CHAPTER 1

The Nature of Curriculum

The intent of this introductory chapter is to provide curriculum leaders with a general overview of the curriculum field and a set of concepts for analyzing the field. To accomplish these related goals, the discussion that follows focuses on these outcomes: defining the concept of curriculum, examining the several types of curricula, describing the contrasting nature of curriculum components, and analyzing the hidden curriculum. Some fundamental concepts essential for understanding the comprehensive field of curriculum can be established at the outset.

Questions addressed in this chapter include the following:

- What is curriculum, and why is it important?
- What are the types and components of curricula, and how have they changed over the years?
- What are the three "Ds" of curriculum standards?
- What are mastery, organic, and enrichment curricula, and what roles do they play in the development of curriculum?
- Why is knowledge of the "hidden curriculum" important to curriculum leaders?

Key to Leadership

Curriculum leaders should review and monitor curriculum policies to make sure the policies align with curricular goals and support student learning.

THE CONCEPT OF CURRICULUM

In a sense, the task of defining the concept of curriculum is perhaps the most difficult of all, for the term *curriculum* has been used with quite different meanings ever since the field took form. *Curriculum*, however, can be defined as prescriptive, descriptive, or both.

> **Prescriptive [curriculum]** definitions provide us with what "ought" to happen, and they more often than not take the form of a plan, an intended program, or some kind of expert opinion about what needs to take place in the course of study. (Ellis, 2004, p. 4)

Analogous to prescriptive curricula are medical prescriptions that patients have filled by pharmacists; we do not know how many are actually followed. "The best guess is that most are not" (p. 4). This is parallel to the prescribed curriculum for schools where the teacher, like the patient, ultimately decides whether the prescription will be followed. In essence, "the developer proposes, but the teacher disposes" (p. 4).

To understand the nature and extent of curriculum diversity, it is important at this juncture to examine the prescriptive and descriptive definitions offered by some of the past and present leaders in the field. The prescriptive definitions in Exhibit 1.1, arranged chronologically, have been chosen for their representativeness.

EXHIBIT 1.1 Prescriptive Definitions of Curriculum

Date	*Author*	*Definition*
1902	John Dewey	Curriculum is a continuous reconstruction, moving from the child's present experience out into that represented by the organized bodies of truth that we call studies . . . the various studies . . . are themselves experience—they are that of the race. (pp. 11–12)
1918	Franklin Bobbitt	Curriculum is the entire range of experiences, both directed and undirected, concerned in unfolding the abilities of the individual. (p. 43)
1927	Harold O. Rugg	[The curriculum is] a succession of experiences and enterprises having a maximum lifelikeness for the learner . . . giving the learner that development most helpful in meeting and controlling life situations. (p. 8)
1935	Hollis Caswell in Caswell & Campbell	The curriculum is composed of all the experiences children have under the guidance of teachers. . . . Thus, curriculum considered as a field of study represents no strictly limited body of content, but rather a process or procedure. (pp. 66, 70)
1957	Ralph Tyler	[The curriculum is] all the learning experiences planned and directed by the school to attain its educational goals. (p. 79)

(Continued)

EXHIBIT 1.1 (Continued)

Date	*Author*	*Definition*
1967	Robert Gagne	Curriculum is a sequence of content units arranged in such a way that the learning of each unit may be accomplished as a single act, provided the capabilities described by specified prior units (in the sequence) have already been mastered by the learner. (p. 23)
1970	James Popham & Eva Baker	[Curriculum is] all planned learning outcomes for which the school is responsible. . . . Curriculum refers to the desired consequences of instruction. (p. 48)
1997	J. L. McBrien & R. Brandt	[Curriculum] refers to a written plan outlining what students will be taught (a course of study). Curriculum may refer to all the courses offered at a given school, or all the courses offered at a school in a particular area of study.
2010	Indiana Department of Education	Curriculum means the planned interaction of pupils with instructional content, materials, resources, and processes for evaluating the attainment of educational objectives. (n.p.)

In your opinion, which definition is appropriate today? Why?

The descriptive definitions of *curriculum* displayed in Exhibit 1.2 go beyond the prescriptive terms as they force thought about the curriculum "not merely in terms of how things ought to be . . . but how things are in real classrooms" (Ellis, 2004, p. 5). Another term that could be used to define the **descriptive curriculum** is *experience.* The experienced curriculum provides "glimpses" of the curriculum in action. Several examples, in chronological order, of descriptive definitions of curriculum are listed in Exhibit 1.2.

The definitions provided for prescriptive and descriptive curricula vary primarily in their breadth and emphasis. It would seem that a useful definition of *curriculum* should meet two criteria: It should reflect the general understanding of the term as used by educators, and it should be useful to educators in making operational distinctions.

Curriculum Tip 1.1

The following definition of *curriculum* is offered and will be used in this work: The curriculum is the plans made for guiding learning in the schools, usually represented in retrievable documents of several levels of generality, and the actualization of those plans in the classroom, as experienced by the learners and as recorded by an observer; those experiences take place in a learning environment that also influences what is learned.

Several points in this definition need to be emphasized. First, it suggests that the term *curriculum* includes both the plans made for learning and the actual learning experiences provided. Limiting the term to the plans made for learning is not enough, because, as will

EXHIBIT 1.2 Descriptive Definitions of Curriculum

Date	*Author*	*Definition*
1935	Hollis Caswell & Doak Campbell	All the experiences children have under the guidance of teachers.
1941	Thomas Hopkins	Those learnings each child selects, accepts, and incorporates into himself to act with, on, and upon, in subsequent experiences.
1960	W. B. Ragan	All experiences of the child for which the school accepts responsibility.
1987	Glen Hass	The set of actual experiences and perceptions of the experiences that each individual learner has of his or her program of education.
1995	Daniel Tanner & Laurel Tanner	The reconstruction of knowledge and experience that enables the learner to grow in exercising intelligent control of subsequent knowledge and experience.
2006	D. F. Brown	All student school experiences relating to the improvement of skills and strategies in thinking critically and creatively, solving problems, working collaboratively with others, communicating well, writing more effectively, reading more analytically, and conducting research to solve problems.
2009	E. Silva	An emphasis on what students can do with knowledge, rather than what units of knowledge they have, is the essence of 21st-century skills.

In your opinion, which definition is appropriate today? Why?

be discussed below, those plans are often ignored or modified. Second, the phrase "retrievable documents" is sufficiently broad in its denotation to include curricula stored in a digital form—i.e., software and/or shared on the Internet. Also, those documents, as will be more fully explained below, are of several levels of specificity: Some, such as curricular policy statements, are very general in their formulation; others, such as daily lesson plans, are quite specific. Third, the definition notes two key dimensions of actualized curriculum: the curriculum as experienced by the learner and that which might be observed by a disinterested observer. Finally, the experienced curriculum takes place in an environment that influences and impinges on learning, constituting what is usually termed the *hidden curriculum*.

Although the definition, for the sake of brevity, does not deal explicitly with the relationship between curriculum and instruction, an implicit relationship does exist. Instruction is viewed here as an aspect of curriculum, and its function and importance change throughout the several types of curricula. First, in the written curriculum, when the curriculum is a set of documents that guide planning, instruction is only one relatively minor aspect of the curriculum. Those retrievable documents used in planning for learning typically specify five components: a rationale for the curriculum; the aims, objectives, and content for achieving those objectives; instructional methods; learning materials and resources; and tests or assessment methods.

Consequently, instruction is a component of the planned curriculum and is usually seen as less important than the aims, objectives, and content at the actualized level; when the planned or written curriculum is actually delivered, instruction takes on a new importance. For that reason, administrators and supervisors should view the curriculum as the total learning experience for students and focus on instruction—how teachers are teaching.

THE TYPES OF CURRICULA

The definition stipulated above suggests that there is a major difference between the planned curriculum and actualized curriculum. Yet even these distinctions are not sufficiently precise to encompass the several different types of curricula. It is important to note that the word *curriculum* (as defined from its early Latin origins) means literally "to run a course." If students think of a marathon with mile and direction markers, signposts, water stations, and officials and coaches along the route, they can better understand the concept of types of curriculum (Wilson, 2005).

