WHAT ARE TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE CURRICULUM DEVELPOMENT PROCESS?

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Dawn A. Lauridsen, B.S., M.S.

*****

The Ohio State University
2003

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Diana B. Erchick, Advisor
Professor Patti Brosnan
Professor Barbara Seidl

Approved by

Advisor
College of Education
Graduate Program
ABSTRACT

Curriculum development, as a word and a concept, is an integral part of education systems, used with varying connotations and interpretations. Curriculum can be defined as a sequence or series of coursework, within a particular area or content focus. The development of curriculum becomes a value-laden process of determining what “should” be taught within the institutions of schools, given the social, cultural, political, and environmental influences upon this curriculum development process. It is this phenomenon of the curriculum development process for the perspective of the teachers that was the topic of this study, using a qualitative approach implemented through interpretivist/constructivist – anthropological paradigmatic assumptions, with attention also afforded to the critical theory paradigmatic assumptions as well. Consistent with qualitative methodology, teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process were explored through interviews, participant observations and document analysis.

Teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process revealed teachers have perceptions of technical aspects of the curriculum development process and perceptions of affective aspects of the curriculum development process. The first two technical aspects of the curriculum development process are that curriculum development is influenced by external and internal factors. Third, teachers’ perceive the process to contain elements of negotiation and deliberation, and is a process that is influenced by and occurs over time. Lastly, the perception emerged that the curriculum development process includes a series of steps; steps that are not
always sequential or linear. Collectively, these are the teachers' perceptions of the technical aspects of the curriculum development process.

Teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process also include affective aspects. The first aspect entertained the influence of the size of the group engaging in the curriculum development process. Second, teachers' perceive themselves as a bridge between other teachers and state standards. Next, teachers' perceive the curriculum development process as a process one could not undertake and accomplish without the group dynamic. Lastly, engaging in the curriculum development process creates a sense of ownership and investment in the curriculum developed. These are the affective aspects of teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process that emerged from this study.
Dedicated to the memory of my mother and grandmothers,
To my family, and
most of all,
To Kent, the love of my life
and my inspiration
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my advisor, Diana Erchick, for her endless encouragement, intellectual support and enthusiasm, which made this dissertation possible, and for her patience in correcting both my stylistic and formatting errors.

I wish to thank Barbara Seidl for encouraging me to pursue my doctoral degree initially, and for her encouraging words and offers of support throughout the process.

I wish to thank Raylene Kos for guiding me through the beginning stages of my doctoral work, helping me define my focus and perspectives, and adding a layer to my personal and scholarly selves.

I am indebted to my participants, “Lab Rats”, as they identified themselves. I cannot express my sincere appreciation for their willingness to participate in this study, engage in hours of interviews and discussion, and for their continued words of encouragement. This is their study as much as it is mine.

I wish to thank all who have aided me in the various stages of transcription, editing, formatting and proofreading. Their efforts and talents are invaluable.

Lastly, I wish to thank my friends and colleagues who have given me endless support and encouragement throughout this entire process. They are appreciated beyond words.
VITA

January 17, 1968……………………………………Born – Oxford, Ohio

December 1989………………………………….…..B.S. Education, Miami University (Ohio)

June 1999…………………………………………M.S. Education, The Ohio State University

August 1990…………………………………………Classroom teacher

January 2001………………………………………..Curriculum coordinator

PUBLICATIONS

None at this time

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Education, Integrated Teaching and Learning
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.........................................................................................................................................ii
Dedication.......................................................................................................................................iv
Acknowledgments ............................................................................................................................v
Vita...................................................................................................................................................vi
List of Tables ....................................................................................................................................xiii
List of Figures ....................................................................................................................................xiv

Chapters:

1. Research Significance....................................................................................................................1
   Research Significance .....................................................................................................................1
   Contextual Information ...................................................................................................................3
       Research in the Intermediate Schools .......................................................................................4
       Research Participants ...................................................................................................................4
   Curriculum and Curriculum Development Defined .......................................................................5
       What are Curriculum Contents? ................................................................................................6
   Curriculum Development for the Eyes of Educators: Pilot Study
       Findings .......................................................................................................................................6
       Thoughts of Classroom Teachers ...............................................................................................7
       Thoughts of Curriculum Coordinators .......................................................................................8
       Implications for Curriculum Based Professional Development ..............................................9
   Interpretivist/Constructivist Paradigm in Social Research:
       Assumptions, Purposes and Development ..............................................................................10
   Critical Theory Paradigm in Social Research:
       Assumptions, Purposes and Development ..............................................................................13
   Anthropological Perspective: with Respect to the Curriculum Development
       Anthropological Approaches to Culture as Applied to Education ..........................................15
       Culture, in the Anthropological Sense, as Applied to Education ............................................16
       Categories of Meaning of Curriculum Using an Anthropological Lens..................................18
       Culture and School in the Anthropological Sense .................................................................19
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural Perspective (with Respect to the Curriculum Development Process)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Development with respect to the Consideration of the Children Collectively</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration of the Student/Child as an Individual</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Theory (with Respect to the Curriculum Development Process)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freire’s <em>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</em></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greene’s <em>Dialectic of Freedom</em></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hooks’ <em>Teaching to Trangress</em></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Theory to Classroom</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropological, Sociocultural and Critical Theories applied</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Curriculum Development: In summary</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Fundamental Assumptions</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paradigmatic Assumptions and Curriculum Theory</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditionalist Paradigmatic Assumptions</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positivistic curriculum theory</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual-Empiricist Paradigmatic Assumptions</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual-empiricist model</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconceptualist Paradigmatic Assumptions</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconceptualist theory and curriculum</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Theory Paradigmatic Assumptions</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical theory and curriculum</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paradigmatic Assumptions and Curriculum Theory: In Summary</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Contexts of Curriculum Development</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Aspects in Curriculum Development</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural considerations in Curriculum development</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden curriculum within the formal curriculum</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-community connection and curriculum development</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliberation in Curriculum Development</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliberation: Its definition and characteristics</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of deliberation</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

viii
Commonplaces of deliberation ..................................................58
Commonplace of the teacher ..................................................58
Commonplace of the student ..................................................59
Commonplace of the milieu ...................................................59
Commonplace of the content ..................................................60
Commonplace of curriculum making and the curriculum specialist ..................................................60
Obstacles to the deliberation process .........................................61
Stress and more obvious effects on deliberation ..........................61
Stress and more subtle effects on deliberation ............................61
Deliberative perspective to schooling and the public interest ..........62
Curriculum deliberation: In conclusion .......................................62
Teacher Inservice and Curriculum Development .........................63
Implications of Curriculum Development by Teachers for Administrators and/or Supervisors ..................................................65
In Conclusion ........................................................................66

3. Methodology .....................................................................69

Interpretivism/Constructivism Applied to Studying Teachers' Perceptions of the Curriculum Development Process ..................................................70
Research Population ................................................................72
Research Sample .....................................................................73
Research Setting .....................................................................74
Interpretivist/Constructivist Research Strategies .........................75
Consideration of Multiple Perspectives .....................................75
  Kincheloe: Fiction formulas and critical constructivism ..........76
  Fine and Richardson: Multiple perspectives ........................77
Triangulation During the Research ..........................................78
Interviews as a Means of Data Collection .................................79
Participant Observations as a Means of Data Collection ............83
Document Analysis as a Means of Data Collection .......................88
Data Collection Methods in Summary .....................................90
Approach to Data Analysis ....................................................91
Steps of Data Analysis ..........................................................92
Thematic networks: An analytic tool for qualitative research ......................................................... 93
Developmental research sequence method ..................................................................................... 95
Data Analysis Methods In Summary ............................................................................................. 96
Trustworthiness and Ethical Behavior ............................................................................................ 97
Trustworthiness in theory ............................................................................................................... 97
Trustworthiness in practice ........................................................................................................... 98
Research Timeline ....................................................................................................................... 101
Conclusion ..................................................................................................................................... 103

4. Conclusions ............................................................................................................................... 105

Curriculum Development in the Words of the Teachers ................................................................. 106
The Beginning ............................................................................................................................... 107
It Wasn’t Always an Easy Process ................................................................................................. 107
Group Negotiation and Deliberation ............................................................................................ 108
Interpretation of Content and Vocabulary .................................................................................... 109
More Negotiation and Deliberation .............................................................................................. 109
Hearing Everyone’s Voice ............................................................................................................. 110
External and Internal Factors ....................................................................................................... 110
The Power of the Group ............................................................................................................... 111
The Power of the Process for the Group ...................................................................................... 112
The Power of the Process for the Individuals .............................................................................. 114
This is my Document .................................................................................................................... 115

Teachers’ Perceptions of the Technical Aspects of the Curriculum Development Process .......... 115
What is Curriculum? ...................................................................................................................... 116
External Factors on the Curriculum Development Process ......................................................... 118
External influences: State standards ............................................................................................. 119
External influences: State proficiency tests .................................................................................. 120
External influences: Community and Business Sector ................................................................ 121
External influences: In summary ................................................................................................ 122
Internal Influences on the Curriculum Development Process .................................................... 123
Internal influences: Teachers ...................................................................................................... 123
Internal influences: Administrators ............................................................................................. 124
Internal influences: Building Configurations .............................................................................. 125
Internal influences: Students ....................................................................................................... 126
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Trustworthiness and Ethical Behavior</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Research Timeline</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Fundamental Assumptions</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Teachers' Perceptions of the Curriculum Development Process</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

Curriculum is a word repeatedly used in education, with varying connotations and levels of development. Curriculum can be associated with state standards, or developed by committees of teachers and administrators at a district level. Regardless of the “official” origin of the curriculum as a document or the exact definition of curriculum applied, curriculum or courses of study and their development are not unique to any school district, and the curricula that is actually delivered at the classroom level is directly associated with the classroom teacher in question. This process involves generating several responses to problems and controversy during the curriculum development process, and entertaining alternative modes of thought, practice, and perspective. It is this phenomenon of the curriculum development from the perspective of teachers that was the basis for my doctoral research.

Research Significance

As a curriculum coordinator, gaining the perspective of the teachers in the curriculum development process through this research allowed me to better facilitate the process and provided me with an emic perspective from which to draw upon. Pelto and Pelto (1978) emphasize the importance of gaining the emic perspective to understanding phenomena saying, “The very
rigidity of definition may lead to misunderstanding of the essential problems involved...If it is our purpose to understand the thoughts of a people, the whole analysis of experience must be based on their concepts, not ours” (p. 55).

Curriculum development is an integral part of education. In the shaping of curriculum, deliberation, at the individual and/or group level, is an integral and necessary component. McCutcheon (2002) defines deliberation as “the process of weighing the many possible resolutions to problems and the many matters that vie for attention, affect the curriculum, and otherwise shape teachers' decisions about what to teach in order to act in their students' best interests” (p.3). In order to understand this process as proposed by McCutcheon, gaining the emic perspective as presented by Pelto and Pelto is key. It is only though a more comprehensive understanding of the curriculum development process within the context of its development that I can examine this phenomenon in actuality, better facilitate this process as curriculum coordinator, and guide those involved to a truer appreciation for the magnitude of their work.

As I engaged in this examination of the process of curriculum development and attempted to uncover and bring to light teachers' perceptions of their role in this process, I needed to do so from various perspectives, all while operating as the researcher exploring the phenomenon. I needed to respect and reflect the voices of classroom teachers as participants in the process. These voices, in isolation and conjunction, are absent from the literature. The absence of these individual and collective voices not only do a disservice to the representative bodies, but also prevents administrators at various levels of public education from fully understanding the task of curriculum development by teacher educators at its various levels. Curriculum development is a phenomenon critical to education and deserving of examination; but exploration of this phenomenon from voices of the teachers who engage in the curriculum development process is
significant with respect to the process of curriculum development, the actual curriculum developed, the implementation of said curriculum, and the true implications of said findings. This significance has implications for curriculum coordinators, teachers, administrators, and all who may engage in and/or be affected by the curriculum development process and products of said process. I begin with providing the contextual information defining the parameters of this study.

Contextual Information

Before I can elaborate on the paradigmatic and theoretical assumptions that will guide my research, it is imperative I present and discuss the cultural context within which I operated and participated during my research period. I must preface my discussion with the following two qualifiers. First, I did conduct my research in Summit Way City Schools, a pseudonym for the actual school district. I am a product of Summit Way City Schools and recently completed my twelfth year as an educator in the district. For ten and a half years I served as a classroom teacher, teaching third through fifth grades, in an inclusion setting (one third to one half of my students having various special needs). The last eighteen months I have served as curriculum coordinator of mathematics and science education for grades kindergarten through twelfth grade and as curriculum coordinator of technology education grades seven through twelve. It is in my current capacity and role as curriculum coordinator that I conducted my research. Second, my examination of teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process occurred concurrently with the development of a new mathematics curriculum for Summit Way City Schools’ kindergarten through twelfth grade. Embedding my research in this authentic process afforded me the opportunity to operate more fully as a participant observer along the participant observation continuum and the opportunity to utilize access to and interaction with the teachers involved in the
study. I present these two qualifiers not only to illuminate my connections to my research setting but also to remind me of potential areas of bias and conflict based upon my connections to and within Summit Way City Schools.

*Research in the Intermediate Schools*

Given the above circumstances and the current developments within Summit Way City Schools, my focus was to study teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process, with a particular interest at the intermediate school level (i.e. grades five and six). Summit Way City Schools recently opened four intermediate level buildings. Since their opening, the staffs of these buildings have struggled to determine the nature and culture of this grade level configuration. Fifth grade teachers bring an elementary perspective, while sixth grade teachers operate on the basis of their middle school experiences. Consequently, as intermediate level teachers had shared with me during the 2001-02 school year, merging these two very different “worlds” or ways of knowing and operating to create an intermediate culture, has not been an easy transition. Curriculum related decisions are therefore situated within a climate of change and negotiation.

*Research Participants*

My research participants included a total of eight teachers, one fifth grade and one sixth grade teacher from each of the four intermediate schools. This ensured equal representation of the four buildings and each included grade level, and also for the socioeconomic status and English as a Second Language (ESL) populations of these buildings’ students. I worked with teachers from each building and grade level equally in terms of interview sessions and all participants were present during participant observations. My research methodology will be more precisely explained and elaborated upon in chapter three.
Curriculum and Curriculum Development Defined

Before one can address curriculum development, one needs to define the concept of curriculum. According to Darder (1991), “Curriculum traditionally refers to the coursework offered or required by an educational institution for the successful completion of a degree or credentialing objective” (p. 19). It is this connotation of curriculum that has been traditionally assumed to be in operation in the context in which I conducted my research. Darder (1991) continues to discuss the content and knowledge that is taught is based upon what is recognized as “legitimate and necessary by those who dictate curricular decisions” (p. 19). As Darder illustrates, curriculum can often be viewed as a document presented for implementation, not necessarily developed in partnership with those responsible for the implementation of the said curriculum.

Beauchamp (1982) supports the notion of curriculum as a document when he states that curriculum can be a “written plan depicting the scope and arrangement of the projected education program for a school…the basic environmental structure from which teachers are to develop teaching strategies for specific classroom groups” (p. 25). It is at this point we can begin to see the cultural and political influences upon curriculum by the value judgments placed upon what “should” be taught. As Chandler (1992) asserts, this “should” “is a valued based decision” (p. 41-42). Hence, we see the duality of curriculum. First, its contents are based upon developers' value judgments, and second, its delivery and reception is based upon the values of the teachers, students, and community in question. I next define the curriculum contents as defined in this study of teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process.
What are the Curriculum Contents?

As previously stated, the contents of curriculum can include topics and concepts deemed necessary and of value for students to learn. This includes “questions about the purpose of the curriculum and what is learned through participation in that curriculum” (Chandler, 1992, p. 34). Reid (1992) reiterates the cultural dependent notion of curriculum and its development. Deciding what concepts and skills to include in curriculum based upon traditional and/or mainstream values may no longer appropriately or adequately serve the population it is imposed upon.

Curriculum, as the product of the curriculum development process in which the participants of this study engaged, is defined as the mathematics course of study for grades five and six. This course of study or curriculum will be one component of the comprehensive mathematics course of study for kindergarten through twelfth grade. The final document included grade level indicators, the mathematics skills and concepts appropriate for fifth and sixth grade students. While the curriculum document is the goal of the curriculum development process, it is the teachers' (participants') perceptions of the curriculum development process that was the primary area of focus and interest in this study. I next discuss the cultural context within which this curriculum development process occurred and additional pertinent information based upon my pilot study.

Curriculum Development from the Eyes of Educators:

Pilot Study Findings

In order to examine and uncover the teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process within its cultural context, I felt it necessary to determine the framework from which some educators are currently operating. Given constraints of time, availability, and the reality of proficiency testing (a cultural context of its own), my limited research during my pilot study provided me an initial basis from which to begin to construct my own notions of curriculum development and
implementation, and how to facilitate this process. I was able to benefit from interviews and participant observations with classroom teachers and curriculum coordinators, which I outline in the following sections.

**Thoughts of Classroom Teachers**

During my interviews with classroom teachers (who live in the proficiency reality) and participant observations during a professional development opportunity, some themes emerged. Follow-up interviews and observations would be recommended to more fully inform my facilitation of curriculum development. Still, these findings did help guide the initial stages of my study. The following is a summary of my experience.

Teachers’ perceptions emerged from my interviews with educators and through participant observations as a theme and phenomenon deserving of additional exploration. A component of teachers’ perceptions included the resounding theme was the power of dialogue as a vehicle for participation, understanding, and development. Each of the four educators interviewed discussed the benefits of being able to talk with teachers across the district. The teachers repeatedly discussed how the staff within the building thought they developed a culture of their own, collectively and individually, through dialogue. Through discourse, teachers had established a collegial network, focused efforts, and shared experiences crucial to creating a climate conducive to group deliberation. Dialogue between teachers satisfied these teachers’ need to feel valued, listened to, and respected for their opinions and experiences. The conclusion that teachers’ perceive dialogue is important on a multitude of levels was drawn based upon direct and implied statements. The notion of the importance of dialogue has implications for future research and facilitation of curriculum development, its implementation, and related professional development, and was an area of interest and consideration in this study.
Teacher perception is an important and primary topic of consideration. During my pilot study I merely scratched the surface of teachers’ perceptions concerning their role in curriculum development and what the deliberation process may be. In parallel to exploring teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process, a portion of my pilot study included exploration of how curriculum coordinators view the curriculum development process. I now turn to perspectives shared from curriculum coordinators.

Thoughts of Curriculum Coordinators

The curriculum coordinators I spoke with in my pilot work addressed the concept of deliberation in curriculum development, although the specific term “deliberation” was never used. Again, as with the teachers, additional dialogue is recommended to more fully express and qualify their thoughts, perceptions, and perspectives on the curriculum development process. Their thoughts and comments as determined through my pilot work were summarized and analyzed to produce the following conclusion.

Curriculum development as a process and related professional development opportunities were discussed by the curriculum coordinators as separate and related entities. The curriculum coordinators referred to the need for curriculum development professional development along with and in response to the development of curriculum. The curriculum coordinators alluded to the need to structure curriculum development professional development in response to the differences among teachers of different grade levels and varying experience. Professional development needs to be appropriate for teachers given their grade level and their prior experiences. The question of the focus on the “bigger picture” versus the more minute details arose, as did the notion of classroom practice versus the actual adopted course of study. These two issues were also discussed with respect to the teachers’ role in these two areas and how curriculum coordinators
need to function as advocates and support for teachers in the curriculum development and implementation process. Group deliberation and the entire negotiation process were mentioned (although not necessarily in those specific terms), as well as the role of the coordinator to facilitate and monitor these processes. Without hesitation, more research is needed to more accurately and knowledgeably make these assertions and form more grounded theories from which to operate.

The research cited is admittedly sparse in terms of generating conclusions and plans of action. However, these pilot results do inform further study. I now present an anthropological, sociocultural and critical perspective to serve as part of a foundation upon which to move on in this work, to situate the group deliberation process, and determine teachers' roles in this process within the cultural context of a mathematics curriculum development. Although my pilot study was limited, the resounding themes of power of dialogue and the need for professional development became apparent from the teachers and curriculum coordinators. I now consider the possible implications of curriculum development-centered professional development opportunities, and I return to theory that considers a cultural perspective.

Implications for Curriculum Based Professional Development

From interviews and participant observations with teachers and curriculum coordinators, the need for curriculum based professional development became quite explicit and clear. From a sociocultural or cultural perspective, teacher inservice or professional development is crucial to actualize a curriculum developed. Even within a group deliberation perspective, attention must be afforded to the cultural context creating the curriculum and how it will be implemented. Educators need to have the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to successfully implement a culturally relevant and equitable pedagogy (Banks and McGee Banks, 1995). Before teachers can effectively enrich their students' lives, they need to enrich their own understanding. Fostering the
attitude and encouraging teacher personal and professional development may be accomplished through self reflection, study of pedagogy, and learning how to “recognize and respond to multiple students' characteristics, including race, social class, and gender” (Banks and McGee Banks, 1995, p.153). Educators need to make personal investments to create curricula of multicultural dimensions; rooted in anthropological, sociocultural, and critical theory pedagogy; that will work for all students within the realm and culture of influence of each curriculum.

Before examining the curriculum development and deliberation process, I examine and discuss the cultural context within which this development occurs and the theoretical assumptions that will serve as the foundation for this research. I preface my specific references to the interpretivist/constructivist and critical theory paradigms with a brief description of their basic assumptions, purposes, and development. Later, I present each with more specific reference to curriculum and the curriculum development process. I now present and explore the interpretivist/constructivist lens that was the primary lens through which the phenomenon of teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process was examined.

Interpretivist/Constructivist Paradigm in Social Research:

Assumptions, Purposes, and Development

The curriculum development process and the teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process, are a social phenomenon. Given the social aspect of the curriculum development process, the interpretivist/constructivist lens is appropriate to the exploration of the curriculum development process. The interpretivist/constructivist paradigm was the foundation of my positionality and underlying assumptions during this research. The following section further
delineates the assumptions of the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, illustrating the alignment of my research to uncover and deconstruct teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process and situating myself within this paradigm.

The assumptions of interpretivism/constructivism include the three linked elements of ontology, epistemology, and methodology, but their definition and application differ from a more traditional and positivist manner. First, to an interpretivist, an ontological assumption is that reality is socially constructed through culture. Schwandt (2000) supports this notion when he states that there is “no way to experience real relations of a society outside of its cultural and ideological categories” (p. 198). This consideration of social and cultural construction is evident in interpretivist/constructivist epistemology and includes transactional and subjectivist elements. Transactional refers to the belief that findings and knowledge are created through dialogues, which are a social and cultural act. The subjectivist element refers to the way we know being created in the moment - within one’s own mind, contingent upon prior knowledge and categories of meaning. These ontological and epistemological assumptions illustrate the attention afforded to social construction of meaning and reality within the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm. Consequently, the methodology utilized to uncover these assumptions must be in alignment with the above stated ontological and epistemological assumptions.

The epistemological assumptions, as delineated above, influence the methodological assumptions of interpretivism/constructivism. According to an interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, how one gains knowledge is dialectical, based upon a set of shared meaning creating through dialogue and/or interaction. D’Andrade (1984) and Mead ([1890] 1973) both explore the idea of culture as a system of meanings; these meanings affect the culture or social structures, which in turn lead to effect on the meanings. Dialogue and interaction are constantly shaping culture and
societal meanings, creating a constant state of growth and revised schema, as individuals and
groups of individuals. Interpretivist/constructivists, simply, operate under the assumption that
meanings and realities are socially and culturally constructed, always open to cultural and social
interpretation and influence.

Interpretivism/constructivism examines the world in a far more subjective and interpretive
manner than positivists. Interpretivism/constructivism encourages examination of cultures to
understand difference in their construction and ideologies related to culture for what they are, not
as a means of comparison or evaluation. As Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986)
illustrate, knowledge and truth are culturally constructed, defined in emic terms, based upon the
voices/perspectives in question or observed. Interpretivism/constructivism examines events and
knowledge, in their cultural context to better understand those events. This paradigm is
appropriate when cultural context and cultural/social construction are in question.

Anthropological and sociological approaches to research on social and cultural
phenomena have influenced the development of Interpretivism/constructivism. Anthropology and
sociology, by definition, address and examine culture, social relations, and the relationship
between culture, human interactions, and the continued development of culture/society.
Malinowski ([1922] 1961) and DuBois ([1899] 1973) exemplify the impact of long term immersion in
a particular setting while undertaking qualitative research. Both researchers illustrate how the
cultural perspectives from the dominant culture and the culture in question need to be explored to
more accurately understand the reasons for and implications of actions within a given culture as
they describe actions and interpretations of these actions within the given culture in question. A
result of the need to acknowledge these elements is that methodologies from disciplines (i.e.
sociology and psychology) became “blurred” (Geertz, as cited in Lincoln in Guba, 2000, p. 164) with the more traditional/positivistic genres to create paradigms (i.e. interpretivist, constructivist, and naturalistic) that are more responsive and appropriate for examining the ontologies and epistemologies of the cultures/peoples in question.

Clearly, the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm affords emphasis and attention to the notion that reality and knowledge are socially constructed through dialogue, and this co-constructed reality may be viewed differently by different individuals. The social influences and importance of these influences are factors in the curriculum development process. I consider critical theory as a relevant theory and deserving of consideration as well, although not necessarily as prominent in my research or my primary lens. The importance of the inclusion of critical theory will become more evident in later chapters. Due to the inevitable relationships of power that emerge in group processes, I now outline the assumptions of the critical theory paradigm in social research.

Critical Theory Paradigm in Social Research:
Assumptions, Purposes, and Development

Critical theory is a paradigm concerned with examining issues of power, control, and politics. It embraces subjectivity, is not value neutral, and is openly ideological. Researchers’ values will affect the entire research process. Consistent with the paradigmatic assumptions previously presented in relation to interpretivism/constructivism, critical theory also defines ontology, epistemology, and methodology.

The basic ontological assumption of Critical Theory is the notion that reality is socially constructed through asymmetrical power relations over time. Epistemological assumptions are rooted in transactional and subjectivist notions (previously defined), adding the idea that how we
know the world is also value mediated. This element is a departure point from the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm. Therefore, the methodological assumptions for a critical theorist are value mediated and dialectical, and they attempt to reveal structures of domination and people's responses to them. Critical theorists often conduct research to emancipate or empower the researched. The key element of critical theory that differentiates it from the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm is the notion of asymmetrical power relations and how they affect the social/cultural constructions of reality.

Critical theorists research with openly political and transformative intentions in many instances. As Ladson-Billings (2000) and Schurleich and Young (1997) discuss, critical theory attempts to disrupt or explain the current hegemony or status quo with respect to oppressed peoples, whether their oppression is based upon race, gender, ethnicity, language, class, sexuality, or other forms of difference. Critical theory can be the foundation for human agency when embraced by the oppressed as agents of their own social change, not necessarily by the direct and explicit actions of the researcher. Critical theory does not involve labeling a people(s) as culturally deprived or culturally disadvantaged, but intends to help these people(s) understand the conditions under which they live and learn that shape their knowledge and their reality and to empower them to change or modify their reality as they see necessary (Ladson-Billings, 2000).

The acknowledgment of the influence of power relations of critical theory is the factor that has potential connection to the curriculum development process. Teachers, during the curriculum development process, make decisions and recommendations about curriculum that will ultimately be implemented by all teachers with the intent of serving all students. The teachers engaged in the curriculum development process may determine the elements of inclusion at a particular grade level, define skills and concepts for a particular grade level, and determine how a particular grade
level and/or school district may interpret the language of developed curriculum with implications on classroom practice and implementation. The group dynamic of the curriculum development committee may also exhibit aspects of critical theory. Elements of critical theory may be evident in the actions of more experienced teachers who may self-assume leadership roles, outspoken teachers who may advocate for their particular position without equal consideration of others’ positions, or dominance within the group dynamic based upon additional qualifiers or factors of consideration. Teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process was the focus and emphasis of this study, but critical theory paradigmatic assumptions did arise during this research and will be afforded additional consideration and attention in later chapters.

Interpretivism/constuctivism theory, with admission of potential critical theory attention, seems a natural lens with which to undertake a study of teachers’ perceptions, given the social and cultural nature of their work. The paradigmatic assumptions of these perspectives have been briefly presented above and will now be applied to curriculum development, from the anthropological and sociocultural perspectives, as well as the application of critical theory to curriculum development. I begin with the anthropological perspective applied to the curriculum development process.

Anthropological Perspective:

with Respect to the Curriculum Development Process

Curriculum can be developed and examined through a multitude of perspectives. Consideration will be given to the anthropological framework in this section, with the qualification that this is but one lens with which to undertake this examination. The anthropological perspective is consistent with my interest in the cultural context of curriculum development in the intermediate schools in Summit Way City Schools and will help me facilitate the deliberation process as it
unfolds in the writing of the revised mathematics curriculum. I will present and discuss the anthropological approaches to culture, cognition and language, and categories of meaning. I will then examine the notion of culture and school as a cultural context. Each of these discussions will take place with the underlying consideration of curriculum development within the cultural context and the relationship to teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process. I begin with anthropological approaches to culture.

**Anthropological Approaches to Culture as Applied to Education**

Anthropologists assert that education is a "situated human activity embedded in the flow of everyday social life and, therefore, necessarily intertwined with political, economic, and cultural dimensions of society" (Levinson, 2000, p. 3). Consequently, one can extend this to imply that education and its numerous components are manifestations of cultural and related meanings, for example, the curriculum development process. Dobbert and Cooke (1987) continue this argument with the assertion that learning is a societal and cultural process, occurring through relationships with and between peers, adults, culture, and is a fluid and reciprocal process. Meaning making (in education) is a socially constructed process that is both liberating and constraining, within a given cultural context (Dobbert and Cooke, 1987). Cohen (1998) reiterates the connection between culture and society and the duality of freedom and constraints that exist in education within this cultural context. Geertz (1973) more specifically places education within the cultural context. He maintains that education as an institution is embedded within culture and is, therefore, a public and contextual system of interactions, behaviors, representations, and conventions. Education, and more specifically for the purposes of this study, the curriculum development process, occurs within a cultural context. To ignore the role of society in the curriculum development process would
negate the setting for which the curriculum was developed. This anthropological notion of culture will now be even more specifically applied to cognition and language, as related to curriculum development.

_Culture, in the Anthropological Sense, as Applied in Education_

Within the world of language development, Vygotsky’s notion of language acquisition and development are not unfamiliar constructs to most educators. Vygotsky (1978) supposes that language is directly related to learning, is actually spoken thought, and is influenced by the cultural context within which it occurs. This line of reasoning is further extended when Vygotsky asserts that culture provides the tools for cognition and learning and that this cognition and learning are socially constructed. Whorf (1956) extends the influence of culture on cognition and learning with a more detailed examination of the influence of culture on language as a product and indicator of cognition. Whorf maintains that language is situated in categories of meaning that are socially constructed and based upon individuals conceptions of those linguistic symbols, even within a common culture. Williams (2000) applies the arguments of both Vygotsky and Whorf to education specifically. Given the premise that culture is co-constructed in and by society, within which educational systems function and operate, the following assertions therefore follow: education is a product of and influence on its cultural boundaries; education is, like culture, public and created within that public context; and, education can reinforce and challenge the current status quo or hegemony (Williams, 2000).

Quite clearly, an anthropological perspective on education and learning has great implications for the curriculum development process and teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process. The attention to the interrelatedness between education and culture, as
presented above, emphasizes the attention that must be afforded to the cultural context of the intended curriculum during its development and later implementation. The notion of curriculum can then be scrutinized with respect to categories of meaning.

**Categories of Meaning of Curriculum Using an Anthropological Lens**

Curriculum exists in education as part of the formal processes of schooling. Scribner and Cole (1973) support this assertion when they state, "A theory of formal education also requires a theory of how learning and thinking skills develop in an individual member of society, and how educational processes (with curriculum development being an educational process) contribute to the shaping of these skills" (p. 553). This teaching and learning in education operates within the established system, interpreted and filtered differently by each participant in the process. It is through this process of interpretation and filtration that individuals sort knowledge into categories of meaning. This process of reflection, thinking, and filtration influence and are embedded in the curriculum development process as a cultural and socially constructed process and product. Wolcott (1994) reiterates the reflection and cultural and societal influences inherent in the curriculum development process in his assertion that knowledge is socially constructed, both by generations and individuals. Mead (2000) explores categories of meaning in her discussion of the education of the Samoan child. Meaning is given to language, tasks, and experience based upon the context of the situation. Meaning is also related to a function of the encompassing culture. This influence and transmission of categories of meaning cannot always be clearly defined and identified but their existence is clear. Basso's (2000) accounts of the Western Apache stories further illustrate the influence of culture on assigned categories of meaning by exemplifying the role culture and environment play in not only the settings of the Western Apache stories, but also by the prominence and importance given to culture and the environment in these stories. Whether the
culture in question is a Samoan tribe, Western Apache tribe, a classroom in Ohio, or a curriculum development team, the assignment of meaning to events, learning, and experiences is based upon the cultural context in question.

Given the notion of individual and group interpretation and the development of socially constructed categories of meaning, the implications for curriculum development are clear. The curriculum development process is a social construction, conveying and implying certain categories of meaning, and the resulting curriculum will be continually re-interpreted and filtered as it is delivered and received. The cultural context of the curriculum developer and receiver (teacher then student) should be considered in this process. Consideration of the cultural context of education is more than merely acknowledging various ethnicities and nationalities; it is truly acknowledging and accepting the cultural contexts and their influence on the entire curriculum development process.

This anthropological assumption of transmission and acquisition has great implications for curriculum development. These categories of meaning can also be applied to the notion of school and its cultural context. This is precisely why it is critical to explore and examine teachers’ perceptions of their role in the curriculum development process, a socially and culturally driven process.

