Although a great deal has been written about curriculum theory in social studies education, teachers' curriculum practice has received much less attention. What do teachers plan? What ensues in the classroom? How does this curriculum affect what students learn?

PRIORITIES IN SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM RESEARCH

Curriculum decisions are ineffective unless they affect what teachers do in classrooms and what students learn. Still, the social studies curriculum literature has seldom focused on curriculum practice. The literature has, in Cornbleth's words, "[arbitrarily separated] curriculum construction from implementation . . . calling the former curriculum and the latter instruction." This divorce of what might be called official curriculum—curriculum guides, adopted textbooks, and behavioral objectives that teachers are held accountable for—from the curriculum enacted in classrooms has distorted our view of social studies curriculum. Social studies scholars have long debated what social studies curriculum should be, but the debate has focused its greatest energies on official curriculum. The available evidence, however, suggests that the curriculum theories of social studies professors are seldom the same as the curriculum practices of teachers.

This gap between theory and practice has frequently led social studies professors and curriculum specialists to assume that current curriculum prac-
tices are somehow problematic. There is an apparent consensus in the research literature about life in social studies classrooms: Instruction is teacher-centered; textbooks are the dominant curriculum material; evaluation is based on student memorization of content; little attention is given to controversial issues; and students find the social studies uninteresting and impractical. As Hertzberg observes, though, relatively little social studies research has examined real classrooms. She concludes, "One should not ignore what one seeks to change and simply assume that it needs changing." 5

Although researchers believe curriculum practices are deficient, these same practices have been remarkably resistant to change. 6 At least three factors are responsible for the conservatism of social studies practice. First, teachers' chief priorities are usually activities conducive to classroom order and keeping students busy. Thus, teachers' curriculum priorities starkly contrast theorists' less management-oriented views. Second, teachers' curriculum practices, though divergent from most curriculum theories, are far from simple. For example, McCutcheon describes teachers' rich realm of mental planning, a realm still poorly understood. 7 Perhaps we have tried to change teachers' curriculum-development practice while seriously underestimating its complexity. Third, and most important, we have assumed that theoretical models can be transferred, in a more or less wholesale fashion, to teachers. This approach, according to Noddings and Enright, not only fails to recognize teachers as autonomous human beings but presupposes that we can dictate a model of educational practice. As Noddings and Enright conclude, it seems unlikely that we can impose "a model [of educational practice] unless the practitioners are already basically in sympathy with it." 8 This last factor becomes more telling when we consider that teachers seldom see much relevance of theories to what they do in the classroom.

According to an emerging view of curriculum practice's, teachers construct their own views. 9 Here, one productive role for theorists and researchers

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5 Stephen J. Thornton, "Curriculum Consonance in United States History Classrooms" (doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 1985), p. 15
7 Ibid., p. 168
8 Gail McCutcheon, "Elementary School Teachers' Planning for Social Studies and Other Subjects," Theory and Research in Social Education 9 (Spring 1981), 45–66
9 Nel Noddings and D. Scott Enright, The Promise of Open Education, Theory into Practice 22 (Summer 1983): 182
is not to dictate to teachers—something that has been conspicuously unsuccessful anyway—but to assist them to reflect on their own practice. This role would require rich descriptions of what teachers actually do, why they do it, and to what effects. As Jackson remarked a generation ago, it is a "reasonable goal . . . to seek an understanding of the teaching process as it is commonly performed before making an effort to change it." 10

The remainder of this article is intended to contribute to this understanding. Three 10th-grade U.S. history classrooms are the focus of a study of curriculum consonance—the relationships among what teachers plan to teach (the intended curriculum), what ensues in the classroom (the operational curriculum), and what students learn (the experienced curriculum). The study’s aim is to enhance our understanding of teachers’ curriculum practices and the effects of these practices on students.

STUDY DESIGN

This study of curriculum consonance was conducted at a northern California school, “Taylor High.” 11 Taylor is located in an upper-middle-class community, and the school’s program has a strong college-preparation orientation. More than 90 percent of graduating seniors go on to college. The study investigated consonance in three classes taught by three different men (Carson, Voisin, and Bauer) The study used the methodology of educational connoisseurship and educational criticism to illuminate the educational significance of what unfolded. 12 Two focal questions were addressed: (1) What degree of curriculum consonance existed? (2) What appears to account for it?

