Current Structures of Curriculum Making in the Federal Republic of Germany and their Impact on Content

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Since 1949, more than seven thousand separate syllabi have been issued for general education alone in the Federal Republic of Germany. This moderate estimation is based on the current number of syllabi in the eleven states of the former Federal Republic combined with the average period of validity. A future Germany with sixteen states will have around two thousand different syllabi in general education, plus at least twice that number of curricular guidelines in the various areas of special and compulsory vocational education. These rather large numbers are due to three basic fundamentals of the current system of curriculum-making in Germany:

- No syllabus is valid in more than one state. Each state issues its own syllabi. Only in a few areas (e.g. the final examinations in secondary education) do guidelines exist at the federal level; how ever, to be valid, these have to be adopted in the state syllabi as well.
- No syllabus covers more than one subject. At the primary level, the timetable covers at least eight, and in higher secondary education, there are normally more than twenty different subject matters. All in all, more than fifty different subject matters are represented in general and special education alone.

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[1] In: Gundem B, Engelsen, B., Karseth, B. (Eds) (1990). *Curriculum work and curriculum content. Theory and practice, contemporary and historical perspectives* (pp. 158–180). Conference papers, University of Oslo. Institute for educational research, 10–12 October 1990. Permission for republishing granted by University of Oslo. Institute for educational research and S.T. Hopmann.

I had the great advantage to conduct the research summarized here in cooperation with my friend and academic teacher Henning Haft (1942–1990). As many times before, the following report should have been a joint presentation of our research. Henning's death in July 1990 made this impossible. The article is dedicated to his memory.

- As a rule, no syllabus covers more than one of the different school types or levels, sometimes even less, covering only one grade of a school type or level, or a distinct course of study.[2]

As a result, any nationwide compulsory subject matter is laid down in at least as many syllabi as there are states in the Federal Republic. Several subjects, such as, e.g., fundamental German, mathematics, or English, are covered in more than fifty syllabi. Others, like Danish or Astronomy, may have just one or two written editions, because they are introduced in not more than one or two federal states and at not more than one or two school types or levels.

Besides, the system is as confusing as it sounds. Having co-edited the first comprehensive register of syllabi in the area of general education in the Federal Republic (Haft, Hopmann, Riquarts & Waldow, 1986), I can assure you that not even the responsible administrations are always able to check out which syllabi are currently valid in their state. It took more than 2 years to compile the first edition.

In administration, any complication on one side causes simplification on the other. Where the products of administration are multiplied to a confusing extent, the process has to be simplified to allow regaining control; at least, this is what happened in the case of curriculum making. The different syllabi are made within almost identical structures of curriculum development, and I will try to outline some of these. In four sections I will address (1) the conditions of curriculum making within administration, (2) some aspects of the work of curriculum commissions, (3) the related system of organized public deliberation, and, finally, (4) the status of syllabi at the classroom level, looking at the impact the structures of curriculum making may have on the curriculum or the content of instruction in each case.

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[2] Thereby one has to take into account that the German school system is traditionally divided into four or five areas at the secondary level: the Hauptschule and the Realschule, both providing lower secondary education, the Gymnasium, leading to university access, and, since 1968 in but a few areas, the comprehensive school as a combination of Hauptschule, Realschule and Gymnasium. Moreover—I feel, as a national shame—we have the Sonderschule, a subdivided system of special education institutions not only for those having a physical handicap, but also reaching out for all those who could not stand the ways and means of the other school types. Additionally, we have a dozen or so different types of compulsory vocational schools, several of these subdivided into various branches.

I would like to add three preliminary remarks. The first refers to the limits of the outline. They are set by the empirical research I have done (cf. Haft & Hopmann, 1987a, 1987b; Hopmann, 1988; Haft & Hopmann, 1989; Hofmann, Hopmann, Haft & Frey, 1989).[3] It concentrates on the structures of curriculum making in general education, which concerns primary and compulsory secondary education, and excludes special and vocational education. If not explicitly stated otherwise, the empirical data are taken from a comprehensive survey I made between 1984 and 1988 (reported in Hopmann, 1988) and stem from the eleven states of the former Federal Republic as it was until October 3, 1990.[4] The second remark addresses a linguistic difficulty that had to be solved in advance. As there is no direct translation of the German term "Lehrplanarbeit" and its contextual meaning, I had to make some conceptual differentiation: In the following, the term curriculum-development refers to the social process of constructing a written curriculum, and curriculum implementation to the use made of a written curriculum as soon as it is enacted. The more encompassing term curriculum-making refers to any part of both the development and the implementation of a curriculum in public schooling. Finally, I would like to stress that, even though some data (like the total numbers of involved persons, organizations, and agencies) may give the impression of very unique complexity, most findings are compatible with those reported from other German-speaking and most Western European

