SCHOOL-BASED CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AS A POLICY OPTION FOR THE 1990s: AN AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE

KERRY J. KENNEDY, University of Southern Queensland

Australian education was soundly criticized in the 1950s and '60s for its highly centralized and bureaucratic structure. The product of a frontier society, this structure emerged more for equity reasons—for example, to provide educational services to isolated regions—than for ideological reasons concerned with controlling state functions. The early 1970s, however, saw considerable support for the view that the school site, not the central office, was the more appropriate location for educational decision making. A similar impulse was described in other parts of the world—a natural extension of the process of democratization to school communities.

Yet a gap often exists between rhetoric and reality. Bates has made this point about some initial reforms in one Australian state aimed at devolving responsibility. He identified two metaphors in the rhetoric:

The first, which appealed to the electorate, was one of organizational devolution, which would disperse decision making and control nearer to the "coal face." The second and paramount metaphor was one of organizational efficiency and

---

There was, however, little recognition by the Government, or by its critics, of the contrasted nature of these metaphors and of the competing views of efficiency they implied.\textsuperscript{4}

Local control and corporate management became counterpoised—devolving responsibility would take place only in the context of tight policy control from the center. Thus, this state maintained the appearance of local autonomy demonstrated by such phenomena as school councils, one-line budgets, and greater say for principals and school communities over staffing decisions. Yet in reality, centrally developed policy guidelines, a restrained financial resource context, and a range of industrial issues concerned with personnel deployment all constrained decision making. While democracy provided the initial impetus for devolving responsibility to local communities, politicians and bureaucrats thwarted the process.

In the 1990s, all government education systems in Australia saw repeated the fate of the reforms Bates describes.\textsuperscript{5} If the democratic impulse helped shape reform in the 1970s, then corporate managerialism dominated the reform process in the next decade. Without exception, state departments of education were all restructured to function more like businesses than professional organizations: \textit{Efficiency} and \textit{effectiveness} became the catchwords. Instead of focusing on resource inputs that might alleviate educational problems, these education departments concentrated almost exclusively on outcomes—as though these two variables were unrelated. A new instrumentalism, proposing new educational values and new agendas, started to dominate Australian education. International economic competitiveness became the driving force of government policy. For the education sector, the policy question changed: How can we more effectively harness the education system to the needs of the national economy?

While this situation applied specifically to Australia, remarkable international similarities also existed in countries like the United Kingdom and the United States. The public nature of the reform in the 1980s marked it from earlier periods of reform. The educational reform agenda became the property of politicians and public interest groups. Professional educators, still wedded to romantic views of education, were often excluded from formative decision making, relegated to the role of implementors rather than initiators. On an international level, educators faced the danger of becoming totally irrelevant in the 1980s.

During the 1980s reform period, efforts focused on the curriculum of schools. It came under increasing pressure from two fronts: centralization


\textsuperscript{5}Ibid.
tendencies from national governments and instrumentalist theorizing that has not been confined to the political Right.\textsuperscript{6} Broader policy issues in countries like Australia, the United States, and Great Britain have apparently swallowed up earlier efforts to give teachers and schools a significant role in curriculum development. Yet teachers must play a significant role in developing the school curriculum if they are to be more than mere technicians implementing centrally prescribed documents. If educators are to influence the current curriculum debate, they must develop a professional agenda to demonstrate real alternatives for policymakers. In this proactive way, educators might more effectively influence the new order.

Yet Skilbeck's advice is important here:

We cannot treat the experience, values, and criteria for judging curriculum change that characterized the '50s to mid '70s as a kind of bedrock.\textsuperscript{7}

Neither should earlier conceptions be entirely forsaken. Rather, educators must confront the new economic and political realities. They can no longer expect to receive scarce resources if they cannot show that they can give real value from their use. This point applies particularly to the school curriculum.

From the Australian experience at least, school-based curriculum development (SBCD) encountered significant problems during the 1970s. Teachers were simply not prepared for it, school structures did not change to cope with it, and the community's expectations remained essentially conservative. We would be foolish to ignore real problems because of a romantic attachment to SBCD.

