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TEACHERS' CONTENT DECISIONS:  
A CASE STUDY

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The selection of course content has political and sociological implications as well as educational significance. Since local curriculum development is increasingly prevalent, description of teachers' content decisions is an important concern. This study examined the content decision making of four Family Living teachers in a natural school setting.

Qualitative data collection included participant observation of curriculum meetings, followed by stimulated recall interviews. Biweekly interviews over a semester were conducted to ascertain influences on the content in the teachers' lesson plans. A participant construct instrument (Munby, 1982) was used to elicit their teaching beliefs.

Data analysis consisted of the use of a categorical coding system for content analysis of the transcripts. Comparative analysis of transcripts and curriculum documents resulted in an outline of 55 content influences and a description of strategies employed during lesson planning and curriculum development.

The most important influence on the content decisions of three of the teachers was their repertoire, or what they had taught in the past. This repertoire originally had been based

on the local curriculum guide, which had been patterned in turn after state guidelines for the course. The fourth teacher, whose repertoire was weak, was influenced strongly by curriculum resources, particularly a new textbook. Other important factors which influenced content emphasis were student interests and needs and teacher values. Personal influences from principals and parents were slight.

During curriculum development, the teachers employed either a "curriculum by repertoire" strategy, pressing for the curriculum guide to reflect what they were already teaching, or a "curriculum by authoritative resource" strategy, pressing to follow the textbook to simplify lesson planning. These opposing strategies resulted in continuing conflict.

In dealing with controversial content, the teachers employed either a "curriculum by default" strategy, teaching what they believed important until told to do otherwise, or a "curriculum by approval" strategy, seeking approval from a higher authority as a means of protection.

Recommendations based on these findings were made for curriculum supervisors, school administrators, and researchers.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Content has long been recognized as a critical factor in education. Because the selection of course content has educational, political, and sociological implications, the process by which this selection occurs merits examination. Description of content decisions made by teachers is an important area of concern for investigation, for it is teachers who are the "ultimate arbiters of classroom practice" (Doyle and Ponder, 1977, p. 75).

The educational significance of content has been emphasized by the findings of teacher effectiveness studies. In a review of these studies, Rosenshine and Furst (1971) identified content covered as one of the most consistent variables associated with student achievement, and in 1979 Rosenshine singled it out as one of the variables having shown the best results in subsequent research. He concluded that content covered has emerged as one of the most important variables in current educational thinking. More recently Milton Goldberg, executive director of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, reported that curriculum content was one of three variables identified by the commission as "most crucial to improving the quality of education"

(Goldberg, cited in "Improving American Education: Are Standards the Route to Excellence?", 1982, p. 1). The other variables were time spent on a subject and expectations held for students and teachers.

In addition to its educational significance, content covered in schools has political implications. To the extent that content is imposed upon students and its selection is influenced by external pressures, content decisions are political in nature (Schwille, Porter, & Gant, 1980). The recent portrayal of educational organizations as "loosely coupled systems" (Weick, 1976) has highlighted the degree of autonomy enjoyed by teachers, a concomitant effect of which is to open them to a myriad of external forces attempting to influence their content decisions.

Content decisions have sociological implications to the extent that beliefs about what knowledge is worth knowing result in the differential distribution of knowledge in schools (Schwille, Porter, Gant, Belli, Floden, Freeman, Knappen, Kuhs, & Schmidt, 1979). Eggleston (1977) and Apple (1979) are among critical theorists who have held that schools reflect the social order and perpetuate dominant social class values and existing hierarchies. And Davis (1983), in a recent presidential address to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, maintained, "The concern of educators seeking to educate for liberty should be, 'What knowledge for whom?'"

Teachers' content decisions thus can be important determinants of the knowledge distribution patterns in schools and society. This idea, coupled with the findings of curriculum implementation studies (i.e., Berman & McLaughlin, 1978) has led to increased interest in local curriculum development and teacher participation in that process (Ponder, 1983; Short, 1982). Mapping of the influences on teachers' content decisions and the strategies they employ in decision making is therefore important and timely.

#### Statement of the Problem

The problem for this study was teachers' decisions regarding course content.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to describe the influences on secondary teachers' content selection and the strategies they used in making decisions about content. Content planned by teachers in a high school course that was minimally text-bound was noted for a semester, and inferences regarding their content choices were developed. Specifically, the content decisions of four Home and Family Living teachers in a naturally occurring school setting were studied during curriculum development and lesson planning.



### Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed through this study:

- 1) In what ways were these teachers' content decisions influenced by external factors such as textbooks, district objectives, parental input, and administrative directives?
- 2) In what ways were their content decisions influenced by internal factors such as educational beliefs and teaching repertoire?
- 3) How did internal factors mediate the effects of external influences in these teachers' content decisions?

### Background and Significance of the Study

Several researchers have examined the processes by which content selection takes place in the classroom. Zahorik (1975) found that selection of content, not objectives, was most frequently the decision made first by teachers when planning instruction. Leithwood, Ross, and Montgomery (1982) conducted an interview study of 93 randomly selected teachers in Canada, approximately two-thirds of whom were elementary teachers, to identify factors influencing their curriculum decisions. They found that "students' needs, characteristics, and responses" and "teacher background, preference, and

skills" were the most pervasive clusters of factors mentioned in the interviews. Results of a questionnaire administered to the same teachers identified the teachers' "past experiences" as the highest ranking influence on curriculum decisions. Regarding the "planning/organizing and development" functions within the teachers' general curriculum decision making, local curriculum guidelines, texts, and fellow staff members were the dominant influences.

