

EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE CHANGES IN THEIR CURRICULUM BELIEF SYSTEMS OVER TIME

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Do schools as a collective unit of educators change their beliefs about curriculum and instructional issues over time in such a way that the quality of education they offer improves? This is one of the significant questions that both professional educators and the American public must answer. Some say: Yes. Our schools have changed their beliefs about curriculum and instruction over the years, and the changes are for the better. A larger percentage of children is in school for more years of their life than ever before, children are being exposed to a broader range of ideas than ever before, and the majority of them are learning more than ever before. Others say: Yes. Our schools have changed their beliefs about curriculum and instruction over time, but the change has been for the worse. This is partially because educational expectations for our schools have lowered and as a result, schools demand less of themselves and their students. Still others say: No. Our schools have not changed their philosophical underpinnings in any fundamental way over the years. The negligible changes we see must be interpreted from Sarason's perspective that "the more things change the more they stay the same."¹ The insignificant changes taking place within our schools are simply natural "swings of the pendulum" that are inherent in our educational system.

A related question is: *Do the educators who run our schools—both teachers and administrators—change their beliefs about curriculum and instructional issues over the span of their careers?* This is a critical question to answer if we want to answer the larger question mentioned above. It is also a critical question to answer if we want to understand what is occurring in our schools or if we want to learn how to influence change systematically within our schools.

This research investigates educators' perceptions about the types of changes that occur within their beliefs about curriculum over time. It specifically examines the changes in curriculum ideology—or philosophy—that

¹Seymour B. Sarason, *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971)

occurred during the careers of 76 educators. It explores both the frequency of and reasons for change. The major findings are the following:

- Educators make changes in their curriculum ideologies about once every four years.
- The first such change occurs about three years after entering the work force.
- The most frequently noted events associated with change are changing the school or grade in which an educator works, noting and responding to previously unknown needs of the children or community, and changing jobs from teaching to administration.

A major observation accompanying these findings is that it is changes in the ordinary everyday relationships and events in educators' lives that act as the prime stimuli for change in their curriculum and instructional belief systems, and not the extraordinary intrusions of curriculum consultants, new textbook series, or other such "change-oriented" curriculum events. In addition, this research describes different ways educators conceptualize the relationships between their curriculum beliefs and those of other educators.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In *A Place Called School* John Goodlad indicates that over the last 300 years, four major goals have come to compete for attention within American schools.² They are

- (1) academic . . . embracing all intellectual skills and domains of knowledge,
- (2) vocational . . . developing readiness for productive work and economic responsibility,
- (3) social and civic . . . preparing for socialization into a complex society, and
- (4) personal . . . emphasizing the development of individual responsibility, talent, and free expression.³

Each of these goals is supported as the primary goal of education by both a substantial segment of our society as a whole and by a substantial group of teachers.⁴ Goodlad further points out that a discrepancy exists between what teachers perceive to be the proportionate emphasis upon each of these goals

²John I. Goodlad, *A Place Called School* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1984), p. 39

³Ibid., p. 37

⁴Ibid., p. 65

and what they would prefer was the proportionate emphasis in the schools where they work (see Table 1).

Educators find themselves immersed in constant debate and disharmony over critical philosophical and ideological issues concerning (1) the competing struggle among the academic, vocational, social, and personal goals for influence over their school curricula, (2) the discrepancy between perceived and preferred goal emphases for their schools, and (3) their actual ability to choose which goals or combinations of goals they will promote. This debate and disharmony render them receptive to frequent changes in the educational goals they support.

At one level, the issue for educators is which of the goals they will emphasize in their curriculum and instructional endeavors. At a deeper level, the issue is which one of four curriculum ideologies they will subscribe to in order to give meaning to their curriculum and instructional endeavors. Here, the phrase *curriculum ideology* means a practical philosophy that influences educators' day-to-day behaviors toward curriculum issues. This study will label the four ideologies Scholar Academic, Social Efficiency, Social Reconstruction, and Child Study. These ideologies roughly parallel the academic, vocational, social, and personal goals for schools. The curriculum ideologies are major conceptual systems that have competed for educators' allegiance and control over their endeavors for most of this century. These ideologies go beyond the philosophical realm of beliefs about "what should be," for they are the conceptual systems that dictate "how one should behave" when confronted with curriculum and instructional tasks. Each ideology is more akin to a pedagogical subculture than to a goal; for each has its own set of beliefs about the nature of knowledge, learning, teaching, children, and evaluation, as well as its own set of goals, slogans, heroes, values, and myths.

The Scholar Academic ideology is concerned with maintaining "cultural literacy" by having students study the content and modes of inquiry of traditional academic subjects. The Social Efficiency ideology is concerned with conditioning students to learn the skills they need to perform as efficient adult

Table 1. Teachers' Perceived Goal Emphasis in Their Schools Versus Teachers' Preferred Goal Emphasis for Their Schools (in Percentages)⁵

School Level	Academic	Vocational	Social and Civic	Personal
Elementary	78.5 vs. 48.9	3.2 vs. 3.5	12.2 vs. 14.0	6.1 vs. 33.5
Junior High	64.4 vs. 46.7	10.7 vs. 10.1	16.3 vs. 13.9	8.7 vs. 29.3
Senior High	52.2 vs. 45.6	23.0 vs. 14.8	18.0 vs. 9.0	6.8 vs. 29.7

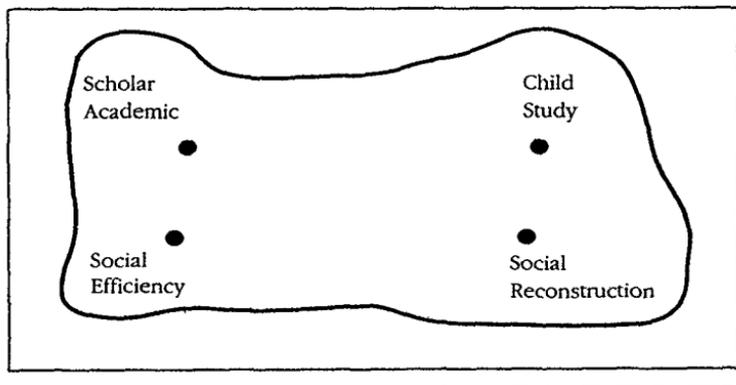
⁵Ibid., pp. 63, 64, 39.

members of society. The Social Reconstruction ideology attempts to help students understand the crises facing our society, develop a value stance toward those crises, and learn to act to alleviate the crises and thereby bring into existence a better society. The Child Study ideology places the child in the center of the educational endeavor and is concerned with helping each child grow into a unique individual with a healthy self-concept.

In the past, curriculum theorists have mapped the curriculum field as a whole, describing the nature and evolution of each of these curriculum ideologies.⁶ In Figure 1, the contents of the curved line depict all of the possible ideological stances that educators can hold with respect to curriculum, and the four points represent the ideologies just mentioned.

Curriculum theorists thus far have described the contents of this set of curriculum beliefs and noted that the density of this set of beliefs is greatest near the points representing the ideologies and most well defined and consistent at those same points. This study goes further by examining both educators' perceptions of how these four curriculum ideologies have affected their ideological stance throughout their careers and how events within their lives have affected their choice of, and interpretation of, curriculum ideologies.

Figure 1. The Four Major Curriculum Ideologies



⁶See, for example, Michael Schiro, *Curriculum For Better Schools. The Great Ideological Debate* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications, 1978); Elliot Eisner and Elizabeth Vallance, *Conflicting Conceptions of Curriculum* (Berkeley: McCutchen, 1974); William Schubert, *Curriculum. Perspective, Paradigm, and Possibility* (New York: MacMillan, 1986).

METHODOLOGY AND POPULATION

Data for this study were collected from 76 students enrolled in 1989 in graduate courses in curriculum theory taught by two full-time faculty members at Boston College.⁷ During the courses, each student was given an ideological preferences inventory to help clarify his or her ideology and was exposed to the four ideologies. At the end of the courses, each student was required to write a "curriculum ideology life history." The histories traced the evolution of the students' ideologies from the time they decided to become an educator until the present. (Special emphasis was to be placed on describing the events that enabled them to formulate and change their ideological stances.) They were also asked to draw a "diagram" that illustrated this history.

The 76 educators studied in this research included the following subgroups, some of which overlap. 39 administrators (grades K-12) from countries with English as the native language (U.S.A., Canada, Great Britain, Australia); 21 teachers (grades K-12) from countries with English as the native language, 9 educators employed in higher education, 17 Catholic school educators (grades K-12) enrolled in Boston College's Catholic School Leadership Program, and 17 senior-level school administrators (grades K-12) enrolled in Boston College's doctoral-level Professional School Administration Program. Two subgroups that are not differentiated in the study from the total population include educators from countries where English is not the native language (5 persons) and educators employed in nonschool settings (2 persons). The total population included 30 males and 46 females, 5 people under the age of 30, with the youngest being 26; and 5 people with 5 or fewer years of full-time educational work experience, the shortest being that of a school principal with 2 years experience. The administrator subgroup included 4 superintendents, 7 assistant superintendents, 17 principals, and 4 assistant principals.

The reliability of the author's interpretation of data within this study was checked in three ways: (1) a second person collected and tabulated data from 23 of the life histories and compared it to the author's data;⁸ (2) the findings were submitted to 23 of the participants, who were asked to what extent the

⁷The author and Dr. Kilburn Culley

⁸Mrs. Christine Moynihan, a doctoral student at Boston College, performed this reliability check. The only significant difference in the data related to the number of people who were counted as having a "change of school or school system" contribute to a change in curriculum ideology. In examining the difference in the scoring of the ideology life histories, the reason for the difference became obvious: when a "change in school" and another event simultaneously contributed to a change in ideology, Mrs. Moynihan counted only the "other contributing factor," while this author counted both. For example, if an educator moved from teaching in a school in an affluent suburb to teaching in a school in a poor urban community and changed ideology because of the differing needs of students, this author attributed the change in ideology to both a "change in school" and the "needs of children," while Mrs. Moynihan attributed it to only the "needs of children."

findings within the study corresponded to events within their lives;⁹ and (3) similar courses were taught to 24 Boston College graduate students in 1991, with one minor difference. After writing their curriculum ideology life history essays, these 24 students were asked to analyze their own essays, set up their own sets of reasons for why they changed their ideologies, and tabulate their findings. This allowed both for the data in this study and for the category system used in analyzing the life history essays to be examined from a new perspective. All checks for reliability indicated that the findings within this study were accurate reflections of its participants' interpretations of their lives.