This article, therefore, examines SBCD, and by implication the role of teachers and schools in curriculum development, as a policy option for the 1990s. It considers the apparently international reaction against educational professionals as well as the specific experiences that have characterized teacher involvement in SBCD in other places. Here I formulate a proposal that places SBCD in a professionally oriented context that is relevant to current policy concerns and workable in a practical situation.

Specifically, the article addresses three broad questions:

- What is the nature of SBCD both as a policy construct and a practical process?
- How might SBCD work in practice?
- What does the future hold for SBCD?


Policy Issues

A recent report from the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation reveals the contrary mood of the present time compared with the 1970s. The report reviews the move toward decentralization in member countries. A second general trend is evident in the increase in the control of central authorities over the curriculum, particularly through tighter assessment and evaluation mechanisms. Many countries have systems of centrally employed inspectors, while others are introducing comprehensive forms of monitoring and evaluation. At the same time, the report identifies areas of decentralized decision making:

- details of the curriculum
- responsibility for the selection of staff
- responsibility for the budget (especially in the United States and Canada, where this is seen as the linchpin of change)
- responsibility for evaluation at the school level

This important balance indicates that decentralization is not an "all or nothing" matter. Some areas are appropriate for school-level decision making, and others are not. The curriculum is interesting on this score: The report suggests that while central authorities wish to maintain control over the main framework of the curriculum, they are prepared to allow schools to take responsibility for the details.

This idea is quite removed from Brewer's romantic notion of SBCD as "teachers making decisions about what is taught and learned in schools." Nevertheless, it reflects current realities. We must view curriculum decision making as a shared responsibility, especially in relation to the role of teachers. Skilbeck, for example, has pointed out in the U.K. context that "the legislative framework for curriculum decision making does not support the assertion of teacher, as distinct from school and local education authority control over the curriculum." This balance between central and local education authorities is probably a worldwide phenomena. In Hong Kong, for example, a circular from the

---

9Ibid.
director of schools to all schools, kindergartens, and colleges made the following point:

Whilst the Education Department encourages the development of school-based curriculum, it is considered essential for the projects to serve the purpose of complementing the required knowledge, concepts, and skills offered to pupils in the centrally devised core curriculum.12

From a policy perspective, we need to understand this balance because it will determine the nature of SBCD in a particular local context. We must accept that, as a phenomena, SBCD will differ from place to place depending on local conditions. The requirements of a particular jurisdiction will determine the demands on individuals and organizations.

The concept of balance also points to different levels of curriculum decision making. Some levels of curriculum decision making will always be the sole preserve of teachers, and these matters do not really form part of the discussion here. We must accept that teachers make curriculum decisions every minute of the day as they implement their teaching programs. In this largely interactive decision making, teachers adapt and modify their original planning decisions to better meet their students' needs. Shavelson and Stern have reviewed this kind of decision making.13

Before classroom interaction occurs, however, teachers prepare their teaching programs themselves. This other level relates to the discussion on SBCD. Where there is no central curriculum authority, teachers will make curriculum decisions—either in consultation with other teachers or community members or based on their own professional judgment of their students' needs. These situations call for some sophistication and a range of skills on the part of teachers. We may need to decide who gets access to significant skills and content, as well as how to make the access available.

However, where there is some kind of centrally prepared curriculum framework, planning decisions will occur in relation to that framework. Depending on the nature of the framework, decisions about general objectives, specific content and skills to cover, and when, may already be made. Teachers might decide on the resources, the pacing and timing of individual lessons, evaluation and assessment, and the specific teaching strategies. These decisions are by no means minor, but they are of a different order.

SBCD is a process that covers both kinds of decision making. But policymakers and practitioners must be absolutely clear about what they are advocating. At the same time, we must realize that these different approaches are based on fundamentally different concepts of the curriculum.

12Director of Schools, Hong Kong, Circular (4/88)
If the curriculum represents a selection from all available knowledge and skills that society values, then students must have guaranteed access to the knowledge and skills. The simplest mechanism for conveying a consensus is a centrally developed curriculum framework or syllabus. On the other hand, if the curriculum is the means teachers use to cater to individual students' needs, then the emphasis will fall almost entirely on local decision making.