A research team at the Institute for Research on Teaching has conducted for the past several years an ongoing study of external factors influencing the content selection decisions of elementary math teachers (e.g., Schwille, Porter, Belli, Floden, Freeman, Knappen, Kuhs, & Schmidt, 1982; Floden, Porter, Schmidt, Freeman, & Schwille, 1981). They found that teacher repertoire served as the starting point for teachers' content decisions. External factors such as standardized test results, district objectives, and textbooks had considerable influence, while personal influences from principals, parents, and students had only small effects on teachers' content selection. Their concern was limited to the selection of content and did not extend to content emphasis, a factor which may account for the apparent discrepancy with the findings of Leithwood et al. regarding students' influence.

The present study expanded research into teachers' content decisions to the secondary level, examining decision making during lesson planning and curriculum development for a

minimally text-bound Home and Family Living course containing potentially controversial content. The impetus for the study was a controversy over the teaching of birth control which resulted in the temporary removal of that topic from the curriculum. A community needs assessment was subsequently conducted to determine the course objectives which parents, teachers, and students felt were appropriate. With this data, the teachers of the course began a revision of their local curriculum guide. Additional external factors which were expected to affect their content selection were the adoption of a new textbook for the course and the arrival of new curriculum guidelines from the state. Within this framework for decision making, the teachers revised the course outline and planned their lessons for the semester.

#### Assumptions

The major assumptions underlying this study were as follows.

- 1) The teacher is a rational and intelligent professional who makes and carries out decisions by simplifying the complex teaching environment in patterned ways (Shavelson & Stern, 1981).
- 2) A teacher's behavior is guided by his or her thoughts and decisions; to understand behavior, the underlying thoughts and decisions must be understood.
- 3) Behavior (e.g., the carrying out of decisions) can be understood only in relation to the context in which it occurs.

- 4) In selecting content, teachers enjoy some degree of autonomy, while at the same time being influenced by factors beyond their control (Schwille, Porter, & Gant, 1980).

#### Definition of Terms

- 1) Content - The curricular topics a teacher decides to teach.
- 2) Home and Family Living course - A home economics course for eleventh and twelfth graders in which the topics covered include personal development, preparation for marriage, and responsibilities of parenthood.
- 3) Stimulated recall - A phenomenological technique in which the subject is asked to view or listen to a tape of a previous activity and to verbalize what he or she can recall of the thought processes which occurred during the activity.

#### Limitations

This study provides detailed descriptions of content selection in one school district. Broad generalizations to other contexts, therefore, are inappropriate. Data was collected principally through observation and interviews and analyzed qualitatively. Much of the data was phenomenological; self-reports are known to be imperfect representations of thought processes, and explanations

generated in this study should not be considered exhaustive or definitive. Due to practical considerations, content was defined by teachers' preactive selection rather than interactive implementation.

In naturalistic studies of this type, researcher bias cannot be eliminated. This study controlled for internal reliability by having subjects examine and confirm reduced and aggregated forms of their original statements. However, practical considerations prevented using a second researcher to establish inter-researcher reliability, leaving open the possibility that the respondents' answers were bound by the researcher's questions. Thus, data and conclusions should be treated with appropriate caution. Finally, descriptions of practices as they occur in a natural setting should not be taken as prescriptions for ideal procedures.

#### Procedures for Data Collection

Because the goal of the study was detailed description of a number of interrelated factors within a particular setting, the qualitative research approach was selected. A triangulated data collection procedure (Denzin, 1978) involving observation, interviews, and document collection was used to build a data base from which to infer content influences and decision-making strategies.

Specifically, the researcher attended all curriculum meetings for the Home and Family Living course in a suburban school district over an eight-month period. Following each

meeting, the researcher conducted modified stimulated recall interviews with each of the four subjects who had attended. In addition, the teachers were interviewed biweekly over a full semester to discuss the content they had selected when preparing weekly lesson plans for the course and the influences on their content decisions (see Appendix A for a sample interview transcript). A participant construct instrument was administered to each subject to elicit her teaching beliefs. The district's home economics consultant was interviewed, and relevant curriculum documents were obtained from her, including textbook contents and state and local curriculum guidelines.

#### Procedures for Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of the use of a categorical coding system for content analysis of the 411 pages of transcripts of meetings and interviews (see Appendix B for the coding categories). The coding categories were developed through the constant comparative method used in the generation of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967); that is, the categories emerged and were constantly refined in an iterative analysis of the data. Comparative analysis of transcripts and curriculum documents resulted in an outline of 55 content influences and a description of strategies the teachers used to select content during curriculum development and lesson planning. The findings were reviewed and confirmed by each teacher in a summary interview.

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## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This review of research begins with an overview of recent developments in curriculum development and implementation, with particular emphasis upon the teacher's role in these processes. Next, selected findings of studies of teacher thinking, planning, and preactive decision making are presented to provide the context for the conduct of content decision making studies. Third, the review examines work on teachers' content decisions done by researchers at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and by the Content Determinants Group at the Institute for Research on Teaching. The final section describes the methodologies which have been used to study teacher thinking, including case study and ethnography, process tracing, policy capturing, and a participant construct instrument used in this study to elicit the teachers' beliefs.

