



Curriculum development processes in selected small Montana school districts
by James Lee Kimmet

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Montana State University

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Abstract:

This study was an investigation to determine the curriculum development processes used in selected small Montana school systems and to compare administrator and teacher perceptions of the processes used.

The questions to be answered dealt with which curriculum development processes were used, which provided the most satisfaction, which were perceived as most effective, the amount of time spent on curriculum development, and perceptions of barriers and influences on the curriculum. It also compared teacher and administrator responses and determined the kinds of assistance they desired.

The review of literature conducted during this study centered on small school characteristics, the various small school improvement projects, and change theory. It was found that small schools do not compare well with large schools in attributes that are a function of size; i.e. number of course offerings, variety of activities, staff size, and fiscal resources. Their strengths centered about the humanistic possibilities allowed by working with small numbers of students and the sense of community generated. The most successful small school improvement projects required a community basis and demonstrated that uniquely small school practices must be developed rather than adopting large school practices.

The method of research used in this study was to review Fall Accreditation Reports, accreditation letters, and the administration of a questionnaire to all the administrators and a sample of teachers in the sixty-four third class school districts in Montana.

The data showed that: 1. The accreditation process is not much concerned with curriculum development.

2. Curriculum development in most, but not all, schools consisted of textbook review and adoption. The most satisfactory and effective methods were tied to this process.

3. Schools generally did not fix responsibility or designate specific time for curriculum development.

4. The primary need was information on curriculum materials and methods of developing curriculum.

5. Teachers tended to view various barriers to curriculum development as larger barriers than did administrators.

6. Teachers preferred strategies providing them with autonomy; administrators preferred use of group strategies.

7. There was very little evidence that change theory was utilized effectively in the respondents' schools.

8. Teachers and administrators differed significantly (.05 level) in all aspects of the study.

I would like to dedicate this study to the people who have always encouraged me to do my best work: my parents, George and Delores Kimmet, and my wife, Sue.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES IN SELECTED
SMALL MONTANA SCHOOL DISTRICTS

by

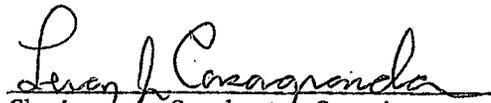
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ABSTRACT

This study was an investigation to determine the curriculum development processes used in selected small Montana school systems and to compare administrator and teacher perceptions of the processes used.

The questions to be answered dealt with which curriculum development processes were used, which provided the most satisfaction, which were perceived as most effective, the amount of time spent on curriculum development, and perceptions of barriers and influences on the curriculum. It also compared teacher and administrator responses and determined the kinds of assistance they desired.

The review of literature conducted during this study centered on small school characteristics, the various small school improvement projects, and change theory. It was found that small schools do not compare well with large schools in attributes that are a function of size; i.e. number of course offerings, variety of activities, staff size, and fiscal resources. Their strengths centered about the humanistic possibilities allowed by working with small numbers of students and the sense of community generated. The most successful small school improvement projects required a community basis and demonstrated that uniquely small school practices must be developed rather than adopting large school practices.

The method of research used in this study was to review Fall Accreditation Reports, accreditation letters, and the administration of a questionnaire to all the administrators and a sample of teachers in the sixty-four third class school districts in Montana.

The data showed that:

1. The accreditation process is not much concerned with curriculum development.
2. Curriculum development in most, but not all, schools consisted of textbook review and adoption. The most satisfactory and effective methods were tied to this process.
3. Schools generally did not fix responsibility or designate specific time for curriculum development.
4. The primary need was information on curriculum materials and methods of developing curriculum.
5. Teachers tended to view various barriers to curriculum development as larger barriers than did administrators.
6. Teachers preferred strategies providing them with autonomy; administrators preferred use of group strategies.
7. There was very little evidence that change theory was utilized effectively in the respondents' schools.
8. Teachers and administrators differed significantly (.05 level) in all aspects of the study.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The mid 1970's was a time in which schools were forced to recognize and deal with change. The total environment was composed of many varied social systems integrated in a weblike configuration, and the acceptance of change in any one subsystem required response from the other social institutions linked to it. It was logical that the institutions of a rapidly changing society must also be rapidly changing. The changes occurring in a society at that time required an educational system that was dynamic and could accommodate changes in society (Rogers and Svenning, 1969).