The decision to adopt either approach to the curriculum and thus to SBCD is clearly a policy decision of the highest order. It reflects underlying philosophical assumptions about the nature of the curriculum and its role in society and in the lives of individuals. These areas concern society as a whole, its politicians, its parents, and its professional educators. All of us must realize that different levels of SBCD call for different responses from teachers and their school communities.

The practical implications following the policy decision have enormous proportions. Each requires a significant range of skills of teachers, and each requires a significant reorientation of teachers' role. Evidence produced over the last decade suggests that barriers prevent us from effectively implementing SBCD, regardless of the level being discussed.

The Process of SBCD—Problems and Prospects

Conceptual problems—the role of teachers. Rudduck has identified the problem of teachers' orientation as curriculum developers.

I remain somewhat skeptical about the intellectual rigor and coherence of courses of study created by busy teachers in their own schools: Creation must be disciplined by conscious articulation of the problematics of the relationship between materials and form. . . . Major works of curriculum creation could be more safely left to others provided that we could rely on confident critique and adaptation from teachers.  

Her reasons deserve some consideration. She does not believe teachers are adequately prepared as curriculum developers, and she anticipates some danger that they will produce curriculum that is "conservative or epistemologies innocent." She places her faith in external curriculum teams and assigns teachers the role of critics. This role marks a clear differentiation between teacher-as-developer and teacher-as-implementor. In one sense, Rudduck may be expressing a realistic expectation about what teachers can do in the available time. Hers is not a lone voice.

Lewy, for example, has raised questions about the feasibility of teachers producing curriculum materials. He argues that even if performing these tasks

---


15Ibid., p 83
is part of teachers' role; time alone would prevent teachers from devoting their full-time attention. He also wonders whether a capacity for teaching relates in any way to the demands of materials development. Like Rudduck, he seems to suggest a more limited role for teachers—a role that focuses on classroom interaction rather than broader interactions associated with the educational endeavor.

Hargreaves has also objected to school-centered innovation, a somewhat broader process than SBCD but nevertheless related:

Can teachers reasonably be expected to participate in a democratic process of [school-centered innovation] when the majority are excluded from other important centers of decision making? What effect does the relative exclusion of ordinary teachers from the wider governance of education, their restricted access to educational theory . . . and the consequent overwhelming [centrality] of classroom practicalities to teachers have on the kind of contributions they can make to staff discussions?

Again, Hargreaves argues for a greatly restricted role for teachers. He does not view them as central to the larger educational process, including curriculum development. He questions the fundamental role of teachers: Can they contribute to the great debates about the nature and purpose of education, or is their role more limited? Should teachers' responsibilities extend beyond the craft of teaching, or should they stay with what they do best?

We cannot ignore the views put forward by Rudduck, Lewy, and Hargreaves. They warn the profession: We can ask too much of teachers, and simplistic policies with no awareness of the broader issues can have disastrous results. I highlight these views here not because I believe that teachers are inadequate for the task but because these researchers bring into the open the main issues.

Curriculum development is a specialized skill: It requires training and a broadly based education. We cannot throw it in as an educational extra as though teachers are simply waiting to be included in the democratic processes of school-based curriculum decision making. On the contrary, teachers themselves may be the greatest opponents of SBCD—especially when it is introduced without adequate training for teachers and without an investment of resources from education authorities.

Practical problems—lessons from implementing SBCD. A study of a small-scale grants scheme designed to support SBCD in Western Australia has found that projects' outcomes differed somewhat from the intentions of

---

the scheme. Almost 50 percent of the projects used funds to purchase new resources, and almost 30 percent focused on developing new approaches to instruction or new instructional documents. Only 3 percent developed new policies, and only 2.5 percent undertook an evaluation activity of some kind. These activities contrasted with some assumptions of the scheme—for example, “Teachers who have exercised responsibility in modifying or developing a curriculum are likely to feel a stronger commitment to implementation.”

Yet for the most part, teachers seemed content to expand their resource base or to examine new ways of teaching. The study provided a number of reasons for this approach.