#### Roles and Processes in Curriculum Development and Implementation

The current interest in the teacher's role in local curriculum development and implementation resulted largely from the lessons learned from evaluations of the federally subsidized curriculum projects which followed the launch of

Sputnik. In the late 50's and early 60's, government agencies and large foundations began large-scale centralized curriculum development efforts following the research and development model used in business (Short, 1982). These projects, which were scholar-dominated, attempted to produce "teacher-proof" curricula which could be implemented with "fidelity," that is, as the developers intended (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977).

Subsequent evaluations of these projects (e.g., the Rand studies) showed that the curricula were not implemented as intended; on the contrary, a great deal of adaptation generally occurred at the local level (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978). Research interest then turned to the nature of this adaptation and, hence, to the teacher's role. Subsequent studies of the implementation of programs disseminated by the National Diffusion Network came to the same conclusion regarding the importance of the teacher: "Teacher autonomy not only influenced aspects of the programs that would be used, it also decided their ultimate fate" (Parish & Arends, 1983, p.63).

Largely due to the perceived failure of the large-scale curriculum development projects, many curriculum analysts have now directed their attention to the local setting. Short (1982) identified three models of curriculum development: 1) the "generic/scholar-dominated/implementation as directed" model, described above; 2) the "generic/mileus expert-dominated/limited adaptation" model followed by developers of

programs for special groups such as the handicapped; and 3) the "site-specific/balanced-coordinated/open adaptation" model, simply put, local curriculum development. He concluded that this third model best met the criteria for effective curriculum development.

In local curriculum development, committees of teachers with a person in charge tackle the task of producing locally relevant curricula (Ponder, 1983; Ben-Peretz, 1980). These committees may choose to create their own innovative program, or they may base their curriculum on any of a wide range of authoritative curriculum resources in what Saylor (1982) referred to as the "Curriculum Plans Reservoir," which includes textbooks, state guides, and the like. Walker (1983) referred to these strategy options as "planning for change" and "operational planning." In any case, participation by teachers is the key element which leads to "ownership" and hence to more successful implementation (Loucks & Lieberman, 1983; Berman & McLaughlin, 1978). Teacher participation also leads to a greater likelihood of congruence between objectives, teaching, and testing, and thereby to "tighter coupling" of the educational system (English, 1980).

While it allows for adaptation to local settings and students and produces tighter coupling and teacher ownership, local curriculum development involving teachers is not without its problems. Short (1982) identified the need for outside resources as one impediment to successful local development.

Goodlad (1981) listed lack of allocated teacher time, lack of funds for compensation, and lack of teacher training as other "grave" problems which must be addressed. Nevertheless, many curriculum analysts and researchers support the local development model (Ponder, 1983; Connelly & Ben-Peretz, 1980; Connelly & Elbaz, 1980; Saylor, 1982).

Ponder (1983) identified four groups of "actors" involved in local curriculum development: teachers, principals, local consultants, and external consultants. Teachers, of course, are the most important. Doyle and Ponder (1977) referred to teachers as "the ultimate arbiters of classroom practice." Saylor (1982) called them the "ultimate curriculum planners." In local curriculum development, the teacher is viewed as a "user-developer" (Connelly & Ben-Peretz, 1980), a positive image consistent with the view of the teacher in research on teacher decision making. That is, the teacher is viewed as a rational professional who makes and carries out decisions in a complex environment (Shavelson & Stern, 1981).

Doyle and Ponder (1977) described an "ethic of practicality" used by teachers in making curriculum decisions. In their conception, teachers view as "practical" change proposals which meet three criteria: 1) instrumentality, or degree of procedural specificity; 2) congruence, or degree of match with current practice; and 3) cost, or ratio of benefit to investment. Parish and Arends (1983) found in their study of the implementation of National Diffusion

Network programs that congruence was indeed a critical factor. They reported that the teachers in their study expressed universal agreement that the program needed to fit their way of teaching. Connelly and Elbaz (1980) referred to the teacher as a "knower of the practical" and thereby well suited to the task of curriculum development.

The second group of important actors, after teachers, are principals. Implementation studies (e.g., Loucks & Pratt, 1979) have documented the important role administrators play in providing support for the new project. The other two groups, local and external consultants, also provide this much-needed support, identified by Loucks and Lieberman (1983) as a key element in successful implementation. External consultants serve as a link between local districts and new knowledge, while local consultants "lead without power," serving as "cheerleaders," "linkers," and "troubleshooters" (Ponder, 1983).

These four groups of actors -- teachers, principals, and local and external consultants -- interact in local curriculum development and implementation through several necessary processes: information acquisition and circulation, deliberation, and developmentalism. The acquisition of new knowledge, frequently by local consultants, and the sharing of this information through internal communication networks produce an "information flow" critical to effective development and implementation (Ponder, 1983). Walker (1971)

described the process of curriculum development as moving from platform positions taken by participants through deliberation, or interaction, to the design of the program.

Finally, Loucks and Lieberman (1983) identified "developmentalism," along with teacher participation and material and human support, as a key element in curriculum innovation. Developmentalism is the process of change through which teachers move in successful curriculum projects. Loucks and Pratt (1979) listed seven levels of this change process, beginning with awareness of the program and culminating in refocusing, or modifying the program. This process takes time, often three to five years, during which continuous support must be provided for individual teacher concerns. The assumption in this developmental model that successful completion of the change process involves modifying the program is consistent with the notion of "mutual adaptation" (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; McLaughlin, 1976) found in the Rand studies to be a critical element of success in implementation.

Studies of curriculum development and implementation over the last two decades have thus placed the focus of interest squarely upon teachers and the importance of their participation in curriculum change. The next section of this review deals with research on teacher thinking, planning, and decision making, processes important to an understanding of curriculum decisions at the local level.