As early as the late 1970s, Goodlad and associates (1979) were perhaps the first to suggest several key distinctions. As Goodlad analyzed curricula, he determined that there were five different forms of curriculum planning. The *ideological curriculum* is the ideal curriculum as construed by scholars and teachers—a curriculum of ideas intended to reflect funded knowledge. The *formal curriculum* is that officially approved by state and local school boards—the sanctioned curriculum that represents society's interests. The *perceived curriculum* is the curriculum of the mind—what teachers, parents, and others think the curriculum to be. The *operational curriculum* is the observed curriculum of what actually goes on hour after hour in the classroom. Finally, the *experiential curriculum* is what the learners actually experience.

While those distinctions in general seem important, the terms are perhaps a bit cumbersome and the classifications are not entirely useful to curriculum workers. It seems to be more useful in the present context to use the following concepts with some slightly different denotations: the **recommended curriculum**, the **written curriculum**, the **supported curriculum**, the **taught curriculum**, the **tested curriculum**, and the **learned curriculum**. Four of these curricula—the *written,* the *supported,* the *taught,* and the *tested*—are considered components of the **intentional curriculum**. The intentional curriculum is the set of learnings that the school system consciously intends, in contradistinction to the **hidden curriculum**, which by and large is not a product of conscious intention.

The Recommended Curriculum

The recommended curriculum is the one recommended by the individual scholars, professional associations, and reform commissions; it also encompasses the curriculum requirements of policymaking groups, such as federal and state governments. Similar to Goodlad's "ideological curriculum," it is a curriculum that stresses "oughtness," identifying the skills and concepts that ought to be emphasized, according to the perceptions and value systems of the sources.

Curriculum Tip 1.2

Recommended curricula are typically formulated at a rather high level of generality; they are most often presented as policy recommendations, lists of goals, suggested graduation requirements, and general recommendations about the content and sequence of a field of study, such as mathematics.

The prevailing decline of American education at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, its low international educational ranking, and the achievement gap between students of different races are undoubtedly factors that influenced several of today's reform reports. Many perceive the state of American education as a national embarrassment as well as a threat to the nation's future. Second, advancements in technology also play a role. The widespread use of technology in the nation's schools has influenced several of the professional associations to include in their recommendations aspects of technology across the curriculum. Advancing excellence in technological literacy in our schools is vital because

> citizens of today must have a basic understanding of how technology affects their world and how they coexist with technology. Attaining technological literacy is as fundamentally important to students as developing knowledge and abilities in the traditional core subject areas. Students need and deserve the opportunity to attain technological literacy through the educational process. (Dugger, Meade, Delany, & Nichols, 2003, pp. 316–317)

The impact of technology is best evidenced by Monica Martinez (2010), president of New Tech Network, who notes that with the advent of digital media, network teaching, and learning platforms, we now have an unprecedented opportunity to reimagine teaching and learning.

Professional associations and individuals also seem to have an impact. First, the professional associations representing the several disciplines, such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and those that represent school administrators, such as the National Association for Secondary School Principals, have been active in producing recommended curricula. Also, there seems to be a network of opinion shapers in the profession, who through their writing and consulting have a strong impact on recommended curricula as they attempt to translate the latest research into recommendations for content and methodology. Also, as will be discussed in Chapter 4, federal and state legislation and court decrees play a significant role. Public Law 94-142, requiring the "least restrictive environment" for handicapped pupils, and Public Law 107-110, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), as well as charter schools, homeschooling, school choice, and vouchers, have had a profound influence on all those developing recommended curricula for these groups of learners.

All this legislation is being judiciously reviewed. And, to be sure, many strongly believe that NCLB has had the most devastating effect on schools as well as a general debilitating effect on teaching (Starnes, 2010). Along with the adoption of Common Core State Standards for English language arts and mathematics by a majority of the states, national

educational organizations have launched a series of ambitious projects to define voluntary standards for science, mathematics, art, music, foreign languages, social studies, English language arts, and other subjects. These efforts have served as catalysts in a wide-ranging national conversation about the needs of students and the instructional approaches of their teachers. This also adds to the national dialogue by presenting the consensus that exists among thousands of educators about what all students in K–12 schools should know and be able to do in the various subject fields. The authors endorse the act of defining standards released by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and learned societies because it invites further reflection and conversation about the goals of public and private schooling. As we reviewed the standards set forth by the NGA Center and CCSSO and various learned societies, we concluded that administrators, curriculum specialists, and teachers should know that clear goals for learning are required to ensure quality education for all students. And there is a difference between content standards—what students should know and be able to do—and performance standards identifying the acceptable level of performance (Cox, 2000).

Curriculum Tip 1.3

First, we must define what we mean by standards. Second, we must create a set of standards that are "doable" in the classroom. Finally, teachers must view standards as an important part of their work. I call these the three Ds—definition, doability, and desirability.

—Jim Cox, president of JK Educational Associates, Inc. in Anaheim, California

It is interesting to note that the recommended curriculum, as posited by the NGA Center and CCSSO and learned societies, remains remarkably accurate today. As Mike Rose (2010), professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, states: "When standards are employed fairly, they can facilitate learning and show students that their teachers believe they can meet academic expectations" (p. 26).

Raising standards in the core curriculum subjects continues to gain momentum in states and school districts across the country. In essence, "the process of setting standards for state assessments should follow the suggestions of many experts—good judgment and pragmatism must guide the final standard setting" (Pellegrino, 2007, p. 541). In this regard, states have begun to use academic standards to make clear what students should learn and what teachers should teach. The curricula recommended by state governments, as well as learned societies, will help curriculum coordinators and teachers make decisions about developing their instructional programs.

In addition to recommendations for the core curriculum by the NGA Center and CCSSO and learned societies, there must be a focus on curriculum diversity in our schools. The authors perceive diversity education as a response to the changing demographics of the United States. This perception was supported early by Hanley (1999), who cites J. A. Banks and C. A. M. Banks (1996), who predicted that "by the year 2020, 46% of the students in

public schools will be children of color and 20.1% of all children will live in poverty" (n.p.). Subsequently, "the need to address the various learning needs of such a diverse student population and the subsequent pluralistic society for which those children will be responsible is an urgent task faced by American public [and private] schools" (n.p.).

The Written Curriculum

The written curriculum is intended primarily to ensure that the educational goals of the system are being accomplished; it is a curriculum of control. Typically, the written curriculum is much more specific and comprehensive than the recommended curriculum, indicating a rationale that supports the curriculum, the general goals to be accomplished, the specific objectives to be mastered, the sequence in which those objectives should be studied, and the kinds of learning activities that should be used. Note, however, that Glatthorn (1980) questioned such comprehensiveness and recommended that the written curriculum be delivered to teachers as a loose-leaf notebook, containing only a scope-and-sequence chart, a review of the research, a list of course objectives, and a brief list of materials to be used. This simpler format, he believed, would make the written curriculum more likely to be used.

Curriculum Tip 1.4

The written curriculum is an important component of authentic literacy—the ability to read, write, and think effectively.

As school administrators and curriculum leaders, the authors believe that the written curriculum must be authentic. Schmoker (2007) supports this belief, saying, "There is every reason to believe that these capacities [the ability to read, write, and think effectively], if acquired across the disciplines, will change lives by the millions and will redefine the possibilities of public education" (p. 488). Similarly, Steven Wolk (2010), associate professor at Northeastern Illinois University, believes that we need visionary educators who see bold purposes for school and who understand that what students read in school has profound, lifelong effects. As an aspect of early authentic literacy discussions, Walker (1979) was one of the first to note that written curricula can be both generic and site specific. Let's review the concepts of generic and site-specific curricula.

Generic curricula are those written for use in various educational settings. Initially, during the 1960s, numerous generic curricula were produced by federally funded research and development laboratories; now, more typically, they are produced by state and federal education departments and intended for use throughout the individual states and/or country, with some local leeway provided. Site-specific written curricula are those developed for a specific site, usually for a local school district or even for a particular school.

Site-specific written curricula are influenced by several different sources. First, as will be explained more fully in Chapter 4, federal and state legislation and court directives play a role. The passage of Public Law 94-142, prescribing that schools provide the "least restrictive environment" for handicapped learners, undoubtedly precipitated much local curriculum work to help teachers work toward "inclusion." The textbooks and standardized tests

in use in the district seem to influence decisions about the inclusion and placement of content. The expectations of vocal parent and community groups seem to have at least a constraining influence on what can be done.

In general, however, the guides seem to reflect the preferences and practices of a local group of elites: a director of curriculum, a supervisor of that subject area, a principal with a strong interest in curriculum, and experienced teachers. They, in turn, seem most influenced by the practice of "lighthouse" districts. It is important to note that we are entering a new kind of shared leadership in the 21st century. Teacher leadership continues to evolve as teachers gain a "global" view of what affects their vision of good schools and good teaching (Hanson, 2010). The authors know that people will support what they help create; so all stakeholders, especially teachers, share the commitment of curriculum leadership.