The research method used in this study is the biographical method, as described by Denzin.¹⁰ Curriculum theorists, including Connelly and Clandinin and Butt and Raymond have discussed the applicability of the biographical method to the field of curriculum.¹¹ As described by Denzin, the "biographical method . . . involves the studied use and collection of personal-life documents, stories, accounts, and narratives which describe turning-point moments in individuals' lives."¹² The documents used in this study were the written curriculum ideology life histories, the diagrams of those histories, and, when available, the curriculum ideology preference inventories, curriculum vitae, and conversations and interviews with participants. The use of these multiple documents allowed for a triangulation, or cross referencing, of data that

⁹Sixteen of the 23 participants who were surveyed about the accuracy of the interpretation of the data responded. They responded by circling a number on a 5-point scale, where 5 was "closely corresponds to my life," 3 was "roughly corresponds to my life," and 1 was "no correspondence to my life." To the question "Do you think that the findings relative to the rate at which educators change their curriculum ideology, closely correspond to events within your own life, correspond roughly to events within your own life, or do not at all correspond to events within your life?" participants responded with a mean of 3.9 and a median of 4. To the question "Do you think that the findings relative to the reasons why educators change their curriculum ideology, closely correspond to events within your own life, correspond roughly to events within your own life, or do not at all correspond to events within your life?" participants responded with a mean of 3.9 and a median of 4.

¹⁰Norman K. Denzin, *Interpretative Biography* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1989), Norman K. Denzin, *The Research Act* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1989), ch. 8.

¹¹F. Michael Connelly and D. Jean Clandinin, *Teachers as Curriculum Planners: Narratives of Experience* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1988); F. Michael Connelly, and D. Jean Clandinin, "On Narrative Method, Biography and Narrative Unities in the Study of Teaching," *The Journal of Educational Thought* 21 (No. 3, December 1987): 130-139; Richard L. Butt and Danielle Raymond, "Arguments for Using Qualitative Approaches in Understanding Teacher Thinking. The Case for Biography," *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 7 (No. 1, 1987): 62-93; Richard L. Butt, Danielle Raymond, and Lloyd Yamagishi, "Autobiographic Praxis: Studying the Formation of Teachers' Knowledge," *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 7 (No. 4, Winter 1988): 87-164. See also L. Berk, "Education in Lives: Biographic Narrative in the Study of Educational Outcomes," *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 2 (No. 2, 1980): 88-155; Madeline Grumet, "Supervision and Situation: A Methodology of Self-Report for Teacher Education," *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 1 (No. 1, 1978): 191-257; William Pinar, "Life History and Educational Experience," *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 3 (No. 1, 1981): 159-286.

¹²Norman K. Denzin, *Interpretative Biography* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1989), p.13.

permitted a more accurate description of a life than a single document.¹³ The use of written, diagrammatic, and, where possible, oral data, was considered important because the different media permitted participants to portray their lives in different ways. The "turning-point moments in individuals' lives" are the composite sets of experiences that lead individuals to change their curriculum ideologies. These are the events or cumulative sets of events placed within a temporal framework that "alter the fundamental meaning structures in a person's life"¹⁴ through which curriculum and instructional events are given meaning.

The research method of this study provided participants with a contextual framework to give meaning to the components of their lives that relate to curriculum and instructional events. Participants were introduced to the four curriculum ideologies mentioned above through lectures and discussions, took a written inventory that represented to them their curriculum and instructional beliefs in terms of the meaning structure defined by these ideologies, and read books and articles written by advocates of each ideology. They also read analyses and critiques of each ideology and participated in debates during which they had either to defend or attack each ideology. This took place in an environment that attempted to avoid showing favoritism toward or discrimination against any ideology or participants who held any ideology. Participants were thoroughly familiar with the contextual framework within which this study took place and were under no external pressure to subscribe to any one ideology. The intent was to provide participants with a theoretical context that could give meaning to their lives and then have them explore their lives within that contextual framework in order to extend the meaning of the theoretical construct. This is in contrast to the purpose of others who have used the biographical method within the field of curriculum as a way of understanding the experiential knowledge of classroom participants¹⁵ or "for purposes of understanding classroom actions."¹⁶ For them, "the starting point for inquiry is a practical event rather than a working theory."¹⁶

¹³Curriculum ideology life histories and the accompanying diagrams were frequently not in agreement, possibly because they provided different media for portraying a life. Where documents did not match in one-to-one correspondence, a single composite document was constructed, in which contradictions, irregularities, and discontinuities among individual documents were accounted for. The data for this study were then abstracted from the composite document.

¹⁴Norman K. Denzin, *Interpretative Biography* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1989) p. 70.

¹⁵F. Michael Connelly, and D. Jean Clandinin, "On Narrative Method, Biography and Narrative Unities in the Study of Teaching," *The Journal of Educational Thought* 21 (No. 3, December 1987): 131, 134.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 131. Note that whether one uses the biographical method to elaborate upon theory or practice, both the interpreter and the writer of the biography understand events and give meaning to events from within a contextual structure. As Norman K. Denzin expresses it in his *Interpretative Biography* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1989): "No self or personal-experience story is ever an individual production. It derives from larger group, cultural, ideological, and historical contexts. . . . To understand a life, the epiphanies and the personal-experience and self stories that represent and shape that life, one must penetrate and understand these larger structures. They provide the languages, emotions, ideologies, taken-for-granted understandings, and shared experiences from which the stories flow" (p. 73). The research herein reported has

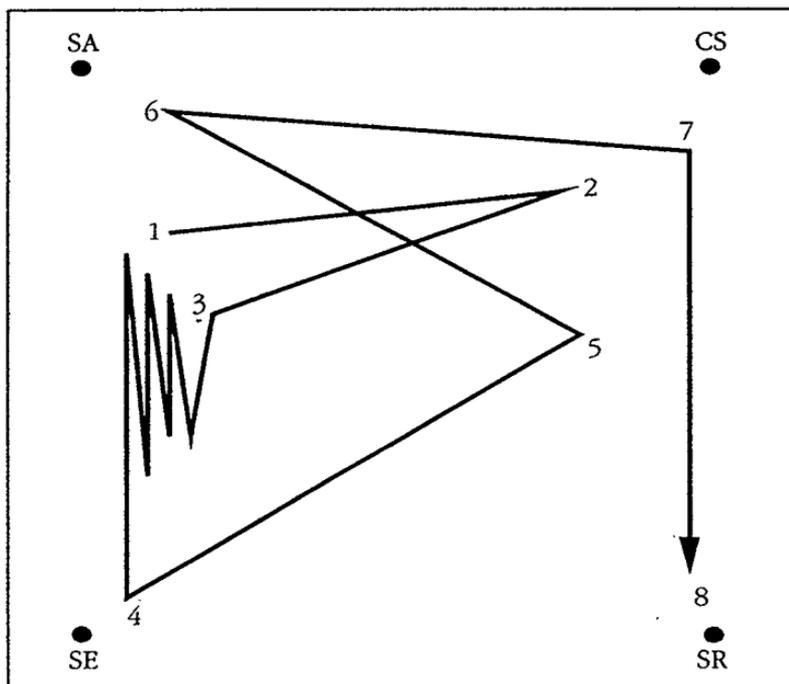
CURRICULUM LIFE HISTORIES

Let us now examine five types of drawings that educators used to describe how their curriculum ideologies have changed throughout their careers. These drawings, called ideology life history diagrams, provide an overview of the kinds of data this research is based on and show the range of illustrations educators have invented to portray their lives.¹⁷ They are presented in a "cleaned up" format that maintains the structural integrity of the originals while altering such things as uneven line quality, spatial orientation, particular life events, or comments that might identify their authors.

Figure 2 portrays what I call "Life History as a Trip." This educator began teaching at the 1st grade level with a close affiliation to the Scholar Academic ideology (position 1). Experience in teaching children gave this educator an increased desire to nurture children's individual needs, and he moved away from the Scholar Academic ideology toward the Child Study ideology (position 2). When he changed the grade he taught from 1st grade to 5th grade, the increased emphasis on academics and classroom control caused him to move to a combination of Scholar Academic and Social Efficiency ideologies (position 3). Another change of grade level that accompanied a change of school and community placed him in a position where he vacillated between the Scholar Academic and the Social Efficiency ideologies before subscribing to the Social Efficiency position, a position supported by the parents of the children he taught (position 4). When he moved again, from an urban to a rural community, he found himself working in a school and for a principal who believed in "open education" and the "progressive approach", as a result he moved his ideology toward the Child Study position (position 5). When his job changed from teacher to school principal and he moved from a rural to a suburban school, this educator moved toward the Scholar Academic ideology, an ideology that reflected the desires of upwardly mobile suburbanites who wanted their children to attend the "best" colleges (position 6). Another relocation allowed this educator to serve as the principal of a school on a Native American Indian reservation. In this position he saw how problems of alcoholism, unemployment, and drugs were daily concerns of the children. Because most children and parents on the reservation did not possess self-esteem, the child-centered ideology became primary for this educator during the first year at this location (position 7). Upon learning more about the needs of the Native Americans, this educator moved toward the Social Reconstruction ideology, for he felt he needed to help the Native Americans reconstruct the social conditions under which they lived, rather than simply nurture them. He realized that these children had to do something for their people. They

made the participants in the research familiar with the theoretical context being explored, in order to enlist them into being elaborators of that theoretical context

¹⁷Students, in fact, invented a wider range of illustrations than those presented here. This researcher, however, found it difficult to interpret illustrations of flowers and rainbows of balloons in changing colors.