### Studies of Teacher Thinking, Planning, and Decision Making

Paralleling the increased interest of social scientists in cognitive psychology, educational researchers over the past decade have turned from a preoccupation with measurable behaviors to an examination of the mental processes which influence those behaviors. Selected studies from the broad field of research on teacher thinking are described in this section to provide the context within which content decision-making studies have been conducted.

#### Studies of Teachers' Knowledge and Beliefs

An important variable underlying teacher behavior is individual differences among teachers. Three studies illustrate a phenomenological approach to eliciting teachers' implicit knowledge and belief structures. Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel (1976) conducted in-depth interviews with sixty elementary school teachers to investigate their understandings and perceptions regarding curriculum, children, and their teaching environments. These teachers ranged in teaching experience from two to twenty-nine years and were all involved in attempts to implement an "open education" approach to instruction.

Coding of the interview tapes resulted in the identification of four categories of "curriculum construct systems," ranging from the dominance of grade-level facts and

skills to an orientation toward broader curricular priorities. Teachers' understandings of students were analyzed under three headings: needs and feelings, interests and choice, and social interaction. Orientations in each of these areas ranged from relative inattention as a factor in learning to incorporation as a major element in the learning process. Analysis of understandings related to the working environment revealed that parents were more important in the teachers' thinking than principals or other school administrators. The teachers varied in the degree to which they viewed other adults as resources, and these views were related to their perception of children as resources. Overall, the findings provided support for the notion that the wide range of teacher understandings must be considered in any implementation of curricular or instructional innovation.

Elbaz (1981, 1983) conducted five retrospective interviews with one high school English teacher in an intensive case study of her "practical knowledge." The discussions centered around her involvement with the planning of an experimental course and lasted from one to two hours each. In addition, two observations in the teacher's classes were conducted. Elbaz analyzed the transcripts and described the content, orientations, and structure of the teacher's knowledge. She then synthesized the findings into a description of the teacher's "cognitive style."



The content of knowledge included knowledge of subject matter, curriculum, instruction, self, and the milieu of schooling. Five orientations of knowledge, or ways in which the knowledge was held and used, were identified. The situational orientation reflects the application of knowledge to specific situations. The theoretical orientation represents the teacher's position with respect to theory. The personal orientation reflects the ways in which knowledge is used to address personal needs. The social orientation represents the use of knowledge in situations involving others, and the experiential orientation reflects the grounding of knowledge in the teacher's experiences.

Three levels of the structure of knowledge were described: "rules of practice," or specific directives, "practical principles," or reflective purpose, and "images," or broad, metaphoric statements. These terms were used to reflect the relationship of practical knowledge to practice. Elbaz characterized the teacher's knowledge as dynamic, something held in active relationship to practice and used to shape that practice. Her view of the teacher as the holder and user of broadly based, highly complex, practical knowledge depicts the teacher as a possessor of valuable resources which enable her to take an active role in the planning and development of curriculum, rather than as an obstacle to top-down curriculum implementation.

Munby (1982, 1983) adapted Kelly's (1955) repertory grid technique for use in studying teachers' beliefs and principles. The resulting methodology provides a tool for eliciting teaching principles, which are often difficult to draw out beyond a superficial or general level with direct questioning. Munby used the technique, which uses factor analysis to identify teaching beliefs in the teacher's language, in a qualitative study of the teaching beliefs and principles of fourteen junior high school teachers. He attempted to categorize the resulting principles and found that many of them referred to goals of various sorts: curricular goals, extracurricular academic goals (e.g., "making them think"), and extracurricular personal goals (e.g., "make them grow up"). A second category prevalent in the teachers' thinking was concern for management, including attention to student behavior. Overall, however, Munby was dissatisfied with his attempt at generalization through categories, stating:

An attempt to force idiosyncratic and contextually meaningful statements into rather coarse and ambiguous categories can lead only to a dilution of the data's power. (1983, p.38)

To illustrate the range of contrasts and fundamental differences in the teachers' thinking, he detailed the beliefs and principles of four of them. He concluded by relating the observation of several of the participants that their self-understanding had been increased by the self-examination

required by the methodology. (Further description of Munby's technique is contained in the methodology section of this chapter and in the next chapter.)

### Studies of Teacher Planning

Research on teacher planning began in the early 1970's with the work of Zahorik (1970, 1975) and Taylor (1970). Prior to that time, the topic had been addressed primarily at the prescriptive level. Tyler's rational model for teacher planning (Tyler, 1950), in which specification of objectives is followed by selection and sequencing of learning activities and identification of evaluation techniques, had been the dominant curriculum planning model taught in teacher education programs. To determine the model that teachers actually used, Zahorik (1975) asked teachers to list in order the decisions that they made prior to teaching. The most common planning decision concerned activities, and the next most common decision was content. The type of decision made first by a majority of the teachers was content. Zahorik concluded that teachers do not follow the rational model when planning instruction and that, "If proposed planning models are to become helpful tools for teachers, perhaps the place of content in the planning models ought to be more clearly delineated" (p.138).

A number of subsequent studies have confirmed Zahorik's finding that content and activities rather than objectives

serve as the focus for teacher planning (e.g., Morine-Dersheimer, 1978-79; Peterson, Marx, & Clark, 1978; McCutcheon, 1980, 1981). In an intensive case study of one teacher's planning, Yinger (1979, 1980) found that activities were the basic structural units of planning and action. Shavelson and Stern (1981) listed the elements of an activity, termed a "task," which teachers consider in planning: content, materials, activity, goals, students, and social-cultural context. In Yinger's study, decisions related to content and materials were the most frequent planning decisions the teacher made. Other researchers have identified the importance of information about students in teachers' planning decisions (Taylor, 1970; Mintz, 1979).