The chief functions of written curricula seem to be three: *mediating, standardizing*, and *controlling*. They first mediate between the ideals of the recommended curriculum and the realities of the classroom; in this sense, they often represent a useful compromise between what the experts think *should* be taught and what teachers believe *can* be taught. They also mediate between the expectations of administrators and the preferences of teachers. The best of them represent a negotiated consensus of administrative and classroom leaders. An example of the "how to" in developing and implementing curriculum is illustrated in Chapter 10.

Written curricula also play an important role in standardizing the curriculum, especially in larger districts. Often they are produced as a result of directives from a superintendent who is concerned that students in School A are studying a social studies curriculum or using a reading series quite different from those in Schools B and C.

Standardizing and centralizing curricula are often used by district and school administrators as management tools to control what is taught. This control function seems to be perceived differently by administrators and teachers. Administrators believe that controlling the curriculum is an important management responsibility; they point to the research on school effectiveness that seems to indicate that in schools with higher pupil achievement there is a principal actively monitoring the curriculum to ensure that the written curriculum is being delivered. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) compiled more than three decades of research on the effects of instruction and schooling on student achievement and found a substantial relationship between leadership and student achievement (see Exhibit 1.3). The results of this study continue to provide practitioners with specific guidance on the curricular, instructional, and school practices that, when applied appropriately, can result in increased achievement.

Walcott (1977), however, discovered in his ethnographic study of a district monitoring plan that most teachers have historically viewed such attempts to control the curriculum as intrusive and counterproductive and will work hard to subvert such plans. Popham (2009) echoes Walcott's predictions, stating that "teachers must understand that we're talking about a test-supported process instead of a test" (p. 86). Moreover, these concerns about testing seem to resonate with educators across the country. Predictably, written curricula, especially site-specific ones, are of uneven quality. The best of them seem to represent a useful synthesis of recommended curricula and local practice; they seem well conceptualized, carefully developed, and easy to use. Too many, however, lack those qualities. Careful

EXHIBIT 1.3 Principal Leadership Responsibilities

Responsibilities	*The extent to which the principal . . .*
Culture	establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines
Discipline	protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their focus on teaching time
Resources	provides teachers with material and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their roles
Curriculum, instruction, assessment	is directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices
Focus	establishes clear goals and keeps those goals at the forefront of the school's attention
Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, assessment	is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices
Contingent rewards	recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments
Communication	establishes strong lines of communication with teachers and among students
Outreach	is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders
Input	demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff
Affirmation	recognizes and celebrates school accomplishments and acknowledges failure
Relationship	demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff
Change agent	is willing to and actively challenges the status quo
Optimizer	inspires and leads new and challenging innovations
Ideals/beliefs	communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling
Monitors/evaluates	monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning
Flexibility	adapts leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent
Situational awareness	is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems
Intellectual stimulation	ensures that faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture

reviews of a large number of such curriculum guides reveal that they suffer from some common faults: The objectives are often not related to the stated goals, instructional activities are not directly related to the objectives, the activities do not reflect the best current knowledge about teaching and learning, and the guides are generally cumbersome and difficult to use.

The Supported Curriculum

The supported curriculum is the curriculum as reflected in and shaped by the resources allocated to support and deliver it. Four kinds of resources seem to be most critical here: the time allocated to a given subject at a particular level of schooling (How much time should we allocate to social studies in Grade 5?); the time allocated by the classroom teacher within that overall subject allocation to particular aspects of the curriculum (How much time shall I allocate to the first unit on the explorers?); personnel allocations as reflected in and resulting from class-size decisions (How many physical education teachers do we need in the middle school if we let PE classes increase to an average of 35?); and the textbooks and other learning materials provided for use in the classroom (Can we get by with those old basals for one more year?).

The patterns of influence bearing on the supported curriculum seem rather complex. First, both federal and state governments exercise a strong influence on the supported curriculum: State curriculum guidelines go even further by specifying minimum time allocation, as well as state-approved lists of basic texts that restrict the choice of textbooks to a relatively small number.

In addition, the local school board, under the leadership of its superintendent, seems to be playing an ever-increasing role in supporting curriculum. In many districts, boards will adopt curriculum policies specifying minimum time allocations to the several subjects, will approve district-purchased texts, and will make major budget decisions that strongly affect the personnel and material support provided. At the school level, principals also seem to have a major influence. They usually have some discretion in the allocation of funds for textbooks and other learning materials. They often are given some latitude in their requests for additional staff. The school master schedule is the major means for translating school priorities into decisions about curricular support.

Of course, the classroom teacher plays a crucial role as well. All teachers exercise a great deal of influence in determining how much time is allocated to particular subjects, despite the attempts of principals to limit such autonomy.

Obviously, the supported curriculum needs to be examined. The data are clear that several aspects of the supported curriculum have a major bearing on what and how much is learned. First, early studies indicate that time is an important factor. In her review of the research, Stallings (1980) concluded that "the body of knowledge emanating from the research on teaching in the 1970s suggests that teachers should allocate more time to academic subjects, keeping in mind ability levels, and students should be kept engaged in the tasks" (p. 12), which is relevant today as well.

During the 1980s, Berliner (1984) also cited examples of the dramatic differences in the way time is allocated in elementary school classrooms. One fifth-grade teacher devoted

only 68 minutes a day to reading and language arts; another teacher, 137 minutes. Karweit (1983), however, questioned one aspect of this concern for time. In a review of the research on time-on-task, Karweit noted that, "by a variety of criteria for the importance of an effect, the most outstanding finding relating the effects of time-on-task to learning is that the effects are as small as they are" (p. 46).

Second, does class size make a difference? A study of 4,948 participants in Tennessee's class-size experiment, PROJECT STAR, addressed

> three questions about the long-term effects of early school experiences: (a) Is participation in small classes in the early grades (K–3) related to high school graduation? (b) Is academic achievement in K–3 related to high school graduation? (c) If class size is related to graduation, is the relationship explained by the effect of participation in small classes on students' academic achievement? . . . Analyses showed that graduating was related to K–3 achievement and that attending small classes for 3 or more years increased the likelihood of graduating from high school, especially among students eligible for free lunch. (Finn, Gerber, & Boyd-Zaharias, 2005, p. 214)

Achilles, Finn, Prout, and Bobbett (2001) found different behavior patterns between teachers who had small classes (15–17) and regular classes (20–28). Their findings revealed that as the day wore on, teachers in regular classes became irritable, edgy, and tired. "They wiped their eyes, sat down, and slowed or regimented instruction, often neglecting students' indiscipline, lassitude, and off-task misbehavior. All [teachers] seemed hassled" (p. 2). In contrast, teachers with small classes "remained full of energy all day. Time-on-task stayed high and constant with students remaining well behaved, engaged, and energetic. Student and teacher behavior were reciprocal, but positive" (p. 2). Another factor that the study revealed was carbon dioxide (CO_2) levels. "CO_2 is related to the number of persons in a space, is cumulative, and causes drowsiness and lethargy that may influence teaching and learning. Class size and time of day seemed to be key variables" (p. 2).

The National Education Association (NEA, 2011) also indicated that a class size of 15 students in regular programs and even smaller in programs for students with exceptional needs is the key. NEA officials noted that while many education reform proposals remain controversial, reducing class size to allow for more individualized attention for students is strongly supported by parents, teachers, and education researchers. It is believed that teachers with small classes can spend time and energy helping each child succeed. Smaller classes also enhance safety, discipline, and order in the classroom. When qualified teachers teach smaller classes in modern schools, kids learn more.