*Culture and School in the Anthropological Sense*

Teachers engage in the curriculum development process representing their respective schools’ staff, students and community. The teachers of this study are no exception. They developed a mathematics curriculum to be implemented not only in their particular schools, but for
all fifth and sixth grade students of their district, Summit Way City Schools. Given this aspect of consideration, it is necessary and appropriate to entertain culture and school in the anthropological sense.

Schools can be considered institutions that perpetuate hegemony, but they also may be considered a vehicle to challenge the hegemonic practices. The cultures of schools are socially constructed and reproduced, and continually evolve and adapt as a product of and in reaction to that construction. However, a change in culture or curriculum does not necessarily correspond with changes in hegemonic practices, including systems of both formal and informal education. Durkheim (2000) supports this reasoning stating that, “Historical investigation of the formation and development of systems of education reveals that they depend upon religion, political organization, the degree of development of science, [and] the state of industry” (p. 58). Durkheim continues, “Education is, then, only the means by which society prepares, within the children, the essential conditions of its very existence” (p. 61). Henry (2000) concurs with Durkheim, stating that “education is always against some things and always for others” (p. 54). This production and reproduction of culture in schools is, therefore, a situationally emergent social reality and identity (Erickson & Schultz, 1982). By acknowledging this system of preparing children for the “function they will be called upon to fulfill” (Durkheim, 2000, p. 60), the need for the curriculum development process to consider this component of education becomes increasingly critical. In accepting the potential power of the curriculum development process and the resulting curriculum, within the same cultural and social context it will be implemented, it is evident the said curriculum development process can produce a curriculum that can maintain the traditions of education while adjusting to the culture of the time (Henry, 2000), and can potentially serve as a vehicle to challenge and question current hegemonic practices.
This discussion of curriculum through the anthropological perspective is by no means all encompassing and complete. I have attempted to bring to bear anthropological perspectives on the curriculum development process. I consider the anthropological perspective while remaining cognizant of my own cultural context and research assumptions and the necessity to remain aware of my interpretations and conclusions during the research process. The sociocultural perspective required the same attention and consideration during the research process. I now entertain and discuss the sociocultural perspective with respect to curriculum.

Sociocultural Perspective:

with respect to the Curriculum Development Process

The sociocultural perspective of development, defined very simplistically, involves looking at the development of an individual not only as a biological function, but as a function of biology and the social setting within which one's development occurs. The sociocultural perspective and implications deserve a thorough and extensive exploration. For the purposes of this research, explanation of this perspective will be presented with respect to curriculum and the curriculum development process.

The sociocultural perspective involves looking beyond the physical signs of curriculum development to the influencing factors of the social environment on this curriculum development. Rogoff (1990) asserts that “to understand (curriculum) development, it is essential to understand both the underlying cultural and biological similarities across individuals and groups, and the essential differences between them” (p. 11). Wertsch (1989) acknowledges the connection between individuals engaged in the curriculum development process, as a social construction, and qualifies the process as a “sociocultural analysis of mind as it examines some aspect of mental functioning from the perspective of how it reflects and shapes the sociocultural setting” (p. 15-16).
Rogoff (1990) defines sociocultural development as the “changing cultural history that leaves a legacy for the individual in the form of technologies such as literacy, number systems, and computers, as well as value systems and scripts and norms for the handling of situations met by the individual” (p. 32). Rogoff’s definition refers to education and curriculum and reinforces the need for examining the perspectives of teacher educators involved in the actual curriculum development.

Vygotsky (1978) may have been a basis for Rogoff’s (1990) concept through discussion of the existence of a cultural ecology that included the environmental influences that shape cultural meaning. Both Vygotsky and Rogoff elaborate on the connection of environmental and cultural influences on the meaning of cultural events and phenomena. In light of these assertions, it is clear the sociocultural perspective addresses the social setting (and all that is included and involved within the social setting) as a powerful influence on curriculum development.

Separating the sociocultural perspective and its ideology from the concept of curriculum and its development is a difficult task and possibly impossible. The two are, and should be, inherently intertwined, and they must then be examined together when actual curriculum development and implementation takes place. Curriculum development often begins with a consideration of the child learner. Given students’ connection to developed curriculum during implementation, discussion of curriculum development with respect to the individual child must be entertained.

Curriculum Development with Consideration of the Children Collectively

When developing curriculum for children, it is critical to adopt and apply the sociocultural perspective to that curriculum, considering its planned and enacted forms. Children do not develop within a vacuum or in a linear and constant motion. Rogoff (1996) states, “Changes in children's
abilities can be understood only in terms of their sociocultural activities” (p. 150). It is the interrelatedness of this assertion and its implications in the curriculum development process that is deserving of consideration, as well as the connection between the child/student and the larger community within which the child/student operates and functions. Hubbard (1996) supports this line of reasoning when she contends, “We must look more closely at the effect of children's experiences in the family, in the community, and in the classroom” (p. 150). Educators need to be sensitive to the fact that children do not leave influences outside of the school setting at the school or classroom door. The multiple situations a child must navigate through and be proficient in affect their education development and experience. Ogbug (1987) further applies the differentiation in the cultural context of children to minority children, who are influenced by complex social, economic, historical, and cultural factors. Cusick (1973) maintains that children continue their out-of-school affiliations in school not simply because they want to but because these affiliations provide and meet the students’ needs, often when schools do not. As Cohen (1998) asserts, education should complement the cultural reality of its children. Consequently, curriculum should be developed considering the collective culture of the children. But, does the curriculum that is developed during the curriculum development process actually consider the children it is supposed to serve and is written for? Additionally, besides considering the collective nature of children, curriculum should consider the student/child as an individual as well.

Consideration of the Student/Child as an Individual

All children do not proceed in the same direction or tempo in their development, even when teachers believe that children were given the same information and experiences. Lemke (1993) reiterates this thought when he declares, “We need to acknowledge the great diversity in rates of learning among students with different backgrounds (linguistic, cultural, social, and
Children’s development is a product of more than just the formal education setting and process; it is a product of all of the influences on a child and the child him or herself. The individuality of development and influencing factors on a child is a “perennial source of problem in designing curriculum for lower education, and can be attributed to a failure to distinguish between the logic (the structure) of the discipline and that of the child” (Elkind, 1997, p. 68-69). Therefore, “teachers have a professional obligation to criticize the curriculum and work to change it in the interest of their students” (Lemke, 1993, p. 178). Rival (2000) concurs with Lemke in her discussion of the paradox between formal and informal education and the necessity for educators to continually consider the culture of the child and his or her specific place in that culture.

Critical Theory:

with Respect to the Curriculum Development Process

Critical theory, and its emancipatory stance, takes the notion of curriculum development to a new level of scrutiny and interpretation. Curriculum development as defined by the banking concept (Freire, [1970] 1998) needs to become a component of past practice, while curriculum as an emancipatory document and practice needs to be integrated into current practice. For the purposes of this paper, discussion will be limited to the influences of Freire, Greene, and bell hooks, as they relate to issues of equity and diversity, as applicable to the curriculum development by teachers. The notion of critical construction and “fiction formulas”, as posited by Kincheloe, will also be discussed as critical theory that may impact the research findings.

Education is an institutionalized entity in the United States, but that institutionalization cannot be interpreted as equal in all forms of implementation; nor does it adequately address the diversity in schools today. While some schools may be able to qualify their students as possessing a particular set of characteristics, some schools may exhibit a wide range of characteristics and
languages. Summit Way City Schools is no exception, as particular schools demographics support. Educators should consider and develop instruction with respect to state and national academic content standards to encourage students to be actively engaged in their learning, through the work of teachers who facilitate a more inquiry based approach (Ohio Mathematics Standards, 2001).

Freire, Green and bell hooks are three critical theorists in education. Each speaks of emancipation and freedom of the oppressed to varying degrees and with varying connotations. It is the role of education in this emancipation I must afford consideration to when deconstructing teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process. The skills and concepts embedded in curriculum can be considered as contributing to the opportunities of students to overcome obstacles and function in society. While the following examples of critical theory are not directly connected to this study, the lenses each present do have application and connection to this study. Freire, Greene and bell hooks each present critical theory as applied to education and has potential application in the data analysis and implications of this study. It is the system of continual action, reflection and action embedded in these critical theorists’ positions that is critical during and beyond this research as I examine teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process and the resulting implications. I begin with Freire.

Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Despite reform in education standards, Friere’s (Freire & Madeo, 2001) notion of the banking concept in education still exists. Briefly, the banking concept in education posits the teacher as the bearer of knowledge, who deposits knowledge, at his or her discretion, into the students, students are mere receptacles who receive the information. The teacher decides what information to make students privy to, how to deliver this information, when to deliver this
information, and to whom this information is delivered. It is this system of education, Freire (Freire & Madeo, 2001) maintained, that continues to reinforce and reproduce the oppressor-oppressed relationship and support a male-dominated, hegemonic state. He stated, “It is not surprising that the banking concept of education regards me as adaptable, manageable being” (p. 54). Students accept the banking concept as the status quo, thereby supporting the oppressor role by not questioning their own oppression. As Freire (Freire & Madeo, 2001) states, clarifying the role of student as the oppressed explained, “The capability of banking education to minimize or annul students’ creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed” (p. 54). It is this system we should examine and consider; the need for inquiry and praxis is essential in breaking down the oppressive barriers in the current teacher-student, student-student, teacher-teacher, and student-teacher-administrator relationships in education.

*Liberatory education* is the term Freire ([1970] 1998) uses to describe this emancipatory education to replace the banking concept in education. Central to this notion is the idea of praxis. Praxis, as presented by Freire, is a reflexive process of action, reflection and action. Praxis consists of individuals, alone or collectively, reflecting upon a current condition or problem. Reflection leads to action or practice. Action is then given the same scrutiny and reflection to determine what action must be taken next. Although this is simply stated, Freire ([1970] 1998) emphasized the importance of the reflection and action operating in conjunction. He stressed, “Education is thus constantly remade in the praxis. In order to be, it must become” (p. 65). Praxis, as a system of reflection and action upon the world is one way to transform the world.
This system of praxis is necessary to consciously intervene and transform a system of education that denies an equal and equitable education to all students across lines of diversity (based upon assorted qualifiers) and to bring liberating and empowering pedagogy to education; in essence, to bring freedom to education. It is this system of praxis and the effect it may have on teachers' pedagogy and practice that I feel is critical to examine in my research, as I examine the participants’ perceptions of the comprehensive curriculum development process, and how the effects of said curriculum will go beyond the classroom setting. Freire ([1970] 1998) argues that educational opportunities are not equal, and they predispose individuals to remain in their oppressed state. He states, “Dehumanization is a distortion of the vocation of becoming more fully human” (p. 28). Freire continues this line of reasoning as he “outlines how when men see themselves as being prevented from ‘being’, then words take on their significant meaning, like freedom and laws, and words help men discover themselves and transform their world” (p. 175). Dialogue, thus, is a powerful component in praxis.

Without dialogue, humanization and change in educational pedagogy cannot occur. Freire ([1970] 1998) states, “Dialogue, as the encounter among men to ‘name’ the world, is a fundamental precondition for their true humanization” (p. 133). He further emphasizes “the use of codification in education, dialogue in knowing and the use of problems in helping men transform their realities” (p. 110). Communication, through dialogue, must be part of education if revolution in education can liberate the oppressed, whether one considers the oppressed to be the students, teachers, and/or curriculum developers, or all of the above. I intend to examine not only how dialogue contributes to the curriculum development practice, but how this dialogue coupled with a system of practice leads to changes in pedagogy and practices, perhaps towards developing and implementing a more liberating and emancipatory curriculum.
Freire advocates for the power of dialogue not just as a means of communication, but as a potential vehicle for reformation as well. In the curriculum development process, dialogue contributes to the development of said curriculum and can lead to reformation of classroom practice related to the developed curriculum. Greene considers the notion of critical understanding and system of praxis as Freire does, while also examining and deconstructing the social element of education. As previously stated, the curriculum development process is a value laden, social enterprise. The degree of freedom or agency that can be associated with the process and product of curriculum development that Greene posits is what makes attention to her position relevant and necessary in the study of teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process.

Greene's Dialectic of Freedom

Greene (1988) supports Freire's advocacy for freedom in education in her assertion, "My focal interest is human freedom, in the capacity to surpass the given and look at things as if they could be otherwise" (p. 3). Greene asserts that a critical understanding is necessary to reach a "field of possibilities" (p.5). This freedom or field of possibilities needs to extend beyond the walls of education as well. As Greene (1988) states, "There is also agreement that freedom ought to be conceived of as an achievement within the concreteness of lived social situations rather than as a primordial or original possession" (p. 5). We have to unite our voices to allow those who have been silent to be heard.

Greene (1988) takes Freire's notions of freedom in education to discuss how education can interact with the social. Schools need to "empower young people to seek out openings in their lived situations, to tolerate disruptions of the taken for granted, to try consciously to become different than they are" (p. 17). Conditions may be deliberately created to encourage reflection upon the current hegemonic reality and to empower people to choose their own reality. In other
words, a sense of personal agency brought to consciousness is crucial for change. Greene (1988) staunchly supports the saliency of personal agency, saying, “without the consciousness of agency, no human being is likely to take the initiative needed for the achievement of freedom” (p.36). This personal emancipation can lead to freedom.

*hooks’ Teaching to Transgress*

Greene and Freire speak to the system of education and the institutions of school as comprehensive and encompassing entities. The power of liberatory education and empowerment are entertained with respect to all. bell hooks, however, considers education and instruction at the individual classroom level. How does one’s own pedagogy and assumptions influence and define classroom practice and interactions? This very notion curriculum and the connection to classroom application is an integral and related component of the underlying assumptions of the participants engaged in the curriculum development process and their perceptions of the curriculum development process.

bell hooks (1994) begins her book echoing the sentiment of Freire and Greene, “To educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn” (p. 13). hooks continues, “Our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin” (p.13). Students have the right to experience “education as the practice of freedom” (p. 15). Clearly, bell hooks has taken Freire and Greene’s ontological assumptions to a different level.
bell hooks (1994) expands upon Freire’s liberatory notion of education in its application to the classroom, drawing upon her own experiences as well as researched classrooms. She maintains that classrooms that employ a holistic model through praxis based instruction will empower and encourage teachers to grow. This growth in teachers, consequently, will be actualized in students’ growth. This “engaged pedagogy” (p. 21) will lead to transformations in curriculum, approaches that lead to disruption of biases and systems of oppression, and teaching of informed resistance. This empowerment cannot happen if teachers do not first take risks and then empower and encourage their students to do the same.

From Theory to Classroom

Freire, Greene, and bell hooks each advocate the need to address the diversity in education and the inequities found within the institution of schooling. Freire proffers his pedagogy of the oppressed, stressing the critical role of raising consciousness to revolt against and reform the oppressor-oppressed relationship. Greene takes Freire’s education into society and advocates for a liberating education that empowers students in and out of school, giving them the avenues of possibility to achieve their freedom. Finally, bell hooks illustrates how liberatory pedagogy can be actualized at the classroom level, in both the teacher and students. Each adheres to the importance of praxis as a process of action and reflection and the commitment necessary to truly undertake an emancipatory approach. These aspects of critical theory are vital to raising the consciousness of others, especially as curriculum is developed by teachers representing increasingly diverse classrooms, for the liberating and empowering educational opportunities for teachers and students.
Critical theory examines roles of power and power relations. Kincheloe, as I will present in Chapter Three, examines the notion of power within the representation of reality in the narrative text of the researcher. Kincheloe (1997) summarizes his position in the following manner, “Critical constructivism understands that the power to narrate, to represent, and to silence is the power to oppress, (p. 75).” It is this notion of critical theory power and power relations and critical constructivism I needed to remain ever conscious of throughout the research process.

Anthropological, Sociocultural and Critical Theories

Applied to Curriculum Development:

In Summary

Curriculum is an integral part of education and possesses assorted connotations. Thus, the curriculum development process also contains various shades of meaning and interpretation. This multi-dimensional phenomenon of the curriculum development process is best addressed through exploration of the curriculum development through the anthropological, sociocultural and critical theory perspectives. Despite differing positions, each of these theories maintains the ontological assumption that reality is socially constructed through and within culture. This interaction is situated within everyday life, intertwined with political, economic and cultural dimensions of society. While critical theory takes the social construction of reality a step further by exploring reality construction through asymmetrical power relations over time, critical theory affords attention to the social construction of reality. In this study, the curriculum development process was explored from the perceptions of the teachers while they engaged in the curriculum development process. As the anthropological, sociocultural and critical theory perspectives posit, reality is socially constructed. The social reality in this case is the curriculum that is developed, and all that the curriculum development process encompasses.
Just as anthropological, sociocultural and critical theory perspectives share the ontological assumption that reality is socially constructed, they share the epistemological and methodological assumptions that acknowledge the role of dialogue in gaining knowledge within social construction of reality, and that events and phenomenon should be examined within the social context. Dialogue, which comes to be a component of the curriculum development process according to teachers' perceptions in later chapters, is a critical component of anthropological, sociocultural and critical theory perspectives. Dialogue is an integral component of each perspective, and is illustrated in this study not only as a vehicle for data collection, but is the phenomenon that reveals teachers' perspectives in and of itself. In Chapter Two I discuss the role of dialogue in the deliberation process as defined by McCutcheon (2002) and Reid (1992), which the participants in this study reiterate through their demonstration of deliberation and negotiation embedded in the curriculum development process. Dialogue is a reoccurring theme in each of the anthropological, sociocultural and critical theory perspectives. Therefore, these perspectives, anthropological, sociocultural and critical theory perspectives, in combination, are a natural collective lens with which to examine dialogue as it relates to teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process.

Culture should be considered when designing curriculum, not just in terms of the words of the document but in the spirit the curriculum is intended. The curriculum should be flexible enough to allow for individual students, serve to balance the oppressor/oppressed relationship, yet meet the collective need of the larger school and community, as outlined through the anthropological and sociocultural perspectives. Consequently, the need to understand the perceptions of teachers who engage in the curriculum development process becomes more salient. Admittedly, the research on
this specific topic is sparse and contributes to the urgency and importance of this research to deconstruct and examine this very phenomenon of teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process.

Research Questions

This research is based upon the following basic questions. Question number one is the overriding theme, but question two is related and will need consideration throughout the research process and analysis:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of curriculum development process?
   a. How do teachers negotiate processes and procedures?
   b. How do teachers develop understanding of curriculum concepts and relate this to classroom practice?
   c. What factors influence the curriculum development process?

2. What are the resulting implications of teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process for themselves, administrators, school districts, and curriculum coordinators?

Curriculum development and teachers' perceptions of this process during this study was considered from anthropological and sociocultural paradigms. Given the social nature of curriculum development and implementation, these paradigmatic assumptions lend themselves to application in this study. I have presented and discussed the contextual framework and setting of this research. Curriculum was defined, followed by a brief discussion of the sociocultural and anthropological paradigmatic assumptions. I discussed the notion of curriculum development and emerging themes from my pilot study having relevance on this research. The curriculum deliberation process, as evidenced by the participants engaged in the curriculum development
process, will be expanded upon and discussed in subsequent chapters. While attempts to separate these ideas for discussion purposes will be taken, the interrelatedness of curriculum development and the cultural context within which curriculum is developed cannot be totally separate from one another. Each is both an influencing factor and a product of the other. It is, therefore, a must that educators consider curriculum development and the resulting product within the cultural context it was developed. As Chandler (1992) states, “Curriculum development is indeed a value-laden enterprise-based on sociocultural values and are interrelated with curriculum” (p. 41-42).

Conclusion

“The school culture and social structure are powerful determinants of how students learn to appreciate themselves” (Banks and McGee Banks, 1995, p. 153). The consideration of the relationship between school culture and social structure has implications on the curriculum development process from the sociocultural, anthropological, and critical theory frameworks. It is within these paradigms that the deeper structures of school curricula are challenged. It is through heightened awareness of these aspects of schooling that teachers find the power and knowledge to implement “culturally sensitive teaching methods and actualize equity pedagogy in classrooms and schools” (p. 154). This, in turn, will allow teachers to identify and apply teaching strategies that will promote academic achievement and social awareness in all students, regardless of the gender, race, ethnic, economic, or cultural group they represent; and within the deliberative perspective of curriculum development and the given cultural context. Curriculum development and its cultural context need to be considered in tandem, not as two unrelated entities, to design curriculum and guide instruction that provide students with the truly well rounded educational experience they deserve.
It is my goal, therefore, to determine teachers' perceptions of their role in the development and implementation of curriculum within this framework. It has been demonstrated that various paradigmatic assumptions of approaches to curriculum development exist, and guiding epistemologies in conducting research may vary. Consideration has been afforded to the deliberation process of curriculum development, and ways curriculum may be delivered, formally or informally, intentionally or hidden. Curriculum connections to the larger community have been made. What is missing is the perceptions of the teachers in this process. These are the voices I wish to hear. It is crucial to understanding the teachers' perceptions of their role in this process to encourage systems of practice, culturally relevant pedagogy and instruction and to create and implement curricula that are truly relevant and appropriate in education today.
CHAPTER 2

FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS

In this era of revised state content standards in education, the issue of “curriculum” is of renewed importance. Debates entertain the inclusion and exclusion of topics, such as intelligent design in science courses, as well as the developmental appropriateness of grade level indicators. Curriculum development is not new to controversy and has been an issue of contention and concern of schools for decades (ASCD, 1995). It is given this heightened awareness of curriculum development and its implementation across the state and in particular school districts that teachers’ perceptions of their roles in the development and implementation of curriculum becomes even more salient. As a foundation for examination of teachers’ perceptions related to curriculum development and implementation, the following relevant areas deserve exploration: (a) curriculum and its development in a more historical context, (b) the social context of curriculum development, and (c) the implications of curriculum development and implementation by teachers for administrators and/or supervisors. The exploration of the social context of curriculum will also include an examination of the deliberation process, as related to the curriculum development, and the notion of teacher/educator as the facilitator and deliverer of said curriculum. Collectively, these areas will serve as contextual and foundational areas for research and for the implications that this research may engender. The following illustrates the components of this chapter:
Fundamental Assumptions  Figure 2.1

These are the crux of chapter two, followed by discussion and implications of curriculum development by teachers for administrators and supervisors. As DeCorse (1996) states, “Teachers must be encouraged to see the evolution of curriculum as a continual process, one which is not only meaningful, but which is the essence of our teaching task” (p.91). It is ultimately this very point I wish to explore.

Paradigmatic Assumptions and Curriculum Theory

Curriculum theory and curriculum development can be generally classified into four paradigms: traditionalist, conceptual-empiricist, reconceptualist, and critical theory paradigms. Although broad and general distinctions can be made among these three perspectives, they do not exist devoid of one another. Each also demonstrates characteristics of research methodologies, spanning the continuum from positivism to critical theory. Definite distinctions cannot be drawn, confirming the existence of what Geertz (1983) terms “blurred genres.” It is also not possible to entertain notions of curriculum theory without addressing their connections to and influences of research methodologies. While constructivist theory paradigmatic assumptions guide and influence my own assumptions, it is my intent to present a more comprehensive view of curriculum theory and curriculum development in a given historical context.
Traditionalist Paradigmatic Assumptions

In the words of Tyler (1981), curriculum development (from the traditionalist epistemology) is “by and large a systematic attempt at problem solving focused on a particular school problem, namely the understanding and guidance of learning” (p. 17). Tyler (1981) further defines curriculum as “the outline of a course of study” (p. 17) and curriculum development as “developing the plans for an educational program, including the identification and selection of educational objectives, the selection of learning experiences, the organization of the learning experiences, and the evaluation of the educational program” (p. 17-18). Tyler clearly reiterates the traditionalist notion of curriculum as a teacher friendly, content driven, set of objectives and skills that assess students' mastery of the given objectives. The shortcoming of this objective based focus is that the objectives can be open ended (not aligned to specific standards), reactive as opposed to proactive, and based upon little data. As cited by Tyler, this type of curriculum traditionally follows a more bureaucratic and managerial theoretical approach:

The fundamental processes of a curriculum system are the choice of the arena in which curriculum choices are to be made; the selection of personnel to work within the system; the selection, ordering, and execution of working procedures; and the establishment of procedures for appraising and revising the curriculum. The primary output of a curriculum system is, of course, a curriculum. (p. 66).

Clearly, curriculum aligned with this model is written as a “plan for subsequent action” (p. 66), and what should be taught in schools as the primary consideration. In the traditionalist paradigm, power is a subtle component compared to critical theory when considering the degree of attention and prominence it receives, but a component to be considered.

The traditionalist model advocates a curriculum that perpetuates existing societal functions and missions (Tyler, 1981). This model approaches learning and instruction through the transmission model, with limited dialogue and interaction. The traditionalist model emphasizes
functional knowledge, that is intended and created to perpetuate societal norms. The traditionalist model of curriculum development involves a power structure that perpetuates society in a subtle manner. It also demonstrates characteristics of positivist curriculum theory, as outlined below.

**Positivistic curriculum theory.**

Positivists develop and define their theoretical assumptions based upon logic and mathematical reasoning, and operate from an objective and deductive standpoint. Positivistic curriculum theory is, therefore, grounded in a belief system based upon accountability and structure. Positivistic curriculum theory serves three basic purposes for a positivistic theorist: (a) it serves as an orienting framework to position oneself about a problem, (b) it serves as a vehicle and/or framework for deriving laws or explanations, and (c) it can provide a framework from which to make order of phenomena. Each of these interrelated purposes of positivistic curriculum theory briefly will be discussed below.

Positivistic curriculum theory serves as a perspective or lens from which to examine phenomena or problems. Bernstein (1976) elaborates on the positivistic position when he states, “[positivism] can provide a broadly orienting framework. It can also serve to codify, interrelate, and make available a vast amount of existing empirical knowledge. It also serves to call attention to gaps in our knowledge and to provide canons of criticism of theories and empirical generalizations” (p.17). This notion aligns with the systematic approach and structured format used in positivist curriculum theory when clarifying, formulating, and verifying theory. Simply put, positivistic curriculum theory directs the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions underlying the way in which phenomena are viewed and explored.
Positivistic curriculum theory, as previously presented, is a systematic approach to viewing phenomena. More specifically, it serves as a vehicle and/or framework for deriving laws or explanations. This framework consists of two aspects. First, “generalizations appropriate to systematic theory differ significantly from miscellaneous empirical generalizations based on the observation of specific variables” (Bernstein, 1976, p.11). Again, the objective and directly observable notion of positivistic curriculum theory is evident. The theme of existence based upon measurability and accountability reemerges. The second aspect of this framework is that it serves as a vehicle for deriving laws or explanations continues the traditional scientific way to measure the world, as Bernstein refers to as “the so-called ‘scientific law’” (p. 11). Reference is again connected to the deductive approach used in positivism, the need for explanations derived in a logical and mathematical manner, and the need for objectivity. Clearly, positivistic curriculum theory serves as a (structured) perspective from which laws, explanations, and additional theories are derived.

Lastly, positivistic curriculum theory serves to make order out of phenomena and reality. Polkinghorne (1983), referring to positivism and its application to experimental confirmation of theses about the order of nature, states that “such an approach not only proved fruitful for advances in medicine and for solving problems of technological production, but also for general understanding of the natural world” (p. 16). Positivistic curriculum theories operate on the ontological assumption that a single, knowable reality exists. This reality is made up of observable and measurable facts that can be understood, captured, and synthesized. Polkinghorne’s statement applies this notion to the natural and social sciences, in which curriculum also exists. Bernstein (1976) elaborates on the need to make order and understand phenomena and reality, asserting that “the primary issue is not the possibility of collecting and interpreting data, but rather
the significance of this enterprise and what inferences we can draw from it” (p. 11). Reoccurring is the need for order and structure. Positivistic curriculum theory drives and creates this sense of order, which is critical to this framework.

Positivistic curriculum theory, in alignment and conjunction with traditionalist assumptions, includes three purposes: (a) it serves as an orientating framework to position oneself about a problem, (b) it serves as a perspective or paradigm for deriving laws or explanations, and (c) it provides a framework from which to make order of phenomena. While each of these purposes has been presented for discussion, it should be noted that this list of purposes and applications is subject to varied interpretations, additions, or modifications. The general themes of positivistic or traditional curriculum theory drive the purposes presented, in the manner presented, and may be defined by a particular positivist or traditionalist theorist slightly differently, especially when applied to curriculum theory. The general essence, however, of positivist or traditionalist curriculum theory has been brought to bear and briefly defined.

While the traditionalist approach to curriculum and curriculum development is not in exact alignment with positivistic curriculum theory, the defining and dividing lines are not concrete and clearly drawn in all interpretations and applications. Both perspectives do involve more of a transmission model in curriculum development and curriculum implementation. The traditionalists and positivists illustrate subtle distinctions in theory and application; the conceptual-empiricists illustrate another alternative set of paradigmatic assumptions. The conceptual-empiricist model of curriculum development involves the scientific model application of positivism, but in a slightly different connotation and application. Like positivistic and traditional curriculum theory, power in conceptual-empiricist theory is present, but the recognition of power does not always occur.
Similar to a traditionalist, a conceptual-empiricist views curriculum development as a practical concern of schoolpeople and school curriculum (Pinar, 1981), and as content-sequencing content, aligned with “hard data”, typical of social science of the present time (Pinar, 1981). To a critical empiricist, the emphasis of curriculum is on language and definition. Beauchamp (1981) suggests that “the technical language of curriculum needed to become ambiguous and disciplined” (p. 62), requiring an objective and facts-based stance. In his mind, “principal curriculum is investigated through a process of classification, contingencies, and making relationships” (p. 62). Beauchamp (1982) states that the function of curriculum theory is “to explain phenomena that demand explanation in the judgment of a theorist. Thus, theory functions as a device to organize and classify knowledge, and it unifies the phenomena being examined” (p. 26). Given this epistemology, research and data are at the foundation of curriculum, and social science undergirds what is considered worthy of inclusion. In the conceptual-empiricist paradigm, power and influence are subtly exercised through the language used. Beauchamp (1981) explains, “Curriculum is the most important technical word in the investigative process because it is a prerequisite for understanding the phrases curriculum system and curriculum as a field of study, … tells us that what (in terms of content) ought to be taught is of primary importance” (p. 62).

The conceptual-empiricist model operates under the assumption that knowledge and curriculum should be based upon the scientific or physical science model. This methodology, consequently, perpetuates certain knowledge while negating and denying other knowledge, such
as tacit, literary, and/or artistic knowledge. The questions of why “this knowledge” instead of “that knowledge” is superceded by technical questions about what is the best way to learn “this knowledge.”

While the more traditional and positivistic approach of the conceptual-empiricist approach may appear objective and grounded in research and theory, its narrow scope and reality fail to recognize and acknowledge outside influences on curriculum development. The notion of culture and cultural context, are absent in this perspective. Further, conceptual-empiricists posit that knowledge is neutral, and free of meanings and interpretations. Therefore, while conceptual-empiricist curriculum is grounded and intended to be a very grounded and objective document, curriculum developed under the conceptual-empiricist model is, nevertheless, influenced by values and norms.

The conceptual-empiricist model for curriculum development operates under the assumption that curriculum development is objective and meets the needs of all students. Therefore, knowledge is neutral and fact based. This assertion that knowledge is neutral is not an assertion the reconceptualists would posit. Reconceptualists, in contrast, assert that no knowledge or research is neutral or free from influence; “A reconceptualist tends to see research as an inescapably political as well as intellectual act” (Pinar, 1981, p. 93). This is the third curriculum model that will be discussed.

Reconceptualist Paradigmatic Assumptions

Reconceptualists operate from a basic assumption that curriculum development “acknowledges a ‘value-laden’ perspective and a perspective with a politically emancipatory intent”
Reconceptualists are interested in understanding and interpreting human action, assuming that schools are part of the wider societal process and must be viewed and judged within the socioeconomic framework. This attention to understanding and interpretation illustrates the hermeneutic quality of the reconceptualist curriculum theory model.

Reconceptualist theory and curriculum.

"Hermeneutics is the science of correct understanding or interpretation...a method of systematization of formal procedures which is designed to assist researchers in the task of understanding and attaining a goal of correct interpretation" (Polkinghorne, 1983, p. 218). This idea of a shared or common interpretation of meaning and understanding has direct implications on the curriculum development process and the developed curriculum. During the curriculum development process shared meanings and interpretations would be critical to developing a document within a group dynamic to help prevent potential issues of contention and misinterpretation.

Understanding in the hermeneutic sense refers to comprehension of meaning, and for reconceptualists it infers a specific type of understanding that recognizes contextual and situational meaning to relationships. Reconceptualists incorporate this emphasis on subjectivity and lived experiences or existential experiences of hermeneutics into their assumptions and methodology. Reconceptualists acknowledge and address the cultural, political, and social meanings and aspects of curriculum and schools, holding staunch to a hermeneutic perspective in which these considerations are fundamental to knowing. Therefore, “hermeneutic knowing applies to cultural
systems, social organizations, and systems of scientific or philosophical concepts" (Polkinghorne, 1983, p. 221). It is critical to comprehension and understanding that the meanings of various situations are recognized within their cultural, social, and/or political contexts. In this model, the determination of what cultural, social, and/or political contexts are worthy and deserving of consideration requires that power relationships become a critical issue. Consideration of power relationships, therefore, must be applied to curriculum theory and curriculum development.

To reconceptualists, interpretation and understanding apply to meanings of actions and meanings of text, in a social, cultural, and political context. For the reconceptualist, value laden curriculum theory and curriculum development can neither operate devoid of society and the social order, nor of the implications that this social reality can and will have on curriculum theory and curriculum development. The consideration of current reality or hegemony and the corresponding relationships of power and control, in which the said curriculum theory and documents are developed, illustrate the critical theory influences emerging in the reconceptualist framework.