Yinger outlined a process model of teacher planning which consists of three stages: problem finding, problem formulation/solution, and implementation, evaluation, and routinization. He found that the development of routines served to simplify teaching procedures and free the teacher's time and energy for other concerns. He identified four varieties: activity routines to control classroom activities, instructional routines (teaching styles), management routines to control classroom organization and behavior, and executive planning routines to organize other routines.

Yinger identified five levels of planning: yearly, term, unit, weekly, and daily. Several studies have identified the important influence of long-range planning at the beginning of

the year in providing the framework for later lesson planning (Joyce, 1978-79; Clark & Elmore, 1979, 1981). In an ethnographic study of twelve teachers, McCutcheon (1980, 1981), however, found little evidence of long-range planning, with plans usually covering lessons for only a week at a time. The teachers in her study relied heavily on textbooks to do the long-range planning for them.

Other studies have documented the heavy reliance of teachers on curriculum materials. Mintz (1979) found that although teachers consulted a variety of materials, they were likely to rely most heavily on the basal teacher's manual in planning reading instruction. On the basis of a survey of elementary teachers, Clark and Yinger (1979) concluded that teachers tend to limit their search for ideas to readily available resources such as teacher's guides. In a case study of one teacher's yearly planning for math, science, and writing (Clark & Elmore, 1981), the primary resources used by the teacher were teacher's guides, her memory of the previous year, and a calendar. In all three subject areas, she stopped planning when she had confirmed that she could "cover the material."

McCutcheon (1980, 1981) identified several factors which hindered teachers' planning efforts. Lack of coursework on how to plan, relative isolation from other teachers, problems with availability of materials, and errors in textbooks were sources of frustration for the elementary school teachers in

her study. In addition, administrative practices such as interruptions and policies regarding textbook use, discipline, scheduling, and student promotion interfered with their planning efforts.

McCutcheon found that teachers were influenced by their own skills, knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs in planning topics to address. The teachers in the study tended to plan lessons around topics they knew well and liked to teach. Other researchers also have identified the influence of individual differences on both the process and content of planning. Clark and Yinger (1979) identified two different planning styles, "incremental" planners, who plan a step at a time, and "comprehensive" planners, who plan for units as a whole. Peterson, Marx, and Clark (1978) found wide variation among teachers in the nature of their planning statements. These differences were related to conceptual level, as teachers whose cognitive level was more differentiated displayed more differentiation in their planning. Clark and Elmore (1981) found in their case study that the teacher's implicit theories of effective instruction affected her yearly planning.

Finally, although teachers apparently do not follow the "rational model" in planning instruction, it should not be inferred that their planning is therefore ineffective or unimportant. On the contrary, plans exert a strong influence on teachers. Because they tend not to deviate from their

plans once they have begun implementing them (Joyce, 1978-79; Peterson et al., 1978), much of their behavior for a particular lesson can be predicted from knowledge of the lesson plan (Shavelson, 1983).

### Studies of Teachers' Preactive Decision Making

Educational researchers' interest in teacher decision making was sparked by Shavelson's (1973) assertion that "the basic teaching skill is decision making" (p.144) and by a chapter by Shulman and Elstein (1975) outlining the methodologies used by psychologists to study human judgment. Shavelson (1976) depicted teaching as the choosing of a teaching act from alternatives in order to achieve a desired goal. He posited that teachers, in making this choice, estimated states of nature (principally student variables), considered probable outcomes of the alternatives, and selected the alternative perceived to have the greatest utility. This model of the teacher as a rational decision maker making choices from alternatives has recently been expanded to identify other factors impinging upon teachers' choices (Shavelson & Stern, 1981). Teachers' judgments are depicted as dependent upon three primary factors: information about students, individual differences between teachers, and nature of the instructional task. In addition, institutional constraints such as administrative policies affect the overall judgment process.

Amplification of this model is provided by the information processing view of teacher thinking (Clark, 1978; Clark, 1978-79; Joyce, 1978-79), which views the teacher as a person who is faced with a very complex environment and copes with that environment by simplifying it. Research findings indicate that teachers take a vast amount of information about their students and integrate it into estimates upon which their decisions are then based. In one study, teachers were given descriptions of students who systematically varied on the dimensions of sex, reading achievement, mathematics achievement, class participation, and classroom behavior (Borko, Cone, Russo, & Shavelson, 1979). The teachers were asked to estimate the likelihood that each student would master the reading and mathematics curriculum by the end of the year and the likelihood that the student would be a behavior problem. The researchers found that teachers based their estimates on the one factor most relevant to the estimate. Estimates of the likelihood that the student would complete the reading and mathematics curriculum were based upon reading achievement and mathematics achievement, respectively. Estimates of the likelihood that the student would be a behavior problem were based upon prior classroom behavior.

A series of studies utilizing both experimental and phenomenological methodologies provided further evidence that teachers use simplifying strategies to form estimates, which



are then used as the basis for decisions (Borko, Shavelson, & Stern, 1981). These studies were designed to determine what information about students is used by teachers in forming reading groups. Results indicated that the teachers attended to only a few pieces of relevant information, and they integrated this information to form estimates of students' abilities, which were then used as the basis for grouping decisions. These reading groups then became the basis for subsequent instructional decisions.