Finally, the quality of the textbook and other learning resources as an aspect of the supported curriculum seems to play a central role. Allington (2002) noted that "many students in Grades 5–12 struggle to learn from content-area textbooks that don't match their reading levels" (p. 16). As Chall (as cited in Allington, 2002) declared, the demands of reading increase dramatically for students in fourth grade as their learning begins to rely more on textbooks. For example, "the vocabulary they encounter is less conversational and less familiar, with more specialized, technical terms (*delta*, *plateau*, and *basin*) and abstract ideas

(*democracy*, *freedom*, *civilization*)" (pp. 16–17). In essence, "the syntax of texts becomes more complex and demanding" (p. 17). Also, "the reasoning about information in textbooks shifts, with a greater emphasis on inferential thinking and prior knowledge. (For example, what stance is the author taking on industrial polluters? Is there another stance that others might take?)" (p. 17). As Baumann and Duffy (as cited in Allington, 2002) indicated,

> Schools have typically exacerbated the problem by relying on a single-source curriculum design—purchasing multiple copies of the same science and social studies textbooks for every student. This "one-size-fits-all" approach works well if we want to sort students into academic tracks. It fails miserably if our goal is high academic achievement for all students. (p. 17)

Undeniably, problems with textbooks are a recurring issue. It should be noted that current elementary school reading series appear to contain several flaws: Stories written for use in the primary grades do not give enough insight into characters' goals, motives, and feelings; many of the so-called stories do not actually tell a story; textbooks lack a logical structure, often emphasizing a trivial detail rather than a fundamental principle. Harder textbooks, as well as media-related texts, unfortunately, have captured the attention of educators and policymakers who want to raise academic achievement.

Yet today, the concern over quality textbooks continues to grow. Dr. Gay Ivey (2010), professor of Early, Elementary, and Reading Education at James Madison University, notes, "When it comes to subject-area reading materials, we are stuck in a rut" (p. 22). Further, "to create lifelong readers, we need to give them reading materials that leave them wanting to know more. . . . Instead of focusing on how to get students to *remember* what they read, our best bet is simply to provide texts that are more *memorable*" (p. 19).

It should be noted that supportive curriculum involves aspects other than textbooks. For example, curriculum author Carol Ann Tomlinson and her colleagues (2002) indicated that the supported curriculum can also involve the use of flexible options and the formation of a parallel curriculum model. They noted in *The Parallel Curriculum* that parallels can be used to develop or support curriculum for individuals, small groups, and entire classes. The term *parallel* indicates several formats through which educators can approach curriculum design in the same subject or discipline. Tomlinson and her colleagues refer to the four parallels as Core Curriculum, Curriculum and Connections, Curriculum of Practice, and Curriculum of Identity. These parallel processes can be deductive or inductive and can be used as catalysts to discover student abilities and interests or in response to student abilities and interests. They believe that these parallels act as support for thematic study and help connect content that might otherwise seem disjointed to learners. Using this model, a teacher might establish a definition of change, identify key principles related to change, and introduce students to key skills as well as specify standards that need to be covered. Tomlinson and colleagues' parallel model for curriculum development is only one of the many approaches that can be used to help support curriculum.

The supported curriculum plays a central role at several stages of the curriculum cycle. First, in developing curricula, educators should focus specifically on the supported curriculum, paying special attention to time allocations and the materials of instruction. Second, in implementing the curriculum, administrators should be sure that adequate

support is provided. Next, as Chapter 11 indicates, those involved in aligning the curriculum should assess to what extent a good fit exists between the written, the supported, and the taught curricula. Finally, any comprehensive evaluation of the curriculum should assess the supported curriculum because deficiencies in support will probably be a major factor in student achievement.

The Taught Curriculum

The extent to which consonance exists between the written curriculum and the taught curriculum seems to vary considerably. At one extreme are those school systems that claim to have achieved a high degree of consonance between the two by implementing curriculum-alignment projects. At the other extreme are schools where a state of curricular anarchy exists: Each teacher develops his or her own curriculum, with all sorts of disparate activities going on across the school.

Curriculum Tip 1.5

The taught curriculum is the delivered curriculum, a curriculum that an observer sees in action as the teacher teaches.

How does the taught curriculum, regardless of its fit with the written curriculum, become established? The question is a complex and an important one that can best be answered by synthesizing several studies of teachers' thinking, planning, and decision making.

Thus, teachers' decisions about the curriculum are products of many interacting variables. Rather than being mindless choices or acts of willful rebellion, those decisions instead seem to represent the teacher's considered judgment about what compromises will be best for that teacher and a particular class. Statistical evidence provides a strong warrant that how we organize and operate a school has a major effect on the instructional exchanges in the classroom (Bryk, 2010). Bergman and Bergman (2010) agree, noting that good teaching is like good writing—the principles of good writing can help teachers improve their style.

The Tested Curriculum

The tested curriculum is that set of learnings that is assessed in teacher-made classroom tests; in district-developed, curriculum-referenced tests; and in standardized tests. To what extent are these several types of tests related to the taught curriculum? The answers seem to vary. First, there were early problems in test preparation. Tests previously concentrated on assessing students' comprehension and memory of objective information, and their attempts to measure understanding of concepts resulted in multiple-choice items that really assessed students' guessing ability.

The evidence on the congruence between curriculum-referenced tests and instruction suggests a somewhat different picture. In districts using curriculum-referenced tests as a means of monitoring teacher compliance, the test seems to drive instruction. The result is a closer fit. Yet, here, the congruence is not reassuring to those who value higher-order

learning. An examination of a curriculum-referenced test used in a large district's alignment project indicated that the test items were concerned almost exclusively with such low-level objectives as punctuating sentences correctly, spelling words correctly, and identifying the parts of speech. Finally, the research suggests that a gap is widening between standardized tests and what some instructors are teaching. The consequences of inadequate alignment and poor testing are serious.

From a historical perspective, Berliner took the lead in 1984 to point out that achievement was lower in schools where there was not a close fit between what was taught and what was tested. Students were put at a disadvantage when the teaching and testing did not match, and their grades and scores were probably not a valid measure of what they had learned. Finally, there were serious legal consequences when poorly fitting tests were used to make decisions about promotion and graduation. The courts ruled that when tests were used for purposes that denied constitutional guarantees of equal protection or due process (as in retention or denial of graduation), schools needed to provide evidence that those tests assessed skills and concepts actually taught in the classroom. As noted author James Popham (2007) states,

> If we plan to use tests for purposes of accountability, we need to know that they measure traits that can be influenced by instruction. . . . Instructionally insensitive tests render untenable the assumptions underlying a test-based strategy for educational accountability. (p. 147)

Within this milieu of court orders, educators soon began facing greater problems with local testing. Schools, under pressure, then began to rely on strategies to get immediate but lackluster results. This move often creates a dilemma of selecting an assessment method that is incapable of reflecting intended learning, which then compromises the accuracy of results (Chappuis, Chappuis, & Stiggins, 2009).

The good news is that many more teachers are using state-approved, online-based programs to ease the alignment of local testing to state and national standards. Teachers are also using data analysis of student strengths and weaknesses. Web programs such as ExamView and Classroom Performance System now allow classroom teachers to create pre- and posttests online easily and quickly. Valid and reliable test questions aligned with state and national standards are selected from large banks of test items. Online testing programs also provide possible teaching strategies to address specific areas of need.

Curriculum Tip 1.6

Components of the curriculum determine the fit between what is taught and what is learned.

It might be useful at this juncture to note again that the four curricula discussed above—*written, supported, taught,* and *tested*—might be seen as constituting the intentional curriculum, which comprises that set of learning experiences the school system consciously intends for its students.

The Learned Curriculum

The term **learned curriculum** is used here to denote all the changes in values, perceptions, and behavior that occur as a result of school experiences. As such, it includes what the student understands, learns, and retains from both the intentional curriculum and the hidden curriculum. The discussion here focuses on what is learned from the intentional curriculum; the last part of the chapter analyzes what is learned from the hidden curriculum.

What, then, do students learn and retain from the intentional curriculum? Obviously, the answer varies with the student, the teacher, and the curriculum. Thus, for many educators, it's hard to know what works and what doesn't when it comes to school turnaround (Salmonowicz, 2009). There are, however, some subtle transformations, especially between the taught curriculum and the learned curriculum, that occur in most classrooms, regardless of the specific conditions. (The discussion that follows draws primarily from the review of the research on academic work.)

To begin with, students seem especially sensitive to the accountability system at work in the classroom and take seriously only that for which they are held accountable. Regardless of what objectives the teacher announces or what the teacher emphasizes, students seem to assess the importance of classroom transactions in relation to their value in that accountability system: "Will this be on the test?"

To achieve success in an accountability-oriented classroom, students invent strategies for managing ambiguity and reducing risk. They will restrict the output they provide teachers, giving vague and limited answers to minimize the risk of making public mistakes. They also attempt to increase the explicitness of a teacher's instructions, asking the teacher for more examples, hints, or rephrasing of the question. Furthermore, they pressure teachers to simplify curriculum complexity, strongly resisting any curriculum that forces them to think, inquire, and discover. Undoubtedly, NCLB tried to address many of these student/classroom issues through accountability and testing. In this regard, NCLB brought about an accountability culture in numerous districts that creates greater coherence through centralized control. However, according to Rutgers Professor William A. Firestone (2009), "The accountability culture is often not as effective as the student learning culture for promoting achievement." Firestone adds, "What takes a district from accountability to the student learning culture is a mix of board and community support and leadership from the top" (671).

