There appears to be a natural interfacing between curriculum and organization development activities

Exploring the techniques

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Some meaningful and not altogether artificial distinctions can be drawn between curriculum development and organization development activities in school settings. Essentially, and without belaboring definitions at this point, curriculum development activities tend to focus around specific curricular or instructional changes, modifications or improvements being considered for implementation. The major agenda in curriculum development efforts is thus to either improve the existing curricular or instructional program, typically through some form of modification, or to identify and then introduce totally new curricular or instructional content or processes that will better meet student needs. Organization development activities, on the other hand, are usually directed to improving organizational processes such as decision-making, problem-solving, goal setting, conflict resolution, and communications within organized work settings.[1]

There appears to be a natural interfacing possible between curriculum and organization development activities which to this point in time has not really been articulated adequately nor examined. This interfacing involves the systematic use of organization development approaches to facilitate the process issues which arise at specific junctures in a typical curriculum development sequence. This suggested interfacing is perhaps made more clear and explicit as it is presented in **Figure 1** below.

Obviously it is not enough to say that organization development approaches should be used to facilitate particular human interactive process issues which arise during curriculum development efforts. It is necessary to train and prepare appropriate school personnel to use organization development techniques. Thus staff development specifically focused on teaching school personnel to employ organization development strategies is an indispensable part of the interface.

Following the line of thought of Rogers,[2] Guba,[3] and others writing more recently about the normal sequence that takes place in the adoption of innovations,[4] it is reasonable to view most curriculum development efforts as involving a similar sequence of events. This five-stage sequence, which begins with awareness and moves toward final adoption,[5] reproduces the pattern of events that are typical of many curriculum development efforts.

Figure 1
Organization Development and Curriculum
Development Interface

Appropriate OD Activities	Curriculum Development Sequence
1. Diagnostic activities; survey-feedback activities; process consultation	1. AWARENESS: recognition of curricular need
2. Survey-feedback activities; process consultation	2. INTEREST: specific needs identified and alternative solutions examined
3. Planning and goal-setting; survey-feedback activities; intergroup activities	3. EVALUATION: determination of designated solution suitability and design of a plan for implementation
4. Team-building activities; process consultation; education and training	4. TRIAL: solution piloted on a small scale
5. Coaching and counseling; process consultation; education and training; structural activities; life and career planning	5. ADOPTION: solution implemented on a more comprehensive basis

First is an awareness of some possible curricular need. This, in turn, is followed by a period of more involved interest at which time the need is specified in greater detail and some possible alternative ways of meeting the need are examined. A decision and evaluation phase follows wherein a determination is made of what specific modification or change is to be tried, how suitable the change might really be, and how the change might actually be implemented. The new curricular or instructional change is then tried on a limited basis, with adjustments made as needed, and when those involved are satisfied the change is meeting the needs set forth at the outset reasonably well adoption on a more complete and comprehensive basis takes place. The interfacing of organization development activities within this sequence involves the use, at each of the five stages noted, of appropriate OD activities that have the potential to assist in clarifying and working through process issues which may arise at each stage.

In looking at organization development activities that might be appropriate to each stage of the curriculum development sequence, French and Bell's identification of twelve separate "families" of OD approaches provides a useful classification system from which to work. They make distinctions among:

Diagnostic Activities: fact-finding activities designed to ascertain the state of the system, the status of a problem, the 'way things are.'

Team-Building Activities: activities designed to enhance the effective operation of system teams. They may relate to task issues, such as the way things are done, the needed skills to accomplish tasks, the resource allocations necessary for task accomplishment; or they may relate to the nature and quality of the relationships between the team members or between members and the leader.

Intergroup Activities: activities designed to improve effectiveness of interdependent groups. They focus on joint activities and the output of the groups considered as a single system rather than as two subsystems.

Survey-Feedback Activities: related to and similar to the diagnostic activities already mentioned. However, they are important enough in their own right to be considered separately, and are more than diagnostic in the sense that feedback is provided in some manner.

Education and Training Activities: activities designed to improve skills, abilities, and knowledge of individuals.

Technostructural or Structural Activities: activities designed to improve the effectiveness of the technical or structural conditions impacting on individuals or groups. The activities may take the form of experimenting with new organization structures, or devising new ways to bring technical resources to bear on problems.

Process Consultation Activities: activities on the part of the consultant which help the client to perceive, understand and act upon process events which occur in the client organizational setting.

Grid Organization Development Activities: activities developed and franchised by Robert Blake and Jane Mouton, which constitute a six-phase change model involving the total organization. The model starts with upgrading individual managers' skills and leadership abilities, moves to team-improvement activities and then on to other planning and assessment activities.

Third-Party Peacemaking Activities: activities conducted by a skilled consultant (the third party) which are designed to help two members of an organization better manage interpersonal conflicts.

Coaching and Counseling Activities: activities that entail the consultant or other organization members working with individuals to help them define learning goals, learn how others see their behavior, learn new modes of behavior to see if these help to achieve their goals better.

Life and Career Planning Activities: activities that enable individuals to focus on their life and career objectives and how they might go about achieving them.