Conditions at Taylor High made an undistracted examination of consonance easy for several reasons. First, Taylor High’s students were a remarkably homogeneous group, at least compared to the heterogeneity of many schools today. Nearly all the students were white and from upper-middle-class backgrounds. Because nearly all students went on to college, the school’s program was single-mindedly academic. In other words, catering to various special populations—a state of affairs that limits educators’ autonomy in curriculum decision making—simply was not a significant concern at Taylor. 13 Second, the teachers were all men with more than 20 years’ teaching experience in the district, and each of them had pursued graduate work. The same textbook was used in each class, and the classes were untracked (except for advanced placement). Thus, many of the usual differences between classrooms were virtually absent in these three social studies classes. Finally, there was virtually no official curriculum. Although all U.S. history classes used the same textbook,

11The names of the school, teachers, and students have been changed.
there were no state, district, school, or department mandates on what should be taught in U.S. history. This study examined the teachers teaching the "same" content—a unit on the United States between the two world wars. To a high degree, then, each teacher could decide for himself what he would teach.

The primary fieldwork task was to collect information that would describe the intended, operational, and experienced curriculums in each classroom. Through pre-instruction interviews and an analysis of the textbook, I identified the three intended curriculums. In these interviews, I explored each teacher's conception of curriculum. What did each see as the purposes of teaching youngsters American history? I then asked about the specifics of their curriculum planning: How did they transform their broad curricular conception into specific goals, learning activities, curriculum materials, instructional strategies, and evaluation procedures?

The description of the operational curriculum was based on notes taken during non-participant observation. I visited each classroom every day of the unit—about four weeks in each case—and wrote down descriptions and impressions, including an examination of students' tests, assignments, and seatwork. Whenever possible, I spoke informally with teachers and students, both in and outside of the classroom—these conversations helped me corroborate information gained through observations.

The experienced curriculum was the most difficult to investigate. Plainly I could not directly observe what students were thinking, feeling, and learning. Before the unit began, therefore, I interviewed six academically representative students from each class to determine what they already knew about the United States between the wars. The same students were interviewed again after the unit. The description of the experienced curriculum was based on a comparison of pre- and post-interviews and on corroborating observation and documentary evidence, such as student homework assignments and test papers.

THE INTENDED CURRICULUM

What shaped the intended curriculum? What did these teachers consider when they planned? What were the salient characteristics of their intended curriculums? I will address these questions by looking for patterns of intention, but I will not describe each teacher's intentions in great detail. Readers interested in the individual case studies of each teacher should consult the original study.  

Three largely discrete factors account for what the teachers planned to teach (1) conception of purpose, (2) curriculum management, and (3) outside pressures. I suggest, however, that there was a fourth factor akin to Shulman's notion of pedagogical content knowledge:

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*Stephen J. Thornton, "Curriculum Consonance in United States History Classrooms" (doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 1985)*
[It is] a special kind of knowledge that is neither content nor pedagogy per se. It is a form of teacher understanding that combines content, pedagogy and learner characteristics in a unique way.\(^1\)

The first factor was each teacher's conception of the purpose of teaching youngsters history. Although these teachers' conceptions had much in common, such as the belief that students should learn important facts and generalizations, their emphases diverged in significant ways. Bauer's conception was that history should have personal relevance to his students' lives; Carson believed that history should teach intellectual processes in a manner advocated by the New Social Studies theorists in the 1960s.\(^1\) Voisin believed that students needed a survey of American history as a basis to identify what is historically significant—he hoped that they would approach information critically, become "harder to fool." Conceptions of curriculum, as Adler notes, seldom have a one-to-one correspondence with what is taught, but they act as one important influence on teachers' curriculum practice.\(^7\)

A second group of factors concerned what Flinders calls curriculum management—how teachers arrange curriculum in response to the demands of their particular situation to make their job manageable.\(^8\) These teachers, like all teachers, must deal with the fact that potentially a teacher can always do more: assign more homework, assist students with reading problems, or design more stimulating learning activities. Survival in the job dictates, however, that teachers must manage curriculum in ways that provide order and peace of mind and facilitate accomplishing curricular priorities.\(^9\) No exception, these three teachers arranged curriculum in ways that made their job manageable given the circumstances of their work. For example, as in many schools, teachers at Taylor High in recent years had witnessed growing class sizes and reduced clerical help. As Department Chair Bauer noted, "10 to 12 years ago, for five classes I had about 90 students", now he had the same number in three classes. Consequently, Bauer mentioned that, although he believed essays gave students "practice in organizing their ideas," he rarely assigned them because he did not have time to grade them. Carson also faced management problems. In his first year at Taylor High, he had three prepa

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\(^1\) Sigurn Gudmundsdottir and Lee S Shulman, "Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Social Studies" (paper presented to the College and University Faculty Assembly at the annual meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies, New York, November 1986)


ration sets, yet virtually no assistance with clerical chores such as typing and duplicating. One of his responses was to obtain other teachers' handouts to save preparation time and typing. Voisin remarked that he taught his separate sections of U.S. history at the same pace "just because it's more convenient for me."