COMPONENTS OF THE CURRICULUM

Although several texts in the field seem to treat curriculum development as if it were one undifferentiated process, the realities are quite different. The concept subsumes several distinct entities that might best be described as components of the curriculum. They are as follows. Each of these will be analyzed briefly below and then discussed more fully in the chapters that follow.

Curricular Policies

David Jacobson (2010), senior specialist at Cambridge Education in Westwood, Massachusetts, believes results-oriented approaches explicitly direct administrators to set a specific agenda for school-based teaching teams that have a tighter, more structured, and somewhat more top-down feel. If Jacobson is correct, it appears that few education reforms will be long lasting unless they become institutionalized. And the best way to institutionalize curriculum is to formulate sound curricular policies.

The term *curricular policies*, as used here, designates the set of rules, criteria, and guidelines intended to control curriculum development and implementation. In reviewing the literature, Kirst (as cited in Glatthorn, 1987) led the way by noting that there are macropolicies, such as a board policy on courses required in high school, and micropolicies, such as a set of recommendations for a curriculum unit in mathematics. Policymaking, as he noted, is essentially the "authoritative allocation of competing values" (p. 15). Thus, as a board makes a policy requiring 3 years of science in the high school curriculum but does not require any study of art, it is perhaps unwittingly according a higher value to science as a way of knowing than it does to aesthetics. Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis (1981) made a useful distinction between de jure policymaking (as implemented in court decisions, national and state legislative acts, and local agency regulations) and de facto policymaking (as carried out by community networks, testing bureaus, accrediting associations, and advisory boards).

Curriculum Tip 1.7

Educators, administrators, and teachers are well advised to reexamine policies affecting curriculum and the accepted practices at their schools.

The decisions that a school makes regarding established policies and practices can affect students enormously. For example, school boards that prioritize learning for all students help telegraph positive messages to administrators and thus try to invest deeply in human resources, especially professional development (Mizell, 2010). In this regard, school boards and administrators have multiple policies and practices that can and do affect curriculum development. Some policies are deliberately set in place, while others evolve with time.

Curricular Goals

Curricular goals are the general, long-term educational outcomes that the school system expects to achieve through its curriculum. Three critical elements are included in this definition. First, goals are stated much more generally than objectives. Thus, one goal for English language arts might be "Learn to communicate ideas through writing and speaking." One objective for fifth-grade language arts would be much more specific: "Write a letter, with appropriate business-letter form, suggesting a community improvement." Second, goals are long-term, not short-term, outcomes. The school system hopes that after 12 years of formal schooling, its students will have achieved the goals the system has set.

Finally, curricular goals are those outcomes the school system hopes to achieve through its curriculum. Here, it is important to make a distinction between educational goals and

curricular goals. Educational goals are the long-term outcomes that the school system expects to accomplish through the entire educational process over which it has control, as Brown (2006) found from a survey conducted with educators, parents, and employers as to what type of skills they believed students should be developing. The following is a prioritized list of survey responses:

1. Critical-thinking skills
2. Problem-solving strategies and effective decision-making skills
3. Creative-thinking processes
4. Effective oral and written communication skills
5. Basic reading, mathematics, and writing abilities
6. Knowledge of when and how to use research to solve problems
7. Effective interpersonal skills
8. Technology skills
9. Knowledge of good health and hygiene habits
10. Acceptance and understanding of diverse cultures and ethnicities
11. Knowledge of how to effectively manage money
12. Willingness, strategies, and ability to continue learning

How do curricular policies and curricular goals interrelate? In a sense, the policies establish the rules of the game ("Take 3 years of health education") and the goals set the targets ("At the end of those 3 years, you will have adopted constructive health habits"). In this sense, they should determine in a rational system the form and content of all the other components that follow. As will be evident throughout this work, however, educational organizations are usually not very rational. Typically, policies are not related to goals, and goals are not related to fields and programs of study.

Fields of Study

A **field of study** is an organized and clearly demarcated set of learning experiences typically offered over a multiyear period. In most school curricula, such fields of study are equivalent to the standard school subjects: English language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and so on. At the college level, fields are more narrowly defined; thus, students pursue majors in history or anthropology or sociology—not "social studies."

Programs of Study

A **program of study** is the total set of learning experiences offered by a school for a particular group of learners, usually over a multiyear period and typically encompassing

several fields of study. The program of study is often described in a policy statement that delineates which subjects are required and which are electives, with corresponding time allocations and credits. Here, for example, is a typical program of studies for an elementary school:

Reading and language arts: 8 hours a week

Social studies: 3 hours

Mathematics: 4 hours

Art: 1 hour

Music: 1 hour

Health and physical education: 1 hour

At the college level, a student's program of studies includes all the courses he or she will take or has taken.

Courses of Study

A **course of study** is a subset of both a program of study and a field of study. It is a set of organized learning experiences, within a field of study, offered over a specified period of time (such as a year, a semester, or a quarter) for which the student ordinarily receives academic credit. The course of study is usually given a title and a grade level or numerical designation. Thus, "third-grade science" and "English II" are courses of study. At the college level, courses of study seem to be the most salient component for both students and faculty: "I'm taking Economics I this term"; "I'm offering Elizabethan Literature this quarter."

Units of Study

A **unit of study** is a subset of a course of study. It is an organized set of related learning experiences offered as part of a course of study, usually lasting from 1 to 3 weeks. Many units are organized around a single overarching concept, such as "Mythical Creatures" or "The Nature of Conflict." Units of study generally follow established standards. Unfortunately, these same standards often evolve through consensus that can be unfamiliar to teachers (Rose, 2010). Thus, not all teachers think about standards and units as they plan. Many high school teachers simply aggregate lessons: "I'll have a spelling lesson tomorrow and a grammar lesson on the next day." As college instructors conceptualize their courses, they often seem to think about a sequence of lectures rather than a unit of study.

At the turn of this century, Robert Marzano (as cited in Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001), noted that when developing units of study at any level, it is best to view the process as a series of phases. The planning phases of unit development include the following:

- At the beginning of a unit, include strategies for setting learning goals.
- During a unit, include strategies
  - for monitoring progress toward learning goals,
  - for introducing new knowledge, and
  - for practicing, reviewing, and applying knowledge.
- At the end of a unit, include strategies for helping students determine how well they have achieved their goals.

Marzano's intent is for teachers to systematically utilize strategies that work. These are best-practice approaches. Basically, teachers should present students with the components and subcomponents of the unit process and then structure tasks to emphasize a specific component or subcomponent.

Lessons

A **lesson** is a set of related learning experiences typically lasting 20 to 90 minutes, focusing on a relatively small number of objectives. Ordinarily, a lesson is a subset of a unit, although, as noted above, the unit level is sometimes omitted by teachers while planning for instruction.

These distinctions among the several components of curriculum have an importance that transcends the need for conceptual clarity. Each seems to involve some rather different planning processes. Thus, to speak generally about "curriculum planning," without differentiating between planning a program of studies and planning a course of studies, is to make a rather serious mistake.

Improving and enhancing lessons based on current brain research and curriculum design is becoming a critical component in the search for best practices. Marzano and his colleagues (2001) identified nine categories of strategies that have a strong effect on student achievement. They are as follows:

1. Identifying similarities and differences
2. Summarizing and note taking
3. Reinforcing effort and providing recognition
4. Homework and practice
5. Nonlinguistic representations
6. Cooperative learning
7. Setting objectives and providing feedback
8. Generating and testing hypotheses
9. Questions, cues, and advance organizers

As can be seen from analyzing these nine strategies, students need a fair amount of guidance when learning complex processes.

Classroom teachers, therefore, need to realize that curriculum planning should *emphasize metacognitive control* of all processes. These processes are similar to skills in that they often produce some form of product or new understanding. Teachers intuitively recognize the importance of metacognition but may not be aware of its many dimensions. Metacognitive ability is central to conceptions of what it means to be educated. The world is becoming more complex, more information rich, more full of options, and more demanding of fresh thinking. With these changes, the importance of metacognitive ability as an educational outcome can only grow (Martinez, 2006).