The basis of the educational enterprise was the amalgamation of activities and experiences which it provided the learner. The purpose of these activities was to bring about "a type of social change, a change in people" (Saylor and Alexander, 1966:39). Thus, the role of education in social change was to bring about a change in behavior or to produce certain student outcomes. The desired outcomes must be ever changing to meet the needs of a dynamic society and to follow changes in culture. These outcomes, or curriculum, must be the focal point of change in schools (Neagley and Evans, 1967).

Small schools have been characterized by Rogers and Svenning (1969) as lagging behind other types of schools in innovations and

change. Montana had an abundance of small school systems. There were, for example, sixty-four third class districts operating K-12 school systems with total populations of one thousand or less, and student populations averaging only 155 in grades K-12. This was less than half the number suggested by Conant (1959) and Jackson (1966) for a four year high school. These sixty-four districts comprised 39 per cent of the total number of K-12 systems operating in Montana (Montana Educational Directory, 1977).

The typical K-12 third class district was staffed by one or two administrators and approximately fifteen certified teachers and auxiliary personnel (Montana Educational Directory, 1977). By statute the district was directed by three to five unpaid trustees elected by popular vote (Revised Codes of Montana, 1947).

In his studies of school superintendents, Carlson (1965a) found that the more innovative superintendents had more formal education, held more prestigious superintendencies, were involved in many educational activities, perceived more support for change among board members, relied more on outside information and advice, and attended more educational meetings than less innovative superintendents. Change in small schools was most apt to be through personnel, and in particular, through the superintendent (Gehlen, 1969). Therefore, an examination of the typical third class

district superintendent was felt to be necessary to understand the setting for change in these schools.

Third class district superintendents generally possessed the master's degree and the minimum three years of experience required for certification as a superintendent in Montana, although some did not. Fourteen per cent exceeded minimum educational requirements. They had been superintendents for an average of 6.18 years and held their present position for an average of 2.78 years. They had an average annual salary of \$16,583.00 (Montana State Council of School Administrators Salary Survey, 1977).

When these characteristics of the typical third class district superintendent were contrasted with the same characteristics of the first and second class district superintendents, notable differences were observed. On the average, the latter group had 9.43 years of superintendency experience and a total professional experience averaging twenty years. They averaged 4.58 years in their present positions and 22 per cent reported education beyond the minimum certification requirements. Their average annual salary was \$21,968.00 (Montana State Council of School Administrators Salary Survey, 1977).

It should be noted also that all first and second class district superintendents had one or more principals, and in some

cases, a central office staff. Only 38 per cent of the third class district superintendents had even one principal to share the work load of the district. The writer found, as a third class district superintendent, that his time and that of his colleagues in similar districts, was spent in the operation of the day-to-day affairs of the district with little or no time available for the planning of change. These facts showed that varying degrees of innovativeness in school superintendents as related to several variables are found. The writer's experience showed that these variables applied to third class district superintendents as well. Thus, the process of change in third class districts appeared less likely to be as well planned or executed as in larger districts.

Another aspect of the setting for change in the third class district was the traditional orientation of rural communities. That was pointed out by Vidich and Bensman (1958) in their study of a small town in upstate New York. This tended to be further reinforced by the habit of hiring teachers whose values were in line with those of the community. Often, this was reflected by giving preference to teachers originally from the community. If local persons were not available, teachers with similar backgrounds were preferred (Gehlen, 1969).

In the smaller schools, there was a limitation on curriculum offerings that was directly related to size. A 1974 study of Montana high schools showed course offerings averaged twenty-five for the nine smallest high schools, 39.7 for the median nine high schools, and 106.5 for the nine largest high schools (Barnett). Seyfert (1937) concluded that because of the limited offerings in the smallest schools, it would seem that skill in discrimination of needs and allocation of scarce resources to get the most value from limited staff and facilities is needed to ensure a quality education.

Finally, although they extensively mentioned program offerings, the Standards for Accreditation of Montana Schools (1976) only made cursory mention of curriculum change. Specifically, the standards required cooperative planning by administration and teachers of in-service programs for curriculum development. A review in elementary schools of text materials every five years was also required. Nowhere was changing or updating suggested. Conceivably, a school could offer the same curriculum for a period of thirty years because there was no legal incentive to change. Therefore, change had to be mandated from within the traditionally oriented community. Vidich and Bensman (1958) indicated that this was not likely to happen.

