

objectives model and teacher freedom, initiative and spontaneity? In an earlier period, this is the question that was asked of planning. Is sound planning, of its nature or in its characteristic forms, hostile to individual freedom and inimical to flexibility and adaptability to changing situations? The answer given by Karl Mannheim, John Dewey and others who believe in purposeful democratic action, is that freedom of action in social systems and organizations, so far from being within the reach of spontaneously acting individuals (professional or otherwise), requires both collaboration ('community') and the adoption of procedures where, amongst other things, participants not only try to reach agreement on their objectives but also work out the kinds of action needed to achieve them (rational planning) – (Dewey 1916, chapters VIII, IX; Mannheim 1943, chapter 1). We need not assume that the use of objectives in planning and design prevents us from using them flexibly and imaginatively.

What the critics of the objectives model do not show, is either the inadequacy of the model in *any* form or the undesirability of its continued development and refinement as one of our most useful instruments of curriculum analysis and development. They fear its inhibiting effects, and this is perhaps salutary if surprising, but do not show why schools should not use it with discrimination and sensitivity as a typical mode of practical curriculum development.

Due to the critical onslaught against objectives, for some two decades and more, we have had battle-lines drawn and only the unwary or the brave have come forward with their objectives built into curriculum plans and programmes. Over the next decade, this is very likely to change as increasing numbers of schools become familiar with curriculum planning, the analysis and determination of aims, the overhaul of assessment procedures and the need to communicate the what and the how of their curricula to parents and the community at large. In this new environment of renewed, school-level curriculum activity we may very well find ourselves turning to the systematic review, evaluation and development of the curriculum through the use of simple, powerful and economic objectives design models. The practice and issues arising from it may be expected to lead to a revision of recommended procedures for that practice, and a realignment of theoretical positions.

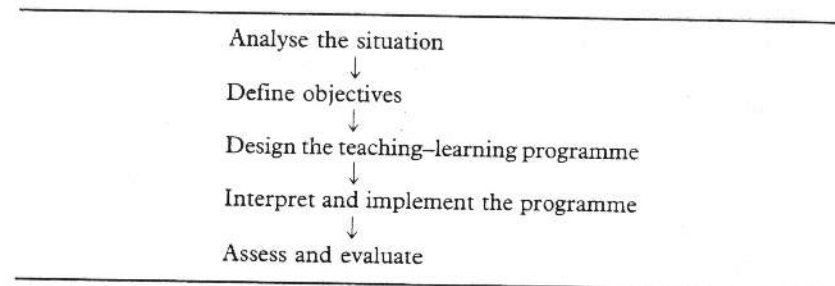
A design model for school-based curriculum development

We have considered the question of objectives at length, because the

opposition to objectives has been intense and widespread, not to say intimidating. It is time for us to change course. The criticisms have meant an uneasiness and ambivalence about objectives which has obscured the issue of how planning and designing the curriculum are to proceed. We may not wish to reduce all of this to models for curriculum development. Yet general planning and design models are undoubtedly valuable, in identifying and interrelating significant areas of action, providing a momentum for action by pointing the way ahead, and indicating where monitoring and evaluation are required. Inevitable simplifications and distortions can be put to further use, as they can be the means of critical analysis and the improvement of the curriculum plans and designs.

In the remaining part of this chapter I shall outline an approach to school-based curriculum development which I first became interested in and adopted several years ago. As formulated in some of my own papers, it has been widely used, often with liberal variations and adaptations, in many different school settings. Discerning readers will have no difficulty in identifying its sources and antecedents. It is set out in Table 8.1, as an outline of the kinds of action to be taken in curriculum development, conceived as a process of collaborative, structured decision making.

Table 8.1



It scarcely needs saying that such a diagrammatic representation of the processes of curriculum making must simplify and risk distortion by its very brevity and apparent orderliness. What should also be obvious is that sequential and cyclical models of human action suffer from the disadvantage of imposing the logic of projected forward motion and anticipation on decisions that may oscillate rather than progress and on activities that may diverge or reverse as often as they seem to 'move on'. Let us accept at the outset certain limitations in all such proposals and be ready,