THE MASTERY, THE ORGANIC, AND THE ENRICHMENT CURRICULA

One additional classification system first proposed by Glatthorn during the 1980s has proven useful, especially in developing and improving fields of study.

Curriculum Tip 1.8

Curriculum leaders should distinguish between the three types of learning in each field of study. The three types of learning are mastery, organic, and enrichment.

The three types of learning result from the following analytical steps. First, divide the learnings in that field between those that are basic and those that are enrichment. Basic learnings are those that, in the views of knowledgeable educators, are essential for all students (all, in this use, refers to the top 90% of learners, excluding the least able and those with serious learning disabilities). Enrichment learnings are the knowledge and skills that are interesting and enriching but are not considered essential; they are simply "nice to know." Thus, in fifth-grade social studies, curriculum workers might decide that the early settling of the Vikings in Iceland would be interesting enrichment content.

Once the first division between basic and enrichment is made, then further divide the basic learnings into those that require structure and those that do not require structure. Structured learning, as the term is used here, has four characteristics:

1. Sequencing
2. Planning
3. Measurable outcomes
4. Clearly delineated content

Nonstructured learning, on the other hand, includes all those skills, knowledge, and attitudes that can be mastered without such careful sequencing, planning, testing, and delineation. Structured and nonstructured learning yield the three types of curricula depicted in Exhibit 1.4: mastery, organic, and enrichment.

Mastery learnings are those that are both basic and structured. An example of a mastery objective for language arts, Grade 2, is the following:

Use a capital letter for the first word in a sentence.

EXHIBIT 1.4 The Three Types of Curricula

	Basic	*Enrichment*
Structured	Mastery	Enrichment
Nonstructured	Organic	

Organic learnings, however, are those that are basic but do not require structuring. They are the learnings that develop day by day, rather naturally, as the result of numerous interactions and exchanges. They tend not to be the focus of specific learnings. They are just as important as the mastery outcomes (if not more so), but they do not require sequencing, pacing, and articulation. Here is an example of organic learning for language arts, Grade 2:

Listen courteously while others speak.

The teacher might emphasize that learning on every occasion, not devote a specific lesson to it. And enrichment learnings, as noted above, are those learnings that simply extend the curriculum; they are not considered basic.

This tripartite division is more than an interesting intellectual exercise. It has significant implications for curriculum development. In general, district curriculum guides and scope-and-sequence charts should focus solely on the mastery elements. The nurturing of organic components can be enhanced through effective staff development; such outcomes do not need to be explicated fully and carefully in guides. The enrichment components can be included in a supplement for those teachers who want to share enrichment activities.

Curriculum-referenced tests should focus only on mastery elements; organic elements should not be tested. One district that ignored this important distinction wasted a great deal of time trying to develop a test for courteous listening before it was forced to give up in frustration. The distinction also has implications for the purchase of texts: Textbooks should focus on the mastery objectives; the teacher can nurture the organic without the aid of textbooks.

Finally, the distinction helps resolve the issue of district versus teacher control. In general, the district should determine the **mastery curriculum**, to the extent of specifying objectives. The district emphasizes the important outcomes but gives the teacher great latitude of choice in nurturing them. In addition, the **enrichment curriculum** is the teacher's own: Here the teacher can add whatever content he or she feels might be of interest to the students.

In addition to the discussion of basic versus organic structure of curriculum, it is also important that teachers be aware of brain research and how students learn. A look into brain research may provide some insight and offer ways to help reduce distractions and increase student attention in the classroom (McDonald, 2010). This sentiment was echoed a number of years ago by Patricia Wolfe (2001), an educational author and consultant, who shared that

learning is a process of building neural networks. She indicated that children construct networks in the cortex of the brain that contain information about an unbelievable variety of concepts. She lists three levels of learning: Concrete Experience, Representational or Symbolic Learning, and Abstract Learning.

Concrete Learning, according to Wolfe, is pretty much what the term implies. It is a combination of repeated experiences and visualizations that allow the brain to store, network, and recall when necessary.

The second level, Representational or Symbolic Learning, is based on the brain linking and cross-referencing information. All sensory data are linked through association and become part of memory. With concrete experiences available, sensory data can be "activated" when remembered. Without the concrete experience, the representation or symbol may have little meaning, no matter how much someone explains it to the student.

The third level, Abstract Learning, involves the brain using only abstract information, primarily words and numbers. With a strong neural network formed both by concrete experience and representations, it is possible for children to visualize in their "mind's eye." An understanding of terms, sets, and similarities depends on a child's developmental age and on a teacher's ability to give sufficient examples that relate to the student's experiences. It is also important for the teacher to involve students in experiences that make the abstract concepts understandable.

More research is helping educators grasp how students learn. For example, neuroimaging studies are revealing an underactivation in the brain region influencing fluency in struggling readers. According to Shaywitz and Shaywitz (2007), understanding neural systems that influence reading and reading disability is critical. Basically, this progress reflects the development of functional neuroimaging–functional magnetic resonance imaging, a technology that assesses increases in blood flow in brain regions while subjects carry out specific cognitive tasks. With this in mind, current research on brain development, especially during this digital age, is continuing to change and evolve. Such findings help educators select the most successful and evidence-based approaches to reading instruction. It is hoped that instruction using phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies will be enhanced with the feedback from neuroimaging research.

Curriculum Tip 1.9

The key to enriching curriculum is to involve students in real-life problem-solving scenarios.

Using real-life problem-solving scenarios via technology applications can assist in the process of developing the strongest brain networks that will be formed by actual experience. Furthermore, students' digitally conditioned brains are 21st-century brains, and teachers must, therefore, encourage these brains to operate fully in the classroom (Sprenger, 2009). As a result, most schools are now using critical-thinking and problem-solving skills and strategies as a major part of the curriculum-development process.

THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

The concept of hidden curriculum expresses the idea that schools do more than simply transmit knowledge. In fact, the challenges one faces *inside* the school can easily be connected to and compounded by things that are happening *outside* school (Hatch, 2009). Thus, there are differences between written and hidden curricula in that teachers teach and students learn implicit concepts and patterns (Deutsch, 2004). Hidden curriculum, which is sometimes called the "unstudied curriculum" or the "implicit curriculum," might best be defined in the following manner:

> Those aspects of schooling, other than the intentional curriculum, that seem to produce changes in student values, perceptions, and behaviors.

As the definition suggests, students learn a great deal in school from sources other than the intentional curriculum. Although the term *hidden curriculum* is often used with negative connotations, those learnings can be both desirable and undesirable from the viewpoint of one aspiring to optimal human development. In examining the specific nature of the hidden curriculum, it seems useful at this point to distinguish between what might be termed the constants (those aspects of schooling that seem more or less impervious to change) and the variables (those aspects that seem susceptible to reform).

Curriculum Tip 1.10

The hidden curriculum might be seen as those aspects of the learned curriculum that lie outside the boundaries of the school's intentional efforts.

The Constants of the Hidden Curriculum

Certain important aspects of the hidden curriculum are so intrinsic to the nature of schools as a cultural institution that they might be seen as constants. Historically, the depiction of those constants presented below has been influenced by a close reading of several early curricular reconceptualists such as Apple (1979), Pinar (1978), and Giroux (1979); sociologists such as Dreeben (1968); and educational researchers such as Jackson (1968) and Goodlad (1984). One of the constants of the hidden curriculum is the ideology of the larger society, which permeates every aspect of schooling. Thus, schools in the United States inevitably reflect the ideology of democratic capitalism.

A key component of the school as an organization is the classroom, where the most salient aspects of the hidden curriculum come into play. The classroom is a crowded place, where issues of control often become dominant. Control is achieved through the differential use of power; the teacher uses several kinds of power to control the selection of content, the methods of learning, movement in the classroom, and the flow of classroom discourse. Control also is achieved by the skillful use of accountability measures; teachers spend much time evaluating and giving evaluative feedback. In such a classroom,

students unconsciously learn the skills and traits required by the larger society; they learn how to be punctual, clean, docile, and conforming. They learn how to stand in line, take their turn, and wait.

Another example of the hidden curriculum, according to Butzin, Carroll, and Lutz (2006), is when a teacher works solo within a "grade," students lose instructional time at the beginning of each year while the teacher gets to know them. Students also lose quality instructional time at the end of each school year after "The Test" because teachers back off from rigorous topics.

Even though the above features of the hidden curriculum are presented here as constants relatively impervious to change, it is important for curriculum leaders to be aware of their subtle and pervasive influence. Being aware of aspects and variables of the hidden curriculum is crucial for the success of our future administrators and teacher–leaders.