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[3] This research was done in a project named "Prozessanalyse Lehplan- und Curriculumentwicklung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," based at the Institute for Science Education (IPN) at the University of Kiel, conducted in cooperation with Henning Haft, Karl Frey and Kurt Riquarts, and supported by quite a lot of colleagues who unselfishly supplied local/state/national data concerning those issues we could not include in our own research design. A number of changes following Henning Haft's death in July 1990 made it impossible to complete the project by the planned follow-up study concerning the "second level of curriculum control" and its impact on instruction. Only the historical part of the project concerning comparative curriculum administration history (as outlined in Haft & Hopmann, 1990; Hopmann 1990) has been finished.

[4] The former GDR had a somewhat different, but in its basic structures comparable system of curriculum making (cf. Waterkamp, 1989) and the five new states emerging from the unification process are expected to copy the traditional German pattern. The communalities of both systems are based on the fact that both, the former GDR as well as the Federal Republic, were following Prussian traditions in their respective administrative systems.

and Scandinavian countries (cf. e.g. Nissen, Teschner & Haft, 1978; Bund-Länder-Kommission, 1984; Lundgren, Svingby & Wallin, 1984; Brüggen, 1989; Haft & Hopmann, 1989; Hopmann, 1990). It is quite natural that this is not always reflected by official statements of curriculum managers: Those involved do not like a perspective reducing their seemingly pedagogical efforts to "mere" administration. However, almost all I met admitted privately that their respective curriculum making was not so much different from the experience described below.

I

It is always the same old story (see figure below): Following an officially guided deliberation process on educational policy in general or on principles of curriculum-making in a distinct area, the Ministry of Education or its administration appoints commissions to produce a draft of the new syllabus. The proposed draft version is subject to a hearing or a limited call for comments and minor administrative tuning. The new syllabus is enacted after 1 or 2 years of practical testing.

A simplified chronological order of curriculum change.

This process takes 5–6 years on average, around fifteen thousand working hours for the members of an average commission of seven. At least ten organizations will have commented upon the draft version before it gets enacted, and the involved agencies, from parliamentary committees to INSET institutes, will have produced a number of related papers and activities. A cautious estimation would be that in the eleven states of the former Federal Republic, permanently, between four and five thousand people spend a considerable amount of their working hours on curriculum development. A count including all steps of preparation and implementation would at least double this number.

What keeps them all so busy? If one asks the members of curriculum commissions, all important motives to redraft a curriculum stem from inside

the school. Changes in timetables, practical experience, school subject-bound actualities, or simply the age of the preceding syllabus create the need for a new one. On the other hand, in public and curriculum research, it is usual to point to social, cultural, or technical change as the main cause of curriculum reform. Both arguments are misleading. At least the change frequency does not depend on practical or social change, school events, or subject matter. In fact, there is no significant variation in the frequency of change between different types of syllabi. A syllabus concerning technology in secondary education is no more and no less subject to change than a syllabus concerning mathematics in primary or Greek in higher secondary education. On average, a syllabus is changed every 6–7 years without regard to politics and policies, state, subject matter, school type, and level.

There are but two organizational patterns of change. The most important one is the consecution of school types or levels. With respect to the limited political and economic capacities of administrations and their curriculum agencies, the least expensive technique is to redraft all curricula of one school type or one subject matter at the same time. Normally, there is no specific order in the sequence, but sometimes attention is directed by the second pattern: Depending on public deliberation or national regulation (concerning, e.g., the value of certificates), some areas are at a given moment more in focus than others. Except for completely new subject areas (e.g. computer science), this does not affect the average frequency of change but may impact the probability that a certain school type or subject matter is apt to change at a certain point in time. Whereas curriculum development in the first pattern is normally preceded by commissions on principles of curriculum change, the second pattern is, in most cases, combined with general educational policy deliberation events. Both kinds of preliminary deliberation may lead to documents of general concern about issues and strategies in curriculum making. However, whatever may result, it has no other empirically proven impact on curriculum development except relieving curriculum administration from public intervention or political pressure and preparing the administration to focus attention and resources on curriculum matters.