Teachers identified two significant problems in carrying out their SBCD projects: lack of time for group meetings and group tasks and lack of time for individual work on the project. This finding confirms the conventional wisdom that teachers are busy professionals who have trouble squeezing in new demands on top of their already crowded schedules. Teachers also cited staff mobility: More than 20 percent of the staff had moved on from the school where the project began, and so support for the project had either disappeared or been severely curtailed. This finding supports the view that all successful innovations depend on widespread organizational support, not one enthusiastic person’s support. The latter may be necessary, but it is certainly not sufficient if we expect an innovation to have any long-term effects in a school.

Finally, one of the scheme’s objectives was to encourage the staff to work together. The results, however, indicate that the staff did not ‘see projects as collaborative ventures of the whole school. More than a third of the respondents indicated that their projects consisted mainly of one person acting alone to make decisions about the project. Only 14 percent of the respondents said that three-quarters or more of the staff were involved. For these projects at least, collaboration was not a hallmark. Again, these findings say something about the nature of teachers’ working lives and how much they can become involved in activities outside the classroom, especially if they are expected to continue with their regular teaching loads while working on SBCD. 

---

19Ibid., p. 1.
20Ibid., p. 16.
21Ibid., p. 1
22Ibid., p. 16
Other researchers have provided information on teachers’ attitudes about SBCD. Prideaux has reported that most of the teachers he interviewed preferred to use central curriculum guidelines rather than work on SBCD. They were not convinced that SBCD necessarily gave them greater curriculum autonomy or allowed them to cater more effectively to their students’ needs. They also pointed out the difficulty obtaining a consensus from other staff members on curriculum issues. In general, they found SBCD difficult to put into practice.

Bezzina and Chesterton have shown the considerable store that teachers place on understanding the practical issues associated with SBCD. They collected data from teachers undergoing further education after their initial training. When asked to evaluate components of a course on SBCD, these teachers indicated that “models of curriculum,” “the role of central bodies in SBCD,” and “community involvement in SBCD” were the least relevant parts of the course. On the other hand, these teachers highly ranked two practical components: “practice of decision making in small groups” and “analysis of group processes.” These important issues remind us, that teachers are practitioners, not theoreticians: Teachers believe they carry out their practical task in students’ best interests. Any attempt at innovation that does not understand this point is doomed to fail.

The story so far may seem somewhat pessimistic—a story littered with a record of failure and misunderstanding. But I needed to start from the beginning to show SBCD in a practical context. As a process, SBCD may well extend social democratic theory to the school setting. But more important, it is also a practical enterprise. SBCD requires time, skills, and support. It will not work simply because the bureaucracy has decreed it or because academics are attracted to its theoretical underpinnings. So, how can SBCD work in practice, and what are the conditions for success?

**SBCD IN PRACTICE—SOME EXEMPLARS AND SOME LESSONS**

*An A Case Study in SBCD*

This section examines one case study of SBCD, identifying some principles that might apply elsewhere. Despite the problems in generalizing, case studies powerfully tap practice and portray the realities of school life. We conducted the case study in a Western Australian school during 1983 and 1984. It was part of a larger evaluation designed to monitor the effect of a

---


government initiative for programs encouraging early school leavers to stay on at school.

Located in the metropolitan area of Perth, the school had about 750 students and 56 teachers. It was not large, and although only 12 kilometers from the center of the city, it had a rural feeling. When we first started talking to teachers, we soon saw that their motives for being involved in SBCD were related clearly to their students' needs. One teacher wanted to help students at risk:

They are not bad kids. They are just not there—they are switched off learning, and they need something to switch them back on again. When the boss asked if anyone would be interested in putting together some ideas for dealing with these kids, I wanted to help.25

Although important, teacher commitment is not enough on its own. The organizational environment must also be supportive. Here, the deputy principal took on the role of a curriculum change agent. She involved the staff in curriculum decision-making processes and encouraged them to participate. These processes have continued in the school for the last five years. The principal supported the deputy:

Everyone works hard in this school. It's because Don [the principal] cares about kids, and he has the ability to make all of us feel that he really cares about staff as well. He has got great leadership skills. He gave the planning team the "full ahead" all the time, and he was positive, really.26

Support for teachers also extended to parents. They helped plan the new initiative, so they understood the changes and had a chance to contribute to the process. As a result, parents fully supported the changes.