The Variables of the Hidden Curriculum

Several other important aspects of the hidden curriculum can be more readily changed by educators. The most significant of these can be classified into three categories: organizational variables, social-system variables, and culture variables.

Organizational Variables

The term *organizational variables* is used here to designate all those decisions about how teachers will be assigned and students grouped for instruction. Here, four issues seem worthy of attention: team teaching, promotion and retention policies, ability grouping, and curriculum tracking. The evidence on the effects of team teaching on student achievement is somewhat inconclusive. Even though many school systems have implemented "promotional gates" policies that promoted students solely on the basis of achievement, several syntheses of the research indicate that social promotion results in better attitudes toward school, better self-image, and improved achievement.

Grouping practices in the schools often have been attacked by critics as one of the most baleful aspects of the hidden curriculum. Here, the denunciation of Giroux and Penna (1979) is perhaps typical of the era then and now:

> The pedagogical foundation for democratic processes in the classroom can be established by eliminating the pernicious practice of "tracking" students. This tradition in schools of grouping students according to "abilities" and perceived performance is of dubious instructional value. (p. 223)

However, Cris Tovani (2010), a high school reading specialist in Colorado, shares, "when strugglers are grouped together, all the experts except the teacher are taken from the mix." She further adds, "groups are fine—as long as the teacher frequently changes the configuration" (p. 28).

The chief problem with curriculum tracking, according to researchers, is the lack of challenge in the general curriculum. Many approaches to tracking have been developed

to prevent an exodus of public school students to private schools as per NCLB and other government regulations. While tracking may have an uncertain effectiveness in achieving that goal, it creates considerable concerns about the potential for relegating the children "left behind" to mediocre schools and tracks and for increasing social stratification (Rotberg, 2007).

A better alternative to tracking would be the regular use of cooperative learning groups. According to Slavin, Chamberlain, and Daniels (2007), cooperative learning is effective at all grade levels, but it is particularly appropriate for the developmental needs of middle school students. Cooperative learning allows students to be noisy, active, and social in the pursuit of academic excellence. Learning groups within a heterogeneous classroom have been shown to result in higher achievement, little or no psychological harm to the students, and reduced segregation. Students also gain experience in individual accountability and responsibility, as well as acquiring skills in working with others.

The weight of the research evidence suggests educational leaders interested in improving the organizational variables of the hidden curriculum might focus their attention on promotion policies and curriculum tracking as the key variables. They should ensure that the general curriculum is neither dull nor trivial.

Other organizational variables might include connections such as class size, better libraries, breakfast and lunch, noncategorical special help, and better assessment, as well as outside connections such as community activities. Each of these hidden curriculum variables can, and do, affect school change in various ways. The key is whether possible changes in these organizational variables are needed reforms or frivolous fads. To this degree, ASCD Editor in Chief Marge Scherer (2009) asks the following questions, "Will the new practices take into account what we know about how students learn? Will they lead to higher achievement for more students, or will they leave more students—and educators—behind?" (p. 7).

Much discussion has taken place regarding the impact of class size on curriculum planning and implementation. Many authors and researchers believe that smaller class sizes facilitate better teaching and more personalized instruction. Some authors and researchers do not. The key is that smaller class size may facilitate, but does not necessarily ensure, better teaching and learning. Most individuals do agree, however, that class size does affect how the curriculum is delivered, and thus, the curriculum's nature can be implicit.

Breakfast and lunch may lie outside the boundary of curriculum, but they still may have an important impact on planning. For example, classes have to be scheduled around these activities, especially if the cafeteria is located in the gymnasium. Children having to eat late or not having proper nutrition may also influence when and how the curriculum is delivered.

Noncategorical special help has a substantial and yet hidden impact on a school's schedule in that staff may have to adjust classes to compensate for students' being out of the room. Teachers also have to adjust their classroom organization to accommodate students' arriving back into a classroom after receiving special help in another setting.

To increase the percentage of proficient readers, educators must increase the use of best reading practices (Carbo, 2007). Special programs such as Reading Recovery and Read Well are now important components of the classroom, since the passage of NCLB in 2002. The

hidden aspect of these special phonics-based programs is that primary teachers must now schedule their units and lessons around these intensive reading programs to accommodate high-risk children. There is little doubt about the impact of these special programs on how the curriculum in the classroom is being delivered. Unfortunately, however, not all schools are raising reading levels. As shared by McCombs and Marsh (2009), "Despite recent progress in reading achievement among elementary school children, literacy levels among U.S. adolescents remain low" (p. 501).

Schools with better libraries and/or that provide students with better access to books may have an advantage over schools that do not. Getting reading and informational materials to students in a timely manner can be a key to learning. Albeit hidden, the ability of a teacher to access books and materials will make a big difference in how that teacher will teach.

Assessment and *accountability* are becoming bywords with the advent of NCLB and Race to the Top, and assessment and data analysis are now becoming major determiners of what is taught, when it is taught, and how it is taught. Entire curricula are being changed based on the collection of assessment data and student test scores.

Although the impact of assessment is not totally understood and often goes unnoticed, extended days and after-school programs appear to be having a major impact on curriculum planning and implementation. Teachers are now being paid extra for extended days to complete in-service and staff development requirements. Additional staff development opportunities often mean that teachers will be learning new material and trying different approaches in their classrooms. The impact of this change on curriculum may be obscure to some, but it is often immeasurable in scope.

Social-System Variables

The concepts of school climate and culture have become part of the standard rhetoric in contemporary discussions of school effectiveness. Unfortunately, both terms are complex and neither is clearly defined. However, McREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning)—known to conduct, examine, and translate rigorous quantitative research into useful information for educators—found that culture matters. In a study conducted by McREL on school-level leadership, school culture surfaced as the often overlooked factor in school improvement efforts. It was found "that when leading bold improvement efforts, one of the first things that suffers is a school's culture—specifically, a shared vision, a sense of purpose, cohesiveness, overall well-being of staff members, predictable routines, and a sense of control" (Waters, 2009). The conclusions from the research on culture reflect four attributes of Purposeful Communities:

- Agreement on what people can accomplish only because they work together as part of an organization
- Agreement on ways in which they will work together as part of an organization
- Effective use of all tangible and intangible assets in the organization
- High levels of collective efficacy (Waters, 2009)

Confirming McREL's research findings, Linda Darling-Hammond (2010) states, "America's commitment to equity will determine our future." She goes on to say, "Creating schools that

enable all children to learn requires the development of systems that enable all educators and schools to learn" (p. 8). In keeping with Darling-Hammond's viewpoint, a small but growing number of school leaders are reviewing their districts' social systems and considering the integration of students by socioeconomic status.

Other research findings were related to teacher–student relationships: Teacher–student interactions in general were positive and constructive; students shared in decision making; and there were extensive opportunities for student participation in activities. Obviously, all these factors can be influenced through effective leadership by both administrators and teachers. They are the building blocks of a strong and healthy organizational culture (Waters, 2009).

Curriculum Tip 1.11

Social and economic issues can affect aspects of the hidden curriculum.

Social- and economic-related programs such as Head Start and Even Start are designed to assist economically challenged preschool children. Head Start is a federal program that has been around since the 1960s. Some school districts are designing their school operation to have Head Start on campus. This allows a good transition for the Head Start children to matriculate into a kindergarten program. Having Head Start on-site in a school district also enhances opportunities for staff development and offers a way to improve staff relations. Head Start teachers and administrators have an opportunity to plan their curricula so that it threads unnoticed into the district curriculum. On-site Head Start teachers are, thus, better able to understand the goals and objectives of the school district and better able to correlate their programs with district primary teachers.

There were two great achievements in the design of Head Start. First, the program highlighted social and emotional development—emphasizing health, comprehensive services, and social services to families. Second, Head Start introduced parent participation. Probably the most important single determinant of a child's growth is the behavior of parents (Perkins-Gough, 2007).

Even Start is a family literacy program that includes preschool children and their parents. Both children and parents go to school. Parents work to complete their high school education or receive adult literacy instruction (Michigan Department of Education, 2010). The implicit aspect of this program is that children are provided with an enriched preschool curriculum. As advocated by Cunningham and Allington (1994), parents also learn more about parenting, including ways to involve their children in reading and writing.

