ABSTRACTS OF SELECTED DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS IN CURRICULUM: 1986

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Curriculum Goals


A modified Delphi technique was used by state commissioners of education and other key state educational policymakers in this study to identify perceived learning needs for secondary school students in the future. Twenty-one participants identified 39 needs. Those deemed most probable and desirable were: (1) the communicative skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, (2) fundamental math and science skills, (3) social studies skills, (4) understanding of international relations and global studies, and (5) knowledge of and ability to use the democratic process. The respondents were optimistic about secondary schools and their abilities to address these needs.


This study set out to compare the perceptions of administrators in three types of higher education institutions about college general education programs for the future. In all, 66 administrators were involved from research universities, doctorate-granting universities, and comprehensive universities and colleges. The Delphi technique was used to collect data. Recommendations from the study include, first, that opportunities for learning about other cultures and our shared cultural heritage should be provided, and second, that skills that help in learning new ideas and an attitude conducive to life-long learning should be developed. The Delphi technique was recommended as a technique for reaching consensus in curriculum goals and content.


The purpose of this study was to determine whether the rank order given objectives by secondary teachers of composition agreed with the rank order of those objectives in widely used commercially published standardized tests of composition as determined by the number of items dealing with each objective that appeared on a test. Little congruence was found. Teachers ranked such skills as organization and logic high and mechanical skills low, but the converse was found for the test objectives. Implications were drawn for the use of instructional materials, the application of instructional techniques, and the evaluation of students.

Influences on Curriculum

In this study, 15 years of three high schools' curricular offerings were analyzed along with state certification and high school graduation requirements to understand better the influences on high school curricula. In addition, more than 100 high school teachers, counselors, and administrators were interviewed. The researcher concluded that influences on curriculum were departmentwide rather than schoolwide. Although similar decisions were made across departments, great variation was found in latitude of and constraints on decisions. Further study of curriculum decisions at the department level was encouraged.


Case study methodology was used in this study to examine the influences that have shaped the Nigerian social studies curriculum. After an examination of technical and political curriculum development, Nigerian education, comparative education, policy studies, and political sociology, a theoretical framework was developed to connect the social construction of curriculum knowledge to political power. Greater use of political power analysis is recommended as a tool for understanding curriculum policy.


This study examined influences in curriculum content by studying the relationship between the number of female faculty members in university English departments and the number of books authored by women used in English and American literature courses. Six universities around the country were involved, and 42 faculty members at these institutions were interviewed. Data were also collected through book order forms. A significant correlation was found between the number of women faculty members and the use of women's novels. However, in the departments where female faculty members had been hired, the women used books by women more than the men did.


Through an analysis of legal issues and court decisions, this study sought to examine state statutory mandates regarding curriculum. In part, the study revealed that: (1) state legislatures do have the right to specify subject matter for all children, (2) students can be exempted from courses if parents submit a written request, (3) students can be released from school to attend religious classes off school grounds, but such classes may not be offered on school grounds, and (4) litigation will continue about who has the right to limit instructional materials and determine what information can be presented to students.

Curriculum Change/Implementation


The perceived impact of seven different staff development programs was assessed in this study to determine what effect these programs had on curriculum change. One hundred fifty-two participants responded to a questionnaire between 12 and 18 months after a specific program had occurred. For programs of one day or less, 82 percent of the participants indicated they gained new awareness and knowledge, while 5 percent indicated they applied new learning and techniques. Some of the programs examined consisted of three, five-day blocks separated by at least a month. Seventy-nine percent attending these programs indicated they not only learned new skills but also applied them in their teaching. It was concluded, in part, that follow-up to staff development programs should occur if curriculum change is to be effected.


This study examined the effect of different workshop approaches on the implementation of a program to teach about new fruit and vegetable crop production. One approach involved a workshop in which the new program was discussed while participants examined copies of the curriculum guide. In the other approach, everything was the same except the participants never...
saw a copy of the curriculum guide. Achievement tests on the course content were administered to both groups. Both groups were also surveyed along with a control group as to their intent to use the program. The researcher found, in part, that use of the guide during the workshop was not necessary to raise technical subject matter expertise. He also found that those who scored higher in the achievement test were more likely to implement the program.


This study sought to analyze how well the implementation of selected industrial arts curriculum innovations conformed to five educational change principles advocated in the literature. Questionnaires and semistructured interviews were used to collect data. The findings revealed, in part, that two of the curriculum innovations that ranked high on the education change principles also ranked high in relation to innovation characteristics. Similarly, two of the projects that ranked low on conformity with change principles also ranked low on innovation characteristics. The researcher concluded that the perspectives of the curriculum implementers are more important than that of the curriculum developer when a program is being implemented. Further, he urged that implementers have a sense of ownership in a program when it is being implemented.