These points might seem quite disparate about a single effort at SBCD. Yet in the educational change literature, they are significant. Fullan has pointed out that "the quality of the initiation process already sets the stage for subsequent success or failure."27 There are no hard-and-fast rules about how to initiate projects. At the least, however, SBCD requires committed teachers, an organizational environment that encourages initiative and creativity, and a generally supportive school community. SBCD should not be a "one off" activity, separate from a school's overall objectives and unrelated to its ongoing needs. A school's decision to undertake SBCD must involve both administrators and teachers. They must recognize that SBCD involves

---

26Ibid., p. 13.
effort and time and that the process is slow until a constituency builds up in the school. Initiation is the time for planning, persuasion, and patience.

Any plan, no matter how carefully prepared and logically developed, inevitably changes during implementation. One project coordinator said:

When we set off at the beginning of the year, we had only a blueprint for a curriculum. The curriculum has actually been constructed through this year. We did not pretend to say, "During the year you'll do this, this, and this." The teachers had the whole year to work it out.  

Implementation is a crucial phase. It tests the consensus built during the initiation period, and it often leads to disagreement and conflict. People who agreed to be involved sometimes withdraw. Those who remain committed find the demands of time and energy staggering. The project coordinators at this school clearly needed to be released for much of their time on the project. They played a crucial role in talking with staff, convening meetings, acting as intermediaries between staff and students, and generally acting as the up-front people for the project.

In this school, the project set out to radically transform the final years of schooling for many students. Yet the lesson is clear: Teachers cannot take on any additional work on top of demanding teaching loads. They need time to plan, think, reflect, and act if they are to work seriously on creating new ideas or materials for students. SBCD is not necessarily a cheap way to produce educational resources, especially if we want schools to produce quality materials and ideas. We must bear the cost of replacing teachers who are working on projects as well as for materials production itself. This school showed, however, that the costs can produce benefits for all concerned.

We can make implementing SBCD a reality—even if it does become a little ragged around the edges—but we must still overcome a final hurdle: Can SBCD become a continuing part of a school's activities? "Continuation involves such matters as incorporation in the budget, staffing, and extent of durability of the change." Continuation raises the real problem of a school's seriousness in undertaking SBCD. A school should not decide to adopt SBCD because external funds are available. The real test of a school's seriousness or an education authority's attitude toward SBCD is the provision made for continuing SBCD as a part of a school's normal activities. In this situation, external funding threatens any innovation because it often means developing the innovation outside the mainstream.

For the case study school, that did not happen. Even today, the course originally designed in 1983 is still running. The factors that will facilitate

---


SBCD's continuation are the support of the principal, the support of systems-level managers, low staff turnover, and the use of the regular school budget as the funding source.\(^{30}\)

SBCD is a complex process that we cannot undertake lightly. In particular, we should not view it simply as a technical task to do once we have additional funds. To be effective, it must involve the school as an organization, and it must have an organizational priority. SBCD is essentially about people rather than technique; it is above all a humanistic enterprise:

[Teachers] found their new role demanding both in terms of time as well as physical and emotional energy. Increased anxiety and stress were counterbalanced by exhilaration and a sense of achievement as the year progressed. These personal feelings of ambiguity and ambivalence are a common feature of implementation as teachers attempt to work through their own reality of the change and transform original plans into the practicality of the classroom situation.\(^{31}\)

**Skills for SBCD**

This brief review of the case study might give the mistaken impression that SBCD is bound to succeed with the right organizational factors: supportive environment, collegial support, time, and funds. These factors would certainly seem to be required for success—if they are not present, the chances of success are low—but their presence alone does not cause success. This reality reflects the nature of education as a social scientific process. Proactive policies from education authorities must ensure that those who participate in SBCD have the proper training. SBCD is not a process that often forms part of teachers' initial training. For it to work, it must be built into teachers' ongoing professional renewal. The best research in this area has been done in Israel.