Critical Theory Paradigmatic Assumptions

Critical theory is a paradigm concerned with examining issues of power, control, and politics. It embraces subjectivity, is not value neutral, and is openly ideological. The basic ontological assumption of critical theory is the notion that reality is socially constructed, by asymmetrical power relations, over time. Epistemological assumptions are rooted in transactional and subjectivist notions, adding the idea that how we know the world is also value mediated. Therefore, methodological assumptions for a critical theorist are value mediated, dialectical, and attempt to reveal structures of domination and peoples’ response to them. Critical theorists often conduct research to emancipate or empower the researched, just as a reconceptualist would develop curriculum to encourage critical thinking and questioning about the current reality in
students. The key element of critical theory that differentiates it from other paradigms is the notion of asymmetrical power relations and how they affect the social/cultural constructions of reality. These underlying assumptions of critical theory and what theory is to critical theorists will be further developed.

Quite deliberately, critical theorists frequently conduct their research with openly political and transformative intentions in many instances. As Apple (1996), Bernstein (1976), Clinchy (1997), Ladson-Billings (2000), and Schurleich and Young (1997) discuss, critical theory attempts to disrupt or explain the current hegemony or status quo with respect to oppressed peoples, whether their oppression is based upon race, gender, ethnicity, language, class, sexuality, or other forms of difference. Critical theory can be the foundation for human agency, when embraced by the oppressed as agents of their own social change, but not necessarily by the direct and explicit actions of the researcher. Critical theory does not involve labeling a people(s) as culturally deprived or disadvantaged but attempts to help these people(s) understand the conditions under which they live, learn, and shape their knowledge and their reality, and empower them to change or modify their reality as they see necessary (Apple, 1996; Bernstein, 1976; Clinchy, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2000). To a critical theorist, critical theory is the vehicle to challenge the current hegemonic state, and provide avenues for the oppressed to free themselves from that current hegemony. The ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions of critical theory will be further examined.

As previously stated, critical theorists operate under the ontological assumption that critical theory will enlighten the oppressed to promote self emancipation, “The theoretician and his specific object are seen as forming a dynamic unity with the oppressed class, so that his presentation of societal contradictions is not merely an expression of the concrete historical situation but also a
force within it to stimulate change” (Bernstein, 1976, p. 181). The researcher operates from the assumption that reality is socially shaped and constructed by asymmetrical power relations over time. Reality is, therefore, not a value neutral concept, for the researcher or the researched. Critical theorists must examine their own realities and conceptions before they can examine the reality of the researched, from the perspective of the researched. As Bernstein (1976) states, “If we subject the legitimation of a positivistic self-understanding of knowledge and science to critical examination – then we can further liberate ourselves from ideological mystifications” (p. 191). Critical theorists must examine their own reality, before exploring the reality of others; a notion in alignment with the need for hermeneutical understanding.

The ontological assumption of critical theory, that reality is socially constructed by asymmetrical power relations, directly influences the epistemological assumptions of critical theory. In accordance with the nature of reality in this paradigm, how we know the world, within this paradigm, is value mediated and transactional. In juxtaposition to positivism, values do play a role in critical theory. Critical theory does not promote “interest”, as Bernstein (1976) defines, “a ‘disinterested’ attitude, in the sense that he [the researcher] should exclude subjective biases and beliefs from the validity of his knowledge claims” (p. 194). Meanings and perceptions become mutually shared and constructed between the researcher and the researched. It is often within this construction process that examination of one’s own reality, or an epoché, takes place. We can’t undo our own perceptions until we examine the lens with which we view those same perceptions and reality. Guess (1981) supports this notion in his discussion of the reflexivity of critical theory, as opposed to the objectifying theories in positivist, natural sciences. This epistemological stance, in turn, influences and directs the methodological assumptions of critical theory.
Critical theorists operate from the standpoint that their methodology will be highly dialectical and value mediated. Their efforts attempt to reveal structures of domination and explore peoples’ responses to these structures of domination. This stance is further developed by Bernstein (1976), who states, “It is the explicit recognition of the connection of knowledge and interest that distinguishes critical from traditional theory, and that justifies calling such theory critical” (p. 180). Bernstein (1976) continues this line of reasoning when he asserts, “Critical theory has a fundamental practical interest that guides it – a practical interest in radically ‘improving human existence’, of fostering the type of self-consciousness and understanding of existing social and political conditions so that ‘mankind’ will for the first time be a conscious subject and actively determine its own way of life” (p. 180-181). Critical theory advocates for the emancipation of the oppressed. This intent to empower the oppressed with the means to free themselves and to encourage the oppressed to restructure the hegemony that maintains and supports the oppressive conditions serve as the foundational beliefs behind critical theory.

Critical theory and curriculum.

It is the emancipatory stance of critical theory that reconceptualists apply to curriculum theory and curriculum development. Curriculum should encourage critical thinking, a question and challenge of the status quo or hegemony, and acknowledge the political agenda implied within. Although this critique of agents of domination and power can create conflict and struggle, it is necessary conflict when one examines the entire context within which curriculum theory and curricula are developed and implemented and how these curricula may act as agents of change or reproduction.
Paradigmatic Assumptions and Curriculum Theory: In Summary

Curriculum development, in one context, can be placed into four paradigmatic epistemologies. Each epistemology can be characterized by its assumptions and shortcomings, and all four operate in conjunction with the others and are each value laden and power driven. Simply put, these paradigms (i.e. traditionalist, conceptual empiricist, reconceptualist, and critical theory as an extension of reconceptualist assumptions) each consist of elements of power and influence, ranging from very subtle demonstrations in the traditionalist paradigm to emancipatory and political agendas in the reconceptualist and critical theory paradigms. Each paradigm has been presented and discussed for its paradigmatic assumptions, with the qualification that a “more perfect” curriculum would involve a combination of all four epistemologies in theory and practice. The social context of curriculum development will follow.

Social Contexts of Curriculum Development

Curriculum development does not occur without the influence of various paradigmatic assumptions and pedagogies, as presented and discussed in the preceding section. Curriculum development in this study was examined from the context of the anthropological and sociocultural perspectives, within a broader constructivist/interpretivist stance. In Chapter One I presented the pedagogical framework of my stance, and considered the children for whom curriculum is intended, individually and collectively. First, I will consider issues of multicultural awareness, the hidden curriculum, and the school-community connection as part of the social context which affects the development and implementation of curriculum. Next, I bring these same perspectives to bear on the issue of the deliberation process in curriculum development. I will consider both individual and group deliberation. The last themes will be focused on teacher inservice as a component of
curriculum development and curriculum and the implications of curriculum development by teachers for administrators and/or supervisors. I begin with discussion of social context factors of consideration in the curriculum development process.

**Social Aspects in Curriculum Development**

Classrooms are reflections of society. This is especially true with respect to the variance in cultures and ethnic groups found in classrooms and society. Curriculum and education should be examined and developed from that standpoint and consideration. Boykin (1994) reminds educators that “we must move awareness from an obsession with social homogenization and social control to a system predicated on cultural and racial diversity” (p. 119). Children do not all look the same, come from the same background, nor have the same experiences. We should embrace and celebrate this diversity, socially and educationally. As Nieto (1995) states, “There is often a tremendous mismatch between students’ cultures and the culture of the school” (p. 10). Establishing a more multicultural curriculum is one step in this process. Nieto suggests that “schools and teachers need to affirm, maintain, and value the differences that students bring to school as a foundation for their learning” (p. 29). There are two considerations that should be addressed in establishing such a curriculum, the goals of a multicultural curriculum and possible hazards of a multicultural curriculum if not examined critically in theory and practice.

*Multicultural considerations in curriculum development.*

The implementation of a multicultural curriculum in today’s society is beneficial and appropriate in our increasingly diverse United States. First and foremost, “the multicultural curriculum can engage students in truly authentic learning and help them make paradigm shifts” (Banks, 1994, p.83). When students identify themselves in the learning activities and processes authentically, that learning becomes more powerful, influential, and embraced by students.
Children need to feel represented and valued for who they are and for the culture or ethnic group they represent. This practice needs to span the entire educational spectrum, not just one particular grade level. This celebration of diversity needs to be an underlying theme throughout the curriculum and in the development of that curriculum, diversity "must be communicated both as a core value in a school and taught as an essential skill, not just for citizenship" (Wagner, 1997, p. 174). This would allow and encourage educators, for example, to "help adolescents better understand and respect others from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds" (Wagner, 1997, p. 174). Society is comprised of diverse cultures, consequently, education should acknowledge and validate this diversity.

Creating an atmosphere based upon culturally relevant pedagogy that promotes success for all students is the aspiration of many schools. Many schools hope to have an environment conducive to creating a curriculum that is responsive to the society and culture in which the developed curriculum will be implemented. Many teachers would argue that they work toward the success of their students, each and every one of them, regardless of their cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 1992). However, culturally relevant teaching requires using the students' cultures as a basis for learning, not merely fitting students into the existing social and economic order (Ladson-Billings, 1992). Students need to be taught how their culture parallels or deviates from the school culture (or other cultures) and why that tradition is necessary. Culturally relevant teaching involves developing a deeper understanding of cultural awareness and appreciation over time. It is this culturally relevant pedagogy and instructional practice that is a part and extension of the social context influence on curriculum development.
Multicultural awareness brings to consideration the notion of hidden curriculum. If curriculum is developed without affording consideration to the context in which it will be implemented and of the students it is intended to serve, a hidden curriculum may become the enacted curriculum, as outlined below.

Hidden curriculum within the formal curriculum.

Racism can be a component of the hidden curriculum that too often coincides with conversation of multiculturalism or societal differences. Curriculum developers may contend students are not capable of mastering certain skills or concepts because of attributes and behaviors attributed to them based upon their ethnic background, not based upon their individual skills or abilities, a subtle form of racism. Differences should not automatically be considered or classified as deficits. Racism is an ideology consisting of “a set of attitudes and beliefs that favors privileges and interests of one group in a society at the expense of others” (Lemke, 1993, p. 160). Unfortunately, this belief has tendencies to manifest itself in violence, discrimination, and other negative consequences. Students of the oppressed class are very aware of acts and forms of racism perpetuated against them, beginning with elementary school through higher level education (Darder, 1991; Lemke, 1993; Rivera & Poplin, 1997). The hidden curriculum of education involves a more subtle version of racism, in that the “hegemony is actualized through school curriculum” (Giroux, 1991, p. 35). The formal curriculum is often superceded by the hidden curriculum in which the dominant culture has become embedded (Darder, 1991).

The hidden curriculum is an appropriately coined phrase due to the subtle ways it manifests its destructive effects. The hidden curriculum can take the form of written text, attitudes or procedures and actions. Darder (1991) states, “Curriculum often blatantly ignores histories of women, people of color, and the working class” (p. 79). This is perhaps one of the most overt
aspects of the hidden curriculum and/or forms of racism, illustrated in the exclusion from history books of women, racial minorities, and the working class; of literature used in the classrooms, classroom displays and/or posters, and with the selection of speakers brought into the schools. This exclusion “functions not only to legitimate the interests and values of dominant groups; it also functions to marginalize and disconfirm knowledge forms and experiences that are extremely important to subordinate and oppressed groups” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, 147-148). The actual curriculum document may perpetuate this inequity through the cultural capital it includes and supports.

The hidden curriculum also emerges as “an attitude toward cultural and ethnic diversity, as reflected in the racial composition of the school staff, and the fairness with which students from different racial, cultural, and ethnic groups are disciplined and suspended” (Banks, 1994, p. 12). This unspoken agenda emerges through class placements and tracking as well (Rivera & Poplin, 1997). Expectations and values placed on students’ reading and writing is also subject to and proof of the hidden curriculum at times (Rivera & Poplin, 1997). How the teacher values and evaluates a student’s writing too often can be tied to ethnic, social, or economic class, due to different styles valued by that culture. Sadly, the hidden curriculum may evolve from a deficit model framework that does not celebrate diversity in thinking and practice and may hinder rather than promote student learning. Given these considerations, it is obvious curriculum developers must consider the larger community of the school during the curriculum development process.

_School-community connection and curriculum development._

When making decisions about the knowledge children should learn and ways to transmit this knowledge, it is critical to consider the connections between the school and the children’s home and community. Charbonneau and Reeder (1995) illustrate the importance of recognizing
the connection between home and school, suggesting that “the children use the community as part of their resource for research, observation, and materials” (p. 163). Apple (1996) reiterating the need to acknowledge this connection, states that “schools are not separate from the wider society but are a part of it and participate fully in its logics and sociocultural dynamics” (p. 107). Educators cannot ignore the social setting within which they are situated. Apple (1996) elaborates on this concept:

For without a recognition of the socially situated character of all educational policy and practice, without a recognition of the winners and losers in society, without a more structural understanding of how and why schools participate in creating these winners and losers, I believe that we are doomed to reproduce an endless cycle of high or diminishing hopes, rhetorical reforms, and broken promises (p. 97).

The connection between schools and the communities they operate within is a strong one. Therefore, educators should create conditions necessary for all people affected by and involved in the education of the community’s youth to fully participate in the creation of the meanings and values of curricula. This means a move beyond the mere facts, concepts, skills and values that make someone “culturally literate” (Apple, 1996). Schools and communities must operate in conjunction with one another to create members of society who can operate within the given confines of each institution, be successful in each of these arenas, and not feel that their positions had to be compromised to attain these goals. Teeter (1997) expressed this best when she wrote:

Since school is embedded in and modeled on our social structure, the need is to totally reinvent schools. Instead of filling students with facts and rote skills, we should be aiming to help children become caring adults, builders of communities, sharers of learning, lovers of the printed word, nurturers (p. 168).

Curriculum is the product of social interaction among the developers of said curriculum, who should consider the larger social and cultural context. I have presented multicultural
awareness, the hidden curriculum, and the school-community connection briefly to demonstrate the larger cultural and social context within which curriculum is developed. I now consider deliberation in curriculum development.

*Deliberation in Curriculum Development*

In the words of McCutcheon (2002), “Deliberation may be the most professional part of teaching, for through it teachers conceptualize, envision, and plan by applying their knowledge of students and the context where they work as well as many diverse theories that they and others have developed about their situation” (p. 3). This deliberation process is filled with praxis, negotiation, and consideration of contextual factors to create an authentic and appropriate curriculum. Deliberation can encompass minute details or grand themes, specific words or intended meanings. As curriculum is continually developed and revised, deliberation occurs. Deliberation can be considered both at the group and individual level and consists of multiple parts and characteristics. I will frame my discussion of the deliberative process of curriculum development largely on the works of McCutcheon (2002) and Reid (1992) but will draw upon the influences of others as well.

Deliberation will first be defined, and its characteristics identified. Second, the commonplaces of curriculum will be presented. Next, common obstacles to the deliberation process will be considered. Finally, deliberation as related to the public interest will be explored. I begin by outlining the characteristics of deliberation.

*Deliberation: Its definition and characteristics.*

In addition to the definition of deliberation presented by McCutcheon above, Reid (1992) presents the following conceptual framework to apply to deliberation:
Underneath our confusion about what curriculum is (because it is entangled with learning, teaching, schooling, and education), and underneath our confusion about where it is to be found (because sources of curricular authority may not be readily identifiable), lies an important and distinctive social activity: an activity that needs to be understood not only by those whose professions are associated with it, but also by the public at large, since the nature of curriculum as practice, and of the institutions that support it, are important expressions of the cultures within which we live (p. 10).

Clearly, Reid (1992) believes curriculum development is a critical selection process for what is valued as worthy and necessary for students to learn. Reid acknowledges and embraces the social context of curriculum and its development. McCutcheon (2002) defines the deliberation process as “a process of reasoning about practical problems” (p. 4). Deliberation is solution oriented and an approach that is a “decision-making process in which people, individually or in groups, conceived a problem, create and weigh likely alternative solutions to it, envision the probable results of each alternative, and select or develop the best course of action” (p. 4). Deliberation is not a linear process. Deliberation is a process often characteristic of certain behaviors and qualities.

*Characteristics of deliberation.*

The deliberation process routinely has nine characteristics. McCutcheon (2002) presents and defines each, as outlined below. First of all, deliberators (curriculum developers) must consider and weigh all alternative and possible solutions and actions. In doing this, deliberators envision potential actions and outcomes of each alternative. Third, in connection with consideration of possible actions and outcomes, deliberators must consider equally the means and ends and the facts and values. This usually occurs within a time constraint, the fourth characteristic of deliberation. Collectively, these four characteristics frame the decision-making process in procedural terms. The remaining characteristics are more conceptual and theoretical in nature.
Deliberation has a moral dimension. This fifth characteristic of deliberation alludes to the subjective and value laden components of curriculum deliberation and development. Deliberation is also, without a doubt, a social enterprise. Educators are preparing students to participate in society, within its cultural context. Simultaneous deliberation is the seventh characteristic. This can refer to both individual and group deliberation, in opposition and in conjunction with one another. Simultaneous deliberation addresses the multiple layers of deliberation that may be occurring concurrently, as well as the negotiation between and within layers during the deliberation and development. As previously stated, deliberation is not a linear process. Multiple decisions and alternatives are being entertained and considered simultaneously, each decision influencing other decisions and being a product of other decisions at the same time. This multidimensional and multi-layered component of deliberation is what simultaneous deliberation encompasses.

Lastly, the eighth and ninth characteristics of the deliberation process are interest and conflict. These are the relationship between the presence of interests and the conflict that may arise when interests are not in perfect alignment. Conflict does not necessarily imply confrontation or have a negative connotation; conflict addresses disruption in the process, which can provide alternative solutions and avenues of exploration. Interest and conflict are often antecedents of cause-effect relationships, leading to a heightened awareness in all participants.

These nine characteristics of the curriculum deliberation process, each is a salient component of the process, in isolation and comprehensively. Each characteristic will also be afforded varying degrees of importance and prominence during deliberation process. Just as the characteristics of deliberation do not operate in isolation, neither do the commonplaces of deliberation.
Commonplaces of deliberation.

Reid (1992) and McCutcheon (2002) both present four commonplaces of deliberation, largely based upon the work of Schwab (1978). Schwab (1978) defines commonplaces as a “set of topics … that an orator might need to consider as he sought to develop his arguments” (p. 19). Instead of an orator, commonplaces are topics or elements of necessary consideration curriculum developers must consider as they engage in the curriculum development process. Commonplaces are elements of deliberation that operate in isolation and in relation to one another.

These elements are:

1. The teacher,
2. The student,
3. The subject matter, and
4. The milieu.

Reid adds a fifth dimension,

5. The commonplace of curriculum making,

that parallels the curriculum specialist presented by McCutcheon. Each of these elements of consideration will be elaborated upon.

Commonplace of the teacher.

Teachers should always be considered for their role, theory and practice in curriculum making. McCutcheon (2002) considers the teacher as including what teachers are likely to know, their flexibility and readiness to learn new materials and strategies, their personal self, and their relationships within the school and to the school. Reid (1992) considers the teacher the most important source of curriculum knowledge. Clearly, curriculum development and the deliberation
process of creating that curriculum must consider the teacher, as an individual and collectively when considering the final product, and in the acknowledgment that the process of curriculum is a social process.

*Commonplace of the student.*

Just as salient as the teacher is the student in the deliberation process. The students are the learners in the curriculum process and the beneficiaries of the curriculum (McCutcheon, 2002). Reid (1992) considers students as co-constructors of curriculum, students who need to be actively engaged in the development and delivery of curriculum. The degree of participation of the students in the construction of curriculum may vary, based upon an assortment of variables. The point of contention is that students ought to be afforded the opportunity to participate in and/or influence what is in the curriculum developed and intended for them. Without that reciprocal information sharing between student and teacher, curriculum may be less successfully conveyed due to the ignorance of the student as a common place in curriculum development.

*Commonplace of milieu.*

The milieu of the deliberation process is the context(s) in which the students' learning will take place. This includes the classroom, school, community, and district, as physical structures and cultures. Included in this designation are the relationships included in these contexts: between students, between students and teachers, between the community and school, cultural contexts, and the list goes on. Reid (1992), conveying the magnitude of this concept, states “Curriculum deliberation is confronted by the fact that it cannot be conducted without constant reference to various manifestations of the world within which, and for which, curriculum is transacted” (p. 131). The milieu of curriculum deliberation refers to any and all of the possible arenas learning may take place.
Commonplace of the content.

Before one can begin writing curriculum with respect to the three previously mentioned commonplaces, the content of the curriculum must be determined. This content can be with respect to any academic discipline; and includes the cognitive, social, emotional, cultural, and societal implications that may come with that discipline (McCutcheon, 2002). Reid (1992) emphasizes the importance of having access to all relevant information, perspectives, and processes related to the given subject matter in question. Content in and of itself may not be subjective given state and national content standards, but within the grand scope of the deliberation process, it can be an element of consideration in its own right.

Commonplace of curriculum making and the curriculum specialist.

Curriculum making and the curriculum specialist are the more specific how’s and who’s of the deliberation process. Reid (1992) defines curriculum making as the “how all the experience represented by the teachers, students, subject matter, and the milieus can be brought together to yield a workable plan that solves problems faced by curriculum in both its institutional and its practical aspects” (p. 144). This how is central to the decision-making process. The curriculum specialist, as present specifically by McCutcheon (2002), serves as the facilitator, director, agenda setter, organizer, and director of the group deliberation that produces the curriculum. The curriculum specialist orchestrates the commonplaces throughout the curriculum development process.

Deliberation is not without obstacles, as one might suppose. Obstacles as presented by McCutcheon (2002) will be examined. This is by no means an exhaustive discussion of all of the potential barriers to deliberation, but it will serve to help create a more comprehensive view of the deliberative perspective and deliberation in practice.
Obstacles to the deliberation process.

Impediments to the deliberation process can take many forms. Impediments can be in the form of a more observable and tangible thing such as stress or less noticeable in the actions or personal stress levels of members of the group. Each of these notions will be briefly expanded upon.

Stress and more obvious effects on deliberation.

Many would argue stress is not usually a productive component to a group process. Although stress can help encourage the completion of tasks, it often has the adverse effect. It is this detrimental influence I will consider. Stress can be the result of assorted variables; confusion about the task, real or imagined time constraints, or just the uncertainty of what the completed product should look like can all produce stress. Naturally, individuals want to alleviate the stress as quickly as possible. Stress can lead to quick decisions that may not be the best decisions, breakdowns in communication, and resistance to consideration of alternatives. Stressed participants may also opt to proceed in a more linear fashion (not in alignment with the deliberation process as intended). These are some of the more obvious effects of stress. I now address the more subtle demonstrations of stress.

Stress and the more subtle effects of deliberation.

Stress and its effects can be quite blatant, or may guide actions in a less overt manner. Stress can cause individuals to narrow their vision or opt for cognitive oversimplification (McCutcheon, 2002). Stress can also influence some to become “champions” of their position or opinion, causing them to act upon with their own agenda, and not be willing to entertain the suggestion or alternatives of others. This stance will create animosity and/or controversy not conducive to productive decision-making in many instances. Rushing to a solution or avoiding
potentially controversial solutions are other behaviors that may be related to stress, but that are not always easy to define as related to stress. These behaviors involve reverting back to a more straight and safe road to resolution, regardless of whether this is the road best for students and the curriculum as a whole. Clearly, stress can cause alterations in behavior in an assortment of ways; those mentioned here are merely enough to suggest the role of stress in the deliberation process.

Deliberation as related to schooling and the public interest is the next issue of consideration.

*Deliberative perspective to schooling and the public interest.*

Deliberation as related to schooling and the public interest gets at the notion that no one person, group, or interest could or should have a unique insight or resolution into curriculum development (Reid, 1992). Curriculum should consider the teachers, students, subject matter, and milieus, and place these within the cultural context and social context they operate within. Whether one considers schools and curriculum as formal institutions or more neutral entities, the totality of curriculum and the results of the deliberation process must be considered (Reid, 1992).

Curriculum does have significance for society and is related to local and national character and influences (i.e. state and national content standards, national trends in content areas).

In addition, the deliberation process and resulting curriculum includes activity that is affected by the forms and structures that govern the system within which the curriculum will be implemented. Curriculum will be delivered, interpreted, and perpetuated within the context of all involved in the process. Therefore, curriculum does have consequence for school as a larger body or institution and for society and the public interest (Reid, 1992).

*Curriculum deliberation in conclusion.*

Curriculum deliberation is simply defined as an approach to decision-making and problem solving that involves a cycle of proposition and revision of ideas, with the quest of finding the best
alternative to problems related to curriculum development. Although the discussion presented thus far has been relatively brief, the connection between curriculum deliberation and the cultural context is overt. Curriculum deliberation and the cultural context of curriculum deliberation and development operate in conjunction with one another, often without hesitation or thought. I now consider teacher inservice and curriculum development.

Teacher Inservice and Curriculum Development

Teacher inservice is crucial to actualize a curriculum developed from the sociocultural perspective, for teaching is a multicultural encounter (Banks and McGee Banks, 1995). Teachers need to have the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to successfully implement equitable pedagogy and practice. Before teachers can effectively enrich their students' lives, they need to enrich their own understanding. An effective teacher education program and a well-designed, continuing staff development program are essential for the successful development and implementation of effective culturally relevant and sensitive curriculum in the school. Fostering positive attitudes toward and encouraging teacher development can be accomplished through self-reflection, study of pedagogy, and recognition and response to multiple students' characteristics, including race, social class, and gender (Banks and McGee Banks, 1995). Teachers need to make a personal investment to make a curriculum of multicultural dimensions, rooted in sociocultural pedagogy, that will work for all involved.

Teachers need to be aware of not only their beliefs and attitudes but also critically examine the materials they utilize. As Banks (1994) posits, "Although multicultural materials are essential for implementing a multicultural curriculum, they are ineffective when used by a teacher who lacks a knowledge base in multicultural education or who does not have positive or clarified attitudes toward a range of racial groups" (p. 96). It is at this point that the hidden curriculum could surface if
preventive measures are not taken when planning and executing instruction, in alignment with a socially and culturally developed curriculum. Teachers need to “identify the ideological messages in texts that focus on individuals to the exclusion of collective action, that juxtapose high culture and structure, that reproduce poverty or exploitation, or that use forms of discourse that do not promote critical engagement by the student” (Giroux, 1991, p. 97). Clearly, teachers must make informed decisions with respect to the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of their students when making curriculum and pedagogical decisions.

Teachers need to examine their own perspective and materials within their classroom to be effective. They also need to critique their method of delivery. As Chandler (1992) contends, teachers could unknowingly perpetuate hegemonies if “the way in which the teacher implemented the planned curriculum influenced students’ perception of the curriculum/activity, and thus how the curriculum/activity came to be defined” (p. 51). The power of this interpretation upon the students cannot be readily dismissed or diminished. Students will have their own impressions of the teacher’s delivery and the messages received. Chandler makes this point as well in his assertion that “the way in which the teacher planned, but did not cover, the same specific topics constrained opportunities for learning and gaining needed information” (p. 51). This statement also exemplifies the urgency for thought about the way information is presented to students. What may be casually spoken or left unsaid can speak volumes to any particular student at any given time. Educators need to be informed not only about the actual curriculum they are presenting but also the philosophical beliefs that shape and inform their instructional methods and practice.
Implications of Curriculum Development by Teachers
for Administrators and/or Supervisors

While teachers develop and implement curriculum within various context(s), teachers operate in conjunction with one another, with their students and students' families, and often the larger community as well. They also operate in concert with their building level and district administration and/or supervisors. These administrators may serve in an assortment of capacities and have varying views of the curriculum as a document and how it may be evident in actual classroom practice. The degree of involvement an administrator may assume in the curriculum process varies for an assortment of reasons and is subject to interpretation and perception on the part of the administrator(s) and teacher(s) involved.

Administrators may align their practice with professional or bureaucratic orientations or utilize a classical or scientific model of organizational management. The intended orientations of said administrator(s) may also differ from the perceptions of the teachers under their management. Clearly, the role of administrator with respect to the teacher in the curriculum development process is complex and far from clear distinctions.

While literature exists delineating the various management styles administrators may assume and portray, literature related to curriculum development and teachers' perceptions of that process with respect to the administrator was not found. Consequently, this is an area that I will continue to explore and develop.

While my initial intent was to qualify the potential administrative stance and how the implications of teachers' perceptions of their role in the curriculum development process might be
incorporated, I do not feel I can make those assertions at this time. This needs to be an area of future focus and further research, considering the teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process that emerged in this study.

In Conclusion

I started this chapter by providing a brief historical view of four paradigmatic assumptions related to curriculum theory and curriculum development. First discussed was the traditionalist paradigm and the attention afforded to notions of curriculum as a document that perpetuates societal functions and roles. Traditionalists incorporate a problem solving approach to make order out of reality and phenomena that is socially constructed. Next, I presented and discussed the conceptual-empiricist notions that curriculum emphasizes language and definition, based upon the assumption that knowledge is neutral and fact based. Within this discussion, Beauchamp's notion of curriculum as more than a mere document was also entertained. The third assumption presented was the reconceptualist model of curriculum theory. This positionality acknowledges the value laden aspect of curriculum and curriculum development, and affords consideration to the political and possibly emancipatory elements of curriculum. Reconceptualists break from traditionalist and conceptual-empiricist notions in their admission that knowledge and curriculum and curriculum development are not value free and/or value neutral. Reconceptualist theory therefore, can be considered a bridge of sorts, between conceptual-empiricist theory and critical theory. Critical theory, the fourth assumption discussed, embraces the subjectivity and openly ideological aspects of curriculum and curriculum development. In alignment with the previous three paradigmatic assumptions presented, critical theory also maintains the societal and cultural influence on the construction of reality and the dialectical nature of this construction. These theories were presented not only to provide a framework with which to examine the curriculum
development process from the teachers' perspectives, but to also illustrate the attention afforded to the role of culture and examining phenomenon with its social and cultural context. In order to explore the curriculum development process from the emic perspective of the teachers actually engaged in the process, it was critical to remain aware of the various paradigms each participant may be operating within and based upon, as well as the interactions and influences of each participants' paradigmatic assumptions. Clearly, the consistent theme of culture and society and the role it plays in curriculum development necessitated the discussion of each of these paradigmatic assumptions within this text and my continued awareness to this realization throughout the research process.

Following discussion of paradigmatic assumptions related to curriculum, curriculum theory and curriculum development, I entertained social contexts of curriculum development. This section included discussion of social aspects related to curriculum development by teacher educators and how that process may look in actuality. Again, the role of dialogue and the reality that is socially created was illustrated. Within the realm of social aspects I also presented and discussed multicultural awareness, notions of potential hidden curriculums and the school-community connection. These issues were afforded attention due to the social and cultural influence they may possess, as well as the possible emergence of these themes within the context of the curriculum development process and/or the research process itself. Schools do not operate in isolation or in a vacuum. They are direct influences on and products of the larger community within which they exist and interact. Consequently, potential and real influences on schools and curriculum development within the educational setting was deserving of attention and consideration.

Just as the social aspects and social context of curriculum development was discussed, McCutcheon's (2002) and Reid's (1992) notions of deliberation and negotiation within the
curriculum development process were presented. McCutcheon and Reid, reiterating notions and tenets from Chapter One, also acknowledge the dialectical nature of curriculum development and the social and cultural elements of curriculum development. They further expand upon the decision making that occurs at an individual and group level, and how this becomes a larger system of reflection, further action, and reflection. Freire ([1970] 1998) terms this process praxis. Despite whether it is termed praxis, deliberation or negotiation, this element of the curriculum development process illustrates the dialectical, social and cultural influenced nature of curriculum development and the theories presented in Chapters One and Two.

Early in this chapter I cited the words of DeCorse (1996): “Teachers must be encouraged to see the evolution of curriculum as a continual process, one which is not only meaningful, but which is the essence of our teaching task” (p.91). It is ultimately this very point I wish to explore. This can only be accomplished through exploration of the system of praxis teachers engage in, examination of their words and actions related to curriculum development and the deliberation process, and determination of teachers’ perceptions of their role in the curriculum development and implementation process. My outline of the research serves as a foundation and guiding paradigmatic assumptions as I undertake this charge.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Teachers are an integral component not only in the education process in general, but in the development and implementation of curriculum as well. Education is a cultural process, which involves learning in a specific context. Within the educational setting of the curriculum development process, the focus of this study was to uncover teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process. More specifically, as stated in chapter one, the research questions of this study are as follows:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of curriculum development process?
   a. How do teachers negotiate processes and procedures?
   b. How do teachers develop understanding of curriculum concepts and relate this to classroom practice?
   c. What factors influence the curriculum development process?
2. What are the resulting implications of teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process for themselves, administrators, school districts, and curriculum coordinators?

Consequently, the methodology to research teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process needs to recognize and incorporate the social and cultural context and elements of
teachers and education. Qualitative research is in alignment with this interpretivist/constructivist approach (Glesne, 1999) to determining teachers' perceptions the curriculum development process.

In this chapter I will first discuss the theoretical methodological orientation that served as the foundation for the alignment between qualitative research methods and the question of teachers' perceptions. Second, I will consider the setting for research. Third, the participants of the research study will be discussed. Next, I will present and discuss the research strategies utilized during the research to collect data, coupled with issues of trustworthiness of the overall data collection. Lastly, I will discuss the approach to data analysis that was taken throughout the research process. I begin with outlining the interpretivist/constructivist approach taken to examining teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process.

Interpretivism/Constructivism Applied to Studying Teachers' Perceptions of the Curriculum Development Process

Interpretivism supports qualitative research methods that “portray a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever changing” (Glesne, 1999, p. 5). The ontological belief in the interpretivist paradigm is that “social realities are constructed by the participants in those social settings” (Glesne, 1999, p. 5). In order to understand the nature and scope of these constructed realities, Glesne (1999) maintains “qualitative researchers interact and talk with participants about their perceptions…to seek out the variety of perspectives; they do not try to try to reduce the multiple interpretations to a norm” (p. 5). Schwandt (2000) also acknowledges the need to recognize the ontological assumption that reality is a socially constructed through culture, “There is no way to experience real relations of a society outside of its cultural and ideological categories” (p. 198).
The consideration of social and cultural construction has natural implications for this study. Curriculum development, potentially influenced by an assortment of factors, is a social construction. Consistent with transactional and subjectivist elements of constructivism, curriculum development and teachers' perceptions of this process exemplify these elements. Teachers develop curriculum through dialogue, which is a social and cultural act; and the knowledge that further guides the development of curriculum is continually influenced by teachers' prior knowledge, categories of meaning, and the way knowledge is created in the moment. Therefore, as supported by D'Andrade (1984) and Mead ([1928] 1973), the collective knowledge that is gained is constantly shaped by cultural and societal meanings, created in a constant state of growth and revised schema, as individuals and as a group. The constructivist/interpretivist assumption that meanings and realities are socially and culturally constructed, always open to cultural and social interpretation and influence, consequently, serve as appropriate paradigmatic assumptions for this research.