This study examined 16 topics in the Mathematics 8 curriculum of British Columbia as teachers said they taught it. Four aspects of curriculum implementation were considered: content emphasis, mode of content representation, role orientation of instruction, and diversity of instruction. Data were collected from five questionnaires collected from 93 teachers throughout the school year. The findings revealed, in part, that emphasis in content varied widely in the three major categories of arithmetic, algebra, and geometry. For example, 60 percent of the teachers gave at least one of those areas only slight emphasis. Teachers tended to emphasize an area if the textbook they used emphasized that area. In low-achievement classes, content was presented more abstractly than in high-achievement classes.

**Cronin, Linda L.** Intended Versus Implemented Curricula: An Interpretative Study. Ph.D., University of Georgia, 1986. 439pp (47/12-4275)

This study sought to identify factors affecting successful curriculum implementation and to determine whether these factors were context specific. Two middle school science teachers participated as they attempted to implement an environmental education curriculum. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Nine categories of factors influencing curriculum implementation were identified: teacher beliefs, teacher knowledge, external factors, student characteristics, teacher expectations, teacher planning, teacher performance, classroom interactions, and student engagement. The categories most difficult to change were teacher beliefs and knowledge; the easiest to manipulate were classroom interactions and student engagement. Although content did make some difference, the researcher felt that some parts of the model could be applicable to any setting.


This study examined the development and implementation of an elementary science curriculum. A Stages of Concern Questionnaire was administered to seven teachers in October and June, an interview was conducted in March and June. The findings indicated that the teachers as a group progressed through stages of concern in typical fashion. That is, in October, the major concern was for information (Stage 1); in March, the focus was on personal concerns, and in June, management concerns ranked highest. At the end of the year, refocusing (Stage 6) was the major focus. Additional data were gathered through an Innovation Configuration, a needs assessment, the principal's calendar, a log, and field notes, among other techniques. The data indicated, in part, that the principal's behaviors were appropriate for the teachers' concerns and that the teachers generally felt positive about their role in the process.

The purpose of this study was to examine the assumption that teachers have a greater commitment to a curriculum if they have helped design it than if they are not involved. Data were collected through a Stages of Concern Questionnaire that measured attitudes and through interviews designed to measure levels of use. Social studies teachers who had participated in curriculum design were compared with those who had not. Analysis of variance yielded no significant differences between the two groups, although the pattern of responses did support the original assumption.


Whether a "curriculum memory"—the recollection of past reforms—exists among current industrial arts teachers was targeted in this study. Seven industrial arts department heads in Philadelphia were interviewed, each from a school where the Selected Education Experiences Diagrammed for Progress (SEED) program was piloted in the 1970s. The researcher discovered that the heads did not initially recall the program and remembered it to varying degrees when it was described. The department heads had not received inservice training in the program, although the teachers under them had received training. Three of the seven department heads did not use the program's concepts, and one who had later abandoned them. The overwhelming problem of implementation that was identified was lack of motivation for change to a program that addressed a problem not felt by those who were to teach the program.

Curriculum Leadership

Putman, Scottie. "The Role, Function, and Influences of District Administrators on Curricular Change in the Multicampus Community College District." Ph.D. The University of Texas at Austin, 1986 249pp (47/11-A.3956)

This study examined curriculum change at a multicampus community college. Of particular interest was the role of the central administration in effecting change on individual campuses. A variety of data sources were used including documents, interviews, and field notes. Analysis of the data indicated that the district administration served basically two roles in curriculum change: leadership and support. Leadership includes setting vision, climate, and direction, or championing and structuring. Support includes coordinating, communicating, and providing resources.


Curriculum development activities of 144 Georgia school superintendents were examined in this study in relation to superintendent characteristics, district characteristics, and preferred power model as defined by French and Raven. Data were collected from state department of education reports, a survey of curriculum development activities, and the Power Perception Profile developed by Hersey and Blanchard. Analysis of the data revealed no significant correlations in the preferred social power mode and such demographic characteristics as gender or number of years as superintendent. A significant relationship was found between systemswide curriculum development activities and the Expert, Legitimate, and Information power modes.


Six major points of inquiry guided this study of curriculum and instruction directors in Michigan. Does this person have a long-term plan for curriculum development? High expectations of performance? An ongoing evaluation program? Is the person a leader of change? Does the person conduct curriculum development as a cooperative venture? Does the person disseminate and encourage the use of research? The researcher surveyed 152 school districts in general, larger school districts fared better than smaller ones on these six measures, although all districts were lacking in cooperative efforts for curriculum planning and development.