Planning and Goal Setting Activities: activities that include planning and goal setting experiences, utilizing problem solving models, ideal versus real organization discrepancy models, and the like.[6]

One or two examples of the suggested curriculum and organization development interface can help to explicate the idea in more detail. Suppose, for example, we look at the "interest" phase of the curriculum development sequence. During this phase members of the school staff (perhaps a department staff or a curriculum committee) are attempting to define the specific curriculum need and are looking at alternative ways potentially to meet this need. The kind of process issues that emerge at this point include a concern for obtaining information and feedback from other teachers about the definition of need as it is being finalized by the group. Also there are occasions during this phase when members of the working group, whether departmental or committee, have disagreements about the curricular need in question, about procedures being used to identify alternative responses to the need, and about the intended meanings of individuals during the course of the ongoing discussion. The organization development approaches and activities identified under the headings of survey-feedback and process consultation are designed to be used in just such situations! To cite an additional example, suppose we take the case of the "adoption phase of the curriculum development sequence. Here the situation is one in which after some preliminary testing of the curricular modification or change, and trial of the change on a limited basis, the change is to be implemented on a more comprehensive basis. The kind of process issues that emerge here include the necessity of providing some form of new training for teachers who will be involved with the change, educating other teachers in the school about the potential implications of the change, and working with teachers involved in the change on new behavior on their part that might be called for because of the change. Those organization development activities identified under the heading of both education and training, and coaching and counseling speak to these issues.

The role of staff development in the curriculum and organization development interface is rather straightforward. It is necessary, prior to the initiation of any particular curriculum development or improvement sequence to prepare someone, or several people, to do specific organization development activities as they are needed to

facilitate the curriculum development effort. That is, it is necessary to train a person or a cadre of people to do OD work. These individuals must be provided with the skills necessary to intervene at appropriate points and do a diagnostic activity, a team-building activity, or any other needed OD activity that will help move the curriculum development work group toward the accomplishment of their tasks and ultimate goal.

Logistically, the staff development needed to supplement the organization and curriculum development interface can be done in a number of ways. Perhaps an ideal format is to introduce a comprehensive OD-related staff development program at the beginning of a school year for a select number of school district staff including those most likely to be involved with subsequent curriculum development efforts. Under this format by the end of the year a group of staff members would have acquired OD skills as a result of participating in a planned staff development program specifically directed to that end. Obviously, however, the ideal is not always the practical in the real world of day-to-day school operations! Another approach to the staff development needed, therefore, is to combine the OD-related staff development program with the curriculum development effort. Here the intent would be to prepare selected staff members to acquire those OD skills that are most likely to be needed at each phase of the curriculum development sequence in advance of reaching that phase, but in a time frame that coincides with the curriculum development effort. Thus, staff development relating to those OD activities which would most likely be needed during the awareness phase of the curriculum development sequence would be provided first. Skills needed to do OD activities relating to the interest phase would follow, as would in order skills needed for the evaluation, trial and adoption phases. The important feature of this alternative, of course, is to have the staff development planned in such a way that anticipated OD skills are addressed prior to the time they are most likely to be needed. Under such a format the staff development program and the curriculum development effort could be initiated during the same semester or school year.

An important final feature of the curriculum and organization development interface that should perhaps be mentioned is the need to familiarize those individuals involved with the effort about the use of the interface concept, and to do so at the outset of the effort. Thus, by creating an increased awareness on the part of the teachers involved concerning the methodologies and expected outcomes of organization development, it is possible to structure the curriculum development effort in such a way that the use of OD process activities are a natural, expected and built-in part of the overall developmental effort.

NOTES

1. The literature on organization development both within and outside the context of educational settings is already voluminous. A reasonable overview of OD may be obtained, however, from several recent publications including the Schmuck, Runkel, Arends and Arends text **The Second Handbook of Organization Development in Schools** (Mayfield Publishing, 1977), Edgar F. Huse's **Organization Development and Change** (West Publishing Company, 1975), and from **Organizational Development: Values, Process and Technology** by Margulies and Raia (McGraw-Hill, 1972). More current publications of interest relating to OD include W. Warner Burke's 1976 article "Organization Development in Transition" in **The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science** (Vol. 12, No. 1), Steinhoff and Owens article in the October, 1976 issue of the **Journal of Educational Administration** entitled "Problems Related to Techniques for Assessing Organization Development and Determining Intervention Style," Milstein and Smith's article "The Shifting Nature of OD Contracts: A Case Study," in Vol. 15 of the **Journal of Applied Behavioral Science** (1979), and Burke's edited volume **Current Issues and Strategies in Organization Development** (Human Sciences Press, 1977).

2. Everett M. Rogers and Floyd Shoemaker. **Communication of Innovations: A Cross-Cultural Approach**, N.Y., New York: The Free Press, 1971.

3. Egon G. Guba. "Diffusion of Innovations," **Educational Leadership**, Vol. 25, Nr. 4, 1968.

4. As with organization development, the literature on diffusion and adoption of innovations is vast and growing. See, for example, John M. Coulson's "Theoretical Antecedents of the Knowledge Dissemination and Utilization Tradition" (**Viewpoints in Teaching and Learning**, Vol. 54, 1978), Berman and McLaughlin's "Implementation of Educational Innovation" (**The Educational Forum**, Vol. XL, 1976), Duke's "Toward Responsible Innovation" (**The Educational Forum**, Vol. XLII, 1978), Lawton and Lawton's "An Autocatalytic Model for the Diffusion of Educational Innovations" (**Educational Administration Quarterly**, Vol. 15, 1979), Aslin and DeArman's "Adoption and Abandonment of Innovative Practices in High Schools" (**Educational Leadership**, Vol. 33, 1976), Warner's "The Need for Some Innovative Concepts of Innovation: An Examination of Research on the Diffusion of Innovations" (**Policy Sciences**, Vol. 5, 1974), and Howes and Quinn's "Implementing Change: From Research to a Prescriptive Framework" (**Group & Organization Studies**, Vol. 3, 1978).

5. The ongoing debate concerning the adequacy of this older five-stage model notwithstanding, it is adequate for the purposes of suggesting the interface discussed in this paper.

6. Wendell L. French and Cecil H. Bell, Jr. **Organization Development: Behavioral Science Interventions for Organization Improvement**, 2nd ed., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1978.