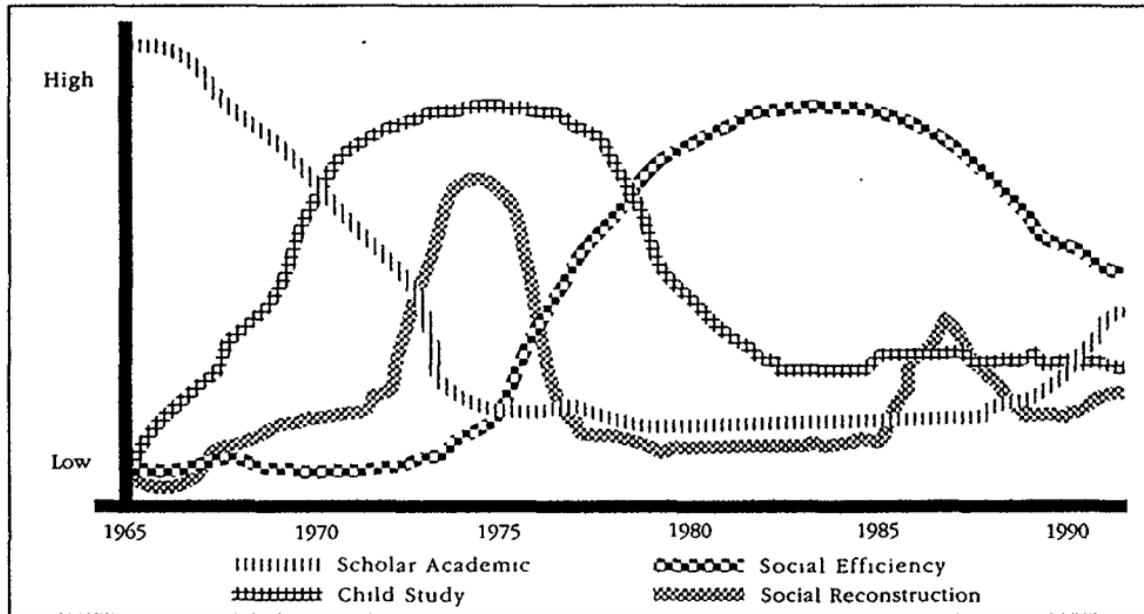
Figure 2. Life History as a Trip

- 1: First three years of teaching 1st grade
- 2: Fourth to seventh years of teaching 1st grade
- 3: Three years of teaching 5th grade
- 4: Four years of teaching junior high in a large urban school
- 5: Five years of teaching junior high in a small rural school
- 6: Five years as principal in an affluent suburban junior high
- 7: First year as principal at the Indian reservation
- 8: Second to fifth years as principal at the Indian reservation

had to become the leaders of their people to combat the serious problems on the reservation (position 8).

Figure 3 portrays what I call "Life History as a Set of Influences." As a teacher of a single academic subject to 7th and 8th grade students between 1965 and 1970, this educator was most heavily influenced by the Scholar Academic ideology. In 1970, teaching 5th grade, he became increasingly aware of the needs of the "whole child" across all academic subjects and within the context of peers and family, and became heavily influenced by the Child Study

Figure 3. Life History as a Set of Influences



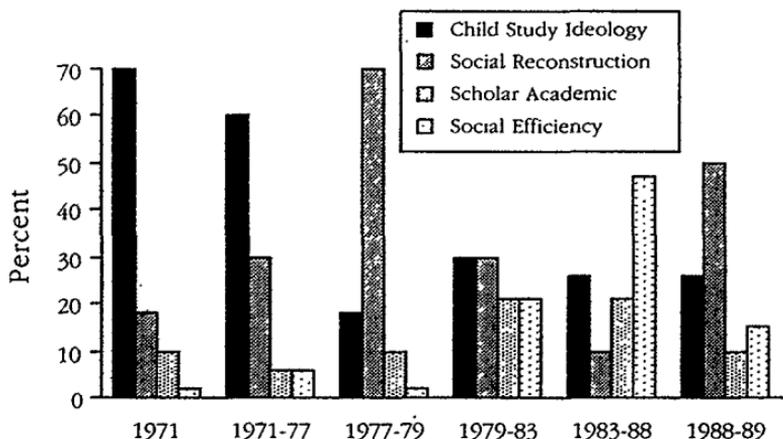
1965-70: 7th and 8th grade teacher
 1970-72: 5th grade teacher
 1972-76: 2nd grade teacher
 1974-76: Special education training

1976-84: Special education teacher
 1984-87: Assistant principal
 1987-89: Principal

ideology. This ideology continued to influence him for another eight years, although the socio-political events associated with the Vietnam War resulted in his being highly influenced by the Social Reconstruction ideology during the early 1970s. With a change of job from regular classroom teacher to special education teacher in the mid-1970s, this educator had to follow state and federal mandates and create behaviorally oriented individual education programs (IEPs) for children. As he did so he began to subscribe to the Social Efficiency ideology. Upon becoming a school principal in the mid-1980s, being freed from the constraints of conceptualizing education through the lenses of IEPs, and being pressured by veteran teachers to reevaluate the importance of imparting knowledge to children, this educator gradually came under the influence of the Scholar Academic ideology, while the Social Efficiency ideology exerted increasingly less influence over him.

Figure 4 portrays what I call "Life History as a Composite of Ideologies." In 1971, as a student teacher, this educator's ideological orientation was primarily Child Study. (From her drawings her orientation was determined to be Child Study, 70%, Social Reconstruction, 19%, Scholar Academic, 10%, and Social Efficiency, 1%.) During her first full-time job as an elementary

Figure 4. Life History as a Composite of Ideologies

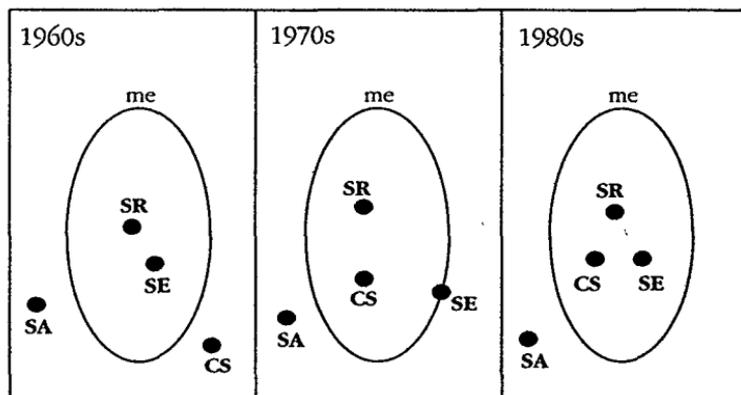


1971: Elementary student teacher
 1971-77: Elementary school teacher
 1977-79: Economics master's student
 1979-83: Junior college teacher
 1983-88: College dean
 1988-89: Doctoral student & college dean

school teacher, she modified her views slightly (Child Study, 60%, Social Reconstruction, 30%, Scholar Academic, 5%, and Social Efficiency, 5%). Between 1977 and 1979, she left teaching to obtain a master's degree in sociology. This altered her ideology dramatically, because of the academic atmosphere of the university, which she resented, and the social and political contexts she found herself in as a student (Child Study, 19%, Social Reconstruction, 70%, Scholar Academic, 10%, and Social Efficiency, 1%). Returning to teaching and changing grade levels from elementary school to junior college equalized the influence of the four ideologies (Child Study, 30%, Social Reconstruction, 30%, Scholar Academic, 20%, and Social Efficiency, 20%). When she became a college dean in 1983, the managerial demands of her administrative position influenced her to subscribe to the Social Efficiency ideology (Child Study, 25%, Social Reconstruction, 10%, Scholar Academic, 20%, and Social Efficiency, 45%). Upon entering a doctoral program in 1988, while still a college dean, this educator altered her ideological orientation in a manner similar to the way she had after entering her master's degree program, hence, the influence of the Social Reconstruction ideology increased, with a corresponding decrease in the ideology that had major influence over her during the previous period in her life (Child Study, 25%; Social Reconstruction, 50%; Scholar Academic, 10%; and Social Efficiency, 15%). This increase in the Social Reconstruction ideology seemed to be a reaction to being a student within the socio-political context of an academic university.

Figure 5 portrays what I call "Life History as a Portrayal of Internal Change." During the 1960s, as an elementary school special education teacher

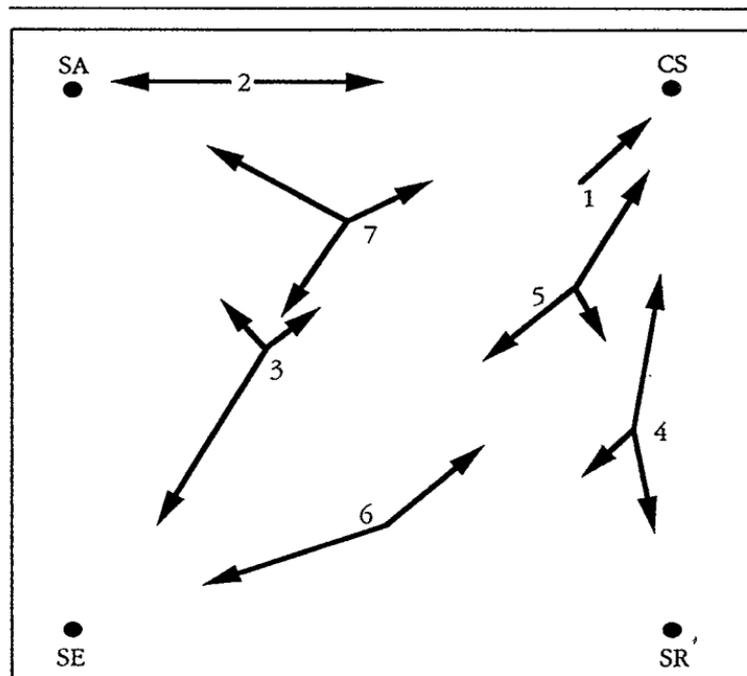
Figure 5. Life History as a Portrayal of Internal Change



working with poor children in an urban ghetto, this educator adopted the Social Reconstruction and Social Efficiency perspectives. Her students lived in a world of poverty and violence, and she knew that she wanted something better for them. Thus, she worked hard to provide them with the literary tools they would need to escape from their poverty by transforming their world into a better place to live. During the 1970s, her life took an interesting turn when she bore two children and adopted two war orphans. Caring for these children as well as teaching part-time influenced her curriculum and instructional beliefs. While her children were growing up, she worked part-time in a Montessori school and learned to enjoy letting youngsters make their own decisions about what they wanted to do. The Child Study ideology in this context had a deep influence on her. At the same time, she worked to establish an alternative school for dropouts. Here, Social Reconstruction was a motivating ideology in her work with adolescents. The Social Efficiency ideology took a position quite peripheral to her life because of her growing dislike of IEPs. The early 1980s took this educator out of the traditional school arena and into church activist work. By the mid-1980s, however, she was back in public education as a high school assistant principal in charge of student services, staff-student relations, and management. The managerial demands of the assistant principal position enabled this educator to readopt components of the Social Efficiency ideology and add it to her acceptance of the Social Reconstruction and Child Study ideologies.