Nevertheless, once the preliminary arrangement is finished, a commission is appointed and tasked with creating a draft version of the new syllabus. The person in charge of selecting the commission's members depends on the

respective organizational structures in the field. If there is (as in most of the states relating to most of the school types and levels) a state-run curriculum development agency (a so-called state institute), its staff will be asked to propose a convenient composition. If there is no such institute, the corresponding department or administration staff member will be asked. Leaving aside a few exceptions (e.g. in Lower Saxony and Bremen), all committee members are appointed by the respective state ministry or department of education alone.

Formally, the administration hardly intervenes in the work of the committees. All that is fixed in advance are general rules of conduct and those preliminary statements of curriculum policy which have been subject to a preceding arrangement. Both rules and statements do not play a significant role in the practical work inside the commissions except under unusual political premises (e.g. a sudden and uncontrollable public attention toward citizenship education in an election year) or in exceptional organizational designs (with intervening supervision, etc.; valued from the perspective of the draft committee members, all respective models failed to produce more than mutual embarrassment and competence twilight). However, staff members of the administration or its curriculum agency exercise a strong influence in case of their personal membership or as compulsory consultants of "their" commissions.

When the commissions have finished their work, they submit their draft version to the appointing ministry or department. Depending on the state and the issue, the administration or its agency now has:

- to call for comments from a selected group of organizations and official committees,
- to check whether the draft fits in the compartmentalized system of regulation,
- to take care of related INSET courses and other information policies,
- to arrange dissemination and implementation.

Usually, these activities do not have a provable impact on the final wording of a syllabus. All in all, more than minor alterations of the draft version compared to the enacted one were reported in less than seven percent of all studied cases. Finally, it is disputed whether or not they have an influence on

the impact a written curriculum may have on the classroom level (cf. Axnix, 1983; Haenisch, 1982, 1985).

As said before, the whole process takes approximately 5–6 years. Taking into account that a syllabus normally is valid for an average of 7 years, that means that we have practically reached a status of rolling reform. The syllabus is never finished but recently changed, under probation, just implemented, not yet evaluated, prone to be changed soon, under preparation, and so forth, without an end.

II

Apart from the administration, the utmost influence on the written syllabus lies with the members of the curriculum commissions. They are responsible for the wording of the draft version. In the educational debates of the 60's and 70's, a point of great contention was the role of teachers in these committees. Following a first survey (made by Hans-Dieter Haller in 1973), it was criticised that more than half of the members of the curriculum commissions were teachers or principals. Interest groups, researchers, as well as the leading official committees on curriculum policy making, asked for more participation by parents, students, social organizations, and—last, but not least—by researchers from different areas of educational and subject matter. Our second survey of the composition of commissions made in 1984/86 proved once again that public criticism has but a small impact on administrative behavior. The number of teachers and other school practitioners was not reduced, but had increased from 55 to an impressive 77 percent (see table below):

Main Occupations of Commission Members (approx. %)

	Haller, 1949–1972	Own survey, 1980–1985
School	55	77
Teacher education	11	5
State institutes	–	7
Administration	10	6
Universities	13	3
Other	7	1
No Response	3	1

Moreover,

- Almost all of the other members had been teachers before their present position or had at least completed teacher education;
- Almost all committee members had practical teaching experience made at the school type or level being covered;
- Four out of five members had studied, the others at least instructed on the subject matter being covered;
- Three quarters had been involved in teacher education or INSET training;
- Three out of five had been members of at least one other curriculum commission;
- Every second member had published instructional materials;
- And—probably the worst side of that homogeneity—less than 2.5 per cent had had any vocational experience outside the educational field, and that number included mainly those in religious instruction who had held ecclesiastical positions.

The greatest reductions have been among those from academic institutions or professions outside the educational field (listed as "other"). Curriculum researchers, for instance, the favorite branch of the seventies, have lost their place in almost all committees. A small portion of counseling is left in the case of a newly established subject matter. Besides that, scientific curriculum development is reduced to a position comparable to any other proposal from outside the school; ordinary teachers need support and adoption to find access to the syllabus. Even worse is the situation of non-educational professions. Apart from the ecclesiastical positions already mentioned, they have simply vanished. The decrease in the share of administrative staff has to be seen from another perspective. It is more than compensated for by the increase in the number of representatives of state institutes, which have been established since 1970. With a different status, these institutes have assumed the function of a partly scientific, partly administrative INSET and curriculum agency. Remaining a part of curriculum administration, they are placed outside its normal channels of decision-making to allow for an additional buffer against public or political intervention.