Although opinions on small schools ranged from the early observation that they are "bordering dangerously close to educational

coma" (Foght, 1912:2) to expressions that the effectiveness of small schools can be better than in large schools (Schoenholtz, 1972), it was evident that the small school differed from the large school in aspects other than size, and that the uniqueness of problems and conditions required approaches to change which were designed to meet the special conditions found in small schools.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was that there appeared to be little or no incentive for small Montana school systems to constantly evaluate and update curriculum and that the processes for doing so were deficient.

This study was intended to determine the curriculum development processes found in selected small Montana school systems (K-12) and compare teacher and administrator perceptions of the processes used.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Traditionally, the small school system has been viewed as inferior to its larger counterparts. McClurkin (1970) found that course offerings in such schools were limited to college preparatory subjects and to meeting minimum graduation requirements. He also stated that such schools were not generally able to provide the

strong leadership and technical assistance required for curriculum improvement. In some ways, McClurkin's statement may have fit the small Montana school system, but a study of Montana schools was needed to show that this generalization extended to them.

The traditional curriculum development model described by such writers as Saylor and Alexander (1966) and Neagley and Evans (1967) relied heavily on the use of committees, councils, co-ordinators, middle management, and teacher representation of various grade levels and subject areas. This arrangement is not feasible with only an average of sixteen professional staff members to share the task. Alpren (1962) found that smaller districts were not active in curriculum development. He suggested the solution of consolidating to make the districts larger. The fact remains, however, that small districts do exist, and that curriculum development processes must be designed to fit the small staffs and meager resources for curriculum development. A first step in designing these processes is to identify and assess the strengths and weaknesses of current practices. The writer found no study that had done this for the small Montana school district.

This study provided information about what curriculum development processes were being used and how well they met the needs of administrators and teachers. Other than the various special school

projects, such as the Texas Small Schools Project described by Wilson (1970), there was little in the literature which indicated the use or degree of effectiveness of specific curriculum development processes in the small school system. This study was needed to provide basic information for the evaluation of the effectiveness of change in small schools.

The Standards for Accreditation of Montana Schools (1976) said little about curriculum. It is natural to wonder if the standards were not lacking by failing to mandate curriculum development per se. It was important to determine if there were adequate curriculum development activities under the 1976 standards, or if additional regulations should have been imposed. Such a determination could be made only after making a status study such as this one.

Finally, this study was intended to determine the scope of curriculum development in small schools in Montana. Although small schools have been stereotyped nationally as being provincial, conservative, and not as innovative as larger schools (Rogers and Svenning, 1969), proof of this was not available for the Montana schools considered in this study.

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are current curriculum development practices in the population school districts as reported by teachers and administrators?
2. How much time did administrators and teachers report as being spent developing and evaluating the curriculum? How did the time for the two groups compare?
3. What curriculum assistance was desired by teachers and administrators? How did the desires of the two groups compare?
4. What were the major administrator and teacher concerns about curriculum development? Were there noticeable differences between administrator and teacher concerns?
5. Which curriculum development processes were perceived by teachers and administrators as being most effective? How did the two groups compare?
6. Which curriculum development processes generated the greatest administrator and teacher satisfaction? How did the two groups compare?
7. What forces provided the impetus for curriculum change in the population school districts?

GENERAL PROCEDURES

The procedures used in this study were:

1. A thorough review of the literature was conducted to determine the characteristics of small school curriculum, the processes of curriculum development generally used in all schools, and the processes of planned change.

2. A review of Fall Accreditation Reports submitted to the Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction for the years 1977-1978 and accreditation letters sent to schools in 1973-1978 was conducted.

3. A survey instrument intended to elicit responses concerning practices of curriculum development in the population schools was developed.

4. A mailed survey of all the administrators and a random sample of instructional personnel in the population school districts was conducted. One survey instrument was used for both groups of respondents.

5. Data obtained from the review of Fall Accreditation Reports and the mailed survey responses was organized in tabular and narrative form so that appropriate comparisons could be displayed to facilitate statistical analysis of the data.