Figure 6 portrays what I call "Life History as a Vector Analysis of Influences on an Educator." Between 1962 and 1966, the primary influence on this kindergarten teacher was the Child Study ideology (position 1). After changing teaching levels from kindergarten to high school in 1966, the major influences upon her were the Scholar Academic and Child Study ideologies, with the Scholar Academic ideology having more influence than the Child Study ideology because of the academic orientation of her high school (position 2). In 1968, she became a special education teacher and was heavily influenced by the Social Efficiency ideology (with its accompanying IEPs), even though the Scholar Academic and Child Study ideologies continued to assert a minor influence over her (position 3). In 1971, she left teaching for a year to study at a university with a mentor, who influenced her to take a socially active role in addressing the injustices done by schools to special education students. As a result, she became influenced primarily by the Social Reconstruction and Child Study ideologies, with a little pull from the Social Efficiency ideology (position 4). Returning to teaching in 1972 and continuing as a special education teacher until 1977, this educator became increasingly influenced by the Child Study and Social Efficiency ideologies, and the influence of the Social Reconstruction ideology decreased (position 5). In 1977, this educator changed her job from teacher to director of special education. She became increasingly influenced by the Social Efficiency ideology as she attended to her management tasks, although the Child Study ideology continued to have

Figure 6. Life History as a Vector Analysis of Influences on an Educator



1. 1962–66: Kindergarten teacher
2. 1966–68: High school teacher
3. 1968–71: Special education teacher
4. 1971–72: University study
5. 1972–77: Special education teacher
6. 1977–85: Special education director
7. 1985–89: Assistant superintendent

a large influence over her (position 6). In 1985, this educator accepted a job as an assistant superintendent, where she had to deal with all students in her school system and not just special education students. Concern for the academic needs of all the children in the school system led her to become increasingly influenced by the Scholar Academic ideology. At the same time the influence of the Social Efficiency ideology decreased, as IEPs mandated by the government for special education students no longer claimed her attention (position 7).

Figures 2 through 6 show five ways that educators portrayed how their curriculum ideologies changed during their careers. They have been described as "life histories," conceptualized as a "Trip," "Set of Influences," "Composite of Ideologies," "Portrayal of Internal Change," and "Vector Analysis of Influences." These drawings show that educators perceive changes in their ideologies during their careers and that events that precipitate change include such things as changing the school or community an educator works in, changing the grade level taught, and changing jobs from teacher to administrator.

Figures 2 through 6 also demonstrate one of the types of data this research is based on: the life history diagram. The curriculum ideology life history essays that educators wrote told their stories in essay form, usually in much greater detail on both their ideological perspective at any one time in their lives and the reasons they attributed for each ideological change.

RESULTS

The findings of this study fall into three groups: (1) those relating to the rate at which educators change their ideologies; (2) those relating to the reasons why educators change their ideologies; and (3) those relating to the different conceptual levels at which educators think about issues related to curriculum ideologies

Findings Related to Rate of Change

Do educators perceive themselves as changing their curriculum ideologies after entering the work force? If they do, with what frequency do they perceive themselves as changing? All educators in this study reported making significant changes in their curriculum ideologies since entering the work force as full-time educators. The shortest amount of time reported before the first change in ideology was a few months, the longest was 18 years.

Table 2 presents data collected from the ideology life histories that indicate the frequency with which educators perceive themselves as changing curriculum ideology.

The data in Table 2 indicate that educators not only change their curriculum ideologies, but that they do so more often than might be expected. The mean number of changes in ideology for the study population as a whole was 2.9 changes, with a median of 3. Note that administrators have a higher mean (3.6) and median (3) number of changes than do teachers (who have an mean of 2.4 and a median of 2). One possible explanation is that administrators had spent a mean of 17.3 years working as educators, while the teachers had spent a mean of 12.9 years.

The study population as a whole reported spending a mean of 4 years within a single ideological framework before changing to another curriculum ideology. Note that the median number of years between changes for the total

Table 2. Frequency with Which Educators Report Changes in Curriculum Ideology for the Total Study Population and Selected Subgroups

	Total	Admin	Teacher	Hi. Ed.	Catholic	Sr. Admin.
Number of persons	76	39	21	9	17	23
Total number of ideology changes	221	142	51	18	56	83
Mean number of changes	2.9	3.6	2.4	2	3.3	3.6
Median number of changes	3	3	2	2	3	4
Mean number of years between ideology change	4	4.1	4.2	3.1	4.1	4.6
Median number of years between ideology change	3.5	3.5	3.5	3	3	4
Mean number of years to the first ideology change	3.1	2.5	4.6	1.2	3.9	2.7
Median number of years to the first ideology change	2	2	3	1	3	2
Mean number of years in education	14.2	17.3	12.9	8.9	16.1	19

Note Subgroups overlap and do not add up to total population

population is 3.5 years; for Catholic school educators it is 3 years; and for senior school administrators it is 4 years. That educators perceive themselves as changing their curriculum ideologies this frequently was a surprise to the researcher. It may mean that educators are considerably more open to change than many change agents believe. It also suggests that it may take more time for an educator to change than some change agents desire.

The mean number of years that educators spend in full-time employment (usually as classroom teachers) before making their first change of curriculum ideology was 3.1 years. The median was 2 years. These numbers are lower than the corresponding ones for the mean and median number of years (over the length of an entire career) spent within one curriculum ideology before moving on to another ideology. In many ways, these lower numbers make sense, for the first several years in teaching are tumultuous ones, when educators must confront the discrepancies between their personal expectations as new teachers and the realities of the classroom. In this study, 24% of the educators reported that confronting the discrepancies between their expectations and the realities of teaching motivated their first change in ideology. What is surprising is that the mean and median numbers of years before the first change in ideology for administrators is so much shorter than for teachers. The means differ by 2.1 years, and the medians differ by a full year. Why should school administrators tend to make their first change in ideology in so much less time than teachers? Could it be that one of the attributes of educators who become administrators is that they have the

flexibility to more easily confront and quickly adjust to the "realities" of the educational workplace than those who remain teachers?

One of the few trends to emerge from this study that focuses on a singular curriculum ideology points to events occurring during the first change in ideology. (See Table 3.) At the time of the first ideology change, 55.3% of the educators in this study moved away from the Scholar Academic ideology, 18.4% moved toward the Scholar Academic ideology, and 26.3% changed their allegiances among the other choices. This seems to indicate that when an educator first changes ideology, the ideology change is most likely to be away from the Scholar Academic ideology. Perhaps the reason is that many new teachers, who have just recently graduated from college, model their ideologies after those of their college professors, who are primarily within the domain of the Scholar Academic ideology. Perhaps adherence to this ideology does not serve K-12 educators as well as it serves college educators.

Findings Related to Reasons for Change

Twelve major reasons for ideology change, or events that formed turning points in educators' lives and stimulated a change in curriculum ideology, emerged from reading the life histories. They are (1) changing the school in which an educator works; (2) changing the grade level at which an educator works; (3) addressing and responding to the needs of the children or community served; (4) working with a mentor (often for several years); (5) responding to social trends or socio-political occurrences (these could include education-based social trends, such as the popularity of learning centers, or socio-political occurrences, such as the Vietnam War); (6) attending graduate school; (7) interrupting one's career temporarily (for example, to be a full-time mother, work in business, or travel abroad; career interruptions varied in length from 4 months to 20 years); (8) changing from one type of teaching job to another (for example, moving from being a classroom teacher to being a special education teacher or a guidance counselor); (9) changing from teaching to administration; (10) changing from one type of administrative job to another (for example, moving from being a school principal to an assistant

Table 3. Percentage of Educators Moving Toward or Away from the Scholar Academic Ideology, or in Directions Irrelevant to It, During the First Ideology Change

Direction of Move	Total	Admin.	Teacher	Hi. Ed.	Catholic	Sr. Admin.
Move toward Scholar Academic	18.4%	17.9%	14.3%	33.3%	35.3%	8.7%
Move away from Scholar Academic	55.3	51.3	57.1	44.4	35.3	60.9
Neither	26.3	30.8	28.6	22.2	29.4	30.4

superintendent), (11) confronting teaching realities, and (12) confronting administrative realities. Assorted other reasons for change included changing the academic subject taught, having a first child, becoming comfortable with oneself as a teacher, having a change in school principal or superintendent, taking a sabbatical year, changing the country of residence, or having a significant religious experience.

A count was kept of the number of times each reason for change was given as a major influence that stimulated an educator to change his or her ideology. The results appear in Table 4.

The most frequently mentioned event that accompanied a change of ideology for the total study population was the changing of the school or school system in which an educator worked. This accounted for 16.5% of the events precipitating a change in ideology. While a change in school or school system may not have been the direct cause of an educator's change in ideology, the event of changing school or school system was frequently the precipitating factor that forced a change in the educator's ideology. This is because a change in school or school system can place an educator in a situation where a new group of children or a new school community must be dealt with, a new grade taught, or a new occupational role assumed (such as when a teacher becomes an administrator).