According to the rules of segmented deliberation, personal access to curriculum commissions is thus given to educational professionals only. Moreover,

when asked which criteria might affect their decision-making, they point to their professional knowledge and experience as teachers or former teachers. However, the professional standard of deliberation inside the commissions should not be overestimated. The committees are expected to deliver a kind of practical reasoning within the given limits of schooling and not a scientific evaluation. This practical reasoning probably matches the logic of public curriculum construction better than any other strategy (cf. Künzli, 1986, 1988).

The subsequent patterns of content choice by curriculum commissions are shaped by successful tradition and negative coordination. Based on practical reasoning, whatever has been a useful tradition in everyday schooling can be included in the curriculum. In an administrative context, however, this is only so if it passes the test of negative coordination, which ensures that any given content has no visible impact on other areas. Both reasoning and coordination act in a particular direction: Anything exceeding the traditional limits of its compartment gets excluded, but inside the compartments, it is possible to enact unacceptable ideas on a more encompassing level. A curriculum commission has, for example, to consider what is traditionally asked by other syllabi of this grade or level; acceptable is only what can be done without risking the acknowledged relations to other subject matter traditions.

As a result, the margin of change included in an average syllabus is not very impressive. Normally, one should not expect more than incremental steps, which do not require considerable changes in conventional instruction. At best, a syllabus may open the door to future change by leaving more space for local decision-making than given anyway and featuring ideas about what could be changed. However, as a special survey in my home state indicated, most committee members do not trust their colleagues' willingness to follow anything new. Thus, rather than introducing new content, a syllabus indicates that something has become a tradition.

That marks the basic difference between scientific and practical curriculum reasoning within institutional constraints. Whereas scientific curriculum research might look for whatever seems to be the best educational, practical curriculum-making has to act like a caretaker in a romantic castle where any change might cause surprising impacts. Not being able to arrange a thorough renovation, any official move has to bear the mark of acknowledged tradition so that any interference can be declared a result of an unknown cause or improper conduct.

Taking care of these limits of deliberation and decision-making is a necessary precondition of licensing (i.e. the structure of curriculum implementation in centralized planning systems) and, simultaneously, a most powerful limit to any particular curriculum construction. Accordingly, the fundamental ends of curriculum-making are not an issue inside the commissions. They are not simply left aside, but repressed in a psychologically illuminating manner. As commission members relate the need for change (despite the facts) to reasons from inside the school only, social, political, cultural, etc., motives do not play a significant role in their curriculum reasoning. Asked whether, at least, the educational concepts in their commissions were uniform, most committee members agreed. However, comparing the personal wording of their concepts often reveals that they do not have much in common. However, the committee members are not aware of this fact. In my survey, I had examples where all committee members declared to agree, and none had but one argument with the others on their concept. A common experience was that annoyance took place as soon as fundamental issues were touched upon. Everyone had to act as if a consensus and any issue was disturbed this feeling had to be excluded. Oddly enough, even a well-known German professor in education, author of several pieces dealing with the blending of politics, morals, and education, wrote in his statement as a committee member that politics had to be left out because pedagogy was at stake.

III

The curious differentiation between politics and education is not just a theoretical viewpoint but a basis of the current structures. Historically, the political part of curriculum deliberation has been outplaced and strictly separated from curriculum development in commissions. Since the late 19th century, this differentiation has been legally fixed in some German states since the 1970s. Since then, organized deliberation has normally occurred in two areas of curriculum making: during the preparation of a new curriculum change and, to a lesser extent, as a critical evaluation of the syllabus before it is enacted.

However, a survey of all organizations that had been officially involved in at least one state showed that—other than the work of commissions—this area of curriculum-making is not organized in a uniform pattern (cf. Hopmann,

Haft & Frey, 1989). Parents and students, employers and unions, churches and political parties, organizations and associations want to be involved in curriculum making. The person who is asked to take part in which section differs considerably. There are states where only a few organizations are invited to comment upon curriculum matters, and where there is no elaborate participation system. On the other hand, there are states with an intricate web of participation preceding, escorting, and following curriculum development.