in this one, to take concurrently or even in reverse what may suggest themselves to the orderly-minded as items for step-by-step progression. By way of illustration, evaluation is a discrete step in a design process, a set of procedures – and also a cast of mind, a way of reflecting on data and decisions which should be apparent throughout a planning programme; again, objectives need to be modified in the light of experience, they are not set down, once for all at the beginning, but are to be thought of as a succession of approximations and in this sense as organic rather than extrinsic, belonging to the curriculum in action, not projecting it from outside. What uses has this sequence of actions in curriculum planning and design? First, we may use it to provide a résumé, a kind of prospectus of tasks to be accomplished. Second, it can be the basis of agreed action and hence help in reducing arbitrary or authoritarian decisions, a matter of some importance when hierarchies may feel challenged by unstructured reviews and evaluations. Third, it will be useful if it encompasses, in simplified ways, crucial and productive kinds of action. There is some risk of circularity here which can be reduced if we are able to show that the approach proposed captures what curriculum planners, designers, teachers and others have found through experience to be the tasks that need to be carried out. Fourth, what is proposed is useful if it helps in the presentation and communication to interested parties of what is planned and is happening in the curriculum. In summary, the kinds of action represented in Table 8.1 are those required in an integrated programme for planning and undertaking curriculum development, evaluating it and communicating with interested parties. They constitute a guide to reflective action in the curriculum. We may better appreciate this by considering the five distinct elements in a little more detail.

1. *Analyse the situation*

A proposal for curriculum review, evaluation or development always presupposes 'a situation': this may be as large as 'the country's primary schools' or 'music teaching in this LEA's secondary schools', or as limited as 'opportunities for second language learning in this school's option system'. Taking the DES cue (*The School Curriculum*, Circulars 6/81 and 8/83), 'the situation' for schools in contemporary Britain might be the whole, existing curriculum of a given school, its assumptions, characteristics and social relations, in the context of emerging national and LEA curriculum policy plans and priorities. In analysing this situation we have, to start with, to find ways of describing what the school's curriculum is –

not only the general statements of intent, syllabus outlines, etc., but what the Schools Council called 'the effective curriculum', that is what students are learning, in or out of the classroom, formally or informally. The Schools Council's handbook, *The Practical Curriculum*, suggests ways of doing all this, by monitoring children's learning experiences (difficult in practice – time consuming and with much inbuilt redundancy of effort); drawing up detailed schemes of work; preparing a visual account of the school's activities, etc. Similarly, there are helpful suggestions for the equally difficult task of gaining a general profile of the students (Schools Council 1981, chapters III and IV).

Comprehensive schemes of this nature exist in many schools already and reference may be made to them for guidance on factors that need to be taken into account and examples of teacher-organized analyses of the context, conditions and evidence of learning (Blenkin and Kelly 1983, chapters 2–7; Galton et al. 1980; Gammage 1982, chapters 2 and 7; Mitchell 1984; Rowntree 1977).

The 'situation' we are referring to, however, embraces not only the teachers' (parent-community-student) perceptions of the curriculum, but the teacher's own reflective self-awareness. Young teachers, especially, have to come to terms with their own situation and the curriculum is often an extension of their own values and concerns, which they need to address (Dow 1982).

But what, also, of the so-called 'hidden curriculum' (an overused and vague term!)? How do we get to the underlying value structures of the school, the message system of rules, rituals, relationships, and the 'sets' toward learning, values and other people that students bring with them to school? There is a growing and sometimes rather excitable literature on this subject, to some of which we referred in Chapter 2. It is surprising, though, how little has been said about what – other than know of its existence, or perhaps regret it – teachers and schools are meant to *do* about the 'hidden curriculum'. Generally the concept has been used as a critical weapon against schools and schooling; its heuristic potential in curriculum development has yet to be brought out. As a kind of negative capability, knowing about the assorted items covered by the term 'hidden curriculum' has value; planning the curriculum in the light of this knowledge ought to be more intelligent than planning based on ignorance. There is something paradoxical, though, in the prospect of the planned curriculum being directed against some aspect of the hidden curriculum. In making a situational analysis, we treat the hidden curriculum as part of the data for

planning, neither ignored nor unwittingly reproduced but 'appraised' for its educational significance and possible utility.

Let us try to summarize some of the key questions to ask – and answer – in a situational analysis. These questions can form an agenda for curriculum review within the school. Reference to several of the Section 3 *Readings* shows how such questions are identified and addressed – or sometimes lost to sight – in the course of school curriculum development.