6. Based on the data collected, guidelines for curriculum development in small schools incorporating promising practices as identified by the study were proposed.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of this study were as follows:

1. Data was derived from a mailed questionnaire and reports submitted from the administrators and teachers of the population districts.
2. Turnover of certified staff made it difficult to contact primary participants in curriculum development processes within a particular school.
3. The study was limited to the sixty-four third class school systems (K-12) operating in Montana.
4. The review of the literature for this study was limited to the resources and services of the libraries of Montana State University and the University of Montana, inter-library loan, and the Montana State Library computer on line search of the ERIC file.

DEFINITIONS

Administrator:

An administrator is a certified staff member designated as either a district superintendent or principal, regardless of the certificate held. Supervising teachers were not considered to be administrators in this study.

Curriculum:

The curriculum is "all the planned experiences provided by the school to assist pupils in attaining designated learning outcomes to the best of their abilities" (Neagley and Evans, 1967:2).

Curriculum Development:

Curriculum development is the process which encompasses the following activities: (a) organization of the curriculum design structure, (b) selection of the outcomes of instruction, (c) designation of appropriate content material, and (e) trial and evaluation of the curriculum (Neagley and Evans, 1967).

Instructional Personnel:

Instructional personnel are certified persons employed in a school who are not designated as either a principal or a superintendent.

Third Class School System:

A third class school system is one which offers instruction in grades K-12 with a total population of no more than one thousand residing in the school district (Revised Codes of Montana, 1947).

SUMMARY

The mid 1970's was a time of change and the changes occurring at that time required a dynamic educational system to accommodate them. The focal point of this change in the schools was the curriculum.

Small Montana school systems, by their very nature, seemed on the surface, to fit the stereotypes found in the literature. Such schools were characterized as being deficient in many areas and did not seem to provide the environment for change in curriculum required by the changing society of the time.

This study was conducted to determine the curriculum development processes in selected small Montana school systems and to compare administrator and teacher perceptions of the processes used.

The needs for the study were for a determination of whether or not the literature stereotype fit the population schools, identification and assessment of curriculum development processes in use was not available prior to the study, and an evaluation of the

effectiveness of accreditation standards concerning curriculum development was needed.

Questions to be answered concerned information on the nature of curriculum development practices, amounts of time spent on curriculum development, curriculum development assistance desired by administrators and teachers, administrator and teacher curriculum development concerns, which processes were most effective and generated greatest administrator and teacher satisfaction, and what forces provide impetus for curriculum development in the population schools.

The study involved the use of a mailed survey to a sample of teachers and all administrators of sixty-four small Montana school districts (K-12). The survey was supplemented by a review of Fall Accreditation Reports for the period 1977-1978 submitted to the Office of Public Instruction. Data collected was presented in tabular and narrative form to facilitate easy use.

Limitations of the study included reliance upon a mailed questionnaire and reports submitted by population school administrators, a review of literature limited to library facilities and services available at Montana State University and the University of Montana, literature obtained from inter-library loan and Montana State Library computer on line search of the ERIC file. A final

limitation was the difficulty of conducting the survey because of the high rate of personnel turnover in the sixty-four population schools.

Chapter Two will present a review of literature pertaining to this study.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

The review of literature was accomplished by examining a great many books, periodicals, and miscellaneous publications. These materials were obtained from the libraries of the University of Montana, Montana State University, and through inter-library loan and Montana State Library computer on line search of the ERIC file.

The review is divided into four main topics. These are:

1. Characteristics of Small and Rural Schools
2. Characteristics of Small School Curriculums
3. Small School Improvement Projects
4. Change Theory

It was the aim of the review to carefully examine current thought and research on small schools, and in particular, curriculum development in small schools. The body of literature relating specifically to Montana schools was limited and has made it necessary for nationally derived observations to be applied to Montana schools.

Part of this study was a comparison of its results with the national generalization about small and rural schools.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SMALL AND RURAL SCHOOLS

This section will review the literature definitions, statistics, quality, strengths, and weaknesses of small schools.

Definition of the Small School

To provide clarification of what is meant by a small school, Carleton (1966:98) noted schools in Montana had a median size of 116 students. He further suggested that while NEA chose 300 pupils as the upper limit for a small school, and that the Western States Small Schools Project chose 200 pupils as its upper limit, the division by Barnes (1948) be used.

The Barnes system divided Montana high schools into five brackets: (1) over 1500, (2) 1500-351, (3) 350-151, (4) 150-76, (5) 75 and under. Carleton indicated that most studies done in Montana used 150 as the upper limit of small school enrollment.

