

the change itself, but rather on the degree of influence and the use of persuasive skills by the principal."

The Change Process in Curriculum Development

Effective principals recognize faculty and staff will publicly state the need for change, but in their hearts, they remain reticent. We understand the reasons for restraint. As a matter of fact, we have learned how to overcome resistance to change. By what means does the curriculum leader successfully initiate the change process in curriculum development?

For starters, begin slowly but purposefully! Research has consistently revealed that effective curricular change begins with the principal who listens carefully to the team and moves cautiously yet deliberately when it comes to the curriculum change process. This pace requires frequent face-to-face meetings and person-to-person interactions to ensure that teacher buy-in is actually occurring (Glatthorn & Jailall, 2009; Méndez & Sorenson, in press; Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006; Wiles, 2009).

Next, effective curriculum leaders utilize the group process. Lunenburg and Ornstein (2008) relate that curricular change must be a group effort. We absolutely agree! Question—What permits the group process to readily influence curricular change? Cannon and Griffith (2007) assert effective groups develop shared goals and vision, structure strategies for change through interactive communication, establish collaborative leadership, exercise power and influence relative to organizational change, manage conflict, and initiate professional development to ensure that any change is understood and implemented. Effective leaders need effective groups to initiate curricular change. Therefore, curriculum development teams must assume numerous roles and responsibilities in the curricular change process. These roles and responsibilities include the following:

- Understanding the research that supports the practice
- Recognizing the need for change in curriculum development and design
- Noting that the instructional program must be improved to ensure increased student learning and achievement
- Balancing the needs of the students with the goals of state and federal mandates

- Being open to research-based, student-centered, and best-practice curricular and instructional approaches
- Acknowledging the need for parental, community, and professional clientele in the curriculum development and planning processes
- Encouraging faculty and staff members to be receptive to the essential improvements to curriculum and instruction
- Appreciating the fact that the integration of curriculum and instruction includes what Tomlinson and McTighe (2006) call an essential four-way partnership between: (1) differentiated instruction, (2) diversified learning, (3) cultural inclusionary activities, and (4) understanding by design

Additionally, curriculum development teams and the curriculum leader must concede that time is of the essence.

Subsequently, any change in the curriculum development process must include leadership that is driven by a knowledge and understanding of curricular matters. Principals can no longer accept the notion that someone else is responsible for curriculum development. Principals *must* be experts in curriculum development. Regrettably, the role of curriculum expert is what intimidates many school leaders and relates to the Glatthorn quote previously incorporated in Chapter 3: "When I told a friend that the title of one of my books was *Principal as Curriculum Leader* [Glatthorn & Jailall, 2009], she responded, 'That's an oxymoron if I ever heard one'" (Glatthorn quoted in Cunningham & Corderio, 2006, p. 228).

In recent years, curriculum leadership in relation to the principal role has been sidestepped and delegated to others in what has been described by McNeil (2000) as a contradiction of school reform. McNeil argues that when a high-standards curriculum is linked to a coercive accountability system, the result is standardization, reduction of curriculum to that which is tested, a decline of innovation, a centralization of control in state and federal policymakers, and an abdication of the curriculum leadership role by school principals. Now, more than ever, principals and curriculum teams must retake the curricular initiative. Principals must be curriculum experts. The question remains: What is curriculum expertise relative to the principal role?

Curriculum expertise for the principal begins with an understanding of two terms: *curriculum* and *instruction*. Curriculum is frequently defined as *what* is taught in the school. Instruction is the *how*—the methods, techniques, and strategies that assist students in the learning process. We will further examine the meanings of curriculum

and instruction in Chapter 7. However, in effective schools and classrooms the two terms merge into what Marsh and Willis (2007) call an interrelated set of plans, experiences, and activities (both planned and unplanned) that a student undertakes with guidance from curriculum experts and other educators in the field of practice.

Curriculum expertise for the principal effectively correlates with the theoretical works of Bruner (1960) whose idea of a spiraling effect serves as a foundational model, which stipulates that previous learning is the basis for subsequent learning. In other words, learning must be continuous, and the subject matter content must be built on an escalating ladder that extends from grade level to grade level. Bruner, as a curriculum theorist and expert, believed that curriculum leaders must possess the knowledge and concepts of subject areas, understanding how learning relates to the structure of a particular subject area. That said, a principal must acknowledge that subject areas be interconnected. A principal does not have to know everything about every subject taught in a school. However, a principal must know that subjects must be connected by an interwoven thread that ties all the subjects together in the learning process. This thread is the curriculum, and it has a profound impact on the instructional program.