One may speculate what the reason might be for these differences. To rebuff the traditional argument in advance, those differences have nothing to do with party politics. These have no provable impact at all on structures. At most, party politics affect the feelings of those involved: fewer organizations feel themselves taken seriously by a social-democratic-run government than by a conservative-run one. However, this is insignificant regarding the real extent of involvement and may simply reflect disappointed expectations of those trusting in the social-democratic slogan "We test more democracy." It was impossible to single out another decisive factor that shapes the size and level of involvement. The only consistent phenomenon was that participation creates more participation. In other words, there are states with a tradition of organizational involvement and others with none, and both normally stick to their tradition. The expansion of involvement in all states in recent decades has not reduced these differences. Another impression was that the participation of teacher associations is a reliable predictor of general involvement. Where teacher associations have had a share in curriculum deliberation, all other organizations follow straight off.

Among the other factors that shape the size and level of organized public deliberation were

- legal guarantees: The easiest access to public curriculum bargaining is given to those whose right to intervene is guaranteed by the constitution or law. Outstanding examples are the churches in religious instruction and the parents in some areas of special concern, like sex education.
- Acknowledged tradition: Besides legally guaranteed traditions, many organizations have an informal right to participate ·because they have always taken part, and nobody dares risk the quarrel which might arise if they were excluded. That is especially true nowadays of otherwise not very important associations with an outstanding history in curriculum

making, like the *Gesellschaft der Naturforscher und Ärzte* (The Association of Natural Scientists and Medicals, a once famous science society).

- Vertical cooperation: Organizations cooperate with others with access to other areas of curriculum deliberation, e.g., to name the most common coalition—with a parent organization, a political party, and a teacher union. This combination guarantees presence at all levels of preliminary deliberation and inside curriculum development. Its proven influence is, e.g., strong enough to stop any change in school structures or timetables.
- Public noise: The simple but empirically proven message is that the more noise an organization can make in newspapers and other media, in parliaments and meetings, the more the administration has to react in public (symbolically at least).
- Personal relationship: In many cases, we could identify personal relations between committee or staff members and leading members of social organizations as the main means of participation. In some cases, that relationship was more than personal: In one case, e.g., the chairman of the curriculum committee was at the same time the director of the respective department in administration, chairman of the subject matter association, and a member of the executive committee of the leading teacher association in his home state.
- Subject matter competence, finally, marks a line between different levels of involvement. Organizations without a special reputation in the field covered by a syllabus are never represented by members inside the commissions. On the other hand, even socially weak organizations, which have no stake in the official deliberation process, may be most influential in curriculum development because of their subject matter-bound reputation. Outstanding examples are the subject matter associations, such as the associations of history teachers or science teachers, that are well represented inside almost all relevant curriculum committees. That is, however, no officially declared policy, mainly since almost all teachers and subject matter professionals in Germany are members of such organizations.

It is important to note that the degree of official involvement has nothing to do with the degree of practical impact on curriculum wording. An organization with a strong foothold in curriculum deliberation may be less influential than another with no visible involvement. Take, for example, the different

emphasis on participation shown by employer organizations and unions. Trade Unions are active in almost all areas of the curriculum making being present in parliaments and public hearings about educational policies and represented by members of teacher unions inside the committees.

On the other hand, employer associations show almost no activity in curriculum development and the subject matter area, and confine themselves to statements of general concern about educational needs. Officially, they say that they do not have enough resources to engage themselves in complicated matters unfamiliar to them. They do not have to: Being the ones who decide about the value of school certificates in the long run, they can normally expect that none of their fundamental interests will be pushed aside. Curriculum committees must consider their curriculum's impact on students entering the labor market. Any public attendance at this hidden force would only create a need to enforce what is normally taken for granted. Therefore, only in cases of unusual threat do employer organizations try to get public support for causes beneath the level of general educational principles.

According to the structure of the segmented discourse, organized participation influences the preliminary formulation of educational principles and other areas of the curricular framework that have been excluded from the curriculum development inside the commissions. As said before, organized public deliberation has almost no provable influence on the commissions' curriculum wording and deliberation process. Both are just different worlds of deliberation. However, participation in organized public deliberation is one of many different ways, a social pressure group may try to shape the curriculum. For instance, indirectly exercised content promotion—as possible by vertical cooperation or opinion marketing—may be more influential than any official participation. Moreover, the social place and power of those backing content in everyday life may be even more important. Teachers and students have to take care of the social exchange value of schooling. A strong position in this respect almost necessarily leads to a long-term career of content. To be sure, as Rein (1897) and Weniger (1952) have already pinpointed, neither public nor everyday success is enough to gain access to the written syllabus. To gain this, content needs more than access to local instruction; it has to survive in the compartmentalized world of curriculum making.