Another workable definition that encompassed K-12 schools was proposed by Broady and Broady (1974:3). These authors defined a small school as one in which there is more than one teacher in the school, but generally no more than one or two teachers per grade. At the secondary school level, they set no lower limit, but presumed there would be no more than fifty pupils per grade enrolled.

The majority of the literature reviewed adhered roughly to

the previously mentioned concepts of small schools. The statistics presented in this study are based on these general definitions.

Small School Statistics

Over the years, there have been many statistical studies of small schools. A very large percentage of the public schools in the United States have been small rural ones (Schloss and Hobson, 1956). The number of such schools has been significantly reduced during recent years. For example, between 1930 and 1952 the number of small high schools declined from 26.7 per cent of the total number of schools to only 11.7 per cent. Two reasons for this decline were consolidation made possible through improvements in transportation and closures due to emigration from rural areas.

In 1964, 28.8 per cent of schools holding membership in the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges were considered small (Carleton, 1966). This contrasts with a United States Office of Education study in which 42 per cent of all high schools enrolled fewer than two hundred students (Ford, 1959). It is interesting that the same study indicated these schools enrolled only 20 per cent of the students in school at that time.

Although the number of small schools seemed to be declining, authorities surmized that small schools will continue to exist in the coming decades (Sybouts, 1970). School reorganization and

consolidation had been carried out to an optimum level in many areas, but there were still some necessarily small schools in existence. Because these schools were necessary to serve isolated youth, it was important to see that each one found a way to satisfactorily serve its students (Oliver, 1966:47).

Small School Quality

A considerable portion of the literature on small schools was concerned with a comparison of the quality of the small school with that of the larger schools. Most often, such comparisons presented the small school in an unfavorable light. This was because the structure of most studies focused on standards which were functions of size (i.e. class offerings, activity offerings, staff size, etc.).

Hoover, in a 1941 study, pointed out that graduates of large high schools were not at all convinced that high schools should be large. Dawson (1934) was able to link school size with efficiency. He was not able to show that student achievement was conclusively linked to school size. Sybouts (1970) did conclude, however, that even though patrons of rural schools can point out small school graduates who have gone on to college and been successful, generally small school graduates experience less success in college than do graduates from larger schools.

A 1976 study of secondary education in Montana which compared student achievement in large and small schools concluded that school size was not a determinant of achievement (Kimble, et al., 1976). It did find, however, that variables influencing achievement differ for the small school student. Another important conclusion was that different schools of the same size may have to spend different amounts of money to maintain achievement at a constant level.

Voelker and Ostenson (1970:25), in a study of North Dakota schools, stated that "the quality of education, as indicated by average test scores, tends to vary directly with size of the school." They also indicated the curricula of smaller high schools "tends to be drab and monotonous, providing few electives for individual students."

Such studies generally have caused those districts which have maintained their small schools to often feel, at best, defensive and, at worst, ashamed of being out of date and out of touch with the mainstream of American culture (Sher, 1977:104).

Strengths of Small Schools

Several writers have catalogued the strengths of small schools. One of the most comprehensive lists of purported strengths was presented by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (1974:7). These strengths were:

1. Close working relationships between faculty and administration.
2. Bureaucratic control and red tape is less prevalent in small schools than in large schools.
3. Decisions in small schools can be made on individual, rather than on collective bases.
4. There is a sense of community felt by the school, fostering more involvement by students, parents, faculty, and community.
5. Student-teacher ratios are generally more favorable than in larger schools.
6. A greater potential for individualization exists.
7. A student is presented with greater opportunity to discover his identity.
8. There are more opportunities for students to participate in the total activity program. In fact, every student is needed.
9. Every student and teacher plays a vital part in the school.
10. Guidance becomes a staff-wide function available at the point of need.
11. Because ability grouping is generally not possible, the inherent problems in ability grouping are averted.
12. Discipline procedures can be more personalized.
13. Teachers must be more the generalist and retain a broader view than the specialist.
14. Changes are easier to make because there is less organizational inertia.
15. Teachers are able to know parents better.
16. There is a larger proportion of parent involvement in the schools.
17. Staff relationships can be closer, fostering greater cooperation.

The authors of this list did not presume that all small schools had these qualities by presenting the following caveat:

These strengths are merely potentials until a dedicated staff and an enlightened administration combine to turn them into realities. If a small school ignores these strengths in developing its program and processes, then it will languish in its smallness.

