Students value academic achievement; peer norms support the value of such achievement.

These aspects of the hidden curriculum also can be influenced by administrators and teachers working together.

To summarize, then, the hidden curriculum is seen here as both constant and variable aspects of schooling (other than the intentional curriculum) that produce changes in the student. The constants—the ideology of the larger society, the way in which certain knowledge is deemed important or unimportant, and the power relationships that seem necessary in large bureaucratic institutions—seem unlikely to change. However, the variables—those aspects of the organizational structure, the social systems, and the culture of the school that can be influenced—require the systematic attention of curriculum leaders.

In reviewing the intended and hidden curriculum, a coming together of the two can be observed. Exhibit 1.3 illustrates how the intentional curriculum and the hidden curriculum extend into the learned curriculum.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This introductory chapter provides a general overview of the curriculum field and a set of concepts for analyzing that field. The chapter defines the concept of curriculum, examines the several types of curricula, describes the contrasting nature of curriculum components, and analyzes the hidden curriculum to provide some fundamental concepts essential for understanding the comprehensive field of curriculum. The chapter includes the topics of what curriculum is and why it is important; the types and components of curricula and how have they changed over the years; what mastery, organic, and enrichment curricula are and the roles they play in the development of curriculum; and why knowledge of the “hidden curriculum” is important to curriculum leaders.
Exhibit 1.3  Relationships of Types of Curricula

SOURCE: Developed by Mark A. Baron, Chairperson, Division of Educational Administration, School of Education, The University of South Dakota. Used with permission.

CHAPTER TERMS

Recommended Curriculum  Field of Study
Written Curriculum  Program of Study
Supported Curriculum  Courses of Study
Taught Curriculum  Units of Study
Tested Curriculum  Lessons
Learned Curriculum  Mastery Curriculum
Intentional Curriculum  Organic Curriculum
Hidden Curriculum  Enrichment Curriculum
APPLICATIONS

1. By reviewing the definitions given here and by reflecting on your own use of the term, write your own definition of curriculum.

2. Some educators have suggested that the profession should use simpler definitions for curriculum and instruction: curriculum is what is taught; instruction is how it is taught. Do these definitions seem to suffice, from your perspective?

3. Some leaders have argued for a very close fit between the written and the taught curriculum, suggesting that teachers should teach only what is in the prescribed curriculum. Others have suggested that some slippage is desirable—that teachers should have some autonomy and latitude, as long as they cover the essentials. What is your own position on this issue?

4. Although most curriculum texts do not make the distinctions noted here between programs of study, fields of study, and courses of study, those distinctions do seem to matter. To test this hypothesis, do the following: (1) List the steps you would follow in designing a program of studies for one level of schooling, such as elementary or middle school. (2) List the steps you would follow in designing a field of study, such as social studies, K–12.

5. It has been suggested here that the “constants” of the hidden curriculum are not easily changed. Others would argue that they should be changed if we truly desire democratic and humanistic schools. As a school leader, would you attempt to change any of those “constants,” or would you give more attention to the “variables”?

6. Outline a change strategy you would use in attempting to improve the “culture” variables that seem to be associated with improved attitude and achievement.

CASE STUDY

Dr. John Summers was hired to be the curriculum director to enhance the teaching and learning process for the Dover School District. Dr. Summers was the superintendent’s choice for the position because he was highly qualified in the area of curriculum development, and his performance at a somewhat smaller school district with 5,000 students, in a neighboring state, was outstanding. The district John came from was known for its high academic achievement, which was attributed to a well-planned curriculum supported by the principals and teachers.

In contrast, the Dover School District was in curriculum disarray, and student achievement was low when compared to statewide achievement scores. As Dr. Summers soon discovered, some teachers in the Dover School District construed the curriculum as ideal because it met their standards. Too, they felt that if something was being taught, a curriculum existed. The principals in the district, however, felt that a planned curriculum was vital for the district, but they were unable to generate the necessary leadership to bridge the gap between theory and practice.
THE CHALLENGE

Analyze the nature and concepts of curriculum in this chapter. As curriculum director of the Dover School District, how should Dr. Summers bridge the gap between curriculum theory and practice?

Key Issues/Questions

1. To what extent do you believe a written curriculum for the various disciplines plays a role in this case?
2. To what extent do you believe the supported, tested, and learned curricula for the various disciplines play a role in improving the intentional curriculum?
3. Do you think there is any hope of changing the teachers’ attitude? If so, how would you attempt to do this? If not, why?
4. Do you feel that the intentional curriculum is prescriptive or descriptive, or a combination of both? Why?
5. What roles do the recommended curriculum and hidden curriculum play in developing the intentional curriculum?
6. In planning curricula, mastery curriculum should require from 60% to 75% of the time available. Do you agree that Dr. Summers should place an emphasis on mastery curriculum? Why?

REFERENCES