As Glense (1999) posits, understanding, contextualization, and interpretation are research purposes in the interpretivist mode of qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (2000) also discuss the constructivist notion of understanding reality when they assert,

We believe that a goodly portion of social phenomena consists of the meaning-making activities of groups and individuals around those phenomena. The meaning-making activities themselves are of central interest to social constructionists/constructivists, simply because it is the meaning-making/sense-making/attributional activities that shape action (or inaction) (p. 167).

It is this task of coming to understand and interpret the participants' perceptions of the curriculum development process, given the social and cultural context of curriculum development and implementation that was the focus of this study, in alignment with interpretivist/constructivist paradigmatic assumptions.
To gain this emic perspective (Pelto and Pelto, 1978), I had to become “the main research instrument as he or she [the researcher] observes, asks questions, and interacts with research participants” (Glesne, 1999, p. 5). Schwandt (2000) stresses the need to gain an understanding of the meaning of action, given the complex systems of meanings in their cultural and social context that came to shape and form the meanings. Spradley (1980) reminds the researcher these meanings can be expressed in language and are implicit and explicit, and that “these systems of meaning constitute their culture” (p. 5). “Interpretivism assists you to uncover some of the complexities of meaning” (Glesne, 1999, p.6) which is what I intended to do, with respect to teachers’ perceptions of their role in the development and implementation of curriculum.

Given the sociocultural context of this study, an inductive approach to develop a grounded theory through inquiry was taken. This approach afforded me the opportunity to “discover concepts and hypotheses through constant comparative analysis…making sense out of a social interaction” (Glesne, 1999, p. 22). This meaning making was based upon descriptions rich with description, meanings, intentions, contexts, and circumstances of actions (Glesne, 1999). Embedded and final interpretation of data and analysis needed to consider multiple meanings and interpretations, in conflict and alignment with one another, to ultimately determine the essence of meaning of the various voices and stakeholders involved. Before discussing specific strategies utilized to build a of curriculum grounded theory about teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process, an outline of the research population follows.

Research Population

The study of teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process is worthy of exploration kindergarten through twelfth grade. Within the context of this research, teachers at all levels kindergarten through twelfth grade in Summit Way City Schools were invited to participate in
the development of a mathematics curriculum for their particular grade level and/or content area. The course of study or curriculum writing committee was formed by those teachers who volunteered for the process district wide.

Summit Way City Schools is currently the sixth largest school district in the state based on student enrollment numbers, the largest district geographically, and serves urban, suburban, and rural populations. Current enrollment figures indicate student enrollment is close to 21,000 students, with 2,300 certificated and classified employees. Opening two new high schools in the fall of 2002 brings the total number of buildings in Summit Way to thirty-four buildings. A fifth intermediate building is scheduled to open in August of 2003, bringing the total to thirty-five buildings. Student populations consist of low to high socioeconomic status, as well as reflect a variety of English as Second Language (ESL) students, primarily Spanish, Somali, Russian, and Ukrainian speaking students. Eighty-three different languages are represented throughout the district, as well as special needs and gifted students. Certificated staff members range from first year teachers to more veteran staff of 30+ years. To attempt to examine this phenomenon of curriculum development across the grade levels kindergarten through twelfth grade and all thirty-four buildings is not manageable, and maybe not particularly purposeful given different perceptions might make products and processes too different to effectively speak across all grade levels. Therefore, I qualify the parameters of my research participants in the following manner.

Research Sample

Summit Way City Schools opened four intermediate level (grades five and six) buildings in January of 2001. These buildings incorporate fifth grade teachers and students from the elementary schools and sixth grade teachers and students from the middle schools, creating a new building configuration. As a result of the fifth-sixth grade merger, a new climate and culture is
emerging and developing. The four buildings from which I drew my sample are Pine Shade Intermediate, Highland Centers Intermediate, Goodale Riley Intermediate, and Fair Way Intermediate. Drawing one fifth and one sixth grade teacher from each of the four buildings ensured equal representation for each of the four buildings. The eight participants were chosen from the larger body of fifth and sixth grade teachers who volunteered to serve on the district’s mathematics course of study writing committee. At the first full mathematics course of study writing committee meeting, which convened in August 2002 for the first time, the invitation to participate in this study was extended to each member of the fifth-sixth grade writing subcommittee. Committee members were asked to respond via e-mail, phone, or personal conversation if they were interested in participating in the study. From the complete subcommittee of 12 teachers, eight teachers expressed their interest in participating. These eight teachers included one fifth and one sixth grade teacher from each of the four intermediate buildings. These educators, therefore, have been both randomly and self-selected. No participant was forced to participate, but all course of study (curriculum) committee members representing fifth and sixth grades were made aware of the opportunity to participate in this research.

Research Setting

Participants were engaged in work as part of the larger course of study writing committee, in a chosen site within Summit Way City Schools. The sub-group of fifth and sixth grade teachers developing curriculum served as a natural opportunity to engage in participant observations. My initial intentions were to conduct formal interviews with the eight participants individually or in groups, in respective buildings and/or classrooms. Once I implemented these research strategies, I found interviews were best conducted individually as suggested by the participants. Each audio taped interview was held at the time and location proposed by the participant. Locations and
times were either participant’s classrooms before or after school, or preceding or following curriculum development writing sessions held in a district facility. Participant observations were conducted during curriculum development writing sessions.

Eight intermediate grade level teachers participated in my research, as outlined above. Once these participants were officially designated and determined, the following participant characteristics were identified: specific grade level of focus, years in education, elementary or middle school experience, content area(s) focus, education level (i.e. BS, MS, MA, PhD), socioeconomic status, gender, and school community (i.e. working class, middle class, etc.). I recognized the need to be continually aware of unforeseen factors, which may have interfered with my research, and provide each participant with equal representation. Having qualified my population of interest, sample, and setting, I now elaborate on the appropriateness of utilizing a qualitative research approach to explore teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process.

**Interpretivist/Constructivist Research Strategies**

As previously presented, researchers who operate out of the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm come to understand and interpret systems of meaning. The researcher is an instrument, looking for patterns within the social and cultural complex context, to better understand the nature of these realities. In order to gain this emic perspective, as previously defined by Pelto and Pelto (1978), it was necessary to utilize interviews, participant observation, and document analysis in the data collection and analysis period of the study.

**Consideration of Multiple Perspectives**

Multiple perspectives related to this research process were continually monitored and negotiated. I needed to continually monitor my own positionalities, the positions and possible
parameters of the participants, and the negotiation of researcher-participant and participant-
participant roles. Negotiating and mediating various roles and positionalities is not unique to this
research. I looked to Kincheloe, Fine and Richardson to determine possible strategies for
managing and negotiating multiple perspectives within one research study. I begin with discussing
Kincheloe's notion of fiction formulas and critical constructivism.

Kincheloe: Fiction formulas and critical constructivism

With the notion of curriculum development and implementation as clearly a sociocultural
construction, the examination of this process and the transmission of teachers' perceptions of their
role in this process through research and its documentation is affected by elements of power and
power relations. Kincheloe (1997) terms this phenomenon critical constructivism and the
representation of reality. Simply stated, critical constructivist researchers “begin to appreciate the
subtle ways power shapes their research, their methods of representation and their narrative voice”
(p. 58). This process involves the “development of a dynamic and textured understanding of the
way power works at both macro (deep structural) and micro (particularistic) levels to shape our
understanding of the world and our role in it” (p.58). Kincheloe continues to deconstruct the voice
and positionality of the researcher as researcher and of the researcher as constructor of the text or
narrative. It is in this duality and negotiated representation through the text that a reality is
constructed. The researcher and his/her positionality is embedded in the text, as Kincheloe (1997)
states, “Any representation of the world manifests its power through its foreclosure of worlds not
represented” (p. 67). Kincheloe reminds the reader/researcher of the power that resides with the
positionality of researcher and in the representation of reality in the narrative text. It is this notion I
remained continually aware of, as I engaged in the research process and my negotiation of the
various roles and voices I sought to bring to light. Fine and Richardson also posit a position of
awareness of multiple roles a researcher may encompass, and I turn to their work next.

Fine and Richardson: Multiple perspectives

It is the constant juggling and construction of pedagogies and perspectives Fine (1992)
experienced in her “Girls Group.” It was in this group as a participant researcher Fine came to
better understand the views of the other members of the Girls Group, but also came to better
understand and define her own views. Fine (1997) further describes the power of the participant
researcher/observer role in Witnessing Whiteness. Just as Fine chose to avert her gaze to the hue
of whiteness “with the raw nerve of reflection and the need for better racial thinking” (p. 209), I
choose to avert my gaze to teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process, and do
so in a similar participant observer role as Fine outlined.

Richardson (1993) also grapples with the multiple perspectives and roles as participant
to interpret my lived experience” (p. 703) is the question Richardson (1993) poses, and is the same
also considered and troubled. Ultimately, this piece contains the voices of many women, including
that of Richardson herself. Given the participatory element of the data collection, analysis and
interpretation, complete isolation of researcher and participants is not possible, but the research-
participant relationship is a product of negotiation and mediation. Richardson summarizes this
position when she states, “Space is left for others to speak, for tension and differences to be
acknowledged, celebrated, rather than buried alive” (p. 706). Thus, Kincheloe, Fine and
Richardson illustrate the inherent conflict in integrating the social, political and multiple
perspectives personally and as a researcher throughout and at the conclusion of a research project. It is with this same honesty, reflection, and acknowledgement I approached and conducted this research.

**Triangulation During the Research**

Three qualitative research methods (interviews, participant observation and document analysis) were utilized during this research. These three methods were used concurrently, as triangulation suggests, to “reflect my attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 5), not uncover a specific or the answer. Janesick (2000) defines data triangulation as using a variety of data sources in a study to gain a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the phenomenon in question. Richardson (2000) presents triangulation as a process in which a “researcher deploys ‘different methods’ – such as interviews, census data, and documents – to ‘validate’ findings” (p. 934). By validate findings I mean apply Richardson’s application of different methods to ensure I remain grounded in the data corpus and represent the perceptions of the teachers in their words, not to prove or disprove a particular position or assertion.

Triangulation is more than merely applying different data collection and analysis techniques. Triangulation involves using different data gathering techniques to determine and represent the essence of the data, to develop thick descriptions and to develop a more comprehensive understanding than that which would be determined by one strategy or technique alone. Triangulation is a system of checks and balances to promote grounded and comprehensive portrayal of the data and findings. Triangulation, efforts to create comprehensive and holistic understanding, was accomplished in this study through the use of interviews, participant
observations, and document analysis to better understand and accurately convey teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process. Interviews and their use will be the first strategy further explained.

*Interviews as a Means of Data Collection*

Teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process was the focus of this study. Interviews were a natural vehicle to attempt to understand the teachers' perceptions. Glesne (1999) defines an interview in the following manner,

> An interview is between at least two persons, but other possibilities include one or more interviewers and one or more interviewees. Interviewing more than one person at a time sometimes proves very useful...and some topics are better discussed by a small group of people (often referred to as a focus group) (p. 67-68).

As Seidman (1998) asserts, interviews allow the interviewee the opportunity to reconstruct their own experiences within the topic under study. Granted, the interviewee can only provide their interpretation of construction of meaning, but it is through this contribution of knowledge based upon participant knowledge that the interviewer can begin to deconstruct the emic perspective of the topic. Pelto and Pelto (1978) reinforce the need to fit the emic, or insider perspective, concepts and assumptions of the interviewee with the etic, or outsider perspective, concepts and assumptions of the interviewer/researcher to create a more contextually and comprehensively accurate interpretation. Gaining such a perspective can only be accomplished through the use of interviews.

Fontana and Frey (2000) stress the importance of utilizing interviewing to gain the emic perspective, “Interviewing is one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings” (p. 645). Interviews are co-created and negotiated acts that help the researcher gain sense of meaning of the area of focus. As Fontana and Frey state,
“Qualitative researchers are realizing that interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering but active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results” (p. 646). Seidman (1998) considers the interview an attempt to try to understand the experiences of people and the meanings they (the people) construct out of these experiences. The researcher is looking for knowledge regarding the how’s and what’s of human experience, based upon the meaning associated with those how’s and what’s of the participants (Fontana and Frey, 2000; Glesne, 1999; Seidman, 1998).

Interviews should not be considered mere conversations with participants, with no fear of possible negative outcomes. As Wolcott (1995) posits, “Our questions as fieldworkers become increasingly intrusive as we seek to understand what is going on” (p. 103). Therefore, as a researcher, I needed to pose questions without appearing judgmental or condescending, inadvertently causing interviewees to become defensive or feel inadequate in their response. The manner in which questions were framed and posed to the interviewee do matter and do convey implications and messages on their own. By being intrusive through the process to try to understand, the process becomes intimate. Wolcott (1995) cautions researchers to consider the subtle influences that interview questions may assert when he declares, “While we almost routinely insist that we are interested in ‘everything’ about the lives of our informants, our questions belie that claim by revealing that some ‘everythings’ are of more consequence than others” (p. 103). Thought needs to be afforded to not only the interview topic and questions, but also to the delivery of questions and to the reactions to questions. Wolcott (1995) summarizes this necessary concern in interviewing in the following assertion, “Interviewing is not all that difficult, but interviewing in which people tell you how they really think about things you are interested in learning, or how they think about the things that are important to them, is a delicate art” (p. 105).
Wolcott (1995) states that being an active listener and being careful not to intrude in the middle of a response can prevent the interviewer from being seen as intrusive and/or judgmental. Silence can be a time for reflection for the participant, which the interviewer can use for reflection as well. Silence can also convey meaning in its own right. In essence, less talking and more listening will give interviewers ample opportunity to respond, providing the researcher with the information they are ultimately attempting to obtain.

Andersen (1993) also cautions the researcher about assuming the expert role during the interview. She challenges the researcher to examine their own position(s) of privilege with respect to the participants in question. Andersen makes particular reference to race and power in research when she declares, “The problems of doing research within minority communities are compounded by the social distance imposed by class and race relations when interviewers are white and middle class and those being interviewed are not” (p. 41). While the research in this study does not involve going into a “minority community” as alluded to in Andersen’s comments, it was critical to remain cognizant of power and relationships between the interviewer and participants, and possible assumptions about power and privilege that may enter the research/interview process. These power relations are inherent in the interviewer/interviewee relationship, in the researcher/participant relationship, and in the curriculum coordinator/teacher relationship.

Just as Andersen advocates for considering the social and cultural context of the interview and interview participants, Holloway and Jefferson (1997) maintain that the interview process can create anxiety in the participants, whether the topic is viewed as anxiety producing or not by the interviewer. As participants evoke meaning and memories of their stories and responses to the interviewer, they can become emotional rather than rational. Holloway and Jefferson (1997) support this assertion when they state,
Their idea of hidden meaning being revealed through the gestalt of a story is analogous to the psychoanalytic concept of free association, in which the links between elements in the narrative are provided by unconscious meaning associations, which then provide clues to the significance of a person's account (p. 67).

Being aware of the possible anxiety of the interview situation and topic(s) in question deserves attention and consideration, even when the researcher may not foresee the situation or topic(s) anxiety producing.

Interviews are a vehicle to elicit systems of meaning about phenomena from interviewees so that the interviewer/researcher may come to better understand the social phenomena in question. The interviewer needs to consider the social context of the interview, and involves the interviewee communicating their interpretation, perspectives, and meanings. The interviewer needs to ask for clarification and verification of the response while affording consideration to the manner in which they attempt to gain clarification, verification, and additional information.

Interviews are not neutral and are co-created. The interviewee needs to feel valued and involved in the process, not just a "subject."

Interviews as a research tool were implemented in this research study in the following manner. Interviews were conducted individually with each of the eight participants, with each interview lasting approximately forty-five minutes to one hour. See appendix D for a complete list of interview questions and follow-up questions for each of the three interview sessions. Interviews were scheduled and conducted at the convenience of the participant, at the time and location of their choosing. Interviews were held before or after school or curriculum development sessions, in either the participant's classroom or the district setting of the curriculum development session.

Three individual interview sessions were conducted with each participant, one at each stage of the study, beginning, middle, and end. Each participant was afforded the opportunity to review
interview transcripts, make recommendations/suggestions for clarification and/or further explanation. Pseudonyms were self selected by each participant and used throughout the data collection period and in this final narrative text.

As described above, interviews were scheduled and conducted at the convenience of each participant. Allowing the participants to dictate time and setting of each interview session, I found participants to be willing to engage in the interview. Each participant reviewed each transcript, and received acknowledgment that their suggested changes had been made. I found the participants more relaxed with the interview process as the study progressed. I, too, became more comfortable in posing questions and asking clarifying and/or probing questions. I also found the less I took notes during the actual interview, the longer participants' responses were to each question. Consequently, eye contact and non-verbal body language became critical to eliciting rich responses, communicated my sincere attention to each participant, and created a conversational style to the interview, as opposed to merely a question-answer session. Thus, as Wolcott (1995) and Andersen (1993) posit, attempts to be an active listener and not assume the expert role during interviews enhanced the interview process and encouraged rich responses.

Participant Observation as a Means of Data Collection

Participant observations, a second method of data collection in this study, were natural extensions of and supplements to structured interviews. As Spindler (1982) contends, observations are contextualized. This implies not only are the observer's interpretations contextualized and biased, so are the participants' view of the reality as described to the observer. Spindler (1982) and Zaharlick (1992) both maintain that considering multiple impacts and perceptions is crucial in qualitative work. Understanding the complexity of relationships, thick descriptions, and examining one's own assumptions, can further influence interpretations and
assumptions. Willis and Trondman (2000) reinforce the deserved attention to culture and its relationship to social, political and economic context in qualitative research. Considering the cultural considerations afforded and supported in this study, participant observation was an obvious and appropriate means of data collection.

Participant observations allowed the researcher the opportunity to observe people, interactions, and events in context in everyday life. As a participant observer, I carefully observed, systematically experienced, and consciously recorded the various and many aspects of a situation in detail within the research setting (Clifford, 1990; Glesne, 1999; Spradley, 1980; Tedlock, 2000). Participant observations involved more than merely observing the "subject." Participant observations involved participating in the experience.

Participant observations allowed me to assume a role as more of an equal, not the researcher as the omnipotent one. This position is in contrast to the positivistic view of the researcher as viewing the object or other, as Angrosino and Mays de Perez (2000) conclude, "Indeed, the very term subject, with its implicit colonialist connotations, is no longer appropriate. Rather, there is said to be a dialogue between researchers and those whose cultures/societies are to be described" (p. 675). Tedlock (2000) describes participant observation as a "simultaneous process of emotional involvement and objective detachment" (p. 465). Tedlock terms this process the researcher “acquiring a second worldview” (p. 458) through direct participation in the practices, experiences and culture in the new culture or situation. Participant observation, consequently, implies partnership between researcher and participants.

Clearly, participant observation provided me with access to the phenomenon in question, the opportunity to interact with those involved in the phenomenon, and the ability to engage the
participants in dialogue to come to understand the cultural and social constructions of the systems of meanings related to the phenomenon in question.

As cited above, participant observation has been defined and qualified by many researchers. In this study, however, participant observation as a process was based upon the procedures and descriptions as outlined by Spradley (1980) in *Participant Observation*. Spradley differentiates the participant observer from the role of mere participant in the following manner,

The participant observer comes to a social situation with two purposes: (1) to engage in activities appropriate to the situation and (2) to observe the activities, people, and physical aspects of the situation. The ordinary participant comes to that same situation with only one purpose: to engage in the appropriate activities. In the process of carrying out these actions, this person does not normally want to watch and record everything else that occurs, describe all the actors present, or make note of the physical setting (p. 54).

Participant observers come to a situation with a conscious awareness of their own realities and bias, as they attempt to interpret situations to determine how the actors or participants interpret and make meaning of this situation or reality. Participant observers are looking for both implicit and explicit meanings and rules, as evidenced by behaviors and/or spoken dialogue between participants or the researcher and participants. Identifying implicit and explicit meanings and rules is accomplished by the researcher serving as both an insider and outsider simultaneously. Spradley describes this duality in the following manner, “On some occasions you may suddenly realize you have been acting as a full participant, without observing as an outsider. At other times you will probably be able to find an observation post and become a more detached observer” (p. 57). Participation observation can take various levels of involvement, as detailed below.

Participation observation can occur with the researcher acting as a complete non-participant in the activity to a full participant in the activity. Degree of participation as participant observer in this study will be defined according to Spradley (1980) as deemed necessary and
appropriate to the situation in question. Nonparticipation is the lowest level of participation. This involves the researcher/observer having no “involvement with the people or activities studied” (p.59). Passive participation involves the researcher/observer being a spectator and present at the scene, while not interacting with other people to a great extent. Attempting to balance the insider versus outsider role, negotiating observation and participation occurs at the moderate participation level. Active participation is the next level of engagement. Spradley (1980) defines this level of involvement in this manner,

The active participant seeks to do what other people are doing, not merely gain acceptance, but to more fully learn the cultural rules for behavior. Active participation begins with observations, but as knowledge of what others do grows, the ethnographer tries to learn the same behavior (p. 60).

For complete participation, the ultimate level of engagement, the researcher/observer becomes completely involved in the activity or situation, assuming a role of ordinary participant. As the research opportunities present themselves and unfold in the proposed research, it will be necessary to negotiate the various levels of participant observation that will allow for maximum data collection, benefits to the research process and data gathering, and preserve the authenticity of the research situation and participants.

Participant observation, as discussed by various researchers, involves observing a situation, people, or event to determine the systems of meaning related to the situation, people, or event. It also involves recording details, occurrences and experiences. As stated previously, this is a cultural and social construction, not neutral or free from bias. As the researcher, it was critical for me to acknowledge my own assumptions and interpretations as a participant observer and researcher, and encourage the participants to share their interpretations and assumptions about
the meanings of the activities and events in question. I needed to clearly delineate between teachers' voices and my own voice. This involved constant negotiation between the various roles and perspectives, and constant reflection.

My role as a participant observer spanned the continuum from a more observer role to that of complete participant observer, as dictated by the circumstance. I operated in this capacity from the beginning to the end of data collection, as opportunities and necessity dictated. I gathered data as a participant observer by recording observations during the activity, audio recording the activity (if feasible and/or appropriate), recording observations in my reflective journal immediately following the event, and/or soliciting input from the participants themselves. I operated as a participant observer during curriculum development session with the entire fifth-sixth grade committee, and with each grade level in isolation as they focused on that grade level devoid of the other. I attempted to afford equal time to the fifth grade group and the sixth grade group, as dictated to natural breaks in conversation, focus and need of the other grade level. I found negotiating both groups helpful and frustrating, as I did not want to miss part of one conversation to join the other. When the grade levels recombined, I filled any gaps in conversation through summaries posed by one group to the other. As with interviews, I found the less I actually wrote while engaged in the conversation the easier the conversation flowed, the richer in content and depth the conversation was, and the more each individual contributed to the dialogue.

In alignment with member checks used with interviews, I solicited participants for their reaction and response to my participant observation notes as necessary. I found this helpful not only in filling in voids in my notes, but provided depth to my notes and additional points of clarification and interest. This additional dialogue aided me in developing a richer emic and etic perspective (Pelto and Pelto, 1978), as well merge the researcher-participant observer roles.
To this point, discussion has been related to the qualitative research strategies of interviews and participant observation. In conjunction with these two practices, it was necessary to engage in document analysis, a third strategy.

**Document Analysis as a Means of Data Collection**

Document analysis, the third data collection method of this study, complements the information gathered through interviews and participant observations. Document analysis combined with data gathered through interviews and participant observations allows for triangulation of the data, which adds credence to potential assertions (Fine, Weis, Weseen & Wong, 2000). Document analysis contributes to triangulation, enrichment of research findings supported through a variety of qualitative research methods (Glesne, 1999; Janesick, 2000; Richardson, 2000) as a complementary strategy to interviews and participant observation. As previously stated, triangulation of the data is a process of utilizing a variety of research techniques in cooperation to contribute to the trustworthiness of the data and increase confidence in research findings through the incorporation of multiple kinds of data sources (Glesne, 1999). Hodder (2000) contends that document analysis can provide interpretations and assumptions not explicit in interviews and observations. He states, “The study of material culture is thus of importance for qualitative researchers who wish to explore multiple and conflicting voices, differing and interacting interpretations” (p. 705). Analyzing documents of the culture as applied to that cultural context also affords the researcher an alternative view of the emic perspective (Pelto and Pelto, 1978). Documents are open to interpretation, making their analysis conditional and bias, but still worthy of examination on their own accord.

Curriculum is socially and culturally constructed, making the study of material culture (documents) related to curriculum necessary to more fully understand the system of meaning
related to curriculum development (Hodder, 2000). Ryan and Bernard (2000) also stress the importance of considering documents within their cultural context when they assert, “items belong in a cultural domain and can be used to assess the relationships among these items” (p. 770). Silverman (2000) also argues the salience of interpreting documents and text in context, for it is interpretation in context that gives a truer essence of meaning to the document in question. He states, “The aim is to understand the participants’ categories and to see how these are used in concrete activities” (p. 826). Material culture can provide the researcher with culture meaning expressed in alternative ways and by often muted voices (Hodder, 2000), when considered in the social and cultural contexts in which they were originally developed and created.

Document analysis is a natural qualitative research strategy in conjunction with the study of teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process. Analysis of the written text, formal and informal, provided insights and confirmation of insights not necessarily expressed by the participants. Glesne (1999) suggests that “documents corroborate your observations and interviews and thus make your findings more trustworthy…they raise questions about your hunches and thereby shape new directions for observations and interviews” (p. 58). Documents for document analysis can be a collection of artifacts that are material traces of the culture. Documents are often prepared for personal reasons and may include diaries, memos and notes (Hodder, 2000).

Documents that arose relevant to the study of teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process were courses of study, federal and state curriculum standards, lesson plans, notes and memos, curriculum guides and timelines. Throughout the data collection and research period it was imperative that I considered the various documents mentioned earlier and text for analysis and attempt to gain an understanding of the context in which the document was created.
and how the participants view its impact on the curriculum development process. I found I frequently reviewed state standards documents and the ongoing curriculum developed as part of the curriculum development process. Just as I was continually reviewing and analyzing state standards and teacher developed curriculum, I was analyzing teachers comments about state standards and the curriculum evolving from the curriculum development process. As the curriculum was being developed, the participants and the curriculum development committee was concurrently proposing and developing a timeline for implementation of the developed curriculum. This analysis often led to discovery of alignment and contradiction when taking the concepts of the curriculum and sequencing them in a timeline format. As this discovery arose in dialogue with teachers, negotiation and deliberation began to reach resolution.

As the participants and I reviewed the timelines and the curriculum being developed, dialogue often focused on how this content would look in classroom practice. Participants entertained and discussed various connotations of the phrases in the curriculum, their interpretations of the content, and how they perceived others might interpret and implement particular points. The power of language and its interpretation, as will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five, became increasingly clear through the analysis of the curriculum document.

Data Collection Methods in Summary

Collectively, interviews, participant observation and document analysis served as the primary methods for gathering data. The use of multiple data-collection methods contributed to not only trustworthiness and validity of interpretations, but also contributed to the creation of thicker and richer descriptions in the data (Glesne, 1999). These three techniques in combination made it
possible to “(1) elicit data needed to gain understanding of the phenomenon in question, (2) contribute different perspective on the issue, and (3) make effective use of the time available for data-collection” (p. 31).

Along with the specific data gathering strategies outlined above, it was essential for me to maintain a reflective/researcher journal throughout the data collection and data analysis process. This journal served as a rigorous collection of conversations I had with myself, the data, and the literature. I recorded these thoughts and notes along with observations in my field notes, as asides during interviews, and as separate entries in my field notes and analysis records. This journal was utilized during data collection and data analysis, from daily to multiple entries per week, as dictated by the actual circumstances and events during the study. It is this journal that became a critical connection between the data, the analysis, representation of teachers’ voices and perspectives, and the grounded theory/theories that emerged from the data. Analysis of the data collected as part of the research process follows.

Approach to Data Analysis

The data collection process yielded information to determine teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process. Analysis of the data collected was critical to making final assertions and conclusions. Glesne (1999) defines the data analysis process as involving:

organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense of what you have learned. Working with the data, you describe, create explanations, pose hypotheses, develop theories, and link your story to other stories. To do so, you must categorize, synthesize, search for patterns, and interpret the data you have collected. (p. 130).
Data analysis does not, however, begin only after data collection has ceased (Erickson, 1986; Glesne, 1999; Ryan and Bernard, 2000; Spradley, 1980). Data analysis was done in conjunction with data collection, enabling the researcher (me) to continually monitor and focus additional data collection as the study proceeded (Glesne, 1999).

Data analysis in the qualitative research framework involves an inductive approach to making inferences from direct observations, interviews, and document analysis. In essence, data analysis involves examining the data in a systematic fashion beginning with a collection of facts and observations, to identify warranted conclusions and assertions, ultimately bringing the research and its relevance to light. While this process is not necessarily linear, several steps or components can be designated in the data analysis process. These components do not happen in isolation and the researcher can be in more than one phase at a given time, dependent upon their particular study. The researcher needs to be continually aware of issues of trustworthiness and validity throughout the research process as well. Several steps of data analysis and the notions of trustworthiness and validity will be outlined below.

Steps of Data Analysis

As Glesne (1999) asserts, data analysis is a process that begins concurrently with data collection and can include practices such as “writing memos to yourself, developing analytic files, applying rudimentary coding schemes, and writing monthly reports to help you learn from and manage the information you are receiving” (p. 130). The ultimate aim of data analysis is, in the words of Erickson (1986), to “persuade the audience that an adequate evidentiary warrant exists for the assertions made, that patterns of generalization within the data set are indeed as the researcher claims they are” (p. 149). How data may be analyzed and specific steps that may be utilized may differ in terminology and format, but the goal in data analysis is to determine “key
linkages" (p. 147) and weave them into a conclusive and warranted argument. Although the actual data analysis system utilized during this study is not in the literature in an exact form, the two systems for data analysis that served as foundations for the data analysis of this study follow.

**Thematic networks: An analytic tool for qualitative research.**

Regardless of exactly how the researcher organizes his/her data, having a system in place is essential to successfully validating one’s assertions. Attride-Stirling (2001) proposes a system termed “thematic networks technique” (p. 385) which is a “robust and highly sensitive tool for the systematization and presentation of qualitative analyses” (p. 385). Thematic networks draws on core features common to many qualitative analytic tools. It is a framework that involves creating a web-like graphic organizer, which illustrates global themes down to organizing and basic themes in the data, eventually leading the researcher to identify a grounded theory. Global themes are the “super-ordinate themes that encompass the principal metaphors in the data as a whole...like a claim in that it is a concluding or final tenet” (p. 389). Organizing themes, or the middle order theme, organize basic themes into clusters of similar issues, that combine to support global theme. Basic themes are the lowest level themes, and are “like a backing in that it is a statement of belief anchored around a central notion (the warrant) and contributes toward the signification of a super-ordinate theme” (p. 388-389). Collectively, the combination of basic, organizational, and global themes illustrate parallels and connections in the data corpus.

According to Attride-Stirling (2001), creating a thematic network consists of six steps that can be applied to qualitative research. Step one consists of coding the material and dissecting texts into segments using a coding framework. Step two, focused on identifying themes, involves abstracting and refining themes as evidenced in the coded data. Next is the process of constructing thematic frameworks. This step contains six elements, beginning with arranging
themes and generating basic themes. From there, basic themes are organized into organizing themes. Once organizing themes are determined, global themes can be deduced. Refining and verifying the networks and their visual representation concludes step three of thematic networks analysis.

Step four in Attride-Stirling’s (2001) thematic network analysis is a continuation of steps one through three. This step involves describing and exploring the generated networks. In this step, the researcher “returns to the original text, but rather than reading it in a linear manner, the text is now read through the Global, Organizing, and Basic Themes” (p. 393). Step four brings together the data and the interpretation. Step five, then, is the researcher’s opportunity to summarize the principle themes that are emerging and make explicit the patterns emerging in the exploration of the data. Lastly, step six is when the researcher interprets patterns in the data. This complex task is best defined by Attride-Stirling as when the researcher returns to “the original research questions and the theoretical interests underpinning them, and address[es] these with arguments grounded on the patterns that emerged in the exploration of the texts” (p. 394). As Attride-Stirling suggests this process acknowledges the subjectivity of this method of interpretation, which is a natural result of the interpretation of meaning of the data understood within the social context of the data.

Thematic networks analysis is one framework for analyzing data in qualitative research. While the terms basic, organizing and global are specific to Attride-Stirling’s (2001) analytic tool, the process of deductively generating theories grounded in the data corpus is germane to qualitative research. Thematic networks analysis suggests a possible guideline and sequence of techniques and methods to accomplish grounded data analysis. Spradley (1980) provides an alternative tool, the Developmental Research Sequence Method.
Developmental research sequence method.

In his book, *Participant Observation*, Spradley (1980) proposes a systematic approach to anthropological fieldwork he calls the Developmental Research Sequence (D.R.S.) Method. In this framework, data analysis is infused with data collection in the form of participant observation and consists of twelve formally defined steps.