A change of school or school system was mentioned more frequently by teachers than administrators as causing a change in ideology (19.8% versus

Table 4. Frequency of Events that Stimulated Ideological Change (in Percentages Rounded to the Nearest Tenth) for the Total Study Population and Selected Subgroups

Event	Total	Admin.	Teacher	Hi. Ed.	Catholic	Sr. Admin.
School change	16.5%	15.8%	19.8%	18.2%	28.6%	15.4%
Grade change	10	8.9	12.4	9.1	14.3	5.7
Children & community needs	12.8	12.3	19.8	9.1	13.1	13.8
Mentor	2.5	3.9	0	0	1.2	5.7
Social trends	4.4	3.9	7.4	0	4.8	4.9
Graduate school	7.5	6.4	8.6	4.5	7.1	4.9
Career interruption	7.2	4.4	8.6	18.2	4.8	1.6
Job change:teacher→teacher	4.7	3.9	7.4	4.5	3.6	2.4
Job change:teacher→admin	11.5	16.3	1.2	9.1	8.3	17.1
Job change:admin→admin	4.4	6.9	0	0	0	10.6
Confront teaching realities	6.2	7.4	4.9	4.5	6	8.1
Confront admin realities	4.4	4.9	2.5	9.1	2.4	5.7
Other	8.1	4.9	12.4	13.6	6	4.1
Number of Events Counted	321	203	81	22	84	123

15.8% of the time) and more frequently by Catholic school educators than by the total study population (28.6% versus 16.5% of the time). Perhaps the reason why administrators mentioned this less frequently than teachers was because of the relatively large number of times they mentioned "changing one's job from teacher to administrator" (16.3% of the time). Perhaps the reason why Catholic school educators mentioned this more frequently than the total study population is because religious orders may move nuns from school to school more frequently than the general population moves from city to city.

The second most frequent reason given for changing curriculum ideology was the needs of children or community served. This includes working within a school that has a changing student population (as has occurred in many urban areas over the last 30 years); changing the type of children one teaches (for example, shifting from regular education to special education), visiting children's homes and families, and dealing with parental pressure. This reason was mentioned 12.8% of the time for the total population. Its frequency supports our current understandings of the complex ways that American schools are responsive to, embody, and reflect both the general culture and the local communities in which they are located.

A change in grade taught was the third most frequent reason given for a change in ideology. It was mentioned 10% of the time for the total study population, 12.4% of the time for teachers, and 14.3% of the time for Catholic school educators. Changing the grade taught is mentioned almost as frequently as a cause for changing ideology as changing the school or school system in which an educator works and only slightly less frequently than the needs of children or community served.

Examination of ideological life histories seems to indicate that moving from teaching a lower grade to teaching a higher grade pushes teachers to adopt aspects of the Scholar Academic ideology. The reverse (moving from a higher to a lower grade) nudges teachers to adopt aspects of the Child Study ideology.

Taken together these three change factors—school change, grade change, and needs of children and community served—account for 39.3% of the reported reasons for change. School change and grade change account for 26.5% of those reported. Why is this significant? The curriculum ideology life histories indicate that the school system an educator works within, the school environment an educator works within, the grade level an educator teaches, and the children and community with whom an educator works have powerful influences on an educator's curriculum ideology. When a change takes place in these things, the educators undergoing the change frequently face turning points in their lives that leave them open to change their curriculum and instructional beliefs. The life histories indicate that the normal everyday curriculum and instructional expectations and atmosphere within which educators

work—the “hidden curriculum”—have an enormous impact upon educators’ curriculum and instructional belief systems.

Educators in this study indicated that a school system’s curriculum and instructional stance can be heavily influenced by its superintendent, that a school’s curriculum and instructional stance can be heavily influenced by its principal, and that a change that results in a new superintendent or principal having a different curriculum ideology than the old one can influence them to change their curriculum and instructional ideology. Educators in this study indicated that a school’s curriculum and instructional stance can have an enormous effect on those working within the school, and that by moving between schools that have different “hidden curriculums,” they frequently face turning points in their professional lives that can cause them to change their curriculum and instructional beliefs.

Teachers indicated that the curriculum and instructional practices at a particular grade level within a school can be heavily influenced by the beliefs of other teachers teaching at that grade level. Such influence can exert enormous pressure for conformity on a teacher moving to a new grade level, resulting in a change in his or her curriculum ideology. The curriculum ideology life histories also indicate that the curriculum and instructional expectations of a class of children and their parents can have an enormous influence on a teacher (or administrator) who teaches (or oversees) that class. When a teacher (or administrator) confronts a class of children and their parents with radically different expectations than previously experienced, this can create a turning point in educators’ lives that can result in changed curriculum and instructional beliefs.

The school system, the superintendent, the school, the principal, the grade level, one’s fellow teachers, and a class of children (and their parents) all carry powerful social, political, ideological, and physical influences that affect educators’ everyday work environments, and that can, in turn, affect their curriculum and instructional beliefs when they change work environments. The stability of these ordinary everyday relationships in educators’ lives helps them maintain an ideological stance. Changing these ordinary everyday relationships frequently presents educators with turning points that can act as the primary stimulator for change in their curriculum and instructional belief systems.

Administrators report that 16.3 % of their reasons for change are attributable to moving from teaching to administration. Because this usually occurs only once during an administrator’s career, more useful questions to ask are (1) what percentage of the administrators in this study associated a change of ideology with moving from teaching to administration, and (2) what percentage of the administrators in this study reported a change in ideology due either to moving from teaching to administration or to changing from one type of administrative job to another?

Approximately 80% of the administrators in this study mentioned that they changed ideology upon moving from teaching to administration. Eighteen of the 39 school administrators (46%) changed their ideological preference toward the Social Efficiency ideology shortly after taking their first administrative position, while only 6 (15%) moved away from the Social Efficiency ideology (see Table 5). These data seem to indicate that if an educator moves from teaching to administration and experiences a resultant change in curriculum ideology, the change is more likely to be toward the Social Efficiency ideology than away from it or in any of the other six major directions (which occurred 39% of the time). This trend is associated with only the first administrative position that educators accept.

The influence that taking on a new administrative position can have on an administrator's ideology can be seen by combining the percentages for changing from teaching to administration (16.3%) and changing administrative position held (6.9%). In sum, 23.2% of the reported changes of curriculum ideology for school administrators were due to a change in the type of job performed.

Usually we do not systematically and purposefully move educators from one job to another, whether the move is to or from teaching, administration, teacher training, curriculum coordination, or special education. Doing so might provide educators with new perspectives that might in turn provide turning points that influence how they view curriculum and instructional issues. Noting that almost one quarter of the reported changes in curriculum ideology for school administrators were due to a change in the type of job performed would point to "changing the type of job performed" as a very powerful change strategy available to educational change agents. It might also indicate that we should be open to, take seriously, and work hard to facilitate shifts of professional responsibility requested by educators, whether those shifts be in grade level, school, type of student, or type of job.

The total study population reported that only 6.2% of the changes in ideology over the length of a career were due to confronting the realities of the teaching profession. However, looking at the first change in curriculum ideology experienced, 18 of the 76 educators (24%) reported that their first

Table 5. Percentage of School Administrators Moving Toward or Away from the Social Efficiency Ideology, or in Directions Irrelevant to It, During the First Ideology Change After Taking Their First Administrative Position

Direction of Move	Administrators
Move toward Social Efficiency Ideology	46%
Move away from Social Efficiency Ideology	15%
Other changes or no change of ideology	39%

ideological change took place primarily because the nature of the job forced them to “confront the realities of teaching.” This included confronting such things as classroom control issues, appropriate grade level content, teacher-principal authority relationships, and the limits on teacher time and energy.¹⁸ For new teachers, “confronting the realities of teaching” is a major cause of change in curriculum ideology. One can only wonder why it is mentioned more frequently by administrators than teachers as the reason for a change in ideology.

Three of the five educators from non-English-speaking countries who took part in this study reported that their first change in ideology resulted from confronting the American educational system, and in particular, the ideological options available to American educators. This availability can have an impact on educators from countries where such options are not so readily available, openly discussed, or supported by substantial segments of the population.

The results of the student-analyzed data—data collected at a later time when another group of graduate students analyzed their own life history essays (see Methodology and Population)—are presented in Table 6. The category system generated by the graduate students to explain their reasons

Table 6. Frequency of Events that Stimulated Ideological Change (in Percentages Rounded to the Nearest Tenth) for the Comparison Population

Event	Total
School change	15.1
Grade change	16.1
Children & community needs	10.8
Mentor	4.8
Social trends	3.8
Graduate school	10.8
Career change, in or out of education	5.9
Job change: teacher → teacher	3.2
Job change: teacher → administrator	5.4
Confront teaching realities	4.8
Personal life events	10.8
Change subject taught	1.6
Staff development within school	1.6
Working on curriculum development	5
Other	4.8
Number of events counted	186

¹⁸Although some of these might be attributed to “responding to the needs of children and community,” the educators in this study spoke about “confronting the realities of teaching” in very different ways from “responding to the needs of children and community.” The former were spoken about in terms of confronting naive and dysfunctional beliefs formulated prior to entering teaching; the latter were spoken about in terms of altering workable sets of beliefs that were grounded in experience as new experiences presented themselves

for changing their ideologies and the data they compiled support the findings of this study—with one important exception. These graduate students created a category delineating personal events that occurred outside of their professional life and that formed turning points stimulating them to change their curriculum and instructional belief systems. These personal events included having children, having children enter school, marriage, divorce, mid-life crisis, death of a close relative, and a close call with death. What is particularly important about this reason for change of curriculum ideology is that it points out that educators' personal lives and professional lives cannot be treated as completely disjointed realities. The change agent who is aware of the personal events occurring within an educator's life can direct the energy generated from personal turmoil toward helping that individual change his or her curriculum and instructional beliefs, if the change agent desires to do so. Either unfortunately or fortunately, change agents tend to excuse educators who are undergoing significant changes in their personal lives from professional growth rather than seeing changes in personal lives as facilitators of professional growth.

Findings Related to Conceptual Level of Curriculum Thought

Curriculum research in the past has described the different curriculum ideologies. This research has examined how educators change their curriculum belief systems from one ideology to another over the span of their careers. Reading the curriculum ideology life histories that emerged from this study brought to light another issue: Are there different conceptual levels at which educators hold a curriculum ideology that influence both their understanding of their ideology and how they relate to educators who hold different ideologies?

The curriculum ideology life histories and discussions with students indicate that two types of growth take place in educators' curriculum belief systems. One leads educators to new curriculum ideologies; the other leads educators to a more mature (deeper, more sophisticated) level of understanding of curriculum meanings. The levels of curriculum understanding can be viewed as "stages" of intellectual development, each of which describes one of the four ways in which educators deal with the fact that curriculum ideologies other than their own exist.