A third factor influencing the intended curriculum came from beyond the classroom door. This factor potentially included matters such as the state social studies framework and community expectations. The former turned out to be unimportant: These teachers largely ignored the state framework. Community pressures, on the other hand, had a discernible influence on the teachers. All three teachers understood that the community held high academic expectations—and these expectations influenced their curriculum decision making. Voisin remarked, "[I] keep pushing through the material, as I feel with SAT tests and parent expectations and things like that I have to get through the material." Carson, new to Taylor High, found that community pressures were not imaginary: Parents and students criticized him for "going too slowly through the material." The unwritten expectation was that U.S. history should cover the scope of U.S. history from its earliest days until recent times. Carson now "covered" each textbook chapter in a week to 10 days. As he wryly remarked, "I do not recommend that as a way to build curriculum."

The fourth factor influencing the intended curriculum incorporates elements of the previous three. As Adler observes, curriculum plans are the product of competing and overlapping demands.\(^\text{20}\) For the three U.S. history teachers, we see that elements of more than one of the three identified factors influenced these reasons for a particular curriculum decision:

- Voisin believes that parents expect him to cover the material, which he argues can be done most efficiently by working through each textbook chapter (outside pressures and curriculum management).
- Carson believes that students should learn to critique their peers' answers, so he structures classroom discussions to facilitate such interchanges (conception of curriculum and curriculum management).
- Bauer uses the textbook because it is a "convenient" tool but supplements it with lectures and other materials when he believes the text neglects important issues (curriculum management and conception of curriculum).
- Voisin believes learning is more effective if it involves "different senses and different activities" but believes he needs (and is expected) to "cover . . . the book" (conception of curriculum, curriculum management, and outside pressures).

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WHAT HAPPENS TO THE INTENDED CURRICULUM?

Teachers' intentions, of course, are only a point of departure for instruction. To what extent were these teachers' plans carried out? How did these operationalized intentions affect what students learned? Where was consonance jeopardized and why? What does a consonant curriculum look like, and how does this curriculum affect the quality of students' educational experiences?

Consonance was first jeopardized within the intended curriculum. The broad aims of two of the teachers were sometimes inconsistent with their more detailed curriculum planning—these two teachers held conflicting distal and proximate goals. For example, Carson's conception of curriculum was reminiscent of the New Social Studies. He was more concerned with how students learned than with the specific content covered: "To just have the recall facts and never have any exercise in doing transfer and synthesis seems to me to be a very empty exercise." In this view, content takes a back seat to transferable intellectual processes. Therefore, one would expect activities that stressed inquiry learning. Carson's plans for learning activities, materials, instructional strategies, and evaluation procedures, however, were centered on teacher-led, question and-answer instruction and seatwork based on the textbook's review questions. There was little connection between Carson's planned activities and his broad aims.

Carson recognized that he and his students often did not perceive events in the same way. For example, he related that students probably regarded his class "discussions" as lectures. Still, Carson betrayed no sign that he recognized dissonance within his own intended curriculum. Instead, he attributed the students' obvious lack of interest in discussion to their preoccupation with getting the right answer to obtain high grades.

The second (and seemingly most obvious) place where consonance was jeopardized was in the translation of intentions into classroom events. All three teachers indicated the topics they would cover (e.g., the causes of the Great Depression), and at this level, with only minor exceptions, their plans were carried out. Yet, at a deeper level, plans were not always realized. For example, one of Voisin's main aims was that students learn to discern historical significance—he hoped to foster this ability to probe beneath surface-level meanings in his classroom. During Voisin's interview, for example, he referred to plans to get his students to appraise information skeptically. But my observations revealed that the teacher usually performed the skeptical appraisal. Voisin apparently did not recognize that if his students were to be made "harder to fool," then they (not the teacher) had to do the thinking.