Spradley (1980) begins with locating a social situation, or research focus. Step two entails doing participant observations, at varying levels of participation. Next, in step three, the researcher makes an ethnographic record of observations and establishes a fieldwork notebook to record data. Step four has the researcher back in the field making descriptive observations. Collectively, these four steps are mainly data collection phases with some preliminary analysis incorporated.

Step five, termed making a domain analysis, begins with returning to the data corpus, as Spradley (1980) outlines, “in order to discover the cultural patterns of any social situation” (p. 85). He suggests that the researcher “must undertake an intensive analysis of your data before proceeding further” (p. 85). Essentially, Spradley is advocating that to determine what cultural domains exist in and influence the data, the researcher must thoroughly examine the data corpus. Step six, in direct reaction to step five, involves the researcher making additional and focused observations to clarify and refine themes and cultural domains. Steps seven and eight, making a taxonomic analysis and making selected observations, respectfully, mirror steps five and six in the sense that these steps have the researcher returning to the data for more detailed and pointed
analysis and then returning to the field for more specific observations to support or refute cultural themes and domains emerging in the data. These four steps are directly related to the next phase of the data analysis.

Step nine, making a componential analysis, is a review of the data and previous analyses that produce a more complex and grounded theory and analysis than in steps five through eight. Spradly (1980) defines this step as the step to “organize and represent domains through taxonomic analysis, a process that helps simplify the data…and represent all the contrasts [you have] discovered” (p. 130). A componential analysis is a systematic search for attributes associated with cultural categories and domains previously identified and involves looking for units of meaning as culturally defined by the participants. This phase leads to discovery of cultural themes, designated as step ten by Spradley. In step eleven, the researcher takes a cultural inventory to identify potential gaps in the data corpus, cultural themes and domains not previously identified. The researcher returns to the data for one last, in-depth inspection of and reflection on the data.

Writing an ethnography is Spradley's (1980) final and twelfth step in the Developmental Research Sequence Method. As the name implies, this step is the formal process of writing up of and translating the data. The product of this step is a written and persuasive account of the researchers questions, research process, and ultimate conclusions and interpretations that are grounded in the data.

Data Analysis Methods In Summary.

Glesne (1999) writes, “Even as you become intimately familiar with your data, you can never be sure of what they will tell you until analysis and writing are complete (p. 131).” Attride-Stirling (2001) and Spradley (1980) each present one analytic tool applicable for qualitative research, but neither contends their way is the only acceptable or successful format for data
analysis. I present these two systems to show that, while terminology of the analytic tool may vary, qualitative research embodies a deductive approach to analysis that is grounded in the data corpus, remains true to the data corpus, and continually returns to the data corpus. Granted, computer software programs exist to aid the qualitative researcher, but many qualitative researchers adapt them to their own purposes. Ultimately the software programs are tools to assist the researcher in organizing the data, but software cannot replace the introspection and reflection of the researcher (Glesne, 1999). As data was collected during my research period, reflection upon and analysis of the data was immediate, frequent, and embedded in the data collection process. Whether the emerging ideas are coined “themes” (Attride-Stirling, 2001) or “domains” (Spradley, 1980), my own data analysis incorporated identifying comprehensive themes and patterns, making connections, and contributing to a greater understanding of the research question (Glesne, 1999).

**Trustworthiness and Ethical Behavior**

*Trustworthiness in theory.*

The notion of trustworthiness and ethical behavior are underlying factors and crucial to the success in any study. Lincoln and Guba (2000) develop the notion of trustworthiness with respect to constructivism as a notion of extended validity. This includes elements of authenticity, relational and ethic-centered criteria, and community-centered determinations of validity. In essence, results are valid or trustworthy to the extent to which the participants involved deem they are valid and trustworthy. Including the researched in the research process when drawing conclusions will promote and produce the desired acceptance of the ultimate product as valid and/or trustworthy. Lather (2002) continues this rationale as she identifies four techniques for establishing trustworthiness. Simply stated, these four components are credibility, transferability via thick
description, dependability and confirmability via an audit trail, and a reflective journal. These four practices involve the researched and researcher operating in conjunction with one another, serving as monitors for each other and themselves. Trustworthiness is the degree to which the research is deemed valid and warranted, as dictated by all of those involved in the process and by those evaluating the process. Within the parameters of this research study, the techniques by Lincoln and Guba (2000) and Lather (2002) were adhered to and demonstrated through member checks, thick description, credibility and a reflective journal, as appropriate and possible throughout the study.

Trustworthiness was also established using verification procedures presented by Glesne (1999). Glesne posits to establish and maintain trustworthiness or research validity in qualitative research, the researcher must demonstrate and/or utilize: (1) prolonged engagement and persistent observation, (2) triangulation, (3) peer review and debriefing, (4) negative case analysis, (5) clarification of researcher bias, (6) member checks, (7) rich, thick description, and (8) external audits. Each of these procedures was considered and utilized throughout the research and data collection process. A brief recitation of how these techniques were implemented follows.

Trustworthiness in practice.

Before presenting a narrative illustrating how trustworthiness and ethical behavior according to Glesne (1999), Lather (2002), and Lincoln and Guba (2000), I briefly highlight how these tenets were adhered to throughout this study in the following table:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Example of Implementation during research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Credibility                       | • Letter of consent (See appendix B)  
|                                   | • Letter of support (See appendix C)  
|                                   | • Member checks of interviews  
|                                   | • Member checks of participant observation notes  
| Prolonged engagement              | • Curriculum coordinator since January 2001  
|                                   | • Curriculum development process from August 2002 through present  
| Dependability and confirmability  | • Member checks of interviews  
| via an audit trail                | • Member checks of participant observation notes  
| Member checks                     | Use of interviews throughout study  
|                                   | Use of participant observation throughout study  
|                                   | Use of document analysis throughout study  
|                                   | Member checks  
| Triangulation                     | Keep throughout study  
|                                   | Included observations, notes pertaining to interviews or participant observations, notes to self  
| Reflective Journal                | Conclusions grounded in the data  
|                                   | Confirmation through interview and follow-up interview questions  
|                                   | Confirmation via member checks  
| Rich, thick description           | Acknowledge dual positionality as researcher and curriculum coordinator  
| Clarification of Researcher Bias  | Discussed in Chapters Four and Five  
| (lends to credibility)            |                                                                 |

Trustworthiness and Ethical Behavior Table 3.1

As previously stated and discussed, each of the eight participants participated in three interviews conducted individually. After each interview (within 7-10 days), each participant received a copy of the transcript of the interview for his/her input, feedback and possible
alterations. Each suggested change was made to the transcript in question, at the participants’ request, before the data was considered in its final and quotable form. Any notes taken during interviews, in addition to the actual interview transcript, were made available to each participant. Participant observations were also shared with participants to ensure accurate accounting of events and comments, as well as to ensure accurate portrayal of content, themes or concepts, and essence of the event. Credibility was not a factor that required the same attention as member checks necessarily, but was accounted for preceding this study as well as throughout.

In the two years prior to the commencement of this study, I served as the mathematics and science curriculum coordinator in Summit Way City Schools, as I have previously discussed. Consequently, I entered this research with an established rapport and reputation with these eight participants, individually and collectively. I had demonstrated my integrity and remained true to my words through assorted arenas and venues. I presented documentation of this study to support my intent, my purpose and validate my request of their participation. Frequent member checks and verification of participant observations reiterated my sincerity to include them in the process, my desire to accurately convey their perceptions, and remain true to their words and intent. As several of them said when given the third interview transcript, “I’m sure it’s fine. I trust you.” Despite our mutual trust, respect and admiration in and for one another, I still asked them to review the transcript. Despite their comments, they still reviewed the transcript and gave me their approval and/or suggestions for change.

I entered this research as the curriculum coordinator they each currently work with in this capacity. As discussed in chapters four and five, the duality of being researcher and curriculum coordinator did create some blurring of roles. As I discuss in later chapters, the distinction was not always clear was I questioning them as the researcher or as the district personnel contact.
responsible for facilitating mathematics curriculum with their help and input. Round one interviews included reassurance they needed to answer honestly. Yes, I was considering their response for this research, but this research also had immediate and real implications for my role as curriculum coordinator. I sincerely believe their voices need to be heard, in the context of this study and beyond, and reminded them of this position frequently. By my very asking the questions helped emphasize the sincerity with which I posed the question and raised the issues. I now present the timeline of data collection, data analysis and the interrelatedness of these two components and the entire qualitative research process.

Research Timeline

This entire process began with my committee’s approval of the proposal in August 2002. Preliminary questions and participant observation focuses were drafted. Exempted review was approved and received by the Institutional Review Board Committee (oral script and consent forms in appendices). The following timeline illustrates the chronological events during the research process and includes the codes used to refer to these events in the process. The reader will see these codes in the data in chapter four.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 2002</td>
<td>Committee approval of proposal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2002</td>
<td>Initial participant observations of curriculum development process, within entire kindergarten through twelfth grade process, with emphasis on grade five and six for this study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Document analysis of standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Document analysis of previous mathematics curriculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September – November 2002</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Draft of interview number one questions and follow up questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preliminary writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Document analysis of standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Document analysis of curriculum drafts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2002</td>
<td>Interview number one sessions</td>
<td>(#1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis of interview data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant observations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drafting of interview number two questions and future participant observations' focus points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2002 continued</td>
<td>Preliminary writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Document analysis of standards and curriculum drafts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2003</td>
<td>Interview number two sessions</td>
<td>(#2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis of interview data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant observations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drafting of interview number three questions and future participant observations' focus points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preliminary writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Document analysis of standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Document analysis of curriculum drafts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2003</td>
<td>Interview number three sessions</td>
<td>(#3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis of interview data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant observations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drafting of future participant observations' focus points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preliminary writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Document analysis of standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Document analysis of curriculum drafts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• March 1, 2003 – June 1, 2003</td>
<td>• Continued data analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Revising and reviewing of preliminary writings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Writing and finalizing final written document (dissertation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Timeline Table 3.2

This truly became our study, not just my study. The light I bring to their voices can only be as bright as they allow it to be. It is without hesitation and trepidation I will share this final document and accounting with them, and demonstrate my appreciation for their willingness to participate in this process.

Conclusion

As Glesne (1999) states, “Like scientists who seek to identify and understand the biological and geological processes that create the patterns of a physical landscape, qualitative researchers seek to describe and understand the processes that create the patterns of the human terrain” (p. 193). In my research, the human terrain is the perceptions of teachers in the curriculum development process. I have outlined the alignment between qualitative research methods and my quest and desire to understand teachers’ perceptions in the curriculum development and implementation process from an interpretivist/constructivist paradigm. Secondly, research strategies to use and implement during the formal data collection process were explored. Finally, data analysis as an integral and embedded component of the research process was discussed. While these issues and strategies were presented to some degree in isolation, they were implemented in a more multifaceted and layered manner. Data collection continued while data analysis commenced. During actual data collection events (interviews and participant observations), my reflexive journal became to location to record tentative conclusions, assertions

103
and next steps. Qualitative research does not occur in a step-by-step format, where one component of devoid of influence by or on other components. The entire research process was all encompassing, for when I was not officially researching or analyzing, I found myself doing just that. Glesne (1999) states, “You become intimately familiar with your data” (p.131). This assertion could not be any more accurate.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS

Nationally, it is the age of proficiency testing and accountability. School districts and teachers are ever aware of the need to align instruction and classroom practice with proficiency outcomes and help students become proficient in conveying their responses in the forms of short answer and extended response. Summit Way City Schools' teachers are no different. It is within this climate of proficiency and academic content standards in the area of mathematics that teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process were explored.

Within the context of this chapter I will present the findings of my research in the words of the teachers and through my eyes as researcher. I begin with first illustrating the transition of the teachers who participated in this study during the curriculum development process using only their words. I will then present their perceptions of the curriculum development process in a more comprehensive manner. I will conclude with an analysis and reflective interpretation of the aforementioned and presented findings. I begin with by outlining the format of this chapter and providing a visual representation of each section.

During the data collection and analysis periods of this research, it became apparent the findings of this study seem to illustrate the tiers or layers of the teachers' perceptions. The first tier involves teachers' perceptions involve technical aspects of the curriculum development process.
This layer includes elements of the curriculum development process such as external and internal factors, negotiation and deliberation, time, and curriculum development as a process. The discussion of curriculum development is further delineated as containing five steps. In parallel to the curriculum development in a technical sense discussion is affective aspects of curriculum development. The following graphic organizer illustrates the organization and presentation of teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process:

```
Teachers' Perceptions of Curriculum Development

Teachers' Perceptions: Technical Aspects
External Factors Internal Factors Negotiation Time Process
Step 1 Step 2 Step 3 Step 4 Step 5

Teachers' Perceptions: Affective Aspects
Size Bridge Alone Mine
```

While this visual representation does not fully convey the essence or connotations of the words of the teachers, it is meant to illustrate the tiers and multiple layers of their perceptions. Before expanding upon the themes illustrated above, I begin with presenting the teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process using only the words of the teacher participants.

Curriculum Development in the Words of the Teachers

Teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process was the topic of this study. Interviews, participant observations and document analysis served as the vehicles to uncover and deconstruct these teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process. Before presenting
and elaborating on warranted assertions and grounded theories resulting from this study, I present data and tell a story using only the words of the eight participants. Headings have been inserted to complement and emphasize the reoccurring themes and issues raised by the teachers but are not direct quotes from the data. Comments on opposing sides of the text represent the dialectic and conversational element of the process and teachers' reflections embedded within the process, individually and collectively. This is their story. This is their account. This is the curriculum development process in the words of the teachers.

The Beginning

We got together.
It was a voluntary process.

Everyone’s role I think,
Was to work together.

It was very nitty-gritty.
But it’s a, it’s one of those jobs you don’t want to do but you have to.
I was learning on the spot.

It’s also a little daunting.
How are we going to make that leap successfully?
What should we do in the interim?

It Wasn’t Always an Easy Process

Overwhelming.
I think it goes again to feeling overwhelmed.
That’s hard because so many teachers are perfectionists
And want to do that good job
And when they can’t do it as well as they’d like,
It’s difficult.

This was a new experience.
Something that I considered I was going to come in and just do this as an observer to begin with.
I decided that you’re never going to learn unless you jump in and do it.
The first couple of days were just hard.
There was just so much and it was just overwhelming.

I feel kind of out in the dark.
I don't know. I don't know.
I just can't even begin to imagine what
kind of nightmare that's going to be.
But, you just have to do what you have to do.

The jargon can get confusing.
You know a lot of times
It's how you perceive the written word.

I think it's a necessary evil.
So I'm not sure there's a fun or easy way to do it.

I don't think I bring much more than experience.
Every time the state changes their standards
the curriculum has to change.
And so that's very difficult.

I think there needs to be some direction,
But openness too.
I mean, it needs to be flexible,
But guided at the same time.

Group Negotiation and Deliberation

Because I think getting
a group of teachers together,
Ok, we're going to write the new course of study.
We kind of looked at each other.

It just seems kind of vague.
I don't know if that's just because it's at the beginning stages.
That's kind of the way it is at the beginning.
Then it gets more detailed, but
Right now it just seems kind of vague.
It may be vague because it's so hard
to get everybody together to give out a task.
It's hard to pull all those people together.

Well, I think that's what we tried to do.
We sat down and worked as a group.
It's pretty important that our course of study is aligned with those outcomes. Because we have so much pressure. Especially this time of year. To make sure that we're covering those in time for proficiency.

Interpretation of Content and Vocabulary

Because the language of those standards isn't always clear-cut. And can be interpreted in different ways. Maybe we don't even see the flow.

Well, we basically just went through it point by point. And said, okay, this is what this does. It's not real clear. Let's clean it up a little bit vocabulary-wise. Let's pull this in because this wasn't really touched on. And that's what the group spent those days going over.

I think we pretty much all had headaches.

More Negotiation and Deliberation

We debated. And talked about it. We spent a long time pouring over language. Wording is pretty important. Looking for a flow.

Basically, it was a lot of cutting and pasting, putting things together, seeing where things matched up. See where the wording was similar and where it was different. If we didn't agree on something, I think that as a group, we sat and had a good discussion. Everybody would come to a conclusion that everybody was happy with. I didn't walk away going, ‘Gosh, I really don't like this, or what they put in’. I went away feeling satisfied.
It was very, very, difficult.

I wasn't quite sure
where everything was supposed to go.
I felt kind of confused.
Looking for things that were missed
or things that need to be plugged in
So an idea does get covered.

Hearing Everyone’s Voice

And I tried really hard this time
to make sure that I said,
'What do other people think about this?'
So I didn't seem like I'm trying to be a dictator.
Saying that we have to do this, and this, and this,
Because everybody has their own opinions.

Wait, how does this work?
How do we put these together?
Okay, how does that fit
with what we're trying to do now?
It just seemed like a lot of confusion,
Feeling a little discombobulated
when we first started.

Lots of different ideas and opinions came together.
I don't think there was anything wrong with it,
But it didn't match the course of study.
We came up with what we thought was best.

External and Internal Factors

Obviously the state standards are a huge part.
We want our citizens to be the best in the world.
School boards have an effect.
Parents and what they need
and what they understand.
‘Leave No Child Behind’.
The needs of our students.

You've got to have the parents
feel comfortable with what you're doing.
Community buy-in.

You've got to have buy-in f
rom the teachers.
Teacher buy-in.
You’ve got to have the support from the administration. Administrative buy-in.

And the district. District buy-in.

And the professional development.

Now there’s a real high bar and people trying to meet it and Working towards it.

It doesn’t happen all at once.

How are we going to meet all of the different needs?

The Power of the Group

It seemed like people were bouncing a lot of ideas off each other. Coming to consensus about where things should be. People seem to get, were pretty open about where things belong.

I think that the way that we worked, There were good intentions behind it.

I thought that we worked well together dividing up the assignment And each doing our part and then Communicating or asking help from each other when there was a question. And I was really surprised at how much we did accomplish.

Sometimes it’s hard. Sometimes it turns into a gripe session of 'we can't do this'. That's just because of the frustrations of the job. You need somebody who is personally a cheerleader out there, 'Hey, you know what, I know you can do it'.

Analyzing, finding out what's going to be the best. Kind of maintaining that collegiality and coming to consensus instead of just moving on.
It needs to be more of a consensus.
There needs to be ownership.

It's not as bad
as I thought it would be.

It actually worked a lot better
than I thought it was going to.

You need to know how to work
within a group effectively.

I think just the discussion
between all of us kind of helped.
We’re connecting. The teachers are connecting.
So I think just that – working together – helps.

I have no hidden agenda.
There's not something I want to teach.
Trust me, there are things that I wanted to teach
That went to other grade levels.

But I guess by doing it that way
it did make us look
And examine more in depth
what was actually there.

All teachers want less
in their curriculum,
But then we’re the first ones
that put more into it too.

The Power of the Process for The Group

I think what we've done so far has worked.
I was impressed at how everybody did come together
And how quickly we did get things matched.
And I think from what the state has given us
That we've done a good job.

I do think it's important for them to realize that
We don’t just pick these out of the sky
That they are really going to benefit from them.
Make people feel comfortable with what they're doing. So they don't feel like they're floundering.

Even an understanding of the language in what they're asking us to do. I know that it's not easy and I know it can be hard.

I think it went really well. It seemed like everybody clicked really well. We debated certain points. Somebody might bring something up and somebody else might say, 'Well, I don't know'. I think it went really well.

I think it's a good process for us, to have that opportunity. Rather than just to take what the state says and 'Here, you're going to do this'. We've made it our own by looking at it, rearranging it, putting it together. I think that helped the process too. So I think that part of the process is a good thing.

It's a cyclical process. It is a step-by-step process. I think we handled it in the best way we could.

I think overall it's been a positive experience. I think everybody's in there for the right reason. Just trying to do what's best for our district and the kids we work with. But it's a great point to be at now.

Well, I think we've done it in a very cohesive way. We did it as a cohesive group. I think we did what we could do with what we had. I think we tried to involve
I think everyone was real comfortable with each other.
Felt comfortable expressing their ideas.
Working together.
I think if just flowed much better.

I felt like everybody bought into it.
Everybody thought,
Yeah, this course of study is strong.
We agree with what we've come up with.
We feel good about it.
Let's move forward.

The Power of the Process for the Individuals

I felt really good about the process.
I think it went well.
I think that people who were there were all working really hard And focused
And all really wanted to be there And really wanted to do a good job with it.

I think we accomplished what we wanted to.
I think we did a good job.
I like what's going on.

I think the process that we have in place works well.
Being kept up with what's going on and where it is.
Being able to contact people who are serving on that committee was also helpful.

The time has been productive.
We gained a lot from it.

I feel comfortable with you.
Knowing that I can call you up and ask you a question or e-mail you.
That’s a good thing.

I want to be at the party when we get this all finished.

It’s been a very positive experience. It was very positive because the teachers were there. They wanted to be there. They were focused and ready to face the challenge.

This is My Document

This is my document. I helped develop this. I helped mold this. I want it to work.

Teachers’ Perceptions of the Technical Aspects of the Curriculum Development Process

The eight participant teachers involved in this study are teachers I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with during the past three years in my role as mathematics and science curriculum coordinator. It is in this capacity I was able to establish the rapport and build the relationships necessary to elicit the honest and genuine responses from each of the participants. While they were continually reminded of my dual role as researcher and curriculum coordinator, once they became accustomed to the tape recorder and note pad, the responses came without apparent reservation or hesitation. As discussed in Chapter Three, this prior relationship contributed to access to these participants, provided me with an emic perspective from which to draw upon (Pelto and Pelto, 1978), gave credence to my position and intentions and negated some potential discomfort. But did this relationship also present contradictory and additional issues deserving of consideration?
Yes, the participants knew me on one level and I knew them on one level. Many have
been candid in past conversations regarding curriculum, policy and professional development
related issues. I entered this research process confident they would be truthful. I also
acknowledge my position as the district curriculum coordinator may have influenced their
responses to a degree. While they self-selected pseudonyms to protect their identity, I must
entertain the notion their responses still may have been tainted. I repeatedly asked them to be
honest and reminded them that I was not looking for specific answers, but they may still have
wanted to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear or the “right answers.” They are dedicated
educators who want to make a difference and are dedicated to their students and colleagues. I
posed the questions, and encouraged them to answer honestly and frankly. While I further trouble
this notion in chapter five, I felt it deserving of mention prior to presenting the research findings.
My intent was to be as objective as possible, but concede the nature of this study created a setting
and situation rendering total objectivity impossible. Before I can express their perceptions of the
curriculum development process, I begin with their definition of curriculum.

*What Is Curriculum?*

Asking this group of teachers for their definition of curriculum yielded eight individual
responses that seemed to reiterate the same collective cry. Curriculum is essentially a course of
study. As previously stated, Beauchamp (1981), Chandler (1992), and Darder 1991) also present
and discuss curriculum as a document that guides and structures course content. Christine (#1)
further defines curriculum as “basically what needs to be taught at what level, covering all subject
areas.” Ann (#1) states curriculum gives teachers a “direction of what they should be teaching.”
Paula, Susan and Paul (#1) comment curriculum is the course of study, is all encompassing and
aligns your instruction for the entire year. Stephanie (#1) qualifies this year-long plan as a “defined
look at what we’re studying and how all the pieces fit together to create a fluid pathway of what we study so that things aren’t in separate pieces; that they’re in conjunction with one another and work well together.” Francis (#1) reiterates the connection between curriculum and the proficiency reality, “The curriculum we teach is a combination of the course of study, and in our district, that’s usually based on state outcomes with an eye for the proficiency outcomes which should be based on state outcomes along with our benchmarks.” The curriculum developed was “value laden decision” (Chandler, 1992, p. 41-42), as developed by the group and supported in the following sections. Collectively, this group defined curriculum as the academic content and concepts presented at a given grade level consistent across the school district.

As the notion of curriculum and how the participants defined that document was explored and discussed, it became evident curriculum can be defined as more than a mere document, as Beauchamp (1981) and (1982) also posits. In addition to the notion of curriculum as the course of study or the content taught, reference was made to the materials used to convey the content as part of the curriculum. As Francis (#1) concedes,

What we adopt (support materials or textbook) ends up being taught. But in an ideal situation, we would sit down with any materials and make sure that everything that the course of study, or proficiency outcomes are saying is important at that grade level, is covered in there because we know the reality is if it’s not there, the teacher is less likely to teach it.

Susan (#1) supports Francis' viewpoint when she admits the curriculum (or what is taught) is often related to text selection. Paul (#1) further illustrates this phenomenon, “I felt like I used the curriculum, but I used the book a lot more as a guide for the curriculum because I wasn’t quite sure where everything was supposed to go.” Although curriculum or the course of study is considered as the document driving instruction in one sense, it is related to support materials provided to implement the said curriculum. While the scope of this study focused on teachers’ perceptions of
the curriculum development process, acknowledging curriculum can also be considered in conjunction with support materials is a notion deserving of mention. I now turn more directly to teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process.

I have just explained the general and collective definition of curriculum from the combined responses elicited during this research. Curriculum development is a cyclical process involving more than one educator charged with the task of determining what the learning goals are and should be for a given grade level or group of students. Several resounding themes emerged during data collection and analysis. As represented in Figure 4.1, I present the following five themes as emergent themes grounded in and warranted by the data corpus:

1. External factors exist that influence the curriculum development.
2. Internal factors also contribute to the development of curriculum by teachers.
3. The curriculum development process involves negotiation or deliberation between the curriculum developers, with respect to curriculum content and interpretation of language of said document.
4. Time affects the curriculum development process.
5. Lastly, the curriculum development process involved a series of steps.

Each of these elements will be further considered and presented, as supported by the data corpus. I begin with discussing external factors on the curriculum development process as defined by the teacher participants.

External Factors on the Curriculum Development Process

As previously mentioned, teachers and school districts are increasingly attentive to aligning curriculum and instruction with testing and state and federal legislation. To say the state
mathematics standards that serve as a foundation for the new testing regimen influence curriculum
development is an understatement, as Paul (#2) reiterates:

Paul- We would start taking what we had and kind of say, “OK, this is what we
had, this is what we used to start with, this is what we got as new, this is what we
have to do”, so we just kind of started from there and taking the things that were in
each grade level and making sure there were no holes and kind of said sometimes
we don’t have a choice and we have to do this so it’s just something we’re going to
have to do. That’s kind of the way we looked at it and accepted it and looked at
ways of how we can do it, and can we word it so it is a little bit easier so everybody
will understand it.

Interviewer- The things that you said “we” have to do, how were those “have to
do’s” established? Was it a certain group member that determined we have to do
this here?

Paul- Oh, no. We used the state course of study, the standards, the state
standards, and said, the state told us, you know, this is what your students are
going to be accountable for, so we said, OK.

Without a doubt, Paul makes obvious the effect state standards have on curriculum development.
The state content standards, along with state proficiency tests, the community and the business
sector, combine to form the external factors of consideration of the teachers whose perceptions of
the curriculum development process were examined in this research. This attention in education
to outside influences is supported by Cohen (2000), Dobbert and Cooke (2000) Geertz (1973), and
Levinson (2000). External influences on the curriculum development process are qualified as
being factors outside the scope of the school district and/or beyond the control of the teachers in
question. I begin by sharing the collective stance regarding the state mathematics standards.

*External influences: State standards.*

The state mathematics content standards were adopted in December of 2002. As the
teachers of this study engaged in the curriculum development process, they did so with one eye on
the mathematics content standards. Much of their work, as previously presented, involved aligning
grade level indicators with benchmarks to assure alignment kindergarten through twelfth grade. As
Paula (#2) states, “So now we’re shuffling to make our curriculum match the new state standards. I would say they (the standards) directly affect our course of study or our curriculum.” Ann (#2) agrees with Paula. When asked about external factors influencing the committee’s work, she responds, “The state standards directly. I mean, that’s where we got everything from.” Francis (#2) reiterates this position, “Obviously state standards. They are driving our curriculum and I understand some districts just use the standards, they don’t even write a curriculum, they just use the standards.” “Well obviously, I think the standards had a huge impact on our curriculum development” is Stephanie’s (#2) position regarding the influence of the standards. Clearly, the collective cry declares the influence of the state mathematics standard on the curriculum development process. Directly related to the standards influence is that of the state proficiency tests.

External influences: State proficiency tests.

The current state proficiency test system of assessment will soon be realigned to match grade level indicators and/or grade band benchmarks in the forthcoming achievement and diagnostic testing schema that will be phased in beginning in the 2003-04 school year. The new state content standards, in essence, become the new bar or target for a given grade level. This external reality was not absent from the minds of these eight teachers as they participated in the curriculum development process. Julia (#2) minces no words in her admission of this reality, “I mean everything done was based on proficiency and the new testing, and what the state says, so it’s very driven by that.” Paula (#2) concedes the proficiency tests are not necessarily a favorite, they are not all bad either, “Nobody wants to teach to the test, but ultimately we’re teaching to the test. But not that the information is bad. I’m the first one to say that I don’t care for proficiency tests, but the information on the test isn’t that bad.” Francis (#2) states it quite bluntly, “The
proficiency is huge.” Susan (#2) summarizes the perceptions of herself and her colleagues in this process, “It's the influence; I mean, that's what we're all striving for.” Regardless of personal feelings or opinions, the collective cry from these eight participants in the curriculum development process is that the state proficiency test and state standards do influence their work as curriculum developers.

External influences: Community and business sector.

The community and business sector emerged as external influences on the curriculum development process, but almost more as extensions of the proficiency testing and standards reality than as stand alone entities. Julia (#2) illustrates the connections between proficiency results and community influence, “That's (the community) very motivating for us. To make sure we're doing what the state stays we should be doing (proficiency and/or standards) because that's what the community is going to judge us on. That's the benchmark that the parents, the community, test us on, so that's what we do.” Paula (#2) supports Julia’s assertion when she states, “I think the community looks at the results of the test. I think that's as easy way for them to see what's going on.” Paul (#2) declares his admission of the community influence by making it even more personal to the particular attendance area of his school, “I think the population in the community, we talked about that a lot at our meeting where we have this diverse community. How are we going to meet all of the different needs?” Stephanie (#2) takes it to the parent level in her belief that “the parents have to feel comfortable with what you’re doing also” in her discussion of community influence. These comments, acknowledging community influence in education, are supported by Banks and McGee Banks’ (1995) declaration of the need in education to “recognize
and respond to multiple students’ characteristics” (p. 153). Regardless of the level of influence, the community serves as an influence in the curriculum development process according to these educators.

It is this community level influence that contributes to and acts in complement to the influence of the business sector. Ann (#2) felt the link between the state standards and the business sector was a direct outgrowth of the community influence. Her line of reasoning progressed in the following manner:

We’re always trying to prepare for the next level and eventually they’re (the students) going to get to a level where they’re in the workforce. Whether it’s right out of high school or in high school, or the student drops out, we need to kind of prepare them so that there’s more of an indirect and we need to make sure that our curriculum focuses on some basic skills that will help students function in every day life as well as preparing them for those who are going on to the college level and leading more of leadership role in a company, CEO, or whatever, but there’s a lot of influences. And I think that’s where the state and community kind of get their influences from – corporate America.”

Stephanie (#2) makes the connection in a more comprehensive manner, “They’re (the community and proficiency tests) not really worried about can you get this exact algorithm. They’re looking at, do you understand the idea behind here? My kids need to know the concepts, not just the basic skills – in my classroom and beyond – as they enter society as a whole.” While Ann and Stephanie were the only two to take the community influence and extend it beyond, the passion of their declaration made it critical to include the business sector (and society as a whole) as an external influence deserving of attention.

External influences: In summary.

Given the external influences, the teachers of this study engaged in the curriculum development process. They went through the perceived steps, and produced a document to take
to the additional stakeholders in the district. Despite the external factors, Ann (#2) clearly reiterates their commitment to the process and their product thus far,

I mean we need to have ownership over what we're doing, teacher autonomy. If we're not going to take ownership of it, you're not going to feed the same way as someone who does. You're not going to be as enthusiastic about teaching as someone who took ownership over, you know, 'this is my document, I helped develop this, I helped mold it, I want it to work.

Just as external factors influence the curriculum development process, the internal influences that affect this process will be presented and discussed next.

Internal Influences on the Curriculum Development Process

The internal factors that influence the curriculum development process that emerged during this study include teachers themselves, administrators, building configurations and students. An internal factor is a factor that previously exists within the school district or educational environment. Each factor was mentioned as an influence by one or more participant, whether viewed as a positive or negative influence is less the issue than the fact the influence arose. The collective and individual perceptions are presented with respect to the four potential influences.

Internal influences: Teachers.

Teachers were seen as a primary internal influence on the curriculum development process by the teacher participants in the study. Ann (#2) considers teachers (the entire teaching staff) active participants in the curriculum development process:

I think teachers do directly because they're the ones who are going to be implementing; the teachers are going to be directly influencing if they are involved. I know a lot of teachers that 'okay, this is what I got and okay this is my job; I'll stay in my classroom and do it, but then there are other teachers who really get involved and really focus on what's best and what's appropriate at an age level, and so I think that way.

Both Paul (#2) and Julia (#2) concede that teachers of math will teach math to students, regardless of how long the document and where the “state” places concepts because they “really love math
and understand it, and want kids to develop that same appreciation for math” (Julia, #2). Francis (#2) declares that teachers will support the efforts of the committee because they trust the committee, are very hard workers, and will accept the curriculum put forth by the committee. Christine (#2) is confident that “I feel like we’ve (teachers) had some kind of say into it because maybe we have a different perspective as we sit in the classroom and where we think this benchmark fits with this particular standard.” Collectively, the influence of the teachers on the curriculum development process is more subtle than the external influence of the state standards, for example, but of enough importance to be discussed by the teachers during this study.

Internal influences: Administrators.