The levels of sophistication educators exhibit in thinking about the curriculum issues influenced by their ideology are somewhat similar to William Perry's levels of intellectual development,¹⁹ with some important differences. Following are brief descriptions of what have thus far been identified as the conceptual levels educators use while thinking about curriculum issues.

¹⁹William Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970)

Dualistic. Educators believe, understand, and value only one ideology, using a dualistic perspective of right versus wrong: those curricular beliefs that agree with their own are correct and good, and those that are different from their own are incorrect. At one substage educators see only two sets of curricular beliefs: those similar to theirs and those that are different. At another substage educators perceive a variety of different curriculum belief systems, but they still believe, understand, and value only one curriculum belief system from a dualistic perspective.

Relativistic. Educators perceive a variety of curriculum ideologies, and they operate from a relativistic viewpoint that gives equal value to each way of viewing curriculum issues. Here it is held that everyone has a right to their own opinion, that no opinion is better than any other, and that curriculum ideologies cannot be measured against any absolute scale of value. At this stage educators have the ability to identify and understand the language and images of each curriculum ideology they recognize.

Contextual. Educators perceive a variety of curriculum ideologies, each of which they view as best for accomplishing certain goals or purposes. At this stage educators have the ability to express curricular opinions using the language and images of each ideology they recognize. They switch their ideology depending upon the nature of the curriculum task they are engaged in or the ideology of the group or individual they are speaking with. Here the ideology is valued because of its utility in accomplishing certain tasks or purposes better than others.

Hierarchical. Educators can differentiate between a variety of well-defined, viable ideologies while making a personal and thoughtful commitment to only one. The educator can use other ideologies to further his or her endeavors and can discourse with educators who hold different ideologies using their language and images, while still advocating his or her own curriculum beliefs.

To illustrate the type of statements that led to the construction of these levels of curriculum understandings, the following excerpts from a curriculum ideology life history essay are offered:

I am a chameleon. I often wondered, but I never believed it . . . I have been called flexible; I have been called adaptable; I have been called a survivor; but I am a chameleon, one who changes (color if one is a lizard) in reaction to situations . . . I discovered my new self when I traced my life history through the perspective of curriculum ideologies. My span of review encompasses 30 years, and my [life history] diagram reveals more than a few stops at each of the curricular ideologies along the way . . . I am, perhaps, at this venerable age, understanding for the first time, that there are four (or even more) different approaches to curriculum. More importantly, I, again for the first time, see how each of those approaches, while built of theory, becomes "popular" in response to a societal stance or need. Up to this point, I merely thought that I was altering methodologies in response to student needs, when in fact, I was a victim of society's tugs, my own desire to be continually competent, and a lifelong frustration with sameness. I am a chameleon!

... In 198[-] I became a superintendent of schools, and my authority, as well as my vision, was broadened. . . In retrospect, it would seem that any adherence, however temporary, to any curricular ideology was, perhaps, a kneejerk reaction. When the school committee or community called on me to provide an answer, I moved in the direction of greatest benefit. Some might say that I was a politician in that respect, and I might agree, except that I know that I was running hither and yon just trying to figure out what I was doing. . . As a budgeteer, I heartened to the *Social Efficiency* way of thought, at an elementary PTO meeting, paint me *Child Study* with a tinge of *Scholar Academic*, in giving a seminar to high school kids, the *Social Reconstructionist* reigns supreme; and when comforting the high school staff and lack of scholarship in this generation, that old *Scholar Academic* emerges like a taken-for-granted wife.²⁰

Future research must confirm the existence of this system of levels of curriculum understanding, must elaborate upon the nature of the levels described, and must explore the usefulness, adequacy, and dynamics of this system. The naive belief that this is a system in which educators at the hierarchical stage necessarily produce better instruction and curriculum design than those at the dualistic stage will most certainly be rejected. The hypothesis might be confirmed that educators at the hierarchical and contextual stages are more effective in working on curriculum with the diverse groups of adults found in most American schools than those at the dualistic stage. Important issues to examine are (1) Is this a system of hierarchical levels, in which movement to a "more mature" level prevents regression to a "less mature" level, or is this a system in which educators can move from one position to another depending upon their circumstances? and (2) Are these stages coordinated with more general levels of psychological development that take place in educators' personal lives?

RELATION TO RESEARCH ON EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

What do these findings mean within the context of existing research on how educators change over time? The most distinguishing factor of this research is that it explores a new area of educator development. the development of educators' curriculum and instructional beliefs. This research examines educators' conceptual development over the span of their careers as it relates to changes in their curriculum ideologies, changes that relate to issues such as "What type of knowledge is most worth teaching in schools?" and "What is the role of the student in the learning/teaching environment?" Other research has looked at adult psycho-social development (Erickson, Levinson, and Gould, for example), conceptual development (Perry and Kohlberg, for example), career development (Super and Cruickshank, for example), and

²⁰Quoted with permission

the development of teacher concerns (Fuller and Bown, for example).²¹ This research represents the first attempt to examine the changes in educators' assumptions about curricular issues over the span of their career.

There are a number of ways in which this research reinforces and is reinforced by existing research in the fields of developmental psychology, career development, and teacher development. First, this research indicates that educators can change their curriculum beliefs during their careers. In fact, educators frequently do change their curriculum belief systems, with a change taking place about once every four years. This is one of the basic assumptions of life-span psychology as it relates to people from birth to death.²² Some psychologists suggest that most people go through major periods of change at intervals of between five and seven years, with transition periods that involve times of turmoil and uncertainty taking up almost half of their adult life.²³

Second, this research shows that most of the changes in educators' curriculum beliefs occur because of related changes in their professional or personal lives. These include changing the grade level taught or having children who experience difficulties in school. Educators' curriculum belief systems are in dynamic interaction with both the professional and personal dimensions of their lives, and changes in either of these can impact their curriculum beliefs. This is closely related to one of the basic assumptions of life-span psychology, which asserts that changes in adulthood occur both in the personal and professional dimensions of peoples' lives and that significant changes in one dimension impact on the other dimension because all dimensions of a person's life are in dynamic interaction.²⁴ This is also related to assumptions of adult psychology that assert that adult development can be viewed from a number of different perspectives (cognitive, psychoanalytic,

²¹Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton, 1950), Daniel J. Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (New York: Knopf, 1978); Roger C. Gould, *Transformations: Growth and Change in Adult Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), William Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), Lawrence Kohlberg, "Moral Stages and Moralization: The Cognitive Developmental Approach," in *Moral Development and Behavior: Theory, Research, and Social Issues*, ed. Thomas Likona (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1976); Donald E. Super, *The Psychology of Careers* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957); Donald R. Cruickshank, William D. Armaline, Penelope A. Reighart, Randy L. Hoover, Andrea F. Stuck, and Rob Traver, "As Teachers Mature," *The Clearing House* 59 (April 1986): 354-358, Frances Fuller and Oliver Bown, "On Becoming a Teacher," *Teacher Education, Seventy-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, part 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

²²Donald R. Cruickshank, William D. Armaline, Penelope A. Reighart, Randy L. Hoover, Andrea F. Stuck, and Rob Traver, "As Teachers Mature," *The Clearing House* 59 (April 1986): 354-358, Lois Thies-Sprinthal and Norman A. Sprinthal, "Experienced Teachers: Agents for Revitalization and Renewal as Mentors and Teacher Educators," *Boston University Journal of Education* 169 (No. 1, 1987): 65-79.

²³Daniel J. Levinson, "A Conception of Adult Development," *American Psychologist* 41 (No. 1, 1986): 3-13.

²⁴Donald R. Cruickshank, William D. Armaline, Penelope A. Reighart, Randy L. Hoover, Andrea F. Stuck, and Rob Traver, "As Teachers Mature," *The Clearing House* 59 (April, 1986): 354-358.

personality, physical, social, etc.), that adults simultaneously develop differently within each of these developmental schemes, and that different aspects of adult growth are in dynamic interaction.²⁵

One interesting hypothesis to pursue in the future is the following: Because educators undergo a variety of overlapping developmental transitions during adulthood, they may benefit from different types of staff development opportunities appropriately matched to their developmental needs. For example, at one stage of development educators may be best served by identifying with a mentor, while at another stage they may be best served by being a mentor.²⁶ Another interesting hypothesis is this: If we assume that educators' professional and personal lives are in dynamic interaction, then we can capitalize on transitions and crises in educators' personal lives to help them grow professionally. For example, we should no longer automatically think of exempting educators undergoing family crises, such as divorce, from performing well professionally, but rather should view such crises as powerful turning points that might help them reconceptualize their professional endeavors.

Third, this research shows that there are many ways and reasons why educators change their curriculum belief systems. Although there is no single pattern of movement among ideologies that all educators follow, there are some specific patterns of ideology change that accompany specific turning points in educators' lives (for example, when educators move from teacher to administrator and their curriculum ideology moves toward the Social Efficiency ideology). An interesting hypothesis to pursue in future research is that changes in educators' curriculum belief systems are likely to be temporally coordinated with changes in stages of psycho-social development, stages of career development, and stages of teacher concerns. This would occur because major transitions in educators' lives are likely to have reverberations throughout different aspects of adult development.

Fourth, this research indicates that changes in educators' curriculum belief systems occur at different times during their lives. The occurrence of ideological change varies in terms of time of onset, duration, and sequence. There is not a single age or time at which change takes place or at which a specific change takes place. Chronological time is not a significant indicator of what happens in adult development in the same way it is a significant developmental indicator of what is occurring in children. This is consistent with many views of adult development, in which it is assumed that adult growth is controlled as much by social, professional, and personal experiences and transitions as it is by biological clocks.²⁷

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Sarah L. Levine, "Understanding Life Cycle Issues: A Resource for School Leaders," *Boston University Journal of Education* 169 (No. 1, 1987): 7-19.

²⁷Alice B. Sargent, and Nancy K. Schlossberg, "Managing Adult Transitions," *Training and Development Journal* (December 1988): 58-60.

Fifth, this research indicates that the growth that takes place in educators' curriculum belief systems is of two types, one leading to new curriculum ideologies, and the other leading to a more mature (deeper, more sophisticated) level of understanding of their curriculum ideology in relation to other ideologies. The former is characteristic of growth within a developmental stage, while the latter is characteristic of growth between developmental stages. These two types of growth are different; both are worthwhile and meaningful. The significance of both types of growth has been identified and discussed within the literature on developmental psychology.