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21 Stephen J. Thornton, "Curriculum Consonance in United States History Classrooms" (doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 1985), p. 130
22 Ibid., pp. 228-229.
23 Ibid., p. 229.
This contradiction in Voisin's curriculum is evident from the following comparison. In his pre-instruction interview, he spoke of his goals:

I expect human beings, when they exercise all their faculties, . . . ought to be pretty independent-minded, be able to determine when they don't know something as well as when they do, be able to look at an argument and come to some conclusions, be able to ask questions.\textsuperscript{24}

Yet when Voisin's class dealt with subject matter that required reaching conclusions, the teacher often shied away from his own goals. It was Friday, March 25, and the topic was the causes of the Great Depression:

On this particular Friday afternoon, above all else, it is clear that it is Friday afternoon! The students appear unsettled—their minds seem to be elsewhere than Depression America. Mr. Voisin responds to several students' questions on the previous night's reading homework, but the demeanor of most students suggests listlessness rather than studiousness. Question time over, Mr. Voisin announces that there are six major theories concerning the causes of the Great Depression, he duly lists these on the blackboard. Students are receptive to the extent that most copy the six theories into their notebooks. The teacher offers no explanation, students ask no questions save one: "Will there be a question about these theories on the unit test?" It is the shot heard round the world. The iron-curtain of malaise abruptly rises. Students await the teacher pronouncement. Mr. Voisin, concern creasing his brow, solemnly answers: "I wouldn't ask you something so difficult, and besides not all these theories are in the textbook." Tension is released. Students return to repose. The lecture continues, tasks are assigned, homework set—the students sit passively, . . . the weekend beckons.\textsuperscript{25}

Voisin, when it came to a conflict between making students "harder to fool" and covering subject matter, usually opted for "a good general survey" and teacher convenience.\textsuperscript{26} He believed most students would eventually grasp difficult subject matter—and become "harder to fool"—through repetition.\textsuperscript{27} Although Voisin realized that not all students grasped difficult subject matter, he believed his approach was the best that could be expected given the demands on his time and that he had to "cover" the scope of U.S. history.

A third threat to consonance in these three classrooms was the conflicting agendas set by the teachers and their school. A potent implicit curriculum at work in Taylor High placed a premium on academic achievement. Parents want, and vocally push for, achievement levels that will afford entry to the nation's most prestigious colleges and universities. These expectations foster an atmosphere of fierce academic competition where many students seem driven by the desire for high test scores. Of course, extrinsic reward was not necessarily antithetical to the three teachers' aims, but students' concern with academic "success" sometimes subtly undermined the teachers' intentions. For example, Carson's intellectual processes orientation, although imperfectly
realized, requires that students will take intellectual risks, such as forming tentative hypotheses. This orientation introduces ambiguity. Student reactions to playing with ideas, Carson remarked, stressed extrinsic reward.

And some [class] discussions will go off on tangents that may seem somewhat unrelated. I try to pull them together; I try to take a lot of things out of the [textbook] chapter and apply them to the present day… And [students] find that very frustrating, which is frustrating to me. … What would a student say? "That's covering things which are interesting," but they're [students] not going to be tested on that, so don't waste time on it.28

Almost an echo of the teacher, one student said, "What he [Carson] asks us on tests, he doesn't tell us during class." Similarly, another student observed, "Many things he talks about in class aren't really on the test." Many other students made similar remarks. Carson's students resented not being told "right" answers—their concern was identifying teacher-identified "right" answers and learning them for the test.29 Teachers do not work in isolation from institutional and community expectations. What teachers do, others can undo.

After considering where consonance is lost, we must ask how it is created. The most consonant curriculum, Bauer's, is a good example. Bauer said that he wanted students to gain not only academic mastery of U.S. history but also that he wanted students to grasp its personal significance. His aim in studying the Great Depression was that students would acquire "some kind of sense of what the Depression was and how it affected people." In particular, he believed that the Depression had been the decisive influence on his students' grandparents' lives. He thought that studying the Depression would enable his students to better understand their grandparents' generation. The goals could be best accomplished, Bauer calculated, by a simulation game on the causes and course of the Depression. How did Bauer carry out his plans, and what were the educational effects?

The first day of the simulation was the eleventh day of the unit. The "participant's manual" handout that Mr. Bauer distributed said that the "purpose" of the game was: "To recreate some of the psychological atmosphere of the 1920s as they affected the average citizens of the era." Also distributed at the beginning of this period was a reading assignment (due in one week) that required synthesis of textbook reading on the Depression with simulation participation.