Another study examined the influence of the reliability and valence of information about students on teachers' decisions (Shavelson, Cadwell, & Izu, 1977). Teachers were given one of sixteen versions of a story about Michael, a fictitious student. The versions varied on the reliability of information and the level of ability and effort (valence) ascribed to Michael. The teachers were asked to estimate whether Michael would earn grades of "B" or better that year. Then the teachers were given a second story which included additional information about Michael. It was found that, in making estimates of Michael's ability, the teachers were sensitive to the reliability and valence of the information and revised their estimates in the appropriate direction when given additional information.

While these laboratory studies provide support for the part of the model of teachers' decision making dealing with information about students, the studies of content decision

making reported in the next section provide support based on actual practice for the entire model. In addition, their findings are relevant to all the areas reviewed to this point, local curriculum development and implementation, as well as teacher thinking, planning, and decision making.

### Studies of Content Decision Making

Two groups of researchers have systematically studied teachers' content decisions. As part of a large-scale study of issues related to educational improvement, Leithwood, Ross, and Montgomery (1982) at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education examined factors influential in particular categories of teachers' curriculum decisions. The categories were derived from a matrix of curriculum elements (global concepts, objectives, instructional materials, teaching strategies, and assessment tools) crossed with five curriculum functions (planning, needs assessment, development, implementation, and evaluation).

Open-ended interviews were conducted with a stratified random sample of 93 teachers, approximately two-thirds of whom were elementary teachers, from three school systems in Ontario. The resulting transcripts were analyzed to identify factors influential in the various categories of curriculum decisions. At the end of the interview, 62 of the teachers completed a questionnaire on factors perceived to influence their curriculum decisions.

Results from the questionnaires were presented as a rank ordering of factors perceived by the teachers as influential in curriculum decision making. (No attempt was made to categorize curriculum elements and functions in this part of the study.) The strongest influence was "your past experience," followed by four factors representing student and teacher variables. Ranked sixth were system guidelines. Other factors relevant to the present study, with their rankings, included: availability of resources (7th), fellow teachers (11th), textbooks (12th), ministry (equivalent to state) guidelines (13th), resource staff (18th), principals (21st), and parents (29th). Teacher and student variables, therefore, were perceived as having the greatest influence, curriculum resources were moderate in influence, and personal influences other than fellow teachers had the least impact.

Similarly, results of the interview study indicated that student and teacher variables were the most pervasive clusters of references. Curriculum resources such as textbooks and local guidelines played important but restricted roles, while references to administrators were infrequent. Specific examination of influences on curriculum objectives during planning and development revealed that local curriculum guidelines, texts, and fellow teachers played the critical roles.

Leithwood et al. concluded that the pattern of findings was consistent with the notion of physical and psychological

proximity to the teacher developed by Rayder and Body (1975). Factors closest to the teacher, that is, student and teacher variables, had the greatest impact, while factors usually removed from the teacher's daily activities (principals, parents) had less influence. Overall, the researchers concluded that teachers shared decisions about objectives (content selection), while they were virtually autonomous in making decisions about pace and timing (content emphasis).

The other group of researchers examining content influences is the Content Determinants Group at the Institute for Research on Teaching at Michigan State University. Since 1977 this team has conducted a series of studies on teachers' content decision making in elementary school mathematics. To date, they have completed four phases of research. The first phase was the delineation of the content of fourth-grade mathematics. Content was operationally defined as the topics teachers planned to teach, that is, the intended content from the teacher's perspective. Their definition focused upon content selection rather than content emphasis (Freeman, 1978). They developed a nominal taxonomy for fourth-grade mathematics content which was then used to analyze the content of standardized achievement tests and textbooks (Freeman, Kuhs, Porter, Floden, Schmidt, & Schwillie, 1983). Comparison of the content in the tests and textbooks revealed a lack of consensus on what should be taught. The researchers concluded

that the claim that there is a national curriculum could be justified only at a high level of generality, in that all tests and textbooks did contain material on addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and geometry. At the more specific level of analysis made possible by the taxonomy, however, only two percent of the topics were included in all sources. This lack of consistency, the researchers maintained, leads to significant differences in the content taught in elementary classrooms and increases teacher autonomy in selecting what will be covered.

The second phase of research was a policy-capturing study of teachers' content decisions (Floden, Porter, Schmidt, Freeman, & Schwille, 1981). Sixty-six fourth-grade math teachers with an average of six years of teaching experience at that level were asked to read vignettes describing systematically varied pressures to add or delete topics from the math curriculum. The pressures included district objectives, textbooks, standardized tests, principal, parents, and other teachers. Results indicated a marked willingness to add topics, regardless of the source of pressure; the teachers were less willing, however, to delete topics that had previously been taught. Overall, district objectives and tests exerted the strongest influence; textbooks and personal pressures were less influential.

The third phase of research was a case study of the content decisions of seven elementary school math teachers

from three school districts (Schwille, Porter, Belli, Floden, Freeman, Knappen, Kuhs, & Schmidt, 1982). A bottom-up approach, beginning with teachers and tracing back to content influences, was used, rather than the top-down approach used in implementation studies, in which a policy is traced from official adoption to teacher adaptation. The researchers conducted interviews at the beginning of the school year to determine what topics each teacher planned to teach, the importance attached to each topic, and the teacher's conception of mathematics. The teachers, who had taught for at least two years, kept logs of the content taught throughout the year. Limited classroom observation and biweekly interviews with each teacher were conducted, in addition to interviews with principals and other district personnel and observation of staff meetings. Textbooks, district objectives, and standardized tests were content-analyzed. At the end of the year, questionnaires and direct probes were used to further elucidate the sources of influence upon the content decisions made by the teachers during the year.