Another listing of strengths was found in the report of the Small Schools Invitational Conference (1974). This report stressed, among other strengths, organizational strengths inherent in closeness of management to the students, ease of implementation of change, and better ability to gauge student ability and progress. Sociocultural strengths and classroom management strengths were also presented. The report, like many of the others, noted that most of the listed strengths were based on general observation, rather than strictly controlled research.

Both listings of small school strengths were based on the human element. These strengths could become weaknesses if the potentials for human interaction are not met (Sturges, 1974).

Small School Weaknesses

The bulk of studies concerning small schools dwelled, at least in part, on their weaknesses. Even reports generally favorable to small schools listed one or more weaknesses. One example was the report by Schoenholtz (1972) in which he stated that the most important weakness of the small school was its frequent failure to prepare students well for college or an occupation.

Oliver (1966) provided the criticism that curricula in small schools were less varied. They lacked teachers, tax base for adequate financing, facilities, and salaries comparable with those

of larger schools.

Because the average small school teacher had between five and six preparations per day, it was unrealistic to suppose adequate preparation on the part of the teacher or ability to keep up with curriculum development in all subjects (Sher, 1977:103).

Other problems inherent in small schools included lack of programs for children with special needs. Small schools were largely unprepared to deal with physical and mental handicaps (Sher, 1977).

Higher cost per pupil was another weakness, which, when coupled with a low tax base, limited educational opportunity in small schools. It had also been noted that small schools are hardest hit by change, especially those changes mandated, but not funded, by outside agencies (Small School Invitational Conference, 1974).

CHARACTERISTICS OF SMALL SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Traditionally, the small rural school curriculum had been viewed as being more limited than that of urban schools, and out of the mainstream of educational practice and theory. One early treatise on rural education described the rural school as close to educational coma (Foght, 1911:2). This view, even though extreme, had been shared by others.

In a 1948 study, it was observed that the limited services offered in most small rural districts placed children of these districts at a serious disadvantage. In most of these schools, it was noted that children had little opportunity to develop their capacities in art, music, or dramatics. Limited high school opportunities often did not include business education, machine shop, auto mechanics, or vocational agriculture, even though they were located in farming communities. McClurkin (1970:24) also noted this same problem and further observed that "opportunities in rural schools are further limited because America has patterned its rural schools so much after urban practice that rural life has been ignored."

An evaluation of business education in Montana high schools (Hertz, 1972) strengthened this observation by finding that business education leaders in both large and small schools subscribed to the same curriculum offering ideal. That is, there was no difference in curriculum offerings that they would like to see offered in their schools.

Miller (1970) found that in Oregon schools the same problems persisted that existed for many years. He noted that poor curriculum quality was prevalent and that this was due to the necessity of multiple assignments for staff and limited offerings because sufficient faculty and resources were not available.

The limitations of curriculum offerings of small high schools in Montana were described by Barnett (1974). The nine smallest high schools had an enrollment of 35.3 and offered 25 courses, on the average. The nine median sized schools had an average of 128.6 students and offered an average of 39.7 courses. By contrast, the nine largest high schools had an average of 1674 students and offered 106.5 courses.

The large discrepancy in offerings available logically led to the question of accreditation. Size alone was not the basic criterion for determining accreditation, but when a school was small and this was coupled with inadequate financial support, the presence of a quality program was unlikely. In the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges, the trend was very definitely away from accreditation of the small school as evidenced by fewer applications for membership from small schools (Wilson, 1966).

The Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges reported a significant number of small schools in its membership according to Carleton (1966). He pointed out that the ingredients of a good school would include (1) a good administrator, (2) fully prepared teachers, (3) a comprehensive program, (4) well-qualified special services personnel, (5) adequate physical plant, (6) ample teaching aids, and (7) community support. Of these, he contended that special

services and a comprehensive program could hardly be offered with the minimum required staff (five). Therefore, he supported standards requiring larger staffs.

Standards for Accreditation of Montana Schools (1976) made numerous allowances for the limited curricular offerings of small schools. The only limitation placed on school size was to require an average number belonging (ANB) of twenty-five for high school and an ANB of nine for non-isolated elementary schools. The minimum number of courses required was twenty-four.