Within the school:

1. What is the existing curriculum including the school rules, rituals and value sets?
2. What is the students' experience of (performance in, perception of) the curriculum?
3. What is the curriculum context within the school (i.e. social climate, patterns of conduct etc.)?
4. What are the strengths and capabilities of the staff?
5. What are the available resources for the curriculum?

Wider environment:

6. What kind of neighbourhood, community, society are we serving?
7. What are the key educational policies to which we should be responding (LEA, national)?
8. What kinds of resource/support can we draw upon (LEAs, teachers' centres, community, teacher education, research etc.)?
9. What are some of the changes, proposals and developments in curriculum practice and ideas that could be useful for us here?

In short, the question we must ask is: 'What are our curriculum problems and needs and how can we meet them?'

2. Define objectives

We have already observed that defining objectives is neither a once-for-all matter nor a step that occurs only at the front end of a planning model in a defined 'stage'. The situational analysis will undoubtedly lead into a discussion of objectives; indeed, being clear about problems and needs presupposes at least some sense of purpose, an implicit aim that is not being fulfilled, a sense that things could be different and that something might and ought to be done to make them so. We have already discussed objectives at considerable length. Three or four additional points need to be made here.

1. Objectives in a curriculum should be stated as desirable student learnings and as actions to be undertaken by teachers and those associated with them to affect, influence or bring about these learnings; they need to be clear, concise and to be capable of being understood by the learners themselves.
2. Objectives are directional and dynamic in that they must be reviewed, modified and if necessary reformulated progressively as the teaching-learning process unfolds.
3. Objectives gain their legitimacy by being related systematically both to general aims and to the practicalities of teaching and learning, and by the manner of their construction and adoption in the school (see 5 below). There are problems here but it is nevertheless desirable to try to show that the objectives have a rational and legitimate basis.
4. There are several types of objectives: broad and general – specific; long and short term; higher order cognitive – lower order informational; subject-specific – global; and so on. Working groups, as Davies shows, need to select and plot types of objectives (Davies 1976, chapters 6–9).
5. The construction of curriculum objectives has to be participatory, involving students as well as teachers, parents and community as well as professionals. This is too large an issue to discuss here – we return to it in the next chapter.

3. Design the teaching-learning programme

We may think schematically of the design of the programme – what is to be taught and learnt – under a few general headings. For their elaboration it is necessary to consult the detailed and often subject-specific literature on this topic. We are considering the general, procedural principles here, not the detail. Design of the programme of teaching and learning refers to decisions about:

1. the fundamental orientation of the curriculum, as for example areas of experience in a core curriculum, or academic specialization or leisure interests in the electives part of the curriculum;
2. the groupings and combinations of subject matter;
3. the groupings of students, for example mixed ability, or special interest groups;
4. the relationship of learning in the different subject areas to the overall objectives of the curriculum – a particularly important and often neglected matter in planning;

5. the scope, sequence and structure of teaching content;
6. space, resources, materials, equipment;
7. the proposed methods of teaching and learning;
8. staffing needs and allocations;
9. timetabling and scheduling.

Examples of how decisions such as the foregoing may be prepared for and taken are given in the *Readings* and in the literature on the selection and organization of curriculum experiences (Cohen and Harrison 1977, 1978, 1979; Galton et al. 1980; Gray 1974; Taba 1962, chapters 17 and 18).

In our discussion of the core curriculum in Chapter 7, we defined nine 'areas of experience' with reference to which, we argued, the core ought to be constructed at the school level. Taking this as an example, the design of teaching-learning programmes according to the decisions listed above would, in the distinctive and individual situations emerging from the first stage of our model, undoubtedly yield a considerable variety of school-based core curricula. This variety would reflect not only the diversity of students, school buildings, equipment, locations etc., but also the different interpretations that inevitably arise in group decision making.

It comes as a surprise to some critics of core to realize that it is not monolithic or directive when used as a *strategy* rather than a *blueprint* within a national curriculum framework approach where school decision making in the curriculum has a prominent place. Use of the planning procedures proposed here for school-based curriculum development, and drawing in national policy guidelines and a design for core curriculum, need not result in external control and manipulation of the school curriculum. Curriculum decisions by schools, when orderly and skilfully executed, can facilitate their own freedom: schools can – and should – set objectives and work out teaching and learning programmes in and for their own individually defined situations; they can – and should – use their own judgement in interpreting and implementing these programmes, in assessing students and in evaluating their overall performance in planning, designing and implementing the curriculum. Time and effort given to the decisions in designing teaching and learning programmes, as enumerated above, are justified by the results in student learning and by the school's demonstration of its own capability in curriculum development.