Handouts received, expectancy was in the air, tinged with eagerness, anticipation, and apparent enthusiasm—all of which I had not previously witnessed to the same degree in Mr. Bauer's classroom. Mr. Bauer guides the students through the complex and lengthy rules. He then announces that he is "The Game-Overall-Director," or "GOD for short." There are a few guffaws from students. He continues, "I am also the bank, and the government." At random, students are assigned occupational roles, for example, a clergyman, a dentist, a farm laborer, and a teacher. The object of the game is to accumulate "prestige points." These points are acquired through social status, an indirect function of wealth. Students are informed how they can purchase shares.

28Ibid, p 229
borrow money (on margin, if they wish), join the country club, and the like. All students must feed and house themselves and family (if any).

The game begins. It is 1921, or year one. Mr. Bauer, as GOD, pronounces in expansive tones. "Let’s be generous, after all, they’re not called the Roaring Twenties for nothing! I will loan you money for property, or just about anything else you’d like to buy. What’s more, I’ll loan it to you on margin...!"

Students are now well at work. Only 10 minutes of the 45-minute period remain. Students, calculators working furiously, are pondering how to spend their income for year one. At the end of the period, the teacher announces that the economy is booming and details economic indicators such as rises in share prices. "Calculate your prestige points and income for this first year for homework," Mr. Bauer instructs.

On the third day (year five) of the simulation, class begins with the teacher disarmingly inquiring how players "are doing with prestige points." Apart from a few disadvantaged individuals, such as those in the depressed agricultural sector and those on fixed incomes, players generally agree that times are good and getting better. Optimism abounds.

Play for year five commences. GOD announces to an ebullient class that stock has fallen $5 a share, and rental properties have declined by $1,000. Shock waves. There are several loud "ohs" from the players. Mr. Bauer then asks the stunned crowd for four volunteers. He gets them "Okay," GOD commands, "you four, your banks have failed, your savings are zero." There is general laughter—except for the four volunteers who now look more than a little bewildered. The class is instructed to "count off one through eight." "Numbers two and six," Mr. Bauer announces, "you are unemployed, income zero. Number four, income halved." The instructions and calculations continue for a couple of minutes more. Some players are obliged to liquidate their assets or seek relief "to make a living." Andy confides to me that, even though his stock has fallen from $25 per share to $15, he is not going to sell because he is confident that prices will soon rise. Bill, a farm laborer with four children, is forced to seek relief and eventually secures a job with a federal arts project. Mr. Bauer has Bill announce that to the class. Bill and other distressed players, such as those who cannot meet their loan repayments for stock bought on margin, seem to be experiencing vicarious embarrassment about taking charity.

As day four begins, the class is noisy and takes a few minutes to settle down. There is a question:

Student 1. I’ve been keeping my money in a mattress. So the bank failures haven’t affected me.
Mr. Bauer: Your house has burned down.
Student 2. What if you bury it [money]? 
Mr. Bauer: It was washed away in a flood. Now, things have become worse. The bank is not going to go out of business because some of you malingerers can’t meet your obligations.

Bill has enjoyment written all over his face. Further dark economic news is announced. Bill heads out to the teacher for additional relief. Mr. Bauer, with a wry grin, remarks, "Look at this guy. This guy isn’t even trying to make it." One girl asks if she can commit suicide. "It’s not allowed in the game," Mr. Bauer promptly replies. Many students have now joined the swelling relief line. Ken, the clergyman, is jailed for bootlegging, and his family becomes destitute.

By year nine, a modest recovery is under way; the New Deal has begun. Some prices have increased, and a few of the unemployed have found jobs. Property values remain extremely low. An increasing number of players receive assistance from federal programs. There is a general feeling that the worst has passed.
Halfway through this fourth period devoted to the simulation, Mr. Bauer steers the class toward the subject for the next lesson and a half, the relation of the simulation experience to the "real" Depression. On the board, he lists U.S. economic statistics for the years covered by the simulation game and proceeds to explain notions such as national income. Students appear to grasp quickly the notion of national income when Mr. Bauer relates it to their experiences in the game. As this debriefing continues on day five, Mr. Bauer directly relates some of the key issues of the Depression to the simulation.

Mr. Bauer: When did you in farming start to see your income decline, Bill?
Bill: After year one [general laughter].
Mr. Bauer: Okay, what point was I trying to make about farming?
Bill: Agriculture was depressed even before the crash....