What makes a principal a curriculum expert? To begin with, principals must understand the enduring value of Taba's (1962) work that reveals a correlating connection between curriculum research and instructional practice:

1. **Knowledge complexity:** Curriculum must embed basic principles within course content to include abstract ideas, complex systems, causal relationships, and methods of inquiry, discovery, and problem solving.
2. **Essential acquisition:** Curriculum must be regularly evaluated and revised to include new content to be learned and mastered.
3. **Scope and sequence:** Curriculum must be extensive in its concentration and coverage across a range of content areas. Curriculum must differentiate levels of knowledge and learning. Curriculum must be cumulative and continuous.
4. **Integrative approaches:** Curriculum must be integrated, emphasizing a variety of content themes, lesson topics, and instructional units. Integrative approaches in curriculum development ensure that one content area relates to another.

5. **Valid considerations:** Curriculum must be relevant and practical to the learner. Instructional content must be sound and relate to the mission, goals, objectives, and strategies of a school's improvement or action plan.
6. **Interest and significance:** Curriculum must be meaningful, consequential, and of significance to the learner. Why must I learn algebra? How will I ever use English literature in my profession? What role will world history play in my work as a landscape architect? Questions of interest and significance, such as these posed, as well as a host of others, must be addressed and assessed when developing curriculum.
7. **Useful endeavors:** Curriculum must be applicable beyond the school walls. Principals, as curriculum experts, must be able to ask the following questions of faculty when developing curriculum: (1) What will our students learn that can provide them opportunities to place curricular initiatives and instruction into real-world practice? (2) Will our students gain intrinsic satisfaction from their learning experiences? (3) How will the learning our students acquire help them attain their personal and professional goals? (4) Which of the learning experiences our students acquire are repetitive in coursework and is the repetition necessary? (5) Will our students gain knowledge in one subject area that will be beneficial in another subject area?

Next, principals, as curriculum experts, must recognize that certain philosophical, social, and/or moral implications be addressed when developing and/or changing curriculum. Glanz (2006) reveals that the key to curriculum leadership and change is the school principal, not the superintendent, not the director of curriculum, not the chief financial officer, and not any other district-level personnel. Principals face, on a daily basis, a litany of curricular issues, which must be addressed, evaluated, and often changed. The one individual who must serve as the leader of curriculum in a school is the principal.

Finally, let's examine a listing of curricular issues, as identified by Lunenburg and Ornstein (2008), Marsh and Willis (2007), and Tanner and Tanner (2006), that must be confronted by the curriculum leader.

- Student-centered curriculum versus subject content- and/or teacher-centered curriculum

- Generalized versus specialized curriculum and/or instructional content
- Homogeneous versus heterogeneous grouping
- Tracking versus individualized needs—gifted and talented, regular, at-risk, and disabled learners
- Academic tracking versus vocational tracking
- Essential knowledge skills versus abstract skills
- Excellence in learning and teaching versus equality versus equity
- Needs of society versus needs of learner
- Didactic knowledge versus moral character
- Cognitive versus affective learning
- Traditional versus progressive instructional methods

Compare this listing to the societal changes identified in Chapter 2, the section titled: ISLLC Performance Expectation 1: Vision, Mission, and Goals. How are the lists similar? In what ways are the lists different? What do the lists reveal about change in our schools, change in society, change in curriculum and curriculum leadership?

Curriculum change begins with principal expertise in the curriculum development process. Principals must understand that their expertise in curriculum and curriculum development is the first step to initiating change, managing change, and overcoming learning community resistance to change.

Final Thoughts

Curricular change begins with the curriculum leader—the school principal. Curricular change is the basis for instructional growth, teacher development, and student achievement. Curricular change is an absolute, a constant, and a necessity. Without change, we become stagnant, stuck in a rut, doing the same old thing—the same old way. It is essential that curriculum leaders recognize that change brings out the worst and the very best in people. The worst because we are creatures of habit and fear the unknown—especially when the unknown relates to potential change. The best because change equates to higher levels of trust, more supportive and open cultures, power equalization, and team ownership.

Curricular changes occur when schools are led by principals who articulate a clear vision, examine the research literature relative to curriculum issues, analyze the data, solve problems, stay abreast of