Another social aspect of curriculum that may be hidden is the involvement of parents and community. Although parents may not directly create a change in curriculum, their approval or disapproval can have a tremendous impact on how a school is operated, what is taught, and how it is taught. An example might be the involvement of parents at the primary level and their support of technology. When parents are in the school at the primary level and see the impact that technology is having on their children, they often become major supporters of educational technology. This support is generated in the passage of special levies and bonds that affect the use of technology at all grade levels—even high school.

The involvement of the community can have an impact on curriculum development in much the same way. If members of the community feel positive about what is happening in their schools, they are much more apt to support the schools financially. This financial support might include more staff, improved facilities, materials, and/or staff development. The connection to the curriculum may not be readily apparent to some, but it is definitely a major factor in the success of the school.

Culture Variables

As noted by sociologist Arlie Hochschild, "We are all connected in chains of care, not only to friends and family around us, but also to other people whom we cannot see" (as quoted in Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, p. 20). Sometimes, in school settings it is the people of other cultures who are not seen and/or not understood. Successfully teaching students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds—especially students from historically marginalized groups—involves more than just applying specialized teaching techniques. It demands combining English Language Learning and Leadership—thus, putting it all together (Lindquist & Hill, 2009).

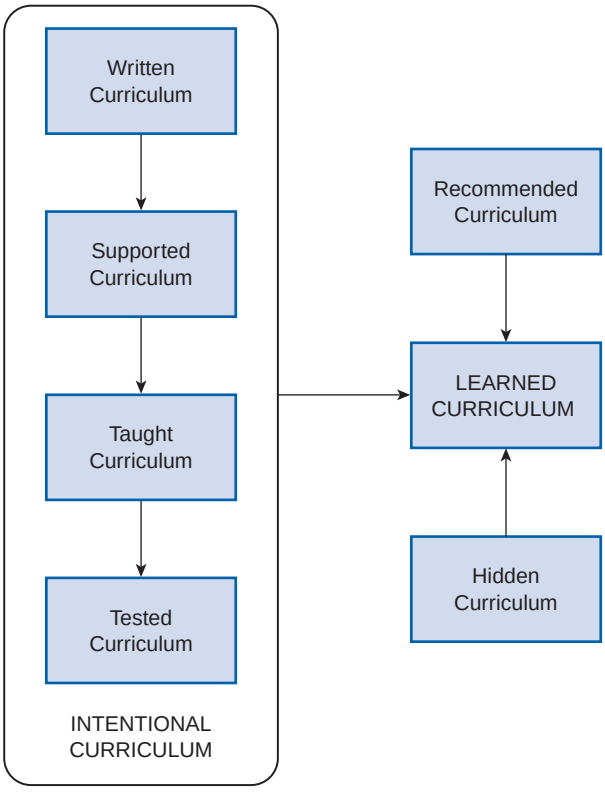
Because the hidden curriculum impacts student learning, Glatthorn and Jailall (2009) identify the key factors that seem to constitute the hidden curriculum:

- *Time allocation*: For example, are health and physical education allocated sufficient time to change the behavior of children and youth?
- *Space allocation*: How much space is allocated for teacher conferring and planning?
- *Use of discretionary funds*: How are such funds expended, and who decides this?
- *Student discipline*: Do suspensions seem to reflect an ethnic bias?
- *Physical appearance*: Does the appearance of facilities suggest that those in the building care for the school? Are walls decorated with student artwork?
- *Student activities program*: Does this program reflect and respond to student talent diversity?
- *Communication*: Are most of the messages over the public address system of a positive nature? How often are student voices heard?
- *Power*: Do teachers have power in the decision-making process? Do students have any real power over the factors that matter? (pp. 115–116)

These aspects of the hidden curriculum also can be influenced by administrators and teachers working together.

To summarize, then, the hidden curriculum is seen here as both constant and variable aspects of schooling (other than the intentional curriculum) that produce changes in the student. The constants—the ideology of the larger society, the way in which certain knowledge is deemed important or unimportant, and the power relationships that seem necessary in large bureaucratic institutions—seem unlikely to change. However, the variables—those aspects of the organizational structure, the social systems, and the culture of the school that can be influenced—require the systematic attention of curriculum leaders.

EXHIBIT 1.5 Relationships of Types of Curricula



SOURCE: Developed by Mark A. Baron, Chairperson, Division of Educational Administration, School of Education, the University of South Dakota.

In reviewing the intended and hidden curriculum, a coming together of the two can be observed. Exhibit 1.5 illustrates how the intentional curriculum and the hidden curriculum extend into the learned curriculum.

SUMMARY

This introductory chapter provides a general overview of the curriculum field and a set of concepts for analyzing that field. The chapter defines the concept of curriculum and standards, examines the several types of curricula, describes the contrasting nature of curriculum components, and analyzes the hidden curriculum to provide some fundamental concepts essential for understanding the comprehensive field of curriculum. The chapter

includes the topics of what curriculum is and why it is important; the types and components of curricula and how they have changed over the years; what mastery, organic, and enrichment curricula are and the roles they play in the development of curriculum; and why knowledge of the "hidden curriculum" is important to curriculum leaders.

APPLICATIONS

1. By reviewing the definitions of *curriculum* provided in this chapter and reflecting on your own use of the term, write your own definition of *curriculum*.
2. Some educators have suggested that the profession should use simpler definitions for *curriculum* and *instruction*: Curriculum is what is taught; instruction is how it is taught. Do these definitions seem to suffice, from your perspective? If so, explain.
3. Descriptive curriculum has numerous definitions, which can be slightly confusing. Based on the general definitions provided by educators and their operational distinctions, rank the seven examples provided in Exhibit 1.2 and explain why your selection meets the criteria.
4. Some leaders have argued for a very close fit between the written and the taught curriculum, suggesting that teachers should teach only what is in the prescribed curriculum. Others have suggested that some slippage is desirable—that teachers should have some autonomy and latitude, as long as they cover the essentials. What is your own position on this issue?
5. Although most curriculum texts do not make the distinctions noted here between programs of study, fields of study, and courses of study, those distinctions do seem to matter. To test this hypothesis, do the following: (a) List the steps you would follow in designing a program of studies for one level of schooling, such as elementary or middle school; and (b) list the steps you would follow in designing a field of study, such as social studies, K–12.
6. It has been suggested here that the "constants" of the hidden curriculum are not easily changed. Others would argue that they should be changed if we truly desire democratic and humanistic schools. As a school leader, would you attempt to change any of those "constants," or would you give more attention to the "variables"?
7. Outline a change strategy you would use in attempting to improve the "culture" variables that seem to be associated with improved attitude and achievement.
8. It seems that in our profession, every year is the year of something—critical thinking, self-esteem, site-based management, portfolio assessment, outcome-based education, Goals 2000, NCLB, and on it goes. They come and they go. Now we have Common Core State Standards for English language arts and mathematics adopted by a majority of the states. We've become hardened to the introduction of anything new and taken on the same motto: "This too shall pass." How will or will not the standards movement move us ahead in some great ways?

CASE STUDY Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice

Dr. John Summers was hired to be the curriculum director to enhance the teaching and learning process for the Dover School District. Dr. Summers was the superintendent's choice for the position because he was highly qualified in the area of curriculum development, and his performance at a somewhat smaller school district with 5,000 students, in a neighboring state, was outstanding. The district Dr. Summers came from was known for its high academic achievement, which was attributed to a well-planned curriculum supported by the principals and teacher–leaders.

In contrast, the Dover School District was in curriculum disarray, and student achievement was low when compared with statewide achievement scores. As Dr. Summers soon discovered, some staff members and administrators in the Dover School District construed the curriculum as ideal because it met their standards. They also felt that if something was being taught, a curriculum existed. Others in the district, however, felt that a planned curriculum was vital for the district, but they were unable to generate the necessary leadership to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

The Challenge

Analyze the nature and concepts of curriculum in this chapter. As curriculum director of the Dover School District, how should Dr. Summers utilize administrators and teacher–leaders to help bridge the gap between curriculum theory and practice?

Key Issues/Questions

1. To what extent do you believe a written curriculum for the various disciplines plays a role in this case?
2. To what extent do you believe the supported, tested, and learned curricula for the various disciplines play a role in improving the intentional curriculum?
3. Do you think there is any hope of changing attitudes? If so, how would you attempt to do this? If not, why?
4. Do you feel that the intentional curriculum is prescriptive or descriptive, or a combination of both? Why?
5. What roles do the recommended curriculum and hidden curriculum play in developing the intentional curriculum?
6. In planning curricula, mastery curriculum should require from 60% to 75% of the time available. Do you agree that Dr. Summers should place an emphasis on mastery curriculum? Why?

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