Clearly the simulation has been a popular learning activity, but I wanted to be sure that it was not merely an entertaining sideshow but rather was educationally worthwhile. Student responses indicate that most of these youngsters learned a good deal of what Mr. Bauer hoped. Bill, for example, remarked: "The simulation proved exactly what it should have.... It showed you what your behavior would have been like in that period of time."

Andy was more skeptical of the simulation's worth—he dismissed it as "obvious" and not well enough integrated with the textbook coverage. Yet, in part at least, Andy's reservations might be taken at less than their face value. After all, it was this same boy who, during the game, confided that he expected stock prices to rise soon after the crash—hardly testament to the obviousness Andy claimed with hindsight.

Generally, student interviews suggest that they did synthesize the simulation and academic coverage of the Depression. Denise gave the lengthiest reply of what appeared to be the general sentiment. "I got the most from the game of the twenties We learned pretty much how people spent their money, and the way their life style was like, and then the drop.... and the Depression.... You can understand what's going on because you're there feeling what's happening.... I wouldn't have [been able to understand the Depression] with just the reading."

Christin expressed a similar view. "It [the simulation] helped me understand it [the economy]. You could connect [the economic concepts] pretty well with the game."

With the exception of Andy, the six students I interviewed concurred that the affective element of the simulation activity made a significant contribution to their understanding of the Depression. As April remarked, "You're experiencing it, and you get more emotional into it." Moreover, the empathy developed by playing the game had, according to several students, affected their view of their own families. For instance, Christin commented, "I now can see how the Depression affected members of my family, and I can understand why my grandmother won't spend money as easily as my mom will."

Similarly, Denise observed. "I can better understand how my grandparents feel... Before I didn't [understand my grandparents]. I thought they were just being mean [laughing]."

Student reports of their learning process may, of course, not be consonant with their academic mastery of the subject matter. Consequently, in the post-instruction interviews, I tried to establish how comprehensive an understanding of the Great Depression these students had acquired. As with the other two classes in this study, I asked Mr. Bauer's students what caused the Great Depression: I wanted to see whether they could distinguish the triggering of the Depression by the Wall Street Crash from the fundamental, underlying causes.
For the most part, Mr. Bauer's students had learned that the triggering of the Depression was not the same as its underlying causes. Christin, for example, employed the apt metaphor of "breaking the ice" to illustrate the effect of the Wall Street Crash. Bill remarked, "The stock market crash was the beginning, it wasn't the cause." Although some other interviewees did not make this distinction as ably, there seemed some level of recognition of the issue involved. (Notably, fewer students from Mr. Voisin's and Mr. Carson's classes were able to make the distinction between the Depression's underlying causes and its immediate causes.) The ambitious aims Mr. Bauer posited for his curriculum found their way into the classroom, and into what students took away.  

CONCLUSION

We can view this examination of consonance in at least two ways. First is the approach adopted by Brophy in his study of consonance. Beginning with the official curriculum, Brophy identified each divergence in its translation into the intended curriculum, into the operational curriculum, and so on. In this view, the teacher implicitly is portrayed as little more than a technician carrying out someone else's ideas—what is crucial is that the teacher follows the specifications. Insisting on curriculum models that teachers find unhelpful and employing accountability procedures that build paper mountains, however, have changed little about how teachers make curriculum decisions.

The technical image of teachers' curriculum practice misrepresents the complexity of what teachers actually do, and must do. What they choose to include, what they emphasize, what they evaluate, and what they praise determines the curriculum children actually experience. Ironically, some teachers "seem willing if not eager to delegate much of this responsibility to text authors and text selection committees." (Voisin commented, for example, "I've found it much easier to teach, than in deciding what to teach") Still, the curriculum is never teacher-proof. This study largely confirms that what you do in a classroom is what you get. When all is said and done, teachers define the curriculum that students actually experience.

In contrast to Brophy and others who assume a top-down model, I believe that our purpose in studying curriculum consonance should be to better understand what teachers do rather than to document their aberrations from official curriculum. No one model of curriculum practice is likely to be

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suitable for all teachers in all contexts. Official curriculum properly sets broad guidelines for curriculum scope and sequence, but it does not, and cannot, replace the need for teachers to adapt curriculum to a particular context. (This ability to adapt is, of course, part of what distinguishes a professional from a technician.) In these circumstances, one reasonable aim of curriculum research is to assist teachers in seeing how they serve as curriculum decision makers and to what effects. Although we may, along the way, discover images of the possible, in the final analysis only teachers can adapt these images to practice.6

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