Accreditation standards were difficult for small schools to meet. In 1961 approximately 25 per cent of all small schools were regionally accredited (Oliver, 1961). This figure was 54 per cent in 1975, although the number of small schools had decreased. This compared with an 84 per cent rate for large urban schools (Sasser, 1975).

The small school curriculum, while more limited in scope than that of the larger school, was successful in areas other than quantity. One Washington State study, while favoring consolidation wherever possible, did find a better opportunity for teacher-pupil interaction in small schools (Ford, 1967). This was further stressed by Cohodes (1971) who wrote that a small high school was a better place for a humanistic education than a large school. This was

especially true because in a small school, every student not only had worth, but was needed; all could participate and fully utilize the curriculum.

The opportunity to participate in school activities was much greater in a small school. In Kansas, a comparison between a large school and small schools showed that even though the large school had twenty times as many students, it only offered 1.4 times as many activities as the small school. Proportion of participation by students in small schools was approximately twenty times that of the large school. Students also indicated a greater feeling of attraction to non-class activities and a greater sense of responsibility to participate than their large school counterparts (Barker and Gump, 1974).

Finally, the curriculum in a small school could often be more effective because communication between all parts of the school could be better. An idea could be born and brought to fruition without getting lost in a bureaucratic morass (Schoenholtz, 1972).

SMALL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Sturges (1974) described six major adaptations that had improved small schools. These included: (1) development of shared services programs, (2) addition of courses via television,

correspondence, seminars via telephone, etc., (3) flexible scheduling, (4) development of empathy for the learner, (5) development of close community relationships to solve problems, and (6) maximum utilization of available resources. Sturges also noted that these adaptations had served to maintain, as well as improve, the small school.

A project centered in the eastern United States was the Rural School Improvement Project of Berea College. This project, conducted from 1953-1957, infused trained, experienced professionals into the thirty-eight target communities. It included such techniques as use of volunteers, physical improvements to facilities, and work in other community projects, all of which were sponsored by Berea.

The Berea project was evaluated as being successful, but a follow-up to determine the long term effects had not been done (Sher, 1977:108).

Other projects which provided infusions of expertise and an intensive in-service program were the Alaska Rural Schools Project and the Texas Small Schools Project. These and other outside-agency sponsored projects filled important needs for specialized teacher training. Sher (1977:109) contended that as long as they were not considered the only necessary improvement, these projects were useful.

There were several other projects that used the outside-

model for change. These included the Catskills Small Schools Project, Oregon Small Schools Project, Western States Small Schools Project, and the Susquehanna Valley Improvement Project (Stutz, 1967:197).

A second model for improvement projects was based on proposals from the schools themselves.

In a description of a project by a consortium of three small New Hampshire school districts, Peters (1978) found that curriculum enrichment was possible using a variety of resources, but that time, staff quality, administrative leadership, funds, materials, and evaluation procedures all affected the components of the project.

The Experimental Schools Program (ESP) funded by the National Institute of Education was conceived as a mechanism by which small school districts could, under federal contract, assess their own needs and objectives and plan and implement comprehensive programs to accomplish them. These projects allowed for community centered projects and resulted in products uniquely a part of the communities in which they were conducted. A perceived shortcoming of these projects was the narrow focus of their proponents (Sher, 1977:110).

A third model for small school improvement was the regional education laboratory. Two of these organizations had devoted a large part of their resources to rural education and small schools. The

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) had gathered and published collections of locally generated promising practices to identify and disseminate creative and inexpensive ways to provide a wider range of experiences for students.

The Appalachian Educational Laboratory used television, mobile classroom units, and learning packages to supplement small school educational offerings (Sher, 1977:110).

Two central themes were common to most of the recent small school improvement projects. First, the community, itself, was the basis for productive change. Second, good innovations successful in one school were seldom directly transferrable to other localities; changes had to be adapted to a particular part of the country. A problem with this specificity of innovation is that it still left a locality in isolation if care was not taken to provide options in the curriculum.

A final point is that:

Each project has concluded that small school improvement is not predicated upon adoption of successful large school practices. Rather, there is common agreement that there needs to be invented a new kind of educational program uniquely suited to the small school and its setting (Stutz, 1967:197).

CHANGE THEORY

A review of the literature on planned change was conducted in order to further amplify the intricacies of curriculum development. The purpose of this review was to develop a greater understanding of how organizations accept or reject changes.

Because of the great number of writings dealing with change, the writer attempted to choose those writings which pertained closely to small schools and implementation of changes in them.