IMPLICATIONS

What are the implications of this research for education? This question will be answered from three points of view: (1) by examining what 23 of the participants in this research said when they were shown its results; (2) by using this research to briefly comment on two educational traditions that relate to the issues of how to improve schools and foster educators' growth; and (3) by the author offering his observations.

Implications Perceived by Administrators

The 23 senior administrators who participated in this study were given a preliminary version of this paper and asked what its implications were for them as administrators. They directed their answers to their concern about how schools could be supportive of the changes in educators' curriculum ideologies that take place over time. They offered the following suggestions.

(1) Supporting and respecting educators as they rethink their curriculum and instructional beliefs and try out new curriculum and instructional procedures with children is critical.

(2) Helping educators view themselves as engaged in an ongoing process of formulating their curriculum and instructional beliefs is critical to helping them rethink those beliefs.

(3) Moving educators from one grade level to another and from one school to another should help them reevaluate and clarify their curriculum and instructional beliefs.

(4) Engaging teachers in administrative responsibilities and school-based decision making might help them reevaluate and clarify their curriculum and instructional beliefs.

(5) Asking administrators to be more engaged in the process of helping other educators rethink their curriculum and instructional beliefs should help those administrators reevaluate and clarify their own beliefs

(6) Understanding how frequently and why educators change their curriculum and instructional beliefs should empower administrators to be more aggressive and effective change agents.

This list contains two types of suggestions. One is directed toward supporting educators as they change their curriculum beliefs (1, 2, and 6). The other is directed toward placing educators in new relationships in their work environment in such a way that they are forced to reexamine their curriculum and instructional assumptions and either change them or reconfirm them (3, 4, and 5). The 23 senior school administrators who provided these suggestions believed that school administrators, in their role as change agents, must both support educators as they grow and find ways to challenge educators to grow. However, supporting educators while they grow seems to be more appealing than placing educators in situations that will force growth.

Implications for Educational Change Theory

Two different traditions that deal with educational change relate to the implications of this research for education. One tradition is grounded in the question: How can we intervene in schools in order to change them and the educators who work in them? The other tradition is grounded in the question: How can we intervene in the lives of adults in order to promote their growth?

The first approach to school change suggests that school improvement and teacher growth can be encouraged by inserting into schools curricular, instructional, or administrative innovations; by providing schools with curriculum consultants, coordinators, or instructors; or by having school personnel engage in other kinds of "change-oriented" curriculum events, such as working on curriculum committees.²⁸ Here the school in which the educator works and the educator's position in that school are left largely unchanged while a new element is introduced into the work environment.

The research reported in this paper would question the effectiveness of this approach in changing educators' curriculum belief systems. Of course, changing educators' belief systems may not be the purpose of such innovations, but then the following question must be asked: Will the innovation introduced to a school accomplish its desired effect if the educators who use it *do not* change their curriculum and instructional beliefs, or is one of the inherent components of most significant educational innovations their attempt to redefine the relationships between teacher, student, and content in such a way that educators must change their curriculum and instructional beliefs in order to use the innovations appropriately?

²⁸For discussions of this approach to change, see Hollis L. Caswell and Associates, *Curriculum Improvement in Public School Systems* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1950), Marcella R. Lawler, *Curriculum Consultants at Work* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1958), John I. Goodlad and Robert H. Anderson, *The Nongraded Elementary School* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1959), Robert R. Leeper, ed. *Strategy for Curriculum Change* (Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1965), Marcella R. Lawler, ed. *Strategies for Planned Curricular Innovation* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1970), Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (New York: Free Press, 1983).

The curriculum ideology life histories collected for this research indicate that innovations, such as those mentioned above, are not nearly as powerful in changing educators' thoughts as other mechanisms, such as changing the grade an educator teaches, changing the school an educator works in, or changing an educator's job from teacher to administrator, where the changes are carefully planned for and resulting growth appropriately supported. Changing the underlying structure of a school (which is difficult to achieve) or an educator's relationship to that structure (which is not difficult to achieve) are more powerful events than simply adding an innovation to a school.²⁹

One can only wonder how the research on school change would differ if the following question was asked by researchers in this field: *How, about once every five years, for those educators for whom it would be helpful, can certain of the regularities of educators' everyday lives be changed in ways that will force them to reevaluate their curriculum beliefs; and then how can one systematically direct, encourage, and support the resulting growth that is likely to take place as educators rethink their basic assumptions about curriculum and instructional issues?*

Inherent in this question are numerous concerns. First are concerns related to the finding that most educators change their curriculum beliefs. Do change agents want to become actively involved in helping educators shape their new beliefs? If they do, what are the most powerful strategies available that will allow one to systematically direct, encourage, and support educators as they change their belief systems; what are the possible positive and negative consequences of using each type of change strategy; and are change agents willing to put the requisite time, money, and effort into implementing their change strategies?

Second are concerns related to the finding that most educators change their curriculum beliefs about once every four years. Do change agents want to let the changes take place according to some indeterminate timetable, or do they want to take responsibility for forcing the changes to take place according to a specified timetable? If change agents let changes take place according to some indeterminate timetable, they may not be present or may not notice when an educator is going through change and thus may miss the opportunity to intervene in the change process. If the change agent alters certain of the regularities of educators' everyday lives in ways that will force them to reevaluate their curriculum beliefs according to a specified timetable, this may allow the change agent to control some of the variables that can affect how an educator's curriculum beliefs are changed. If the change agent wants to control the timetable, how can the change agent determine when it is

²⁹It must be noted that this research examines how educators change their curriculum and instructional belief systems, while the research on school change focuses on a much broader range of concerns, including changing the activities that children engage in. These are very different types of concerns.

appropriate for a change to take place in an educator's beliefs? Is this determination based on individual assessment, or are fixed schedules established for everyone? If fixed schedules are established for everyone, how frequently should the regularities of educators' everyday lives be changed in ways that will force them to reevaluate their curriculum beliefs? Is once every three years too short and once every eight years too long? Are there different timetables for teachers and administrators, for elementary teachers and high school teachers?

Third are concerns related to the finding that most educators will change their curriculum beliefs about four times during their careers. If change agents are going to help educators reformulate their beliefs, how should they determine in which specific direction an educator's beliefs should change? Here there are at least three choices: movement toward a new set of beliefs, recommitment to an existing set of beliefs with a new perspective or understanding of those beliefs, and return to a previously abandoned set of beliefs. All are options, although some may bring about more productive growth than others for certain types of individuals working within specific learning environments. One major distinction that must be considered is that growth and change are not the same; change can lead in directions other than growth. Another major distinction that must be considered is the difference between growth that leads to a new ideology and growth that leads to a more mature level of understanding of curriculum ideologies. Both are important types of growth.

Fourth are concerns related to the finding that changing certain regularities of educators' everyday professional life can have a relatively powerful impact on them in terms of impelling them to redefine their curriculum and instructional beliefs. Is it appropriate to change the regularities of every single educator's everyday life in ways that will force a reevaluation of curriculum beliefs? Are there some educators for whom forced change would be helpful and others for whom it would not be helpful? Considering the literature on change theory, should we not treat educators who are "innovators," those who are the "great majority," and those who are "laggards" differently, each according to their strengths and weaknesses?³⁰ Are there not other ways of differentiating among individuals in determining how they should be treated?

The research on programs that promote adult growth in educators has been summarized by Thies-Sprinthall and Sprinthall in a critique of what works and what does not work:

To sum up a large body of research, adults remain largely unchanged from most conventional educational and therapeutic experiences. In-service education for teachers may result in the acquisition of a few skills, but nothing that would support significant personal/psychological growth. Similarly, we know that short-term human relations type workshops, T-groups, weekend retreats, and the like have no noticeable

³⁰Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (New York: Free Press, 1983)

long term effects upon adult stage growth. Even the most traditional approaches to adult treatment such as long-term psychotherapy have such a modest advantage over control groups (e.g., a 10% improvement) that it could hardly qualify as a promising technique.³¹

Adult growth is possible, but we have not yet solved the problem of how to intervene in adult lives to systematically promote growth, in particular, cognitive growth, in areas such as the development of educators' curriculum belief systems.³² Thies-Sprinthall and Sprinthall do think that adult growth can be nurtured, through planned educational programs that have the following characteristics:

(a) significant role-taking experiences in complex human "helping" tasks, (b) careful reflection and reading, (c) balance between action and reflection, (d) continuity, and (e) instructor support and challenge.³³

One can only ask how this list would change if researchers studying how to promote adult professional growth were to come to terms with the research finding that the behavior of educators is largely defined and held in check by the social systems of the schools in which they work. The research into the design of programs to promote educator growth seems to accept as a given the educator's professional work environment. What would happen if educational programs were designed to change significantly the structural relationships of educators' work environments by changing such things as grade taught, school, or type of work?

Educational Implications

What are the implications of this research for education? I believe there are two major implications. First, educators' curriculum belief systems develop over time, their belief systems develop in response to professional and personal transitions that occur in their lives, and the major professional transitions that foster their growth are those that alter the everyday regularities that they experience as they work in schools. These transitions change educators' structural relationships to the environments in which they work—transitions such as changing the grade level taught (and thus also the age of the children and the colleagues with whom one most closely works), changing the school

³¹Lois Thies-Sprinthall and Norman A. Sprinthall, "Experienced Teachers: Agents for Revitalization and Renewal as Mentors and Teacher Educators," *Boston University Journal of Education* 169 (No. 1, 1987): 71.

³²Paul Bates and K. Warner Schaie, "On the Plasticity of Intelligence in Adulthood and Old Age: Where Horn and Donaldson Fail," *American Psychologist* 31 (No. 10, 1976): 720-725; Lois Thies-Sprinthall and Norman A. Sprinthall, "Experienced Teachers: Agents for Revitalization and Renewal as Mentors and Teacher Educators," *Boston University Journal of Education* 169 (No. 1, 1987): 71.