4. Interpret and implement the programme

Unless we are engaged in training and simulations, our purpose in

planning and designing curricula is to implement them in particular settings and evaluate results. The ultimate justification for all this projective activity is to be found in the satisfactory teaching and learning that take place. No plan or design can guarantee this. The underlying structures of rationality, foresight, and preparatory organization must be combined with teacher professionalism and supported by regular monitoring, review and evaluation. Will the planning and designing be worth while? Will things happen as intended? Will there be results and benefits? Schools are in principle no different from the wider educational environment when change is being proposed: the problems of acceptance, implementation, achieving what was envisaged, coping with the uncertainty, confusion, resistance perhaps or indifference, being flexible enough to adjust and modify according to circumstances, apply within schools, as they do when national projects are being implemented. The location of major responsibilities for the curriculum and decisions in the school is not a panacea. Several of the reports on school experience in Section 3 of the *Readings* make just this point. Curriculum development in the school is often carried out on the initiative of innovators and enthusiasts – perhaps a director of studies, departmental or year head, or a strong-minded primary school principal. Problems of communication, shared values and expectations, of differences of interpretation, of inadequate implementation, frequently arise.

There are one or two crucial differences between schools and educational systems which should – but do not always – ensure that the plans made by the school will be honestly implemented by the school. For several good reasons, we have accepted that the curriculum ought to be planned and designed in detail by those in the school, including teachers with their intimate knowledge of the students for whom it is intended, to ensure a good match with their characteristics and needs. The curriculum, we have also argued, ought to be designed in major part by those responsible for teaching it to ensure their commitment and practical engagement and a good match with their capabilities. Interpretation and implementation by teachers of a curriculum in whose design they have prominently figured ought to be better than other styles of curriculum development, even if the role of the school is primarily adaptive with respect to an externally produced plan and design, and if the curriculum materials are very largely of external origins. The school moreover is not, like national curriculum projects, a temporary system. The curriculum is not an accidental extra but is of the essence of the institution. In spite of

these advantages, we cannot take successful implementation of well-designed curricula for granted, and must, as part of the planning process, undertake a fifth step.

5. *Assess and evaluate*

Assessment and evaluation are large topics and we have already referred to them (see Chapters 2 and 5). Our interest here is in the function of assessment and evaluation in the curriculum development cycle, not in detailed procedures which are dealt with in more specialist literature (see for example Rowntree 1977, and the bibliography in Skilbeck 1984c).

Assessment and evaluation are not the same but they are closely related. For our purposes, *assessment in the curriculum is a process of determining and passing judgements on students' learning potential and performance; evaluation means assembling evidence on and making judgements about the curriculum including the processes of planning, designing and implementing it.* Evaluation of the curriculum ought not to ignore student performances, (although it often does) both because those performances are part of the curriculum as experienced and because their quality tells us something about the quality of the curriculum. For practical purposes, the two processes are often kept apart: assessment (of performance) is the business of defining and agreeing attainment standards, setting tasks, observing and recording work, examining and reporting. As Henry Macintosh and John Stephenson argue in the *Readings*, there is plenty of room for improvement in all of this in schools, and for reducing the excessive weight given to external examination results as 'the final verdict' on student performance. Similarly, much can be done, and is being done, in the development of procedures for curriculum evaluation for use within the school (Eraut 1984; Mitchell 1984). From a curriculum perspective, varied, comprehensive and continuous (as distinct from 'terminal') assessment of student performance is indispensable and can be very effectively used in the curriculum review process. This requires us to shift the emphasis from assessment as a summative activity to assessment as prognostic in respect both of the learner and of the curriculum designer. Similarly, with evaluation, the cyclic nature of our curriculum development model demonstrates a crucial feature of the function of evaluation in focusing discussion, reflection and action – its contribution to the continuity of the whole planning cycle.

Just as we need well-prepared and practically useful schedules for the observation and assessment of students (including their self-assessment) so we need schedules which structure and facilitate evaluation of the

curriculum. Their construction has been attempted but the widespread practice, in schools, of occasional or periodic or partial curriculum evaluation – or none at all – suggests that available instruments and procedures are unsuitable. There is a role here for schools, as in any other aspect of curriculum planning and design, to experiment with and develop these instruments and procedures.