The researchers found that all the teachers were influenced by external policies and pressures such as the textbook and district objectives, but they differed in their response to those influences. For example, dependence upon the text varied from high to low depending upon the extent to which the text was considered a legitimate content authority and the strength of the teacher's content convictions.

Variance in textbook usage patterns was found even within the same district policy guidelines; however, no teacher relied totally on the text (Freeman & Schmidt, 1982). Likewise, where district objectives were mandated, all teachers used them, but their usage patterns varied. Problems arose when the prescribed content challenged the normative math content as defined by teacher repertoire and textbook (Porter & Kuhs, 1982).

As in the policy-capturing study, personal influences were weak. Principals exerted little pressure, stating when interviewed that they felt the teachers were teaching what they should be. Other teachers, particularly upper-grade teachers, occasionally applied indirect pressure regarding what content should be covered, and teachers sometimes sought advice from their colleagues (e.g., comparisons of classroom pace). In few cases did parents attempt to exercise control; their influence was felt primarily through concern over their child's progress. Students exercised indirect influence through ability level, requests, displays of interest and understanding, and creation of management problems (Floden & Knappen, 1982).

The model of teacher content decision making which emerged from these studies characterizes teachers as "policy brokers," arbitrating between their own beliefs and perceptions of student needs and external policies and pressures. In this view, teachers enjoy enough autonomy to be

influenced by their own beliefs, but at the same time are constrained by influences and policies beyond their control (Schwille, Porter, and Gant, 1980). This conception is consistent with the theory of "loose coupling" in educational organizations (Weick, 1976), in which teachers are viewed as having considerable discretion in their classrooms due to relatively infrequent intervention by administrators. The researchers view their model as a compromise between the dissemination perspective, in which teachers are characterized as specialists to be influenced indirectly and individually, and the accountability perspective, in which teachers are seen as pawns to be controlled through regulation (Porter, Schwille, Floden, Freeman, Knappen, Kuhs, & Schmidt, 1979).

According to the model, in the absence of external constraints, teacher repertoire serves as the starting point for content decisions. Topics from this repertoire are selected on the basis of teacher priorities and student needs. External constraints which are not consistent with teacher repertoire must possess enough strength to be heeded by the teacher. On the basis of their research, the team identified the characteristics which relate to policy strength as: degree of prescriptiveness, consistency with other messages, authority, and power (Schwille & Belli, 1982). They used Spady and Mitchell's (1979) reformulation of the concepts of authority and power in developing this part of their model. Authority relies upon voluntary submission based on



tradition, legality (rules), expertise, or charisma, while power utilizes rewards or sanctions to bring about compliance.

The fourth phase of research was an examination of the strength of curriculum policies in seven states and 109 school districts (Alford, Schwille, Irwin, Floden, Freeman, Schmidt, & Porter, 1983). The team collected curriculum documents from the states and questionnaire data from randomly selected curriculum coordinators, principals, and fourth-grade teachers in five percent of the districts in five of the states. At the state level, variation was found from state to state in the prescriptiveness, consistency, authority, and power of the policies. Three types of policies were identified: policies to promote specific topics such as the metric system, policies to promote general areas, such as state objectives or tests, and content-free policies, in which districts were required to develop their own policies. Within the second category, promotion of general areas, objectives, tests, and remediation/graduation requirements were usually found to be strong policies, while textbook adoption and time allocation were weaker in effect.

Similarly, at the district level, policies involving district objectives or testing programs usually had a strong impact, while textbook adoption and time guidelines had a more moderate effect. District objectives were more often characterized as comprehensive than minimal. Districts used appeals to authority more frequently than the exercise of power. Sanctions, for example, were rarely applied.

State policies usually had a direct relationship with district policies; for example, where state policies were strong, so were district policies. This direct relationship resulted from state regulation or persuasion in some instances, and from district modeling after the state example in other cases. For example, where states provided comprehensive objectives, districts often patterned their own comprehensive objectives after the state model. There was variation, however, in the degree of consistency of policies within districts and between district and state policies.

The researchers are currently refining path models of the relationships of policy characteristics to perceived effects for objectives and tests. Additionally, six districts have been selected for intensive study, including observation at the classroom level.

#### Methodologies for the Study of Teacher Thinking

Research on teachers' thinking, planning, and decision making is predicated on the assumption that teachers' behavior in a given context is guided by their thoughts and decisions related to that context. In order to understand teacher behavior, therefore, an understanding of the thinking that guides that behavior is essential. A theoretical base for these assumptions is the field theory of Kurt Lewin (1951).

Methodology aimed at describing teachers' thoughts is phenomenological in nature; that is, various methods of

probing are used to elicit teachers' thoughts in order to gain an understanding of meanings from their point of view. The principal methods used in teacher thinking studies are case study and ethnography, process tracing (think aloud and stimulated recall), and policy-capturing. An additional method employed in the present study is Munby's adaptation of Kelly's repertory grid technique (Munby, 1982, 1983; Kelly, 1955).

### Case Study and Ethnography

A case study is a detailed examination of one subject or setting. An ethnography is a descriptive study of an object or system within its ecological context, using methodology characteristic of anthropologists (Wilson, 1977). Case studies and ethnographies are classified as qualitative, or naturalistic, research methods, in which the goal is "thick description" (Ryle, 1971), rather than prediction. No effort to control or manipulate variables is made in naturalistic research; indeed, it is the interaction of variables within their natural setting which is of interest.