The Israeli work focuses on using curriculum workshops and a trained curriculum coordinator to help teachers gain specific curriculum development skills. A topic of particular local relevance was chosen for the workshop activities, and teachers were selected to participate by their principals or district supervisors. Walker's naturalistic model of curriculum development was the framework for the workshop. When teachers work together in teams, a "natural dynamic . . . develops out of real needs, and not according to authority and specifications presuming in advance what the pace and stages should be."\(^{32}\)

---


\(^{31}\)Ibid., p. 27.

The workshop was considered a learning opportunity. Teachers were released from teaching one day a week for the whole year and were actually paid for attending. The workshop was planned as a deliberative curriculum activity that would involve teachers in producing curriculum materials and help them to understand the processes.

Five main activities were undertaken during the year: curricular training, extension of knowledge on the particular subject matter, plenary discussions and deliberations by the team, practice in writing, and development and research and evaluation. These activities were not segmented, and at times a number of activities took place in the one session. The authors identified two activities that teachers considered essential to the workshop's success: "extensive knowledge of the subject matter" and "a curricular basis." This finding supports the view that SBCD cannot happen without intervention of some kind to help teachers understand both the demands of new content and the process of putting it together as a curriculum statement.

In the Israeli study, the role of the workshop coordinator was crucial to the workshop's success. The coordinator served four functions: subject-matter specialist, curriculum specialist and consultant, team leader, and teacher educator. This demanding role required skill in leading and guiding the team while encouraging independent thought and action among teachers. Attempts at SBCD need to be structured and planned, and teachers should have access to both curriculum and subject-matter expertise.

Sabar and Silberstein have systematically followed up the Israeli line of work. They have examined in more detail the role of curriculum coordinators and the specific tasks teachers need to perform to develop quality curriculum materials. Similar work done elsewhere deserves further attention in other contexts.

SBCD must be taught and practiced over a reasonable period of time before it can become part of teachers' natural repertoire. We do not do teachers a favor by throwing them in at the deep end, tossing them some money, and hoping that they will survive. SBCD must be the subject of a deliberate strategy to equip teachers with new skills that will enable them to be more effective and more productive practitioners. Time, effort, and money must come from the employing authorities. For involvement in SBCD to become part of the culture of schools and teachers, it must become part of

---

3Ibid., p 210
4Ibid., p 214.
6Kerry J. Kennedy, "Reconceptualizing the Curriculum Design Process through Inservice Education" (paper presented at the 11th annual conference of the South Pacific Association for Teacher Education, Adelaide, July 1981)
a long-term policy strategy that values highly professional teachers. We cannot bring this work-force into existence overnight, and it will not come cheaply.

A FUTURE FOR SBCD

This section of the article is necessarily speculative. But we need to try to assess what the future might hold for SBCD in a policy context that seems to value centralization rather than local autonomy.

The school is a natural location for curriculum development to take place, and teachers are natural participants in the process. Yet to succeed, SBCD must become part of schools' culture. Therefore, we must develop real support mechanisms. Teachers need time and money for training because practical curriculum development skills are, generally speaking, not part of most teachers' repertoire. Teachers need access to curriculum experts. An environment of support within the school will encourage teachers to be creative and innovative. SBCD will not happen overnight. It will take time for acceptance to grow and for it to become part of the culture.

But what about costs and benefits? What guarantees do policymakers have that investing in teachers as skilled curriculum developers will pay off for schools, and particularly for students? Educators have not answered these questions very well. Yet the questions are reasonable because of the financial restraints that operate in so many countries today. Without any empirical data to back up my claim, I would argue that a skilled teaching force must be more productive than a semi-skilled one. Teachers skilled in SBCD also have a much broader skills base, thus making them more productive members of society.

In Australia, a company like IBM devotes 2 percent of its gross turnover to staff training and development. This figure amounts to more than $20 million annually in a company of 3,700 employees—or 15 days of training and development per person per year. This amount does not seem to me to be a bad target for an education system serious about SBCD to consider.