Administrators can support teachers through a variety of degrees of participation. As Ann (#2) states, administrators are not the ones implementing the curriculum as the teachers are, but they do have somewhat of an influence. Julia (#2) continues Ann’s thoughts when she states, “Well, I think their (administrators) expectations are that we follow the course of study and we do exactly what we’re supposed to do.” Julia (#2) acknowledges that administrators have expectations of how well we do on that test (proficiency), which is an internal influence on the content of the curriculum developed during the curriculum development process. Stephanie (#2) also admits “you’ve got to have the support from the administration, from the district.” In the minds of these participants, administrators do serve as an internal influence on the curriculum development process.

Susan, Paula, and Christine, however, present an opposing viewpoint with respect to the influence of administration on the curriculum development process. Christine (#2) puts it forth quite frankly, “I’m not sure as far as principals go, as to how much input that they have to it (curriculum
development).” When discussing the potential influence of administrators on the curriculum development process, Susan posits they (administrators) have no influence:

I don’t really think they influence it. I think their main thing is regardless of what kids you have, regardless of whether they’re in this particular area which is a challenge, or at a building where the students seem to come from families that have read to the students and basically have a better home life and things, I don’t really think they can do that. I think they have to come up with a basic standard and you have to just strive for that. Because that wouldn’t be fair to say, “Okay, in this particular area, we’re going to cut it down a little bit”, you just can’t do that.

Paula (#2) supports Christine’s assertion that the administration doesn’t have influence per se, “I don’t think the building I’m in, that my principal has any direct or indirect affect on the curriculum. I think that is something that is done, that it is a group of teachers that get together.” Without a doubt, administration is a consideration with respect to curriculum. The question seems to surround is it in the development and/or implementation of said curriculum that administrators play a role.

**Internal influences: Building configuration.**

The topic of the building configuration of the intermediate schools was a reoccurring theme as a potential internal influence of the curriculum development process. Some participants felt the creation of the intermediate building helped fifth and sixth grade teachers write a more spiral and cohesive curriculum, while others didn’t feel the degree of influence as strongly. Julia (#2) discusses the change in transition from fifth to sixth grade in the new intermediate buildings as opposed to the past elementary to middle school transition:

Well, I think the bridge from fifth to sixth is much shorter now because we are together and that fifth grade gives them, the students, that opportunity to kind of bridge that too. And because we’re connecting, the teachers are connecting with what they did in elementary and fifth grade, and sixth grade helps too.

Julia expresses the benefits of the current fifth and sixth grade level configuration when developing curriculum for those grade levels. Christine (#2) supports Julia’s position, “I think that by putting us
together we’re realized that this is an important piece and it’s kind of helped make that bridge between that elementary and that middle school." Stephanie (#2) reiterates this stance, “I do think it helps when you have, if you’re trying to get more carryover and communication between fifth and sixth grade teachers; you’ve got the two teachers and it’s so easy to flow back and forth based on how you want to organize your curriculum.” Stephanie (#2) continues to elaborate on her guiding assumption:

Well there was definitely, I think there’s more of a bridge between more elementary kind of ideas about math and more middle school ideas about math. I think we’re finally getting to the point where people are starting to see themselves as intermediate teachers. I think the first two years it was elementary and middle school teachers. And maybe there were one or two people who thought they were intermediate teachers, but for the most part, elementary or middle school, and now we’re starting to develop this definition of what it means to be an intermediate teacher and that they’re not the same as either of the other two definitions. And I definitely think that influences people’s outlook…which is part of the course of study and the new curriculum and making that bridge between fifth and sixth grade.

These teachers feel the building configuration of the fifth and sixth grade teachers and students together does influence the curriculum development process, even if in a subtle manner. Some of their colleagues, however, present a contrary perspective.

Internal influences: Students.

The fourth and final internal influence that received continuous mention is the student element in the curriculum equation. As Durkheim (2000) posits, students are the ultimate receivers of curriculums developed, “children are the essential condition of its (education) very existence” (p. 61). Ann (#2) describes the attention given to and influence of the students during curriculum development, “[e]specially with the fifth grade. They are no longer being treated like babies,
they’re middle/young adults now and they’re expected to act and to do their homework and they’re expected to know a little bit more.” Julia (#2) expresses the students are a consideration and/or influence, but does so with a different focus,

I just worry that all of the students are going to know exactly the same stuff and instead of going off into different directions or different interests that everybody in Ohio is going to know exactly the same things. And to a point, where they have to know the basics and stuff, but I think when you have students that, and you still try to, that want to go off in other areas, you try to do that.

Stephanie (#2) shares a perspective that considers the student as not just a fifth or sixth grader, but that curriculum needs to consider and prepare them for life beyond the classroom, as Durkheim (2000), Erickson and Schultz (1982), Henry (2000), Lemke (1993), and Rival (2000) posit: “Trying to prepare the kids to go farther on in life, but realizing they just came up from elementary school and there may be some more support needed there.” Cohen (2000), Cusick (1973), Hubbard (1996), Rogoff (1996), and Ogbu (1987) support the attention afforded to society in the development of curriculum. Freire ([1970] 1988), Greene (1988), and hooks (1994) further advocate for liberatory education the participants spoke of being actualized at the classroom level. Collectively, these teacher participants convey the consideration afforded to students in the curriculum development process.

Internal influences: In summary.

Internal factors as influencing elements on the curriculum development process in the context of this research that emerged were the teachers, administrators, building level configurations and the students themselves. Given the contradictory views presented, this is an area without definite consensus and unanimity in viewpoint and opinion. Despite the embedded contradictions, the presence of these influences is without question and cannot be denied. These internal influences, combined with the external influences and the steps of the curriculum
development process previously presented, are the first two themes that emerged during the research of teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process. I now present the third component of the curriculum development process according to the teacher participants of this study – negotiation or deliberation.

**Negotiation and Deliberation in the Curriculum Development Process**

Coming to consensus or negotiating was a definite element in the curriculum development process according to the teacher participants in this research. Discussion, as posited by Basso (2000), Mead (2000), Scribner and Cole (1973), and Wolcott (1994), leads to the shared meaning making critical in the curriculum development process. The process of discussion and working towards a common and mutually agreed upon final product was evident in each participants’ response as the curriculum development process was explored and examined. Deliberation or negotiation was part of the process whether the topic was content driven or centered upon language or vocabulary. Even without formal ground rules or guiding parameters, negotiation or deliberation, as previously defined by McCutcheon (2002) and Reid (1992), occurred.

**Discussion as a primary component.**

Discussion seemed to be the primary vehicle for negotiating or deliberating the contents of the curriculum that was developed during the course of this committee work and research period. Christine (#3) outlines the process and procedures of the curriculum development process of the group and illustrates the role of discussion and communication:

> We started off by each person taking a different benchmark and coming up with their own indicator. We just kind of delegated out for each person to take one piece of it and just focus on their one piece and to go through and put the indicators together and then came together as a group and then just kind of read off and we discussed, debated sometimes, on where that actually fit and then we pretty much came to an understanding within our group. Everyone seemed to be considerate of other people’s feelings and listened, and sometimes even though you may have come up with an idea to begin with, most people were open for
suggestion and for change. And I think the committee worked together and did a great job. Because we worked together as a team; we didn't do something individual. Even though we had that one piece that you did individually, when we came together, we still worked together as a team.

Julia (#3) also elaborates upon the fact discussion was the mode of operation during the process:

Just a lot of discussion. We have some strong opinions, but I think they were mellowed by the other opinions too and everybody got a chance to say something. It wasn't one person taking control and I thought that was a good thing. That even the stronger minded committee members knew to let others talk and discuss and I think that helped too because a lot of the conversations added to what we were thinking, or in some cases there were some differences but discussing kind of clarified if for everybody, so I guess that would be the specifics of how it came together.

Susan (#3) and Paul (#3) both mentioned the divide and conquer method of the groups in their discussion strategy. "We tended to divvy up a lot more and say, 'okay, you two go take this one and figure it out, and you two take this one and figure it out', and then we all came back together. We kind of discussed. We came back together and revised what we had" is Paul's (#3) rendition of the process. Susan (#3) presents her view in the following manner:

Well, sometimes we split up in five/six (grade level groups) and figure out what we thought was missing or what we thought needed to be there and then we came back together and had a comparison and decided what needed to be done. Or sometimes we did it as a whole group if it was easier to do it that way.

Clearly, negotiation and deliberation took place in the whole group setting as well as in small subgroups during the curriculum development process.

Discussion and controversy.

Discussion was the vehicle promoting communication during the deliberating and negotiating, but that does not mean the process was without a degree of controversy. This does not mean an adversarial situation developed, just that conversation was not without an element of contradiction or initial disagreement. Francis (#3) concedes, “And there were disagreements.
Nothing heavy, but just, ‘well, wait a minute, what about this?’ And that was just talked through.”

Paula (#3) stresses the need to have committee members who are willing to negotiate and deliberate, “Most people on the committee were willing and able to make compromises on what is being taught. The people that did it were willing to work it out, hash it out.” Stephanie (#3) elaborates upon how potential conflicts or points of disagreements were worked through:

Usually what happened was we all talked about, we started in the same area, so if we were looking at number and number relations, or something like that, and somebody would look through and say, ‘hey, what about this one, doesn’t that fit with this benchmark?’, and then everybody would turn there, look at the page, and people would then have a discussion. Sometimes, it would be very quick, everybody was like, ‘oh, yea, yea, yea, yea, and move on’, but then other times we would be like, ‘well, wait a minute, I think that doesn’t fit or something like that and people would say, I can kind of see your point. It was interpreting. But I think in general people did a pretty good job with that and the more time we spent together it helped because you knew different people’s personalities.

Even when the issues didn’t prove to involve initial agreement, the committee members worked through the process to reach agreement.

_Negotiation: In summary._

Francis (#3) summarizes the comprehensive process of negotiation within the group context,

It was very easy to negotiate with the people on the committee. They are very experienced teachers and they are knowledgeable and so it was easy to see their point of view because they totally explained it or to try to get them to see yours. I don’t think that was a difficult process with the people that were on the committee.

Negotiation or deliberation is an element of the curriculum development process in the perceptions of the teachers in this study. I now present the fourth element that occurred repeatedly during this research – the time element and its effect on the curriculum development process.
The Effects of Time on the Curriculum Development Process

Time is required to accomplish the actual curriculum development. Time was continually mentioned, but with varying degrees of importance and certainty. A couple of teachers expressed the process was too quick, while others expressed the process was too lengthy. Regardless of their opinion of the timeline involved, each included time as part of the curriculum development process.

Julia (#3) begins her discussion of time by stating the process was quick, “It just seems that we did it so fast, that I have a hard time believing that we did it well or as well as we could.” Julia (#3) continues to present the contradictory qualities of time, “But then there comes to that point where you can take more time, but are you really accomplishing that much more. So sometimes having that time constraint keep us more focused on getting the job done. Time is the issue in every single thing in teaching.” Paula (#3) reiterates the contradiction in the evaluation of time as related to the curriculum development process:

Sometimes I think it seems like such a long time, isn’t it truly two years that we’re supposed to spend on this (curriculum or course of study development and materials adoption)? And sometimes, I think, ‘my word, that’s such a long time’. But then, when you look at all the things that go into it, it’s probably a reasonable amount of time. From a person who hasn't worked on a course of study it seems like it take forever, but as somebody who has worked on one, it’s probably just about right.

Time is an influential element on and throughout the process, but without clear-cut lines.

Francis (#3) directly states, “I think time is huge. There’s not enough time. There’s just not enough time to really sit down and understand that document. There’s just not enough time.” Francis (#3) continues to elaborate on the pros and cons of developing the curriculum over a period of months versus during consecutive sessions, “I can see that if the meetings were closer together, that probably would keep it (the curriculum being developed) fresh in your mind. You
wouldn't have to reacquaint yourself with the document. But, after a certain point of working on this, your brain is fried, and it becomes something that you just can't work on any longer.” Paul (#3) concurs that the time in between writing sessions can be advantageous:

I think we all had a little time to cool down after that (the initial two consecutive writing days). I think you do. I mean, you start, and it was so rough, and it was rough going, that we all needed a little break. I mean, you know it's like sometimes in your classroom you start something and you go, ‘You know, let's just put this away for a little bit and we'll pull it back out maybe in a week or two when we feel a little more comfortable with it’. Time was a good thing in that sense.

Stephanie (#3) reiterates Paul's position that time between writing sessions is beneficial:

I think it was good. It gave people time to kind of gel with what we had already done, to think about the standards and kind of come to more of an acceptance of what it is we're going to do, and then it gave people time to step back and look again. When we looked again, at a standard, we're like, ‘Huh, why did we put that there, that doesn't make sense.’ Or, ‘Oh, wait, this fits really well, why didn't we put this right here?’ ‘That make so much sense’. When you do it (develop curriculum) day after day, your brain just starts to not see those things anymore, whereas if you take a step back, you look at it later. You can see holes and things like that that you didn't see before.

Time is a help and a hindrance in the curriculum development process according to the teacher participants in this research. Julia (#3) accurately summarizes the perceptions of her colleagues with respect to the element of time, “I'm still torn between not having enough time to do it well and taking too much time to do it. So I'm not sure on the time thing. Other than we've put a lot of time into this.” Having discussed external and internal factors on the curriculum development process, and how negotiation and time influence the curriculum development process, I now present and discuss the teachers' perceived steps of the curriculum development process.

Steps of the Curriculum Development Process

According to the eight participants, a common perception about the curriculum development process was that the curriculum development process is as a cyclical process
involving certain steps. Despite interviews being conducted individually, each discussed the same “steps” in the process and in essentially the same sequence. The collective sequence or series of steps follow.

**Step one: The group convenes.**

Step one involved just getting the teachers together. As illustrated in the data story using only the words of the participants in the beginning of this chapter, getting the teachers together and beginning the process is the first step in curriculum development. Paul (#3) said it most directly when he stated,

I’d say the first step was just coming together and kind of sharing. Kind of saying, ‘This is what we had’, and people giving their opinion about what we had, to put it nicely. And you know, just kind of getting that out. You kind of have to let it all out before you can say, ‘Okay” and then going on to that next step of actually agreeing on some of those points of agreement.

Paula (#3) also alludes to the value of this first meeting when she states, “It’s the initial meeting...it’s the initial and actual work.” I will further elaborate upon the formal commencement of the comprehensive committee composed of teachers representing grades kindergarten through twelfth grade, of which these fifth and sixth grade teachers are a subcommittee, in chapter five.

**Step two: Considering external factors.**

Step two consists of taking the state standards and aligning the benchmarks and indicators to create a “new” course of study or curriculum. As Susan (#3) stated, “you are as a district and know what the state mandates have to be and then you work from that.” It is that work that Paul (#3) refers to as points of agreement, “Then going to that next step and actually agreeing on some of those points of agreement.” Julia (#3) describes this part of the process as “putting those (benchmarks and indicators) together to come up with our own course of study and a lot of the double checking and fine tuning kind of things.” As Julia (#3) admits, this is the intense and time
consuming step on the part of the committee members, “It’s not something that’s going to be over
for a while.” Christine (#3) reiterates this notion when she states

Kind of like at the beginning, we went through and looked over the state
standards, and we went through and looked at what the benchmark was...because
our benchmark as fifth through seventh grade, and then went through and looked at
each one of the indicators and decided which indicator fit with which indicator fit
with which benchmark and then went through and wrote the actual document.

Stephanie (#3 continues this notion of considering external standards when she discusses,
“starting with looking at the standards, looking for where they’re coming from, then from there,
building and looking how can we fit this into our course of study?” As Francis (#3) stated, step two
is to match the language (of the standards) with the alignment of the standards. The alignment of
step two leads directly into the alignment and necessary revision implied in step three.

*Step three: What are we missing?*

Step two is followed by the revision and editing, blurring the line between steps two and
three. Step three is the “follow-up to see what we were missing, where the gaps are, what we
might need additionally” (Julia, #3). This step in the process is the revising and editing, the
“multiple times during the process the committee checks on it (the curriculum) to make sure it is
what they (the committee) planned it to be” (Francis, #3). Stephanie (#3) clarifies this as the
“looking for where we’re coming from, then from there, building on and looking at how can we fit
this into our course of study, what makes the most sense.” Christine (#3) further explains this step
when she states, “‘We, we have this benchmark, but we’ve done nothing to address it in fifth
grade?’ Do we need to address it in fifth grade, and if so, how are we going to address it” Paul
(#3) continues when he describe the revision process,

Okay, now let’s get to some points of agreement here, what was good, okay, we
know this needs to change,’ and then going on to that next. At the end of
revision, the committee then makes the decision to share the draft with staff next
step of actually agreeing some of those points of agreement. And some of those
disagreements, I think some people felt better about there was some time to actually kind of discuss those and they might have not totally agreed, but they at least feel more comfortable about the decision that had been made and then actually going on to the steps of developing it and writing out a rough draft and then revision and then actually sharing it with the staff.

At then end of revision, the committee then makes the decision to share the draft with staff members at their grade level, all fifth and sixth grade teachers in their intermediate level buildings in this particular instance.

**Step four: More revisions.**

Step four is the continued revision and editing after review of the draft course of study by staff members and continued review by the committee. Christine (#3) summarizes this stage of the process, “present our first draft to our staff members who are now looking it over and giving us feedback and after that we’ll go through and look at the feedback that we’re getting.” Stephanie (#3) summarizes this as “looking at overarching themes and idea and where we’re just exploring an idea and where we’re coming to master the idea.” Francis (#3) qualifies this as the “process the committee makes sure it is what they (they committee) planned it to be, and then it goes to general staff.” This is the final chance to make revisions and realignment before taking the document to the next level, “you get to the final product that has to go to the Board” (Paula, #3).

**Step five: Take it to the top.**

Step five is the step of the curriculum development process that does not directly involve the original curriculum developers or curriculum development in the same sense as in the initial stages. This step centers around taking the final curriculum document to the appropriate district committees for final approval and district wide adoption, “You work to get to the final product that has to go to the Central Curriculum Committee and Board (District Board of Education) and is adopted” (Paula, #3). Francis (#3) illustrates her perceived importance of this step when she
states, “It’s my understanding it comes back and goes to Central Curriculum and to the Board and then its adopted and the final draft is written.” This is the final validation of the efforts of the committee. It is after the Central Curriculum Committee and Board of Education approve the comprehensive kindergarten through twelfth grade course of study the district has a new curriculum for mathematics.

The steps aren’t always linear or sequential.

While the data supports the curriculum development process as a set of steps to follow, it does not always appear as such when actually embedded in the process. Paul (#3) elaborates on the fact while steps of the curriculum development process are easy to delineate, those steps in practically are not quite as easily carried out, “I would say at the first meetings there was a lot of frustration and confusion.” And then as we went on to the second meetings, and we looked at things that were there, it was very easy to say, ‘ok, this is what we did, we kind of understand what we have done.’” Christine (#3) shares her own trepidations, “I think when I first came in I was very hesitant doing it, have never had the experience, afraid that it was going to be something more than I thought I could do.” “We worked on that (curriculum development) a long time to find the holes and then to fill those holes, searching for what we knew needed to be there” is Susan’s (#3) account of the complexity and less than linear aspect of the curriculum development process.

Consistently, the eight participant teachers individually identified the curriculum development process as having the above mentioned steps as components. Just as consistent as they were in their conclusion or assumptions about the steps taken, they were as cohesive that this process is not exempt of influence from factors beyond the teachers’ (deliberators) control that actually engage in the process.
Technical Aspects: In Summary

Curriculum development is a necessary component of education. With increasing frequency, teachers gather to form committees to accomplish the task of creating the course of study or curriculum for their grade level(s) or district as a whole. The eight teacher participants in this research are no exception. Their collective perceptions of this process were unearthed to contain five main elements. First, external factors such as state content standards and the state proficiency tests do influence curriculum development. Second, the teachers revealed curriculum development is influenced by internal factors, students and teachers to name a couple. Next, the curriculum development process involves negotiation or deliberation. Fourth, time affects the curriculum development process in a multitude a ways. Lastly, the curriculum development process consists of a series of steps that are followed in a linear yet cyclical manner. Clearly, teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process are that it is a process consisting of multi-layered dimensions that require and demonstrate varying levels of influence and consideration throughout the process. It is these very perceptions and understandings I will now entertain and discuss from beyond the eyes of the actual teachers.

Teachers’ Perceptions of Affective Aspects of Curriculum Development Process

As I reconsider the five reoccurring themes the teacher participants repeatedly mentioned during the course of this study, I cannot help but consider these to be the first level or more observable components of the curriculum development process. These elements are what the teachers perceive to be the procedural and/or measurable qualities of the process:
1. External influences/factors,
2. Internal influences/factors,
3. Negotiation and deliberation,
4. Time, and
5. Curriculum development as a series of steps.

This information is helpful to the extent it provides a framework from which to further examine the curriculum development process and the teachers' role within that process.

It is the less observable or affective aspects that became apparent during this study to which I now turn my attention. These are the feelings and thoughts of the participants that reflect a personal and emotional investment by the teachers. It is the information conveyed in this section that conveys a different and deeper sense of teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process.

As in the preceding section, the teachers seemed to voice similar ideas, although expressed and illuminated in their own individual style. The issues that came to light revolved around the size of curriculum committees, the bridge the committee becomes between teachers and the state, and the collective power of the committee. A fourth notion is perhaps the most powerful and enlightening. It is the essence of what I had hoped to uncover from the onset. Does participation in the curriculum development process have an effect on the teacher of curriculum developer as an educator or individual? The unanimous response was yes. The specifics of just how teachers feel affected are quite remarkable and deserving of sincere consideration and attention. I first discuss the influence of the size of the curriculum development committee from the perspective of the teachers.
Effects of Group Size

“The Group Can’t Be Too Big”

Ann (#2) summed up the curriculum development process in certain respects, “We got together. It was a voluntary process.” Voluntary is the key word in this phrase. Paula (#3) discusses this notion when she addresses the reoccurring question of how to get people involved to benefit the process but also involve more in the process to help deliver the final curriculum/message. Both concluded their comments with, “The group can’t be too big” (Ann, #2; Paula, #3). Ann (#1) qualifies this perspective, “If you get too many people involved, it becomes an overwhelming experience. You have a lot of people putting input in, which is not necessarily bad, but then sometimes you never get to that finishing point or a consensus. I almost think at times we have too many people involved.” The size of the group can matter.

I consider the size of this group in question. The eight teachers participants were the core group, with four additional members that attended curriculum development meetings but were not present during interviews or formally questioned about the process. I question, was the size of this group too big or too small? Or did the group just exist as it was? The invitation to participate in the curriculum development process was extended to all fifth and sixth grade teachers, approximately 130 total teachers district-wide. Potentially, the group could have easily been larger in number, or “too gigantic” (Stephanie, #2). Paul (#2) made reference to the fact the more people you get together, the more communication you have, “that might get a little heated and the more people you throw into that mix, the more heated it may become.” Each participant repeatedly mentioned the fact the larger group broke down into their grade level groups, the “divide and conquer” strategy, as defined by Paul (#3). Stephanie (#2) reiterates the need to have “representation from
each intermediate building to ensure the success of the process as a whole.” Given these perspectives, what are these teachers saying?

Collectively, they are echoing the need to afford all interested teachers the opportunity to participate in the process, while realizing the larger the group involved in the actual curriculum development process becomes, the more involved and longer the process to create the final document and reach consensus will be in actuality and practice. Knowing that, the participants continually stated this open invitation which may lengthen the process is part of the reason they like the process so well. Stephanie (#3) states this perspective in a manner that is concise and reiterates the opinions of her colleagues and fellow participants, “I’ve always like how teacher-focused Summit Way City Schools is with their course of study development, but yet the curriculum coordinator from the district is there, but also they really value the teachers’ work on that, that teachers building that (curriculum).”

It appears the ideal size of the group engaged in curriculum development process is an ambiguous number, and defining that number involves contradictory positions. All interested should be encouraged to participate, endorsing the stance you can’t define a maximum number for group membership, even though the process may be lengthened as the group expands. On the other hand, a group too small in size will create unrealistic demands on those involved, may not afford teachers to opportunity to adequately consider all components and have exposure to alternative interpretations, and/or not allow all voices to participate and/or be represented. Consequently, the size of the curriculum development committee or group cannot be predetermined to have a minimum or maximum number of participants to ensure success of the curriculum development process. Therefore, the curriculum or course of study development committee will negotiate size related dynamics and influences, that are inherently embedded, as
they engage in the curriculum development process. Once this process is complete, the committee members become the delivers of the curriculum message.

*Teachers as The Bridge Between*

*The State and The Rest of The Teachers*

“I Think The Bridge is Much Shorter Now”

Developing the curriculum is the first goal of the curriculum development process and the teachers engaged in that process. In my exploration to uncover teachers' perceptions of this process, it became evident they don't view their task being complete once the document is “finished.” A resounding theme is that they also serve as a critical delivery vehicle as this new curriculum is taken back to all teachers at the affected grade levels. Due to the influence of the state content standards for mathematics in this curriculum development process, they become the gateway or intermediary between the state standards and the remaining teachers at their grade levels in their particular intermediate level buildings and district-wide.

Julia (#2) presents the building level perspective of channels of communication, “I think the bridge from fifth to sixth grade is much shorter now because we are together. We’re connecting, the teachers are connecting.” Julia (#2) continues to elaborate on the necessary role she will play in these lines of communication as the developed curriculum is shared with the remaining intermediate teachers, “I think my role in that would be to again make the connections between, ‘we’re already doing this, here’s that part that’s really changing’, and helping to make that transition easier for them.” Stephanie (#2) discusses the role of committee member a direct link between the state standards and the teachers who will help students reach these standards,

I think part of it is very much people who are on the committee going back and sharing their experience and sharing how it happened and explaining what happened with the standards. Having teachers understand the new standards and the fact that those courses didn't come out of the air or the sky. It was well
thought out from the standards that are now being expected from the state level. And I think it just goes back to being able to discuss and move forward.

Christine (#1) also eludes to serving in this “bridge” capacity as she elaborate on the need of committee members to “making sure that everybody does understand the course of study and what is supposed to be taught.” Ann (#2) stresses the importance of creating ownership not just with the committee members who developed the curriculum, but with all teachers who will implement the curriculum, “We need too have ownership over what we’re doing. If we’re not going to take ownership if it, you’re not going to feel the say way as someone who does. You’re not going to be as enthusiastic about teaching as someone who took ownership over it (the curriculum).”

Paul (#2) terms this practice “being an expert on my specific grade level and being a resource.” Francis (#2) identifies some of the potential role “this expert” may encompass,

It’s my responsibility to read and understand the new standards…to be a resource to other people who come and ask…to attend professional development …to talk about best practice. And not only use someone else’s best practices, but also share some of my own…to share with someone in my building who may hot have been able to go…to read…to keep up with trend…and to keep in touch with people.

Without question or hesitation, the teachers involved in this study feel they have a responsibility to help teachers successfully make this transition from the old course of study to the new curriculum, and make state expectations a foundation for classroom practice. They see themselves serving as the bridge between the state mathematics standards to the curriculum developed based upon these standards to the individual classroom teacher. Clearly, the curriculum development process does not end when the document is “finished” in the minds of these teachers. They also concede the power of the accomplishing the task of developing a curriculum as a group or committee versus engaging in the curriculum development process as an individual.
The Power of the Group

“I Couldn’t Imagine Doing This Alone”

The repeated cry in the initial stages of this curriculum development process from the teachers involved in this study was that it was overwhelming at first. Voices cried this feeling of despair alone and in unison. Julia (#1) makes this point directly, “I think even for them (the district curriculum coordinator) it would be an overwhelming task or responsibility to develop a curriculum for the district solely by themselves.” Julia (#2) emphasizes her stance by declaring her thoughts at a later point in time, “I think just by, for one person to do that whole project (curriculum development) would be overwhelming and time consuming.” Paula (#3) concurs, “I don’t thing that anybody could do that on their own. I don’t know that anybody would want to do that on their own. It’s so much work and a huge responsibility.” Setting the time element aside of one accomplishing this task versus more than one, these teachers expressed they accomplished more as a group than they could have on their own.

Developing the curriculum as a committee not as an individual was part of the power and benefit of the curriculum development process. Christine (#3) expressed the process helped her “to see the whole picture.” Francis (#3) also acknowledged the power in understanding “that whole alignment; the whole ‘where does this go, where does that go?’.” Both Christine and Francis expressed the benefits of the collaboration embedded in the curriculum development process, “All of us come from different background, so we all have our different strengths and our different weaknesses. And maybe some things that I consider to be my weaknesses maybe were strengthened because of somebody else within that group (Christine, #3). Francis (#3) echoes
Christine’s sentiment, “It is so valuable to have more than one person talking and bouncing ideas off of, not all of the things the same way and that’s really worthwhile.” These thoughts were conveyed by their colleagues as well.

Paula (#3) considers the diversity of the group to prove beneficial to the process, the collective group, and individually,

Everybody brings ideas from their own building and from the way that their building does things that you get a good mix. And then everybody has ownership in it. Just generating idea, getting it organized. One person couldn’t do that. And then you would only have your own thought process. I see things this way when somebody else sees it in the other direction, together we can make it work.

Stephanie (#3) shares Paula’s passion for the power of the group,

That bouncing ideas off of each other. You just can’t do that with yourself. But just the whole idea of having a discussion then really pondering what do these words mean? Different people building and creating and understanding of what it means as a whole and as a unit. You couldn’t do that so well on your own.

Paul (#3) stated it quite simply, “It was just easier to kind of pair up as a group and go through it together.” Susan (#3) felt the group “looked at the entire program and adapted it to what we felt from where it was to where it needed to be and came up with a good cohesive piece of writing and a goal.”

Collectively, the perception of the curriculum development process of these teachers considering the power of the group is that it is the group dynamic itself that is powerful and makes the group dynamic powerful. The benefits of the group versus the individual far exceed the time element involved in the curriculum development process. Julia (#3) shares the collective perspectives of her colleagues in her own statement of belief, “I just think it gives you so many different perspectives and skill levels and to bring all those together to accomplish it. I just think that the group approach works better than just one individual.” Francis (#3) emphasizes the power of the collaboration and group deliberation, “it’s just so beneficial that I wish we could do it more
often.” The benefit of the group dynamic was not overtly expressed as an obvious element of the curriculum development process, especially in the early stages of this study. The collective perception, however, is that the curriculum development process creates a curriculum, the document, and brings the committee members to a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of not only the document, but what that document means to themselves and others. I now consider how this group dynamic and the entire curriculum development process affect the individual curriculum developer.

*The Power of Ownership*

“This is My Document. I Want It To Work”

“This is my document. I helped develop this. I helped mold this. I want it to work” (Ann, #2). The passion of this statement illustrates the level of commitment to not only the curriculum document but to the intent and content of the curriculum document that evolves and develops and the curriculum itself is developed. The curriculum developers come to understand the background behind the course of study and feel a sense of attachment to the curriculum. Francis (#2) states this phenomenon in the following manner,

Well, the people that sat on the committee and developed it probably have the best understanding of the vision they saw in the curriculum. They understand the intentions probably more than anybody else. So it’s kind of sad that not every teacher sits on (the curriculum development committee), has that experience.

Paul (#2) makes a similar assertion, specific to the grade levels represented by the teachers participating in this study,

I think we all have a better understanding of what it is we were putting in there so now we have a better understanding of what is actually in that document and what is expected out of a fifth grade teacher, what’s expected out of a sixth grade teacher, and how some of those pieces are starting to fit together.
Without a doubt, the teachers involved in the curriculum development process have a deep understanding of what is in the curriculum itself. This understanding goes deeper than the surface level content.

Christine (#3) shares her understanding of the curriculum development process is now far beyond the mere content and logistics of the process,

It opened my eyes. In all honesty, I thought that people basically sat down and just kind of decided this is where we want to go as a district and kind of wrote up their own little course of study. Of course, the standards came along and that helped us along the way. As I start working with the course of study and the changes to revise, I feel much more confident. I'm willing to do this again. I don't think it's as bad as I thought it would be and I think in the end you end up as a better educator because you have that clear understanding as to what’s expected of you.

Julia (#3) and Paula (#3) also each express that by working on the development of the document, you inherently understand it and know what it means, can better focus on what’s in the document, and know how that will impact your teaching. Francis (#3) supports and states this assertion as well, “I think just the awareness. The awareness of the standards. The awareness of how it was put together in this document we came up with. And hopefully, as we continue, an awareness of how that document should be played out in the classroom.”

Affective Aspects: In Summary

Without question, the teachers involved in the curriculum development process have gained more than the mere knowledge of the content (in terms of skills and concepts in isolation and sequence) at their given grade level(s). They now understand the vertical alignment between the intermediate grades, and how they fit within the larger curriculum context. They also understand how the document came to be the document that will be shared with others. Their heightened awareness and knowledge will continue to develop and build as they continue to share this document and the process with their colleagues building and district-wide. Christine (#3)
illustrates the dramatic influence this process can have, “I think it’s made me a stronger teacher. I think that’s been the biggest thing. I feel much more confident. I’m feeling much better right now about math. I think that’s the biggest thing. Just my growth. My own personal growth”. The power and impact of the curriculum development process on those engaged and entrenched in the process cannot be underestimated. The curriculum development process accomplishes more than a mere curriculum document.

**Teachers’ Perceptions of the Curriculum Development Process:**

**In Conclusion**

Individually and collectively, the perceptions of the curriculum development process of the teachers involved in this study are multifaceted. The curriculum development process is seen as a series of steps; steps that are influenced by external and internal factors; steps that are continually negotiated and revisited over time. The curriculum development process includes negotiation and deliberation about content and language embedded throughout the process, affording each participant the opportunity not only to share their own interpretation and guiding assumptions, but to consider and benefit from the sharing of others’ interpretations and guiding assumptions as well.