Resistance to Change

Gerald Brunetti (1974:12), in an English Journal article, stated that he remained convinced that:

Innovative ideas in education are principally circulated among a select group of educators and tested only briefly in a few "hip" schools, while the bulk of teachers and schools carry on just as they have for generations.

He went on to say that resistance to change came from political and social structures to some extent, but mostly from people's discomfort with the rapid rate of change and the challenge to an acceptable mode of behavior. This was true even when the status quo had become insufferable. That is, there were many teachers in the schools who genuinely desired to change, but did not (Geiser, 1972). The reason for this lack of action was usually

disapproval of peers when there was the possibility of deviation from standard norms and ways of operating.

There were many barriers to change. These included supposed and real consequences of the change. Gardner (1965) attributed many of the barriers to the minds of people. He noted that people often defended current practices by relating them to high moral principles. Nostalgia also played a part in this resistance. The good old days were very easy to emulate.

The fear of the unknown was a common, if unstated, deterrent to change (Geiser, 1972). There was often fear that the change would not be successful or that persons involved would be unable to successfully cope with change.

Proposing change, especially by a newcomer to the organization, shed aspersions on the adequacy of the members of the organization and their past performance (Geiser, 1972:31). This often was tied to the benefits of not changing for certain vested interests (Gardner, 1965:51).

Finally, it was just easier not to change. Innovation was hard work and often was not accepted because of that fact (Geiser, 1972).

Theories of Change

Being cognizant of the various barriers to change led several writers to propose a theory of change. Early theories of change centered on accurately defining the problem using the best analytic technique, and finding the optimum solution. Some observers contended, however, that changes were being proposed without regard for relevance, acceptance, or implementation (Zand and Sorenson, 1975:533).

A theory of change was then formulated, centered on the belief that personality differences between the client system and the change managers, primarily in their cognitive styles, were obstructing change (Huysman, 1970). Thus, for a time, change managers attempted to reconcile these cognitive styles.

Theories of behavioral scientists viewed change as a complex, general social process with many subactivities. Examples of identified subactivities were initiators of change, level of trust, quality of decision to change, techniques of diffusion, and organizational methods of inducing change (Zand and Sorenson, 1975:53).

Because the problem centered and behavioral centered theories focused too much on one or another aspect of change without synthesizing the many interacting elements, it was desirable to produce a theory which could consider all the relationships involved.

Kurt Lewin (1974) conceptualized change as a process with three phases: (1) unfreezing--behavior that increases the receptivity of the client system to a change in the balance of social forces; (2) moving--altering the magnitude, direction, or number of driving and resisting forces; and (3) refreezing--reinforcing the new social equilibrium. Lewin also suggested that an increase in driving forces to induce change may cause an increase in resisting forces, the net effect being no change and greater tension.

Models of Change

Just as the theory of change evolved, so, too, had several models of change evolved. Rogers (1962) discussed adoption and diffusion as the two basic steps in the spread of new ideas. In the adoption process, he identified five discrete stages: (1) awareness during which people come to know about an idea, (2) explore its potentialities and evince an interest in it. Through discussion with others, visitations, observations, and other means, they (3) evaluate the idea for its utility to them. After a favorable evaluation, a (4) trial period takes place, and after successful trial, the process culminates in (5) adoption of the innovation (Hughes and Achilles, 1971:841).

Diffusion is the process through which the innovation gains acceptance and implementation in other systems or subsystems. Diffusion takes place at varying speeds depending upon the inclination to change on the part of potential client systems. Demonstration and dissemination could speed up this process. The person who demonstrates and disseminates has come to be called a change agent (Hughes and Achilles, 1971).

The Rogers model, however, had limitations in its use by change agents. It did provide a way of seeing change as a process, but it really did not provide a clear guide to action (Hughes and Achilles, 1971).

The Guba-Clark model (1967) contained a higher degree of specificity, and used with insight, may have suggested certain kinds of activity at various stages in the process. This model offered an incisive view of the change process. By using the conceptual approach to analysis of change provided by it, the change agent could develop an operationally defined role, ascertain where and how to enter the process, and determine the necessary strategies.

The Guba-Clark model consisted of the following steps:

1. Research--to advance knowledge, provide the basis for invention.
2. Invention--to formulate a new solution to problems; produces invention.