While SBCD obviously can focus on the real needs of schools, it does not literally have to take place at school. In practice, teachers need to get away from the busy demands of their schools if they are to think, reflect, and be productive. Of course, the main focus of SBCD remains on the school and its needs. In the ideal pattern, teachers spend some time away from school developing ideas and plans and then have a block of time back at school where they can test their ideas and modify their plans. This pattern fits in well with the notion that SBCD is as much an educational process for

---

teachers as it is a technical process that produces materials or policies. For SBCD to succeed, we must identify good learning environments. For teachers to acquire new skills and new ways of thinking, we must understand the principles of adult learning.

SBCD cannot deliver the whole curriculum. Important arguments are based largely on equity considerations for using common curriculum frameworks for all schools. How else can we ensure that young people will have access to fundamental ideas, areas of knowledge, and skills? Yet these considerations should not detract from the importance of SBCD. We need to develop school-level policies and create specific resources to meet the needs of individual schools. Teachers must become participants in the curriculum process; otherwise, they remain mere technicians implementing other people's ideas. Therefore, we need to develop and maintain a positive balance between central initiatives and local responsibilities.

Next we must consider the crucial link between professional development and curriculum development. With SBCD, curriculum development can become the medium for professional development. Teachers deliberating on significant curriculum issues and programs is itself a learning process. SBCD is a practical activity that engages teachers in reflecting on their own practice, taking risks with new and innovative practices, and seeking to improve programs of teaching and learning. In practical terms, SBCD produces materials for teachers to use in schools, and teachers learn from the process that produces the materials. SBCD could form the basis of a comprehensive program of professional renewal for all teachers at some stage in their career.

Schools and education authorities cannot manage SBCD on their own. SBCD is an ideal opportunity for developing collaborative relationships between education authorities, schools, and higher education institutions. Working in partnership, these groups can provide the necessary resources to ease the implementation of SBCD in local schools. Indeed, the development of SBCD collaboratives consisting of teachers, policymakers, and academics could give institutional support for SBCD. Structures and expertise would ensure that the efforts focused on priority areas, met local needs, and provided skills training.

Thus, SBCD could not become a technical task undertaken by a single teacher in an isolated school. Teachers must work together, with a common objective, with institutional support, and with a practical outcome in mind; otherwise, it would be more efficient simply to buy new resources and forsake completely the essence of SBCD—professional development.

Support for quality education has become a slogan of the 1980s. In the 1990s, it must become more than that. Only a highly skilled teacher workforce with access to training programs capable of upgrading their knowledge and skills can achieve quality education. SBCD can play its part in this process by equipping teachers with skills of curriculum analysis, curriculum policy development, and materials creation. From their work with SBCD, teachers
may develop new work habits, and employing authorities may have to accept that duties other than teaching should be rewarded.

Both employers and employees need to think carefully about how to do the work of schools more effectively, more efficiently, and with a greater payoff for students. Educators and policymakers should agree we need to prepare students for the 21st century rather than the 19th. In this context, if SBCD is the means we use to renew both teachers and the curriculum, it will have an assured placed in the future.

Young people in schools can only benefit from a process that makes their teachers more highly skilled and more knowledgeable. Teachers-as-curriculum-developers may have been just a slogan in the 1970s. Yet if it can become a reality in the 1990s, it has real potential to ensure educational outcomes that will benefit individuals and society as a whole.

KERRY J. KENNEDY is Professor of Education and Dean, School of Education, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Queensland 4350, Australia.


Glanz, in this first book on the history of supervision, focuses on the dilemma between bureaucracy and autonomy in the drive for professionalism. The book traces the forces shaping the development of American public school supervision from the late 19th century to the present. The book also details the alliance between supervisors and curriculum workers. In 1943, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development was formed from this alliance.


A perspective on teaching and its constituent stages provides the background for this practical vision of the work system of one teaching episode. Here are numerous insights about the content of teaching, truth and school subjects, the language of teaching for understanding, planning for teaching as curriculum design, and teaching as storytelling and as conversation—an alternative to the technical-rational view of teaching.