In this study, 300 elementary principals were surveyed regarding their perceived allocation and their ideal allocation of time for curriculum activities in four areas: studying, planning, implementing, and evaluating. Analysis was based on a t-test, which revealed significant differences in perceived and ideal allocation of time in all four areas. There were also significant differences between male and female principals. Female principals indicated that they should spend more time on studying, implementing, and evaluating and in fact do spend more time on these areas than do male principals. Neither the type of school system nor the size of the school significantly affected the responses.


Questionnaire responses from 110 central office personnel in North Carolina were used to ascertain the role of principals as curriculum leaders. Three factors were significant in determining the central office personnel's view of the principal: (1) prior experience as a principal, (2) involvement in professional curriculum organizations, and (3) awareness of current literature in curriculum and instruction. The researcher urged that increased attention be paid to relations between principals and central office personnel on curriculum matters.

Curriculum Theory


This study explored the meanings of phenomenological curriculum theories as proposed by such theorists as Pinar, Grumet, Apple, van Manen, Huebner, and Phenix. Three concepts received particular attention: intentionality, reflection, and intersubjectivity. It was argued that intentionality is important because it is the curriculum that is experienced that is of major importance. Reflection is necessary because it allows one to step back and reflect on meaning, and it is in the intersubjectivity of interpersonal relations that "real" curriculum is found. The researcher urges phenomenological examination of the curriculum experience so its aesthetic and ethical dimensions can be explored.


In this study, concepts of domination, exploitation, oppression, and alienation were explored as they can be found in the hidden curriculum and in teachers' work. The purpose of this study was to explore such concepts and to propose ways in which teachers can analyze the social context of what they do. According to the researcher, such analysis leads to strategies that can transform schools into more democratic public institutions. Strategies are proposed that can lead to a transformational pedagogy based in critical literacy.


The interpretation theory of Paul Ricoeur was used in this study as a method to analyze contemporary curriculum theory. The method involves a reading of materials, an explanation of the material based on structural analysis, and a phenomenological interpretation of the material, which leads to increased self-understanding. The author applied this approach to a reading and interpretation of two widely diverse curriculum works.


This study sought to develop a curriculum design for use in developing computer courses at the postsecondary level. The proposed design was based on an analysis of four main types of design: (1) learner, (2) core, (3) learner centered, and (4) infusion. Additional input was gained from an analysis of problems for the design, including such problems as the uncertainty of the future, disparity in student backgrounds, and lack of consensus about core elements of computer courses. Because some of the problems are new and unique to computer studies, a curriculum theory was proposed as a design model for computer studies.

This book offers a conceptual framework for staff development and a platform for strengthening the investment in educational personnel. The authors describe the design, implementation, and governance of a system with three components—individual, collective, and systemic—which can result in comprehensive human resource management. They include recommendations based upon the study of a wide range of staff development programs, research on teaching, information about the workplace, and research on how teachers learn. There is a discussion and review of research underlying the claim that staff development can increase student learning. Key chapters include such topics as designing, training, coaching, and evaluating staff development programs.

—Bernard J. Badiali

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**Miscellaneous**


This study examined pupil-teacher planning in the context of probation officer training in 10 counties of western New York. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. It was found that pupil-teacher planning (probation officer-training coordinator planning) is now occurring whether on a one-to-one basis or in small or large groups. This study urges increased use of this practice based on the educational literature on the topic.


The purpose of this study was to determine what changes in graduation requirements had occurred since the 1982–83 school year and to examine the curriculum processes, goals, and status of selected curriculum areas. Questionnaires were sent to 225 superintendents on the basis of stratified random sampling. Even though Iowa has no state-mandated graduation requirements, the data revealed that such requirements had been changed in 67 percent of the districts, with a general increase in hours and academic areas. No significant differences were found on the basis of such factors as student population, student achievement, population diversity, or assessed evaluation per student. The principal emerged as the overall instructional leader of the district. The board of education, parents, students, and the community were seen as having little influence on the curriculum.


In this study, the life of a global education project was examined as well as its long-lasting effects. The major sources of data were from the project's archives and from interviews with 24 teachers and administrators who had been involved with the project. It was found, in part, that (1) the project did cause changes in the curriculum and the teachers who taught it; (2) the project had little impact on school or districtwide curricula, (3) the two-week summer seminar was effective in preparing teachers for the project; (4) when the project was over, teachers continued to use the materials if they had them in their possession, and (5) the project was not continued beyond the four-year period.

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