IV

The segmented structure of organized public deliberation is complemented by the licensing principle. The basic idea of licensing—that any teacher is free to choose whatever instructional method seems suitable and thereby assumes responsibility for the results of his or her instruction—is legally guaranteed and a part of the ideological core of the German school system. I feel that the worst a German teacher can imagine is that, except for examinations, others may have the right to control instruction "live," thereby destroying the "iron curtain" which normally keeps instruction out of public and professional scrutiny.

The limit of a teacher's freedom behind this "iron curtain" is not set by the syllabus alone. Even more important are other regulations, which had been a part of the syllabus initially but have been relocated into special compartments since then. This second level of curriculum control is made by school legislation, examination rules, the licensing of school books and other instructional materials, in short, by different means which do not affect the content choice by the syllabus itself but have an impact on the leeway left. To give an example: A rather open curriculum laid down in a syllabus may in fact, enforce a certain course of study if the only allowed and necessary textbook has an unconditional order of instruction; on the other hand, a very restrictive part of a curriculum may go unnoticed because there are no other means to enforce its use. Normally, the second level of curriculum control does not visibly exceed a limit, which could undermine licensing.

The relevant data we have in the Federal Republic about syllabus implementation at the classroom level (cf. summarizing Axnix, 1983; Baumert, 1980; Grimmer, 1983; Haenisch, 1982, 1985; Hopmann, 1988; Kunert, 1983; Gaebe, 1985) fit into this framework:

- The degree of loyalty to the prescribed syllabus varies between thirty and ninety percent, depending on the subject matter instructed. For example, instruction in mathematics or foreign languages is more probably the given guidelines than that concerning music, the arts, or physical education. The degree of loyalty depends directly on the inherent structure of the content taught (there are not as many different ways to explain the rule of three) and indirectly on the second level of curriculum control as described above: Subject matters in which school books and other second level means

(as e.g. examination rules) have a strong tradition, are instructed more loyally to the syllabus than others.

- The degree of novelty a subject matter has to the teacher, parents, or students directly affects the knowledge and use of the written curriculum. It is less likely that someone has looked into the syllabus in traditional subject matters than in new ones like information science.
- The age and professional experience of the teacher have a corresponding impact: The more experienced a teacher is, the less acquainted he or she is with the latest edition of the syllabus. One reason is probably that the syllabus is an issue in teacher education. Later on, it is never checked what knowledge teachers have of the syllabus. Another reason is that syllabi normally do not require any changes in the instructional work of acknowledged teachers.
- Written syllabi are used by teachers to make plans for a year, but not for a week, let alone a single lesson. This corresponds to their planning perspective and its inherent principle asking for general loyalty and not for obedience to any detail, as well as to the fact that, normally, the annual but not the daily planning of a teacher may be subject to arguments with parents and colleagues and to administrative control.

Finally, at the local level, syllabi are studied in cases of innovation or contention but not in cases of tradition or consent. Despite their construction logic, this use is a consequence of the overall design of syllabi within our pattern. They have been introduced as an administrative formula to settle disputes, legitimate schooling, and to summarize traditions, but not to organize local instruction. Moreover, following the licensing principle, the educational administration must act as if the guidelines are locally enacted until proven otherwise. Accordingly, where there is neither innovation nor contention, there is no need to take care of the curriculum because there is nothing to settle. Only if someone questions the present course of studies may create a need to check its accordance with the syllabus. Therefore, it is no surprise that none of the studies about instruction constraints report significant numbers of teachers feeling bothered by curriculum prescriptions.

All in all, to talk about the impact of syllabi at the classroom level is misleading. In our system of curriculum making, as Wilhelm Rein already

observed at the end of the 19th century, syllabi are normally not ahead of but following everyday experience. As summaries of successful traditions, their impact lies in the fact that they reinforce what is prevailing anyway. Accordingly, the material presented here may explain what shapes the range of content choice in state-run curriculum development, but not what shapes the range of content at the classroom level. Curriculum making, as described here, is but one factor in that complicated world of change and stability.

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