The curriculum development process is one that is better served by a group, not just one lone teacher or curriculum specialist. Certain group characteristics, such as size and exact representation, cannot be qualified and determined precisely before hand, for the group dynamic is a product of the individual group members. There are no ratios or exact minimum or maximum numbers to adhere to when forming the curriculum development group. It is, however, within this group dynamic teachers develop the knowledge and confidence to serve as a facilitator to help other teachers understand the development process of the curriculum, the content of the curriculum, and the resulting implications on classroom practice.
It is this same group dynamic which becomes powerful for the group collectively and individually as teachers reflect upon the task they have accomplished and as they continue to take ownership of the curriculum and its implementation. These participants in the process leave the process as different educators and individuals. They have engaged in pedagogical and content-based discussions, evaluated their own guiding assumptions and those of others, and considered their own classroom practice.

To say only a curriculum document was created during this process would be an injustice. To say the curriculum development process only examines the academic content delivered to students would be unfair. The teacher participants in this study convince us otherwise. The curriculum development process is complex, time consuming, and can be frustrating and controversial. But it can also be enlightening, inspiring, and educational in a plethora of ways and considerations. These teachers have been asked to speak, and their voices have now been heard. In Chapter Five I will consider what the teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process conveyed in these voices mean for me as a researcher, as a curriculum coordinator, and as an educator and individual.
Teachers are the actual deliverers of curriculum across disciplines and across grade levels. Their instructional practice and pedagogical foundations may vary, but they still remain the implementation vehicle for the curriculum. Given the connection between the curriculum development process and the implementation of said curriculum, it is critical teachers are the driving force in the curriculum development process and that their perceptions of this process are made known. The participants in this study were engaged in the development of curriculum for the first time as teachers at an intermediate level building (fifth and sixth grades) and brought with them a plethora of experiences in curriculum development, grade levels and school settings. Despite the differences in their backgrounds, their voices were in unison. These voices must be acknowledged, listened to and acted upon. In the first section of this chapter I will entertain the implications of this study. The second section will include reflections on this study and future studies. Given the teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process uncovered in this study, what are the natural next steps?
Implications of Teachers’ Perceptions of the Curriculum Development Process

In chapter four, I presented the teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process uncovered during this study. In essence, the technical aspects of the curriculum development process, as perceived by these teachers, are as follows:

1. influenced by external factors,
2. influenced by internal factors,
3. involves deliberation and negotiation,
4. a process that occurs and develops over time and is influenced by time, and
5. involves or consists of a series or sequence of steps.

Teachers' have a perception of affective aspects of the curriculum development process, as uncovered in this study, to exist as well. These aspects are as follows:

1. Group size,
2. Teachers as the bridge between the state and other teachers,
3. Power of the group, and
4. Power of ownership.

Understanding teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process is powerful and meaningful for its implications for professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators, for those who facilitate the curriculum development process, and to bring heightened awareness of the curriculum development process to all educators. The application and potential change in practice based upon this more comprehensive understanding of teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process is another example of possible implications of this research and illustrates a potential avenue of power related to this study.
Understanding teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process has implications for the administrators, supervisors and/or curriculum coordinators who work with these teachers and facilitate the curriculum development process as discussed in the preceding paragraph. It is also important to acknowledge the fact that teachers developed the curriculum has implications of its own. How did participation in this process affect, influence and/or change the teachers involved in the process individually and collectively? What message is sent to these teachers they were empowered and charged with the task of curriculum development? What message is sent to all teachers that teachers were the developers in the curriculum development process rather than the curriculum being developed without teacher involvement? As Susan (#2) stated,

I do think that teachers in general do realize that whatever we as teacher leaders and other people on the staff (curriculum development committee) have come up with, that we have their best interest at heart. And they’re never going to agree with everything, but we (the committee) didn’t either. But you do what you can with what you’ve got. Let them realize how much time and effort was put into it so that they don’t feel that this is one of those, ‘Okay, here it is guys, read it and weep’. It wasn't that way.

Given teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process, what are the resulting implications for the teachers involved in the curriculum development process and beyond those teachers? That is the very topic of the next section.

The teachers have spoken. The teachers have shared their perceptions, their insights, their opinions, and their suggestions. It is the application of the perceptions of the teachers I now entertain. This is the resulting and related next step that is critical and further validates the participants' responses and positions. The implications of the teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process seem to have merit of application in six different arenas. First, what do their perceptions of the curriculum development process mean when interpreting the
language of said curriculum? Second, what do their perceptions mean related to vertical communication of curriculum concepts across grade levels? Given the first two, the third area considers the professional development opportunities offered related to the developed curriculum. The fourth element is what is the relationship of the developed curriculum to the materials adopted to support and help guide implementation of the said curriculum. The last two areas of consideration address the roles of the curriculum developer and curriculum coordinator as the curriculum is shared with and implemented by all teachers at the grade level in question. I begin with considering teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process related to the interpretation of the language of said curriculum.

Interpretation of Language

“Through a lot of discussion”

As the teachers engaged in the curriculum development process, language became an issue. How does one convey the complexity behind the language used in the actual words of the document? The participants in this study repeatedly referenced the relatedness between the curriculum development process and the interpretation of the wording included in the said curriculum. As previously discussed, Vygotsky (1978), D’Andrade (1984) and Mead ([1928] 1973) also state the importance of shared cultural interpretations and meanings. Ann (#2) summarizes this position in the following manner, “As a committee, we kind of interpreted it (the state standards and resulting curriculum) ourselves, which means the next person who receives this course of study is probably going to re-interpret what they think it means. Some things get lost. Some things get added.” It is the communication of this common interpretation of the curriculum or course of study that is necessary to ensure the success of this course of study. Each participant discussed the need to deliver a common message, share the committee’s interpretation with all affected
teachers, and go beyond the mere distribution of the document. The question became, not why is it necessary to share the thoughts of the committee during the curriculum development process, but how do we share the common message and vision with others?

Each participant discussed the importance of and possible strategies related to communicating the common interpretation of language of the committee members. Christine (#1) states the non-committee teacher’s position, “I interpret it my own way. They justified their own interpretation of it.” Ann (#2) presents the committee member’s position, “As a committee, we can have a focus. That’s our focus – group interpreting what we interpret what the state says. There was a difference of opinions, what we thought it meant.” It is this common interpretation and perception that needs communicated to ensure the successful and uniform implementation of the developed curriculum. The development of the curriculum is the first step. The second step is conveying the essence and totality of the curriculum with others.

Just how does the communication and transmission of this shared vision happen? Through one shared and uniform voice, according to Ann (#2), “Instead of me coming back to my building and interpreting if for the rest of the building, maybe we have one person who, you know, could come in and interpret. So every building is getting the same interpretation.” Paula (#2) expands upon this notion of interpretation, “I think that you can write it and everybody in the room agrees that this means this, but when somebody who wasn’t there, and didn’t write it reads it, it could mean something completely different.” The power of the developed curriculum is sharing this common interpretation of the curriculum in question with those educators not involved in the process. Levinson (2000), Dobbert and Cooke (2000), Cohen (2002), and Geertz (1973) advocate for the value of shared meaning making in education. This is the first implication deserving of
consideration given the teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process. I next consider the implications of the developed curriculum on vertical communication across grade levels.

Communication Across Grade Levels

"Communication that might get heated"

Communication across grade levels is critical to the successful implementation of curriculum across grade levels. McCutcheon (2002) and Reid (1992) reiterate the need to keep the line of communication open during the curriculum development process. The importance and value of communication was echoed throughout this study. Paula (#2) brings to light the complexity of communication across grade levels, "Everyone from kindergarten through twelfth grade. I think though, once people start to actually break apart and work together, that's harder to do." Paul (#2) shares Paula's position, "Probably start with committee members (across kindergarten through twelfth grade) because it would, I'm sure there will be some vocalization, some communication, that might get a little heated and the more people you throw into that mix, the more heated it may become." Julia (#2) further stresses the importance of vertical communication of the developed course of study, regardless of the particular content area, I think it's getting together. Having time to do that. And I think it would help them (other teachers above the intermediate grade levels) knowing what we need for them to stress by the time the students get here. By talking to those teachers, I think some of those criticisms, that it would alleviate some of that stuff. The elementary teachers could give ideas on how to help some of those lower level students and that would help all of us.

The curriculum development process may occur in isolation in terms of building configuration and manageable size of the committee, but the communication of committee members and all affected teachers is a critical issue in the implication of said curriculum and a necessary component of consideration for committee members and those that facilitate the
implementation of said curriculum kindergarten through twelfth grade. Boykin (1994), as previously stated, supports the need to develop curriculum with an awareness of the student-school connection. The need for communication across grade levels is directly related to the needed professional development that was a resounding theme of necessary consideration in this study.

Curriculum Related Professional Development

“I Could Probably Tell You Everything That’s In The Course of Study. I Helped Write It.”

The curriculum has been developed and is in a format ready to deliver to the remaining teachers at a given grade level. According to the teachers in this study, this is not enough. As Francis (#2) states,

The sad thing about that (the relationship between serving on the curriculum development committee and the implementation of said curriculum) is the people that really sat on the committee and developed it probably have the best understanding of the vision they saw in the curriculum. They understand the intentions probably more than anybody else.

That is the very reason the course of study needs presented to teachers within a clearly defined program of professional development. Rogoff (1990) and Wertsch (1989) also assert there is a connection between curriculum and the influencing factors of the social environment of curriculum development. Christine (#2) further defines the relationship between the course of study and the curriculum and the need to some type of training or professional development with the said curriculum,

Because if you don’t understand the document, you’re going to have a hard time being able to implement it. I’m going to be a better math teacher because I understand more of what’s in the course of study versus somebody who’s handed this document and says, ‘Here, here’s your course of study, now go to it’, without any type of training with the teachers to go through it and really explain it. You have to have a course. I think that we need to start looking at some of those in development so that people are understanding the course of study.
Merely giving the new course of study or curriculum to teachers is not enough. This delivery of the document must be accompanied with professional development.

This professional development must be delivered with the intention of conveying the essence of the curriculum not just an explanation of the contents. The teachers in this study were clear it is the intent of the curriculum that must be conveyed to ensure a more similar interpretation of the language and student achievement across the grade levels. Stephanie (#2) gets at this comprehensive learning experience, “It is very much people who are on the committee going back and sharing their experience how it happened. We all came to consensus about how we saw things, that the implementation of curriculum, we should also be trying to come to consensus of how do you implement the same curriculum.” It becomes creating common goals and experiences between committee members and non-committee members in the implementation of said curriculum. Creating common goals through curriculum related professional development is the third implication of the perceptions of teachers of the curriculum development process that is deserving of attention and reaction based upon this study. I now turn to the materials utilized to support the developed curriculum and their relationship to the curriculum development process.

*Curriculum and Support Materials*

“You have to have your course of study, then you get to pick your materials”

From the very first interview and observation session with these teachers, the topic of support materials came into play when discussing course of study or curriculum development. Initially, it was almost as if one defined the other. Yes, materials are related to the curriculum, but
materials should be a support mechanism to the curriculum not the curriculum itself. Why is this critical? This is critical because this distinction is not always clear in the delivery of said curriculum to all affected teachers beyond the scope of the committee.

Just as there are steps in the curriculum development process, choosing support materials to aid implementation of the course of study have a place in the comprehensive process. As Paul (#2) delineates, “you have to have your course of study first and then you get to pick what materials.” Ann (#2) concurs, “You write the course of study and then you begin to look for materials that match the course of study.” Stephanie gets at the critical connection between the course of study and support materials that must be taken into consideration,

The course of study will dictate what materials we can get. I mean we're really going to have to look at those and see if there’s true alignment between the two, not just key words, does it develop the concepts we want developed? They're (support materials) not going to be perfect, but it gives you a direction of which way to go.

While materials adoption could be considered a separate process and distinct entity not a component of the curriculum development process, a relationship between the two exists. The perceptions of the curriculum development process of the teachers in this study have definite implications for the support materials utilized during the implementation of said curriculum. Yes, the materials should be chosen after the curriculum is developed, but the intent of the curriculum determined during its development should be continued by the materials adopted not overshadowed or forgotten. Given the embedded connection between the developers of the curriculum and the rest of the teachers at the affected grade level, what should the role of the curriculum developers be in this process? This is the next issue of consideration.
Curriculum Implementation

“Explaining why we took that course of action”

Curriculum is developed, support materials are chosen, and then it is time for the curriculum to be implemented at the classroom level. The connection of curriculum development and curriculum implementation is the fifth area with implications following this study I will discuss. Throughout this study and the curriculum development process, the teachers of this study repeatedly stressed while a curriculum or course of study was developed, the curriculum development process went far beyond just the curriculum document. The process of developing curriculum, the how the document came to be, that was critical and deserving of attention, dialogue and explanation, especially in the district-wide implementation of the curriculum. I now discuss the implications of role of the developer of the curriculum in the implementation of the curriculum resulting from this study.

Francis (#2) emphasizes the importance of addressing the needs of non-committee members related to implementation of the developed curriculum,

The tendency is going to be to get the document, to think, ‘Oh, my gosh.’ It’s going to look bad. It’s going to look like a lot, and for them (non-committee teachers) to set it aside and not get to, and that’s why we need discussion. We need to give our people time just to sit without any distractions and read it and see how they would interpret it. My role will then be to help them make sure that they’re looking at that as they’re planning their lessons and making sure they’re covering that as much as possible.

Susan (#2) also reiterates the need to “make sure they (non-committee members) see the benefit of it (the curriculum).” Stephanie shares the belief the role of the committee members is to share not only the content of the course of study with their colleagues but the process they went through to develop the course of study that is important,
There are a lot of things that we’re doing that aren’t that far away from what the new expectation (curriculum) is, it just seems farther than it is. And then what baggage we can get rid of that we’ve been doing, that we can get rid of and move on so that we get to the new expectations and goals. That’s going to be a huge barrier to break down when we get to that point.

Clearly, just delivering the curriculum developed during the curriculum development process is not enough.

According to the teachers in this study, the power of the curriculum is not only the document, but also the entire process that was undertaken to develop the document. The curriculum development process becomes part of the meaning of the curriculum. It is in the delivery of this message the curriculum developers or committee members must take action. They are key components in the steps taking the curriculum to all affected teachers. Allowing these teacher leaders to assume and carry out this role is crucial to the successful implementation of the developed curriculum and a resulting implication of this study. What then should the role of the curriculum coordinator be related to the curriculum development process? That is the final implication of this study I will entertain.

_Curriculum Coordinator Support_

“If the district curriculum coordinator thinks this is important, it must be important”

Once the curriculum is developed, the power of the curriculum does not end. A resounding theme of the participants in this study was the need for continued support after the development process was over. Yes, the teachers who engaged in the curriculum development process must assume a crucial role to help teachers understand the intent of the curriculum, the
language of the curriculum and what it means for classroom practice, but their efforts must be supported at the district level for the curriculum implementation to be successful. The role of the curriculum coordinator is a sixth implication resulting from this study.

Operating as a support resource and coordinating efforts is the simple version of the role the curriculum coordinator should play when sharing the developed curriculum with all teachers affected by the new curriculum, as posited by McCutcheon (2002) and Reid (1992), as well as the participants in this study. Francis (#3) delineates some of the specific components of this support and follow-up provided by the curriculum coordinator,

A great support as we put the document out. As we start to develop, as the curriculum coordinator starts to develop practices and inservices to go over that, as we start making people aware. I see the curriculum coordinator as taking care of all the nuts and bolts. The curriculum coordinator basically organize and arrange and facilitate everything.

Julia (#3) shares Francis’ stance the curriculum coordinator needs to “make sure that we have the necessary things to give to the teachers and be there to help.” Christine (#3) also expresses the importance of continued interaction between the curriculum coordinator and the teachers, “Doing some type of staff development in the building. They (the non-committee teachers) need to go through and truly walk through the entire course of study explaining what’s the expectation.” Without question, the teachers in this study expressed the need for the district curriculum coordinator to share a common and district-wide message to all teachers that validates and gives credence to the efforts of the committee and helps convey the true essence of the document.

Creating the curriculum is a process that requires teacher input and advocating on behalf of these teachers must continue after the document is drafted. As Paul (#3) discusses,

It's the sharing of the document with others as a team, committee members and the curriculum coordinator, that demonstrates the unity behind the document and the intent of the document, “I'd probably feel even a little more comfortable because they (curriculum coordinator) can step in if you have somebody who's,
you know, it’s hard when somebody is your peer, to say, ‘you know what, we worked real hard on this. This is the way it is. I’m sorry you disagree with it. This is why it’s here’ and then trying to explain your point.

Susan (#3) stresses the need for the curriculum coordinator to not only answer and address questions and concerns, but to continue to advocate on behalf of the teachers, “Just to be there with questions and to let the rest of the staff know what was involved and that it was a cyclical process and just fight for some of the things that we believe in.” The relationship between the curriculum developers and the curriculum coordinator should not end after the curriculum development process officially comes to an end. As the participants of this study, this reciprocal relationship takes a different form and focuses on different outcomes, but is just as critical and important.

While the perceptions of the curriculum development process of the teachers in this study can be characterized within certain parameters, the implications of these perceptions extend far beyond the curriculum development process itself. Their perceptions must be considered in a variety of arenas as the curriculum is shared with additional teachers. One must consider and address how the curriculum language will be interpreted, related vertical communication and professional development, what support materials will be the vehicle for implementation, and the role of the curriculum developers or committee members and the curriculum coordinator. The process and relationships of the curriculum development process extend beyond the scope of the document. I have considered the perceptions of the teachers of the curriculum development process and the implications of these perceptions. I now consider next steps based upon teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process.
Next Steps Based Upon Teachers' Perceptions of the Curriculum Development Process

As I entertain the implications of this research, I must concurrently consider what the conclusions of this study mean for the next steps or the "now what" stage. As previously stated, the research itself leads to conclusions and summaries. The same data, however, inspires questions and possibilities at the classroom and district level. Three issues emerge as deserving of attention and discussion. First of all, the focus of this study was teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process. The setting was during the development of a mathematics curriculum. While the mathematics content was a topic of discussion, what does it mean that the mathematics content was not a major finding or conclusion in this study. The fact content was not an overarching element is the first consideration of this section. The second issue considers the power of critical theory for this work. Lastly, I discuss where this study and its conclusions make a difference. I first discuss the mathematics content in relation to the development of mathematics curriculum.

Mathematics in the Curriculum Development Process

In the context of this entire study, mathematics concepts did emerge in conversation. Mathematics as a core concept, however, did not emerge in the conclusions or findings. I troubled that notion, returned to the data, and the following are the resulting conclusions and next steps.

As previously defined, the participants in this study were engaged in the curriculum development process focusing on mathematics as the content area. This study focused on the process of developing curriculum within the mathematical context. Given the state standards, controversy or negotiation did not arise concerning specific skills or concepts (i.e. multiplication
facts, fractions, etc.). Deliberation did arise, however, when entertaining how concepts or skills would look in classroom practice. Paul (#3) outlines the negotiation and discussion that took place,

I think the mathematical vocabulary we all pretty much agreed on. I thought that everybody who was there had a very strong mathematical background and nobody really disagreed about the mathematical language that was in there. I think sometimes we disagreed on, ‘Okay, do they (the students) need to master it or do they just need to know it?’ Because if we put introduced, somebody might put a problem on the board for a problem of the day and say, ‘I introduced it’. Do we need them (teachers) to actually send home five problems for homework and let them figure it out? Because everybody has a different level of, between introduce and mastery of what the students need to be able to do.

Stephanie (#3) illustrates the attention afforded to consistency and continuity of mathematical concepts across grade levels,

I think it was much more discussion based. In August, it was a little more adversarial, because I think people had a little bit more ownership over it (mathematical concepts at particular grade levels) for some reason, but by the time we were in December, it really felt like people tried to be better about saying, ‘Well, what do you guys think?’ And using words like that that opened it up to everybody else so then we’d have a discussion about it (mathematical concepts) and sometimes that point (concept) would stay in and sometimes someone would defend it and say, ‘I really think it fits because of these two ideas in it even though it’s not exactly the same you can reach that goal that way’. Other times people would say, ‘Ah, I think you’re right. Maybe we should put that someplace else or it shouldn’t be included there because it really fits better somewhere else.’

Stephanie (#2) captures the essence of the discussion of mathematics in classroom practice,

I think the one big thing we need to do, is find a way to help people (teachers and students) with their own math skills. And again, I’m not sure how we do that. But, I know that some of it just comes from an uncomfortable level, of maybe you don’t completely understand the concepts yourself, so whether you have materials that help explain those concepts. You know, realizing that multiplication is not just an algorithm for repeated addition. That it was just grouping of numbers and it was repeated addition. It’s developing a concept. Their (students) knowledge is so fragile. It’s based on rote and memory; it’s not based on understanding. We don’t want kids to walk away with fragile knowledge; we want them to have strong knowledge.

Susan (#3) combines the attention to content in classroom practice and the related negotiation among the committee members, “We weren’t afraid to speak our minds and sometimes people
point out little details that someone else doesn't see or they read into it in a way that someone else doesn't based on their lack or their expertise in math.” It is the attention to mathematics beyond the surface level and as classroom practice that was incorporated in the curriculum development process.

It is this same attention that afforded to the mathematics concepts in the development of the mathematics curriculum that is deserving of attention now that the curriculum is developed. Did the teachers engaged in the curriculum development process not entertain discussion of the inclusion of particular mathematics concepts due to the specificity of the state standards that guided their work, due to their own mathematics knowledge and backgrounds, or because they were looking past the specificity of the standards and developed curriculum to the implementation of said curriculum? Given my history with Summit Way City Schools and these participants, I draw the following conclusions and resulting next steps.

The state standards that were considered during the curriculum development process eliminated the conversations determining the grade level or grade levels particular concepts should be placed. There was no discussion concerning the placement of multiplication, fractions, or percentages. Instead, dialogue was centered upon how concepts would look in classroom practice and the transition from one grade level to the next. Concepts in isolation were not the focus. As Stephanie illustrates above, questions centered more on ensuring teachers had confidence and strategies to help students develop the mathematical concepts the standards and curriculum development committee included in the curriculum, not the particulars of that curriculum. This group of teachers went past the “why” of the curriculum to the “how” the curriculum would be
delivered. They considered the “how” for themselves and for all teachers at their grade level. This is directly related to the professional development issue discussed in the first section of this chapter.

Professional development for teachers and administrators related to the content of the developed mathematics curriculum is a critical “next step” related to not only this study, but to the successful implementation of the curriculum developed during the curriculum development process. That professional development must include dialogue that troubles the mathematics content, how those mathematical concepts look in classroom practice and daily instruction, and the related assessment of student learning and student achievement. The fact the participants in this study did not spend a large percentage of time discussing the mathematics concepts does not mean all teachers responsible for delivering the curriculum will so readily embrace the concepts at their grade level. Administrators must also have the knowledge and abilities to support their teachers and students during the delivery of the mathematics curriculum. It is with appropriate professional development opportunities throughout the school year, as opposed to disconnected single sessions, teachers can successfully take the curriculum as a document and convert it to powerful learning opportunities for themselves and their students. Given the power afforded to teachers in the development and delivery of said mathematics curriculum, I now discuss the connections of this process to the critical theory previously mentioned.

Critical Theory in This Curriculum Development Process

How does critical theory relate to the curriculum development process studied in this research? That is the notion I trouble in this section. As stated in Chapter Two, paradigmatic assumptions that served as the foundation for this study were rooted in sociocultural/constructivist notions with consideration of critical theory as well. Curriculum development is a social
construction, with shared meanings and realities being constructed by the participants cooperatively over time. The sociocultural and interpretivist/constructivist aspects are overt and easily identified. What critical theory means for this work, however, may not be as easily recognized or connected. The connections of critical theory to this work is the topic of consideration I will discuss next.

*Freire’s critical theory.*

Freire (Freire & Madeo, 2001), as presented in Chapter One, posits the notion of the banking concept in education. Given this line of reasoning, the teacher is the ultimate bearer of knowledge that transmits knowledge to students, without regard for the students as active participants in the learning process. Freire ([1970] 1998) continues to advocate for a system of praxis as a possible means to reform this banking concept to one of a more liberatory education. Praxis is defined as a system of action, reflection and further action based upon the first action and resulting action. The process is cyclical. The process is intended to lead to a system of education leading to empowering teachers and students and creating relationships beyond that of oppressed-oppressor. The curriculum development process these teachers engaged in, along with the corresponding interviews and activities of this study, were first steps toward a more liberatory education for both teachers and students.

The participants in this study considered the factors influencing their curriculum development work, and developed a curriculum to implement at the fifth and sixth grade levels district wide. Through their dialogue concerning interpretation of language and vertical communication, they were engaging in praxis, whether or not they identified or defined the process as praxis. They discussed how this curriculum would look in classroom practice for all students, not just an identified facet of the entire student population. They entertained notions of a liberatory
and empowering education for all students without defining it in that manner. The participants engaged in dialogue. Dialogue that was not always easy. But, they persevered. They maintained open lines of communication, they deliberated and negotiated, and they created a curriculum for all fifth and sixth grade students. They exercised their power to participate in the curriculum development process, to make the curriculum and the curriculum development process their own, and kept the students as the focus of the curriculum not their own agendas. These participants exhibited characteristics of critical theory as defined by Freire. These participants also exhibited elements of critical theory as posited by Greene.

Greene’s critical theory.

As presented and discussed in Chapter One, Greene (1988) is a critical theorist who advocates for critical understanding and personal agency in education. Developing a critical understanding of education involves providing educational experiences that encourage growth in students and empower within and beyond the institution of education. It is through this critical understanding individuals develop a sense of personal agency that leads to empowerment and success within and beyond the walls of education. Conditions that foster this development can be deliberately created and/or emerge within a situation. This curriculum development process became a situation in which these participants started to develop a critical understanding and sense of agency.

Throughout this curriculum development process, these participants engaged in dialogue and reflection throughout. Whether they realized it our not, they were developing a more critical understanding and developing their own sense of agency. Julia (#2) illustrates this point,

I was really wondering why the state didn't do part of it already. It seemed like it would have been the efficient way to do it – to put those things (benchmarks and grade level indicators) together as you were going along instead of one section...
here, one section there. But I guess by doing it that way it did make us look and examine in more depth what was actually there.

Susan (#2) also expresses the heightened awareness she developed during the curriculum development process,

I was learning on the spot, because I'd never done this before and it was kind of mind boggling to go and get into that much detail. But once it was done I could see the benefit of it and I definitely understand where our course of study came from and how the benchmarks align a lot better than I did, which is saying a lot, since I didn't really know that much. But it really does make you realize the focus and how it's tied into the teaching.

Susan (#2) illustrates her own empowerment and the necessity of sharing information with other when she states,

Make sure they see the benefit of it. I mean most teachers really don't care how you get to this point, I mean they just say, give it to me and I'll teach it, but I do think it's important for them to realize that we didn't just pick these (concepts) out of the sky, that they are really going to benefit from them. And that it's a cyclical process.

Francis (#2) reiterates Susan's assertion,

I think that's going to be difficult. Because I think the tendency is going to be to get the document, to think, 'Oh my gosh.' It's going to look bad. It's going to look like a lot, and for them to set it aside and not get to, and that we were discussing time at the last meeting. We need to give our people time just to sit without any distractions and read it and see how they would interpret it also.

What does critical theory mean for this work? These teachers illustrate how Greene's notions of critical understanding and personal agency were at work during this curriculum development process. Just as Freire's and Greene’s key notions of critical theory can be seen in this curriculum development process, characteristics of critical theory as defined by hooks' is also evident in this curriculum development process, as I will discuss next.
hooks' critical theory.

In Chapter One I discussed how hooks takes Freire's and Greene's advocacy for a liberatory education from education in a more global sense to education at the classroom level. hooks advocates for that classrooms that employ a holistic model through praxis based instruction will empower and encourage teachers to grow. The growth in teachers, consequently, will be actualized in students' growth. Christine (#2) illustrates her own empowerment and notions of hooks, Freire and Greene, “I feel that I've grown more as a teacher. Being able to talk with other teachers, to be able to sit here and take this apart and put it back together that I understand more of what I'm going to be doing in the classroom.” When questioned what brought her to that better understanding, Christine (#2) responds,

I think a lot of conversation with other teachers. Because I think that if we sit in our classroom all day long and we don't communicate within our building or with other teachers, that I think we go into our own little world and we never grow. So to be able to sit with a group of teachers and explain it (curriculum), and even, as we did this, we gave examples of 'here's an activity', so as we were writing it (curriculum), we were thinking of the things and where this would fit in. Sometimes to justify our interpretation that we were going through and give examples of particular activities. So to be able to have that conversation. I think that's the key. I mean that's just in your own personal development, that you have to have that communication. That the fifth grade teachers across the hall from me, that we sit down and talk, and we share idea, and I have a large chunk of their kids this year. So I don't want to repeat something that they did. So, if we have that communication going, it ends up better for the students. And that's what we're here for.

Stephanie (#3) also discusses her own understanding and how it ultimately affects her students,

It (engaging in the curriculum development process) makes me think more critically everyday about what I'm teaching my kids in mathematics conceptually versus just computationally. And how am I going to move them forward conceptually so that when we hit this new course of study, and next year they are moving forward...so they're making a bigger jump. What can I do to prepare them for that jump so they'll have those skills.
Susan (#3) reiterates Stephanie’s position as she discusses how the curriculum development process has changed her as an educator,

Well, it’s made me more aware of the theory and the ideals that are behind our program and the need to reassess and change our program to meet the rising needs of society and the gaps that we have in our district and the pressures of the proficiency and so on.

These teachers are empowered. These teachers are engaging in a system of praxis. These teachers took the risk to engage in the curriculum development process, and are developing an “engaged pedagogy” (hooks, 1994, p. 21) that will lead to transformations in curriculum and their own classroom practice. This is exactly what critical theory means for this curriculum development process. Given the role of content based discussion and critical theory in this curriculum development process, I now answer the question of where this work makes a difference.

*Where Does This Study Make a Difference?*

On one hand, much of this study and resulting conclusions are not new. McCutcheon’s (2002) and Reid’s (1992) notions of deliberation and negotiation during curriculum development were illustrated in this study. Dialogue was the vehicle for communication, negotiation, interpretation and reflection. The fact curriculum development is influenced by many factors was not a new discovery. Despite the replication and illustration of much research, this study does provide new information.

What is new information relative to this study is the organization and structure of the curriculum development process and the attention afforded to power issues and power relations during the curriculum development process. As presented in Chapter Four, teachers consider the curriculum development process as characterized by technical and affective aspects. Lines of distinction between these components of the curriculum development process do exist. While
each set of aspects may influence and be influenced by the other, these participants acknowledge
the differences. This framework or structure for exploring and examining the curriculum
development process is new.

What is also new is what this work means for the teachers themselves, for the curriculum
that was developed, for the district as a whole, and for curriculum coordinators who facilitate the
curriculum development process. I will expand upon each of these ideas, beginning with the
teachers themselves.

For the teachers.

The participants in this study entered the process as eight educators with varying years of
experience and various degrees of experience developing curriculum. They ended this study and
the curriculum development process feeling a sense of accomplishment and empowerment. As
Paula (#2) said, “I would say I felt we had a lot of power over that course of study. That’s for the
entire district and there were, this group of teachers working on it. I mean everybody had the
opportunity to do it.” Paula illustrates the power vested in these teachers during the curriculum
development process. Julia (#2) further discusses the power of the committee and the resulting
ownership and pride in the final document,

I think it’s a good process for us to put our stamp of approval or have that
opportunity, rather than just to take what the state says and ‘here you’re going to
do this.’ We make it our own by looking at it, rearranging it, putting it together and
I think that helps in the process too. That this is now our course of study, not what
the state’s giving us to do. So I think that part of the process is a good thing.

Christine (#3) expresses the power of the curriculum development process in the following manner,

It opened my eyes. In all honesty, I thought that people basically sat down and
just kind of decided this is where we want to go as a district and kind of wrote up
their own little course of study…but I have a great understanding of how the
course of study…I feel much more confident. I mean, I’m willing to do this
again…I think in the end you end up as a better educator because you have that
clear understanding of what’s expected.
Stephanie (#3) supports the positions of her colleagues in this process when she states,

I feel really glad that we did it and that we were willing to challenge our own thinking and our views of mathematics and that there seemed to be so many teachers who are willing to do that. That's kind of exciting. That it's not that people just want a textbook to throw down in front of their kids. They really want kids to know and understand math.

Not only has engaging in the curriculum development process heightened their awareness of the mathematics included in the curriculum, these teachers have engaged in professional development that empowered them and created a strong sense of ownership in the curriculum they developed. I now consider what this means for the curriculum they developed.

For the curriculum.

As I have stated repeatedly, the teachers engaged in the curriculum development process have a heightened awareness of the contents of the curriculum they developed, why items are included, why they are included where they are included, and have given thought to how these items translate into classroom instruction and learning opportunities. That is the power of the curriculum development process when you consider the document that was developed. Granted, the teachers did have state standards to consider, but the curriculum developed is still theirs. They aligned the indicators with the benchmarks to create their own curriculum. After comparing the state standards to the curriculum developed, the documents are more alike than they are different.

The difference lies in the order particular concepts are presented in the document, and the curriculum developed includes examples of concepts the committee felt needed clarified. As Julia (#2) said, “I think what we’ve done has worked and I was impressed at how everybody did come together and how quickly we did get things matched. And I think from what the state have given us that we’ve done a good job.” They understand the document. They have common interpretation of the language. They are ready to take the next steps, as Francis (#3) discusses,
We must admit that the bar is being raised, and there’s language that they're (teachers) not quite sure how it should be interpreted and it looks in the classroom, so I know we’ve talked about this before, but we must go through the document, come up with some practical activities for the classroom that cover the indicators and how we would, not just, I’m not thinking of that correct word, how we would put those activities in place in the classroom. What kinds of things should the kids be thinking about while they’re doing it? How should they be responding afterwards, especially in writing, so that we are getting the most thinking on the kids’ part for those activities as possible. So that’s going to be a huge piece and that’s going to take a lot of time, and it’s probably going to be ongoing.

Engaging teachers in the curriculum development process has lead to the development of a curriculum that is more than a document. It is a symbol of the process the teachers experienced and will continue to experience. Given the power of the process for the teachers themselves and the document, I now entertain the power of the curriculum development process for the district.