³³Lois Thies-Sprinthall and Norman A. Sprinthall, "Experienced Teachers: Agents for Revitalization and Renewal as Mentors and Teacher Educators," *Boston University Journal of Education* 169 (No. 1, 1987): 71, 83.

in which one works (and thus the colleagues with whom one works and the community in which one works), and changing the type of job one performs (where, if the change is from teacher to administrator, the authority and power relationships among peers change). The significance of this finding is that if one wants to motivate educators to change their curriculum belief systems, one powerful way of doing this is to change the everyday regularities that structurally define how they fit into their work environment. Changing the grade level at which an educator works, the content an educator teaches, the school an educator works in, or the job an educator performs has far more potential for facilitating growth in curriculum beliefs than half a day off from teaching each week to attend inservice workshops, a salary increase, the chance to work on a curriculum committee with a special curriculum consultant, or a special commendation for work well done.

The challenges for the administrator who wishes to facilitate growth in this way are (1) to select carefully the new work environment into which an educator will be placed so that environment will support the desired type of growth, (2) to support and respect the educator as curriculum and instructional beliefs are rethought and new curriculum and instructional procedures are experimented with, (3) to help educators view and value themselves as continually engaged in the process of formulating curriculum and instructional beliefs, and (4) to see and to treat each educator as an individual who holds curricular beliefs for good reasons based on events that have occurred over a cumulative life span.

It is important to note that the job changes mentioned above are not the only ones available or necessarily the best ones available to facilitate growth in educators' curriculum belief systems. They are simply the ones mentioned most frequently by the participants in this study. Other interventions that change educators' relationships to their everyday work environment deserve exploration, interventions such as assigning master teachers to be mentors to novice teachers,³⁴ or giving teachers sabbatical fellowships to become curriculum consultants to other educators within a school system or state (as was done in Massachusetts with the Lucrictia Crocker fellowships).

It should also be noted that I am not suggesting that every educator within a school system be randomly uprooted from his or her work every couple of years, simply because it is believed that change brings growth (as is occurring within some school systems). Change for the sake of change can lead to a sense of isolation and alienation rather than growth. Carefully selecting the educators who are going to be moved (it certainly makes no sense to move a person who is already in the middle of a growth transition), carefully planning the timing of the moves (once every two years, for example, is far too short a period of time, for it does not give an educator sufficient time to settle into a position and nurture growth that is taking place), carefully

³⁴Ibid., pp 65-79.

choosing where an educator is going to be placed when moved (moves should place educators in work environments that nurture, rather than inhibit, growth), and carefully deciding how to support an educator's growth while it is taking place are all serious matters for consideration. Nurturing the growth of all persons engaged in schooling—students, teachers, and administrators—is critical to achieving successful schools and should be treated as such.

The second major implication of this research for education is that educators must be viewed as capable of changing their curricular and instructional beliefs in two different ways. One that can lead them to a new curriculum ideology and the other that can lead them to a new conceptual level of curriculum understanding—to a higher or lower stage in the above mentioned conceptual levels of curriculum understanding. Once we recognize that these two ways of growing exist, we can help educators develop not only new curriculum ideologies, but also new levels of understanding about the relationships among curriculum and instructional issues related to the ideologies. Why is it important for educators to be able to move to higher levels of understanding? So they can more fully understand the curriculum context in which they work, more effectively communicate with fellow educators, and more fully implement their curriculum and instructional beliefs into their daily endeavors.

It is my belief that most educators are currently at the dualistic or relativistic stages of curriculum understanding. Being at these levels of understanding inhibits educators from effectively communicating with each other and fosters isolation among educators. It also makes it difficult for educators to work together in groups (for example, on curriculum committees) where consensus must be reached (and, if it cannot be reached, a sense of professional powerlessness results). One of the tragedies of our time is that scholars in educational philosophy and curriculum theory have not formally noted the existence of a set of intellectual levels that describe how educators conceptualize the relationships among curriculum ideologies. This is a tragedy because the fields of educational philosophy and curriculum theory have not set as one of their goals the design of instruction to systematically aid educators in achieving higher levels of thinking about curriculum issues beyond the dualistic and relativistic stages, and thus they have not been able to help educators achieve the sense of community or power they deserve. Positing a set of intellectual stages at which educators can think about curriculum issues may provide a first step in reconceptualizing the purposes of educational philosophy and curriculum theory. Educators must master the languages and symbol systems used within their profession to give meaning to practical educational endeavors (the curriculum ideologies), must learn how to create constructive meaning within their own ideological context, and must learn how to effectively relate to and communicate with educators who hold different curriculum ideologies. I suggest that goals such as these be incorporated into a new agenda for the fields of curriculum theory and educational philosophy. Simply

learning about the history of education, the thoughts of great educational writers, or a single curricular system that gives meaning to educational endeavors is no longer sufficient. Educators must reach higher levels of thought about curriculum issues and not just understanding about a broader range of topics. We must deal with the failure of curriculum theory and educational philosophy to help educators understand the cluster of curriculum ideologies surrounding them, so that they can move beyond dualistic and relativistic perspectives. Such movement will allow them to hold an ideological position with commitment, understand colleagues' positions that are different than their own, and speak with colleagues using various forms of curriculum language to express their own beliefs in ways that foster communication rather than alienation.

THOUGHT VERSUS ACTION

A major question must be addressed: *If educators are changing their curriculum ideologies so frequently, why isn't there more change and diversity in the overall curriculum and instructional environments found within schools and classrooms?* Goodlad considers the issue in *Behind the Classroom Door*, a major study of American schools, when he states that "many of the changes we have believed to be taking place in schooling [since 1955] have not been getting into classrooms," and that American "schools and classrooms were marked by a sameness regardless of location, student enrollment, and 'typing'".³⁵ What needs to be recognized is that a certain amount of change in curriculum ideology is not necessarily mirrored by a similar amount of change in educator behavior. In other words, a 50% change in curriculum ideology may be reflected by only a 10% change in educator behavior.

Why would this be the case? Why would educators not change their behavior to the same extent that they change their thoughts? There are many possible reasons, including at least the following. (1) the American school "system is geared to self-preservation, not to self-renewal,"³⁶ and this inhibits educators from doing things differently than they were done before, (2) educators feel a lack of encouragement and support (social, administrative, monetary, and physical) for deviating from the norm, (3) educators lack superlative role models, and even if such role models have existed for an educator, they make up the minority of people encountered in schooling, with the most recent schooling frequently being at universities, which are likely to be traditional educational environments, (4) students with whom educators work tend to be conservative about doing things in ways that are different from how their friends are doing them, and (5) parental demands

³⁵John I. Goodlad, M. Frances Klein, and Associates, *Behind the Classroom Door* (Worthington, OH: Charles A. Jones Publishing Company, 1970) p. 97

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 99.

for their children's education are often conservative and expressed with the spirit of "If it was good enough for me, then it's good enough for my kids."

Finding ways to help educators implement their curriculum and instructional beliefs into their everyday practice must be one of the goals of our educational system if we want educators to become self-actualizing professionals. Simply helping educators to grow intellectually without giving them the ability to practice their new beliefs does little to help upgrade the field of education into a dynamic, relevant, and responsive profession.

LIMITATIONS

There are three major limits to generalizing the findings of this study. First, this study concerned itself with educators' perceptions of changes in their own curriculum belief systems. Whether or not an unbiased observer who monitored an educator over the span of that educator's career would come to the same conclusions is open to question. From the perspective of biographical research methods, the data within this study are accurate to the extent that biographies are, or can be, accurate representations of the lives they represent.³⁷ Second, this study focused on changes in educators' beliefs about curriculum. It has not focused on how changes in beliefs are reflected in changes in actions. It has made no attempt to examine how educators might change such things as their teaching styles, instructional techniques, or classroom management styles over the span of their careers. Third, the educators within this sample are not representative of educators as a whole: over 50% were administrators, about 50% were in doctoral programs within a private university, and about 25% were nuns or priests who worked in Catholic schools.

SUMMARY

In the past, curriculum theorists have identified four major competing ideologies at work within our schools that give meaning to the curriculum and instructional endeavors of educators. In addition, they point out that American schools operate in a state of ideological disequilibrium, in which these ideologies constantly exert pressure on educators for their allegiances. The questions of how the struggle among these ideological forces affects the daily life of educators over the span of their careers and how changes in the daily lives of educators affect their ideological orientation over the span of their careers have not been addressed before now.

This research has shown that the ideological disequilibrium educators find themselves in does have an effect on them. They change their ideologies about once every four years. These changes are perceived to occur not primar-

³⁷Norman K. Denzin, *Interpretative Biography* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1989) chs. 3 and 4.

ily because of philosophical considerations, research findings, or specific, preplanned, change-oriented curriculum interventions. Rather, they occur primarily because of major intrusions into educators' lives that affect the social, political, occupational, and physical environment in which they work. The most frequently noted events associated with such change are (1) changing the school or grade in which an educator works, (2) responding to previously unknown needs of the children or community being served, or (3) changing occupation from teaching to administration. This research has also noted the existence of four levels of conceptual understanding at which educators understand curriculum and instructional issues related to the curriculum ideologies, and has labeled them the dualistic, relativistic, contextual, and hierarchical levels of understanding.

A major observation that seems to accompany these findings is that it is the ordinary everyday relationships and events in educators' lives that act as the prime stimuli for change in their curriculum and instructional belief systems, and not the extraordinary intrusions of curriculum consultants, curriculum workshops, or other such change-oriented curriculum events. The question for those wishing to understand and change schools is thus: *How, about once every five years, for those educators for whom it would be helpful, can certain of the regularities of educators' everyday lives be changed in ways that will force them to reevaluate their curriculum beliefs; and then how can one systematically direct, encourage, and support the resulting growth that is likely to take place as educators rethink their basic assumptions about curriculum and instructional issues?*

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Popkewitz, Thomas S. *A Political Sociology of Educational Reform Power. Knowledge in Teaching, Teacher Education, and Research* New York: Teachers College Press, 1991. \$48.95/\$21.95

In this treatise Popkewitz articulates several interrelated themes from his earlier work—the impossibility of the detached and neutral educational researcher, the problem of social regulation through instrumental, technical, and administrative reasoning to legitimate certain educational practices, the importance of the historical/social context in studying the political sociology of teaching and teacher education; the role of power in efforts at educational reform; and the exploration of the social epistemology of educational knowledge

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