So much for an outline of the steps in the curriculum development model. It may be, as Michael Marland remarks, that 'In the British school the main burden of curriculum planning is placed on the heads of departments, and their task is expressed in the department's syllabus' (Marland 1981, p. 88). He quickly makes it clear, however, that by syllabus he means a great deal more than topic outlines and that the head of department is expected to share the 'burden' with his colleagues. This is still (and allowing for the assumption of the secondary sector) a narrower conception of the nature of the curriculum development task than the one we have been discussing. Partly, this is because what the department in the secondary school or the class teacher in the primary school does in constructing a scheme of work is not the whole of what is generally understood – and accepted – as the school's curriculum responsibilities.

We have given excessive emphasis, in British education, to the relationship of curriculum decisions to the roles of departments and class teachers, and paid too little attention to the curriculum conceived as the whole range and variety of school learning experiences. One of the purposes of this chapter is to redress this by discussing modes suitable for whole school curriculum development – within and towards which there are vital, but not exhaustive, contributions to be made by the individual subject departments and class teachers. Thus, the objectives component infers objectives for the whole curriculum, in context – the context of the school and of the education system. Correspondingly, our assessment component must not be limited to class learnings and performances in departmental schemes of work but must reach out to encompass that wide spectrum of learnings that the good school facilitates for all its members. It follows that the evaluation of the curriculum entails judgements on the whole life of the school and the quality of experience it provides.

Summary

For the school to perform the curriculum roles that are widely expected and claimed, it needs to decide how the curriculum is to be reviewed,

evaluated and developed. Curriculum planning and design within the school involve many different procedures which cannot be undertaken indiscriminately but require different kinds of ordering and articulation. Reflective problem solving, using individual and small-group studies and inquiries and incremental change strategies are not inconsistent with more comprehensive planning approaches. Both are needed in curriculum development. Their combination produces a model for curriculum development comprising the five interrelated processes of:

- situational analysis
- definition of objectives
- programme design
- implementation
- assessment and evaluation

This approach to school-based curriculum development accepts that well-constructed objectives are crucial for planning, and designing, the curriculum. They figure equally in evaluation and help structure teaching. Disagreements among curriculum theorists and others over the value of attempting to define objectives for the whole curriculum, the nature and level of specificity of objectives and the implications of constructing curriculum designs using objectives, have obscured points of similarity between the several positions taken and magnified differences. It is more helpful to schools to address these issues constructively than to adopt entrenched ideological positions.

Objectives are widely if often inadequately used in curriculum planning and design in schools and colleges and improvements are possible through a reappraisal of how objectives can be incorporated into the curriculum. Weaknesses of the earlier, behaviouristic attempts to define and articulate objectives have been revealed through a succession of critical appraisals. Different forms and styles of objectives have emerged to meet these criticisms.

For whole school development and for more specialized work in particular aspects of the curriculum, the five-stage design model can be used in reaching decisions and determining action to carry them through in the practice of teaching and learning. Decisions need to be collaborative and to be tested in action: the curriculum development model that is proposed is reflexive and developmental in that, by its continuous application, progressive modifications can be made to the curriculum by all the partners and in the light of experience.

CHAPTER 9

PARTICIPATION

'A boy who had just left school was asked by his former headmaster what he thought of the new buildings. "It could all be marble, sir," he replied, "but it would still be a bloody school".' (Central Advisory Council, *Half Our Future*)

In our discussion of the nature of the curriculum and of the school, in earlier chapters, the active roles of teachers – all teachers – have been seen as fundamental in any programme of school-based curriculum development. How these roles are best exercised is a question that cannot be answered unless we give consideration to other relevant participants, both outside and within the school. Our argument in Chapter 3 was that a major new factor since the mid-70s has been the resurgence of national curriculum roles, mainly those of officials in the Department of Education and Science (and to a growing extent in Industry and Employment), HMI and the Government. These roles are not confined to general policy determinations and resource allocations but, as we saw, extend into many areas of the curriculum itself, previously assumed to be distinctively professional, that is, the preserve of teachers and allied groups. Although the exercise of these official and political roles has not driven out other national interests with a strong professional character, such as national curriculum agencies, they do constitute an important factor in any review of who participates in curriculum making and of their claims to do so.

In this same period we have also noted growing parental and community interest in the curriculum of the school with evidence of an enlargement of formal roles, as in the strengthening of the curriculum role of school governing bodies (parents, local community, local politicians) enhanced