*For the district.*

Engaging teachers in the curriculum development process sets a definite tone of empowerment and value in the teachers themselves by the district. As Stephanie (#3) stated, “Well, I really liked, I've always liked how teacher focused Summit-Way is with their course of study development. The curriculum coordinator from the district is there, but also they really value teachers' work on that, the teachers building that.” Susan (#2) supports Stephanie's position when she states,

Well, I think we've done it in a very cohesive way. I don't see how else, I mean, we could have done it quicker giving it to somebody to do, but I think when you do it that way, and it comes down from the powers that be, then everyone says, 'Whoa, wait a minute. Why do I have to do this and teach this?' I think having actual people who are teaching in the district working on it, they feel they have input. I think we handled it in the best way we could.

Christine (#2) also acknowledges the powerful message sent by involving teachers in the curriculum development process,

I mean, obviously, if we are given the opportunity to be able to go through and write this document, it wasn’t that we had someone in central office sit down and
write it out and say, “Here’s your new course of study”. I feel like we’ve had some kind of say into it because maybe we have a different perspective as we sit in the classroom and where we think this benchmark fits with this particular standard. And to be able to have that type of conversation, I think that we are able to influence it somewhat.

Empowering teachers to develop the curriculum values the teachers as educators, as individuals, as leaders, and as the facilitators of educational opportunities and experiences for our students.

What an exciting and empowering system for all involved. I now consider implications for curriculum coordinators as they facilitate curriculum development.

For curriculum coordinators.

This study focused on teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process. The information and conclusions of this study, therefore, have direct implications for curriculum coordinators as they facilitate the curriculum development process. The primary role of the curriculum coordinator should be to support the teachers as they engage in the curriculum development process and continue to support them as the curriculum is implemented. This support can span the continuum from providing paper and pencils to actually working with teachers. Julia (#3) identifies part of the curriculum coordinator role as “just making sure that we have the necessary things to give to the teachers and be there to help.” Christine (#3) provides the following description of components of the curriculum coordinator role,

Make sure that they’re still working with the teacher leaders. The teacher leaders continue to work with the staff. Doing some type of staff development in the building. They need to go through and truly walk through the entire course of study explaining what’s the expectation. And then to make sure that we have the materials to support it so that if we have something that’s new and we can’t seem to come up with something that we can go around and find something.

Francis (#3) defines the curriculum coordinator role in the following manner,

Be a great support as we put the document out. As we start to develop practices, inservices to go over that, making people aware. Start to gather materials. Taking
care of all the nuts and bolts and us just giving our minds for a day. But basically organize and arrange and facilitate everything.

Stephanie (#3) and Paula (#3) each stress the importance of the curriculum coordinator as a resource person to answer questions, be available to help, and indefinitely supplying teachers with information. Susan (#3) adds advocate to the role in addition to resource person, “Just to be there with questions and to let the rest of the staff know what was involved and that it was a cyclical process and just fight for some of the things that we believe in with the administration higher up.”

Francis (#3) summarizes all of the above with the following assertion, “Basically the organizing behind the scenes. The organizing of inservices, the organizing of the textbooks coming to us for us to go through. As facilitator and a planner and the communication link between what we do and the district.” The teachers develop the curriculum, but the curriculum coordinator is responsible for creating an environment conducive to negotiation and deliberation, empower the teachers, and be a source of continual support and encouragement.

Although I have discussed the teachers, the curriculum document, the district, and the curriculum coordinator in isolation, these elements operate in conjunction with one another in reality. They are separate yet inherently intertwined. I have addressed them as separate entities to emphasize the saliency of the attention they deserve. When considering the curriculum development process, it is crucial to consider and take into account the teachers, the curriculum developed, the district, and the curriculum coordinator. I now consider and reflect upon the connections of theories that guided my work to my work, resulting future studies, and my own experiences and perceptions of the process of uncovering teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process.
Reflections of this Study

Theory In Practice

In Chapter One, I presented and discussed the anthropological, sociocultural and critical theories as applied to curriculum development that would serve as foundations for this study. Each of these theories posit that reality is socially constructed, which is the curriculum development process and all that is related to the curriculum development process. In addition to this common assertion, these three theories also acknowledge the role of dialogue in gaining knowledge within the social construction of reality and the saliency of dialogue in the anthropological, sociocultural, and critical theory perspectives. In Chapter Two, I presented fundamental assumptions of curriculum theory (traditionalist theory, conceptual-empiricist theory, reconceptualist theory, and critical theory) and the social aspects and context of curriculum development, with emphasis on the negotiation and deliberation process as defined by McCutcheon (2002) and Reid (1992). As I consider these theories and themes in combination and their existence and emergence during this study, three conclusions can be drawn. These three conclusions are the role and importance of dialogue, empowerment of the participants, and the social nature of curriculum development. Each will be further discussed, beginning with the role and importance of dialogue.

The power of dialogue.

As discussed in Chapter One, dialogue is an element of the anthropological, sociocultural and critical theory paradigmatic assumptions. It is through dialogue reality is socially constructed. Dialogue, in this study, revealed not only teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process but also revealed the role of dialogue in the curriculum development process and
Stephanie (#2) illustrates the role of dialogue in the group dynamic,

I thought it was really good. It seemed like people were bouncing a lot of ideas off each other and coming to consensus about where things should be and people seemed to get, were pretty open about where do things belong. So if somebody said something and they disagreed, it wasn't like people weren't willing to listen to other people, which I thought was really good.

Francis (#2) further explains the power of dialogue in the curriculum development process,

Well, the kind of the sad thing about that is the people that really sat on the committee and developed it (the curriculum) probably have the best understanding of the vision they say the curriculum, the materials that were purchased, being used. They understand the intentions probably more than anybody else. So it's kind of sad that not every teacher sits on (a curriculum or course of study writing committee), has that experience.

Julia (#3) reiterates the need for and benefits of dialogue and discussion,

There was a lot of discussion between the groups too, of what fifth grade needed to do to support sixth grade, and I think having us together was a good thing. It would have been nice to maybe have that connection to some of the middle school teachers to be able to discuss with them what they need from us and then again, like the elementary, what we need from them. So I would like to see at some point, when it's all put together, some overlapping in grade levels to try to discuss where we're going and how we're going to get there and all that. I found that helpful in my own teaching when I went back to the classroom. I just, somewhere in there, that needs to be discussed.

Paula (#3) illustrates the need to share the power of the dialogue of the curriculum development group with all teachers,

I think they need to have some idea because they're the teachers who don't ever volunteer for any of those things and they're the first ones to start complaining about, 'Well, I don't know why we have to teach this.' And you want to say to them, 'Did you go? Do you have any idea of how this happens?' Any maybe it is just a quick overview at a staff meeting. I know that teachers are less likely to read it, if you send it to them in print, but if at a staff meeting you take five minutes to say, or ten minutes to show them, how the process works, and next time join us, because everybody can. It's not special people who get to do it, anybody can be a part.
In addition to the attention afforded to the role of dialogue and communication in preceding sections of Chapters Four and Five, these examples illustrate not only the saliency of dialogue in the curriculum development process, but also reiterate the role and importance of dialogue as posited by the anthropological, sociocultural, and critical theories. Notions of power and empowerment as related to critical theory paradigmatic assumptions, an extension and result of dialogue, will next be entertained and discussed.

*Teacher empowerment.*

Critical theorists, as previously defined in Chapter One, maintain that reality is socially constructed by asymmetrical power relations over time and advocate for emancipation and/or liberation through and as a result of dialogue. While not necessarily defined in the specific terms of critical theory by the teacher participants themselves, the teachers in this study did experience empowerment as a result of their participation in the curriculum development process and all that it encompasses. Paula (#2) clearly states the power the group possessed,

I would say between the fifth and sixth grade there probably weren't more than ten people. From that standpoint, I would say I felt we had a plot of power over that course of study. That's for the entire district and there were like, you know, this time group of teachers working on it. I mean everybody had the opportunity to do it.

Paula (#3) reiterates her position at a later time,

But what's fascinating is that it may only be ten or fifteen teachers that really have some big input on the course of study, so that's what I like about it. I think it's very motivating and very fulfilling to know that you can really make a difference in the course of study of what you're going to be teaching.

Paula (#3) continues to elaborate upon the power of the process for the individual,

You know what it is. You know what's in there. You know where it came from in the previous grades. You know where it's headed in the middle school and high school. I think that helps. And I'm guilty of it too. I probably couldn't tell you five or six things I know are in the Language Arts course of study. It's not my favorite
subject. I teach it. I try to do well. I know math and science. I could probably tell you everything that’s in their course of study. I also helped write it.

Christine (#2) describes the effect the process had for her,

I feel that, I think I’m going to be a better math teacher because I do understand more of what’s in the course of study versus somebody else who’s handed this document and says, ‘Here. Here’s your course of study. Now go to it’, without any type of training with the teachers to go through and really explain it and I think that’s something personally, that has been lacking in the past – that people are given this document but not told how to read it.

Susan (#2) supports the assertion the group was empowered with the task at hand,

Well, I think we’ve done it in a very cohesive way. I don’t see how else, I mean we could have done it a lot quicker giving it to somebody to do, but I think when you do it hat way, and it comes down from the powers that be, then everyone says, ‘Whoa, wait a minute. Why do I have to do this and teach this?’ So I think having actual people who are teaching in the district working n it, they feel they have input and if someone else in the school complains you can always say, ‘Well, look. I was there. I went through it. I agree with it.

Stephanie (#3) makes the connection of the empowerment of the group and the individual to the classroom level,

It (being part of the curriculum development process) makes me think more critically everyday about what I’m teaching my kids in mathematics conceptually versus just computationally. And how am I going to move them forward conceptually so that when we hit this new course of study, and next year they are moving forward sand they’re going to move not just to sixth grade level but maybe, partially into what used to be seventh grade level, so they’re making a bigger jump. What can I do to prepare them for that jump?

As these teachers illustrate, in combination with related discussions in Chapters Four and Five, notions of critical theory and empowerment were at work throughout this study. These teachers have expressed the power they felt individually and collectively, and have started to transfer this new sense of empowerment and awareness to their classroom practice. This sense of empowerment was created within the social context of curriculum development within the group dynamic, the next issue of consideration.
Social contexts and deliberation.

In Chapter One, attention was afforded to the fundamental assumptions applied to curriculum development from the anthropological, sociocultural and critical theory perspectives. Chapter Two considered assumptions based upon traditionalist, conceptual-empiricist, reconceptualist, and critical theory paradigmatic assumptions, with additional examination of the social aspects of the curriculum development process and negotiation and deliberation that may occur within the curriculum development process. While these assumptions were presented and discussed with some sense of separation, that was for discussion purposes not necessarily a result of these theories existing and operating devoid of one another. On the contrary, the social dynamic and deliberation and negotiation of the curriculum developed, as previously defined, was evident throughout the study and illustrated in an assortment of ways.

Christine (#2) describes how dialogue, deliberation and working as a group over time led to more than just the creation of a document,

It was a very interesting process. Because I think at first, just thinking back to the summer when we started out with it, a lot of people were hung up on, ‘No, no, no. This is what we do in sixth grade, or this is what we do in fifth grade’. And it was getting past that part of it’s not what we do now, but this is the benchmark that we have to aim for now. And trying to go through and look at it and sometimes it led to interpretations. There were quite often things where you read between the line and we tried to decide where the benchmarks fit with the standards. So it was very enlightening. Some people had different perspectives. We tended to debate out a few things and we sat back and kind of listened to everybody and then we came to consensus. Nobody was sitting back mad that they didn’t get their way. But I think we saw each other’s thought and our own perceptions and then decided which one fit best.

Ann (#2) describes the group dynamic in the following manner,

Everyone’s role I think, was to work together, and there wasn’t really a particular leader, I don’t think, in each group (when they broke into fifth and sixth grade subgroups). There was probably someone who recorded and took those kinds of roles, but not one that said, ‘This is the way it’s going to be’. Everyone worked collectively to kind of analyze what we had and what were the new state standards
and try to put it together and make it mesh and work and kind of go back to the old. I don't know how to say this, just trying to make it mesh, making sure that there's a flow. That it's not choppy. It makes more sense going this way. So, I think we are all on the same level, I'm not quite sure if you want someone to say, 'I was a leader and said this', but I didn't and no one else did.

Stephanie (#2) acknowledges the social and group influence in her discussion of the relationship between the creation of and implementation of curriculum,

Well, I think that they're related in a lot of way in the same sense we all came to consensus about how we saw things, that the implementation of curriculum, we should also be trying to come to consensus of how do you implement that same curriculum. And that, really on the committee, I felt like there was a lot of everybody brought into it, everybody that, 'Yeah, this course of study is strong'. We agreed with what we've come up with. We feel good about it, and let's go. Let's more forward. We're ready to rock 'n' roll. And I think you need that same kind of buy-in from everybody for implementing that curriculum and that same feeling of consensus and feeling good about what you're going to do. You feel good about the goals you're going to achieve and the expectations that are place in front of you.

Christine (#2) concurs with Stephanie that the process was definitely a group process,

Like I said, when we went through and looked at the different benchmarks and tried to figure out where did it fit with this standard, that debating and you know, when one person would say, 'Well, when I read it, I take it as being this'. And then someone else would say, 'But when I read it, I take it as this'. And then we would talk about it, 'Wow, this really leaves, it's very, very open to interpretation'. So we realized as a committee, there was an awful lot of interpretation that went into it and so, it came down to what do we decide as a consensus.

Stephanie (#2) shares Christine's position that individual interpretation contributes to curriculum development and curriculum implementation,

Again, it goes back to a lot of discussion. Another thing you can do is to have a set of definitions that you have included with the course of study. 'Explore mean', you know. 'Mastery means', and give people some goals. You know, ninety percent of the students will be able to accomplish this task, or 'explore' means look into the concepts and that might help build a clearer understanding. But I don't think, I mean, all teachers are different and that's a good thing. And they're always going to have different interpretation and that's not a bad thing. It's just that we also need to share the interpretations with each other. And I think that will develop over time too.
Francis (#3) reiterates the benefit of negotiation over interpretation,

I think we just gave our own personal definition, how we'd see it (concept, benchmark or indicator in question) played out in the classroom. It was very easy to negotiate with the people on the committee. They are very experienced teachers and they are knowledgeable and so it was easy to see their point of view because they totally explained it or to try to get them to see your. I don't think that was a difficult proves with the people that were on the committee. I don't think that anybody left feeling not heard.

Francis (#3) continues her reasoning when she later states,

That whole alignment; the whole, ‘Where does this go? Where does that go?’ It is so valuable to have more than one person talking and bouncing ideas off of, not all of us do things the same way and that's really worthwhile. So even if we achieved nothing, spending a day and talking about what we do in the classroom is something that teachers rarely get to do. And it's just so beneficial that I wish we could do it more often.

Julia (#3) takes the value of the experience beyond the committee level to the district level,

I enjoyed it (the curriculum development process). It's nice to just to get to talk about mathematics and what we're doing, and to meet and work with some of the other teachers that we see in passing and stuff. That part is nice too, just knowing some of the other people that are in the district is kind of a nice thing. I'll sign up next time.

The social dynamic and the resulting deliberation and negotiation of the curriculum development process, as previously defined, were evident throughout the study and illustrated in various ways. While attempts were made to illustrate the social aspects and deliberation as separate entities for discussion purposes, the distinctions are not necessarily easy to draw or define. Due to the curriculum development process being a social phenomenon, isolating particular facets or elements for clarification, discussion and illustration can be troubling. It is difficult to unequivocally characterize one assertion or action as an example of just one theory, or one assumption, or one position. Articulating what has occurred considering the integrate nature of the theories and concepts is difficult. I speculate the distinctions I have attempted to draw to connect the theoretical stances of Chapters One and Two to the study and resulting data could be classified and
characterized in different respects if examining the data from just one lens and/or with a very direct purpose. The conclusions presented and illustrated in Chapter Four were done so as conclusions of my exploration to uncover teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process, but also illustrate and exemplify many of the theories and characteristics presented in Chapters One and Two. Referring to the data to support the theories sounds so simplistic, when it is simply not simplistic in actuality.

Future Studies?

The participants in this study were math educators at the intermediate level (fifth and sixth grade teachers) only. While some conclusions might remain the same, some perceptions of the curriculum development process may differ across the kindergarten through twelfth grade spectrum and across the disciplines. Do math teachers view the curriculum development process differently than English/Language Arts teachers? Than science teachers? Than social studies teachers? How do intermediate level teachers think differently than elementary, middle or high school teachers? Consideration must be afforded across the grade levels and across the academic content areas to enrich the grounded theory of this study.

Another consideration of this work raises the question of how this work would look if replicated in a district with which I am not familiar. Would these teacher participants responses differ significantly if I were not the curriculum coordinator they will continue to work with after this study? Although attempts were made to protect anonymity, did some participants alter their responses because of their intradistrict connection? While I believe many spoke frankly and without reservation, I am not naïve enough to assume the tape recorder and/or direct district connection may not have prevented one of the participants from complete and uninhibited response. The fact discontent and displeasure did arise encourages me to believe a level of
honestly and openness did exist, but I cannot assume my position (as researcher and curriculum coordinator) did not have some degree of influence on participant response at some point in this research and implementation of data collection strategies.

One must also afford consideration to the notion that the process in question is that of a particular school district, Summit Way City Schools. Do other districts operate in a manner that would create a different perception of the curriculum development process? Would perceptions be different in other school districts even if the curriculum development process were the same? How much of the perceptions of the teachers of this study is a product of the process, the district or the combination of the two? Would the perceptions be different if I replicated this study in another district than that of the perceptions uncovered if the study were replicated by a curriculum coordinator in that same district?

Given the state academic content standards I cannot help but also ponder how the perceptions of the curriculum development process given the state academic content standards differs from the days before the state standards specified grade level indicators and grade band benchmarks? Deliberation and negotiation during this process was often related to interpretation of language and intent of the indicator, not necessary the content of the indicator. Dialogue was not based upon skill as appropriate for fifth or sixth grade, but how this indicator would look in classroom practice. How would this dialogue sound if negotiation was necessary to determine the what and the how? How would the state standards have been received if they were imposed on districts and teachers without any opportunity for teacher feedback and input? While these teachers did indicate the state standards were an external influence, it was communicated in a more matter of fact manner. That was just the way it was. One could argue their agreement with
the standards, but they were nonnegotiable. How did this curriculum development process look compared from past mathematics course of study committees?

I also consider the notion of content within this curriculum development process. As previously defined, the participants in this study were engaged in the curriculum development process focusing on mathematics as the content area. This study focused on the process of developing curriculum within the mathematical context. Given the state standards, controversy or negotiation did not arise concerning specific skills or concepts (i.e. multiplication facts, fractions, etc.). Deliberation did arise, however, when entertaining how concepts or skills would look in classroom practice. Paul (#3) outlines the negotiation and discussion that took place,

I think the mathematical vocabulary we all pretty much agreed on. I thought that everybody who was there had a very strong mathematical background and nobody really disagreed about the mathematical language that was in there. I think sometimes we disagreed on, ‘Okay, do they (the students) need to master it or do they just need to know it?’ Because if we put introduced, somebody might put a problem on the board for a problem of the day and say, ‘I introduced it’. Do we need them (teachers) to actually send home five problems for homework and let them figure it out? Because everybody has a different level of, between introduce and mastery of what the students need to be able to do.

Stephanie (#3) illustrates the attention afforded to consistency and continuity of mathematical concepts across grade levels,

I think it was much more discussion based. In August, it was a little more adversarial, because I think people had a little bit more ownership over it (mathematical concepts at particular grade levels) for some reason, but by the time we were in December, it really felt like people tried to be better about saying, ‘Well, what do you guys think?’ And using words like that that opened it up to everybody else so then we’d have a discussion about it (mathematical concepts) and sometimes that point (concept) would stay in and sometimes someone would defend it and say, ‘I really think it fits because of these two ideas in it even though it’s not exactly the same you can reach that goal that way’. Other times people would say, ‘Ah, I think you’re right. Maybe we should put that someplace else or it shouldn’t be included there because it really fits better somewhere else.’

Stephanie (#2) captures the essence of the discussion of mathematics in classroom practice,
I think the one big thing we need to do, is find a way to help people (teachers and students) with their own math skills. And again, I'm not sure how we do that. But, I know that some of it just comes from an uncomfortable level, of maybe you don't completely understand the concepts yourself, so whether you have materials that help explain those concepts. You know, realizing that multiplication is not just an algorithm for repeated addition. That it was just grouping of numbers and it was repeated addition. It's developing a concept. Their (students) knowledge is so fragile. It's based on rote and memory; it's not based on understanding. We don't want kids to walk away with fragile knowledge; we want them to have strong knowledge.

Susan (#3) combines the attention to content in classroom practice and the related negotiation among the committee members, “We weren't afraid to speak our minds and sometimes people point out little details that someone else doesn't see or they read into it in a way that someone else doesn't based on their lack or their expertise in math.” It is the attention to mathematics beyond the surface level and as classroom practice that was incorporated in the curriculum development process.

These are initial questions that must be entertained and explored before the conclusions and implications of this study can be generalized to all teachers regarding the curriculum development process. Exploration of these topics could be formal and/or informal, occur within the context of a study or job embedded. Regardless, these issues, and additional issues that may arise upon further reflection and examination of the data, should be afforded consideration in future studies when considering participants, level or discipline, and access and relationship. I now reflect on this study from the perspective of the actual researcher.

**Who Am I?**

Who am I? That is the question that I pondered throughout the study. I asked that question in the first round of interviews, while operating as a participant observer and during data analysis. I am still plagued by this question. I am a doctoral candidate as a research one university engaged in dissertation research and final analysis. I am a teacher educator. I am a
curriculum coordinator in the same district as the participants. I am all of these in isolation and in combination. Negotiating these roles and positionalities, as Kincheloe (1997), Fine (1997) and Richardson (2000) posited in previous chapters, was on-going during this study, and still challenges my thoughts. Let me explain.

Round one interview dates we set. I was ready with my questions, tape recorder, pens and notepad. Each of them was ready to begin and expressed their willingness to answer honestly and openly. As the first few questions were asked, almost in unison, the question became is this answer for the research study or the school district? Yes, the questions and answers had connection to the study, but they were also very relevant and pertinent to the roles of curriculum coordinators in their school district. During this first round of interviews, I struggled with my dual roles as researcher and curriculum coordinator. Not necessarily in a negative sense, but it was the “conflict” (McCutcheon, 2002) that forces one to examine phenomenon more objectively. This internal conflict caused me to reflect and question continually and remain as objective as possible. My goal remained clear to continue to ask and answer the questions necessary to bring their voices to light.

Remaining interviews and writing sessions were rich in content, description and deliberation embedded in the curriculum development process. Participants spoke frankly and honestly, whether the tape recorder was on or off. We troubled the issues and asked the questions that needed addressed, collectively and individually. We grew together, as curriculum developers and educators. Trust levels grew as well as mutual respect. Our final session ended with a “Wow”, and a smile far understating the sense of accomplishment shared by the group.

Final interviews had the same sense of accomplishment and completion. There was, however, almost a sense of sorrow. Our interviews sessions were more than just questions and
answers. They were additional steps in relationship building. Participants stated, “Feel free to call if you need anything else. I’m so excited for you. I can’t wait to hear about the final product.” It was exciting to know their voices would be heard, yet contained an element of closure and finality in a sense. The researcher was excited to be coming to a truly grounded theory of teachers’ perceptions I could share with others. The researcher was even more excited to bring light to voices of teachers so devoted to ensuring the success of their students they invest themselves in the curriculum development process.

Again, I cannot clearly define my role as just researcher or just curriculum coordinator. They are separate yet interrelated, overlapping in some aspects, in isolation in other respects. I concede I operated as both throughout the duration of this study. Yes, I adhered to the tenets of the qualitative research paradigm and parameters. I conducted member checks, did my best to stay true to the data corpus, and developed a grounded theory based upon interviews and participant observation. I found myself making connections to constructivism and sociocultural paradigmatic assumptions while conducting interviews and observing as a participant observer and researcher. It was the level of understanding that becomes internalized and a part of whom you are, more than words spoken in a class or paper. I was a researcher. As a researcher, I know I did things aligned with Glesne’s (1999) and Lincoln and Guba’s (2000) positionalities. Qualitative research was now more than a mere set of assumptions.

As curriculum coordinator, I now know from the teachers themselves how these intermediate teachers felt. They shared their perceptions’ of the curriculum development process with me. I believe they spoke frankly, honestly and with the knowledge I was going to consider their comments in my continued work with and for them. They were my “Lab Rats”, as defined by them initially (and still are?). I felt a special connection to them. This connection will remain long
after this dissertation is complete. The heightened level of respect and admiration I have for them will not diminish or end with the completion of this study.

As a teacher educator, telling this story seems natural to me. These teachers are/were me. They discussed the same joys and frustrations I have lived. The teachers are the ones interacting with students on a daily basis. They are the delivers of the curriculum. It is this teacher role that remains a part of my core. I emphasize and sympathize with the teachers involved in the curriculum development process. The issues they raised I have raised. Their concerns I shared when I sat in their seat, and that wasn’t too long ago. It was invigorating to talk about curriculum as classroom practice, not just as a document to be created and never referred to. The teacher side considered the student component. How do these standards translate to actuality with students? What does this mean for differentiated instruction? For student achievement, and embedded and authentic assessment? As a teacher educator I was able to entertain and trouble these issues with fellow teacher educators. This is a story long overdue.

As a person, the growth during this process cannot be truly communicated in words. I grew as a researcher, as an educator, as curriculum coordinator, and through the personal interaction with the participants in this study. They helped me examine my abilities and practice in all of these roles, as separate responsibilities and collectively. They reminded me of the power of human element in research, education and when groups of passionate educators unite. These teacher participants inspired me to continue to do all I can for them, personally and professionally. The privilege was mine to engage in these interviews and observations. They are my connection to the students that gets to the heart of educators. I feel a sense of growth and appreciation words cannot quality or define, but will influence and guide my professional and personal practice.
In Conclusion

I expect that the power of this research will be in my continued efforts and work with educator's kindergarten through twelfth grade. Incorporating this found knowledge of teachers' perceptions of the curriculum development process will enable me to more adequately and appropriately facilitate and coordinate professional development to meet their needs and promote opportunities conducive to student achievement. The test will be incorporating this knowledge into MY practice. The cycle of continual action, reflection and action. Praxis. Keeping myself grounded in the sociocultural and constructivist theory and the research data AFTER the data story has been told. That is my charge as researcher, as curriculum coordinator, as teacher educator, and as a person.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


ORAL SOLICITATION SCRIPT

Oral solicitation script, that will accompany letter of consent, presented to intermediate teachers who have self-selected to be a part of the curriculum development process:

As many of you are aware, I am currently working on my doctorate at The Ohio State University. I am at the stage of beginning to gather data for my dissertation. The title of my study is What are Teachers’ Perceptions of the Curriculum Development Process? I feel this study will not only contribute to my dissertation, it will enable to better meet teachers’ needs in South-Western City Schools. Teachers develop our courses of study and implement our courses of study. Therefore, it is critical to determine teachers’ thoughts about the process of developing curriculum or courses of study.

I have decided to focus my efforts on the intermediate school (fifth and sixth grade) teachers. Given the recent opening of the intermediate buildings, I feel these teachers bring experience from both the elementary and middle school perspectives, as well as variety of schools across the district.

Ideal representation would be one fifth and one sixth grade teacher representing each intermediate building. My goal is to conduct 2-3 individual interviews with each participant, lasting approximately 45 minutes each time. I would also like to work as researcher and curriculum coordinator during our writing sessions by interacting as a participant and recording my observations.

Each interview will be audio taped. After each interview, I will provide each of you a written transcript for you to review and advise me of any necessary changes. I will share your transcript with only you. I will not share the results of interviews with other participants, nor permit access to interview transcripts other than that of a particular participant. I will store all tapes in a fireproof lock box in my home office.

Should the opportunity arise to conduct a group interview will all eight participants in the room, I would not be able to ensure anonymity due to the fact everyone would be present when comments were made. Pseudonyms would be used in the written transcript which all would asked to review.

Participation is purely voluntary. There will be no ramifications during the curriculum development process should a teacher choose not to participate. Participants would also be free to remove themselves from this study at any time.

This study will be conducted during normal and common course of study committee meetings. Individual interviews will be conducted at the convenience of the participant, and in a setting of their choosing (ie. Teacher’s classroom, school, etc.).
Participation in this study will not place participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, or reputation.

The information gathered during this study will be gathered and recorded by the investigator/researcher in such a manner to ensure confidentiality of the subjects. I am sensitive to the fact we are all South-Western City Schools employees. I have the support of Dr. Hamilton (Superintendent), Central Office personnel, and your building administrators. I will be asking each participant to choose a pseudonym that will be used throughout the interviews and any observations to reflect that particulars comments, reactions, etc. I assure you I will not share with any district personnel your participation in this project.

Do you have any additional questions regarding the study at this point?

I respectfully ask who is willing to participate in this study? I will also be providing each participant a written consent form validating my connection to/with The Ohio State University in this endeavor. Dr. Diana Erchick is my advisor if you have any additional questions and I will supply you with her contact information. I am the co-investigator in this study.
APPENDIX B

LETTER OF CONSENT
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH


Diana B. Erchick, Principal Investigator, or his/her authorized representative Dawn Lauridsen has explained the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my [my child's] participation. Possible benefits of the study have been described, as have alternative procedures, if such procedures are applicable and available.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Furthermore, I understand that I am [my child is] free to withdraw consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me [my child].

Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: __________________________ Signed: __________________________ (Participant)

Signed: __________________________ Signed: __________________________ (Person authorized to consent for participant, if required)

Principle Investigator or his/her authorized representation

Witness: __________________________
APPENDIX C

LETTER OF SUPPORT
November 14, 2002

To Whom It May Concern:

I have spoken with Dawn Lauridsen about her dissertation project titled, "What are teachers’ perceptions of the curriculum development process". I understand that Dawn will be working with eight teachers at the intermediate school level. The work will not involve students. Dawn has assured me that the teachers will be solicited according to Human Subject procedures and may withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty to them or to the district.

I believe that the work Dawn intends to do will provide the district with useful information regarding the curriculum adoption process. Her project has my support.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

R. Kirk Hamilton, Ph.D.
Superintendent
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview #1 Questions

1. How do you define curriculum? What is curriculum?

2. What are your thoughts about prior curriculums used?

3. What is your prior experience in curriculum development?

4. What has worked with respect to curriculums in your experience?

5. What has not worked with respect to curriculums in your experience?

6. What external factors influence curricula?

7. What do you know/need to know about curriculum?

8. What additional factors influence curricula and/or curriculum development?

9. What is your past experience with curriculum coordinators?

10. What should the role of the curriculum coordinator be in curriculum development?

11. What should your role be in curriculum development?
End of Interview #1 Follow-up Prompts

1. Next Steps:

2. What do you feel was helpful? (in the curriculum development process)

3. What do you need for our next session (curriculum development session)?

4. What do you need me to do between now and our next meeting?
Interview #2 Questions

1. As a committee member, explain the curriculum development process of the draft mathematics course of study to a non-course of study committee member.

2. How will you summarize your role and actions of the committee to non-committee members?

3. How do you see your role as a curriculum development committee member as the said curriculum is taken to all teachers?

4. How do you envision communication across grad levels in curriculum development?

5. How do you see the development of curriculum as a document?

6. How do you see the development of curriculum related to support materials?

7. How are curriculum development and implementation of said curriculum related?

8. How do external factors (state standards, community, proficiency testing, etc.) directly and/or indirectly influence curriculum development?
9. How do internal factors (teachers, administrators, building configurations, etc.)

directly and/or indirectly influence curriculum development?

10. Discuss how the curriculum development process and teacher “buy-in” are or are not related.

11. Discuss how the curriculum development process and interpretation of the wording or language of said curriculum are or are not related.
End of Interview #2 Follow-up Prompts

1. What is necessary in professional development related to curriculum development for course of study committee members?

2. What do educators who were not part of the course of study writing committee need to know about the curriculum development process?

3. How could the information in the above question #2 be shared with educators?

4. What have you learned from your work on the development of the mathematics course of study to this point?
Interview #3 Questions

1. Describe the accounts of the mathematics course of study writing committee from its’ first meetings to this point?

2. Describe your experience as a mathematics course of study writing committee member?

3. How has your experience in this curriculum development process changed you as an educator? As an individual? (How have you been affected by this process)

4. What needs to be included in a written or verbal presentation or overview of the curriculum development process to non-committee members?

5. What are the steps in the curriculum development process?

6. How does “time” affect the curriculum development process?

7. How were specifics of the curriculum determined/negotiated by the group during the curriculum development process?

8. How did you/your committee members negotiate interpretation of language/vocabulary during the curriculum development process?
9. How did the curriculum development process influence your understanding of the curriculum developed?

10. How will you share your experience and knowledge of the curriculum development process with grade level/building teachers and administrators?

11. What should the curriculum development process “look like” next time a course of study or curriculum is written?

12. What role does the curriculum coordinator need to take to continue to support your role in the implementation of said curriculum?

13. What role does the curriculum coordinator need to take with respect to all fifth and sixth grade teachers in the implementation of said curriculum?

14. What did you accomplish as a group you could not have accomplished on your own?

15. What could have been done differently to make the process more effective?
End of Interview #3 Follow-up Prompts

1. Current grade level of focus: ____________________________

2. Years in education: ____________________________

3. Experience by grade level: i.e. 3 years teaching third grade

__________________________

4. Content area(s) of focus: ____________________________

5. Education level:
   a. BS/BA ____________________________
   b. MS/MA ____________________________
   c. PhD ____________________________

6. Gender: ____________________________

7. Socioeconomic status of school community: working class middle class upper class other: ____________________________

8. Characteristic(s) of school community: urban rural suburban