Fieldwork methods such as participant observation, in-depth interviewing, and document collection characterize the qualitative approach. Data collection and analysis proceed concurrently, following the "constant comparative method" aimed at the development of "grounded theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Rather than entering the setting with

prespecified hypotheses, researchers suspend (or "bracket") their preconceptions in order to draw meaning from the data as they are observed. Conceptual and categorical systems are inductively derived from the data and constantly elaborated and fine-tuned as the research progresses; the resulting theory is therefore grounded in the data.

Qualitative research methods follow well-defined procedures for data collection and analysis designed to increase the validity and reliability of such studies (e.g., Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982a, 1982b). A primary method for increasing validity is the triangulation of data collection, that is, the use of multiple methods of observation in order to examine the object of inquiry from as many perspectives as possible (Denzin, 1978).

The principal strengths of case study and ethnography for the study of teacher thinking are the opportunity for intensive examination of multiple factors operating concurrently and increased validity as the result of the researcher's presence in the natural setting over a period of time. Drawbacks of these methods include limited generalizability of findings and the inordinate amount of the researcher's time and effort required.

An example of a case study is Elbaz's (1981) study of a teacher's practical knowledge, in which a series of five informal interviews over eighteen months and two periods of classroom observation were conducted to ascertain the

structure of the knowledge one teacher uses. An example of an ethnography is Yinger's (1979, 1980) study of one teacher's planning, in which he used participant observation in the classroom over a twelve-week period, along with process tracing (think aloud), to identify the mental processes used by the teacher while planning.

### Process Tracing

De Groot (1966) described process tracing as the use of introspective techniques to elicit cognitive phenomena, which are then studied by protocol coding and interpretation. Two forms of process tracing which are common in the teacher thinking literature are the "think-aloud" technique and stimulated recall. The think-aloud method involves asking a subject to verbalize all thoughts while performing a given task. These verbalizations are usually audiotape-recorded. Stimulated recall is used in situations where thinking aloud would interfere with the activity, such as in interactive teaching. In these situations, the activity is recorded on video- or audiotape. The subject then views or listens to the tape and verbalizes what he or she can recall of the thoughts which occurred during the activity. In both methods of process tracing, the resulting transcripts are content-analyzed, usually with some type of categorical coding system. In studies where the thought processes themselves, rather than the thought content, are of interest, a typical

procedure is the construction of a flow chart to illustrate the sequence of processes the subject employed.

The principal criticism of process-tracing techniques is the classical argument against introspective methods, that is, that verbalization of thoughts changes their nature. Nisbett and Wilson (1977) maintained that subjects who are asked about their thought processes after these processes have occurred have difficulty in retrieving them from memory and tend to compensate for this by constructing plausible descriptions of their thoughts based on logic rather than memory.

Gauld and Stephenson (1967) found, however, that the number of errors made by subjects in a memory task could be reduced by giving them strict instructions to be accurate prior to the task. According to Ericsson and Simon (1980), incompleteness of recall might be expected in situations where the task has become so automatic that memory of each step is difficult, or in situations where the task itself requires such concentration that the reporting of thought processes becomes impossible. In other situations, however, when clear probes are used and when the time lapse between thought and recall is minimal (as in the think-aloud situation), distortion is slight. They conclude that, although introspective techniques may at times produce incomplete information, the information which is retrieved is veridical enough to be useful in understanding behavior.

An example of the use of the think-aloud technique is Peterson, Marx, and Clark's (1978) study of teacher planning. Twelve teachers were asked to think aloud while planning a social studies lesson, which they subsequently taught to junior high students. Stimulated recall protocols from the South Bay Study were used by Morine-Dershimer (1978-79) to construct descriptions of the perceived discrepancy between teacher plan and classroom reality for three teachers.

### Policy Capturing

Henry A. Wallace (1923) first suggested the application of regression techniques to the study of decision making. As Secretary of Agriculture, he devised a method for modeling corn judges' policies by calculating the relative weights assigned to each corn characteristic by each judge. Hoffman (1960) suggested the use of multiple regression equations to model the policies clinical psychologists used in making clinical judgments. He called the statistical model a "paramorphic" representation of the psychologists' policy rather than an "isomorphic" one, meaning that the equation would perform like the judge but could not be interpreted to represent the judge's thought processes.

Subsequent investigation of the use of regression equations to capture judges' policies has shown that a simple additive model frequently outperforms the judge himself in making future judgments, even when beta weights are replaced

with random or unit weights (Dawes & Corrigan, 1974; Einhorn & Hogarth, 1975). According to Dawes and Corrigan, "The whole trick is to decide what variables to look at and then to know how to add" (p. 105).

"Policy capturing" is the label given to studies which have applied regression procedures to the study of teacher decision making. For example, Floden et al. (1981) conducted a policy-capturing study to identify sources of influence in teachers' content decisions. Teachers were asked to make judgments on the basis of vignettes in which six potential influences were systematically varied. Their responses were then analyzed to estimate the effect of each influence.

Recent work comparing the policy-capturing and process-tracing approaches has shown that, while policy capturing often does a good job of predicting future decisions, it is inadequate for describing the processes used in reaching those decisions. Borko (1982) used both policy capturing and process tracing to study teachers' grouping decisions. She found that policy capturing was inadequate for the identification of teachers' underlying rationale for their decisions. She cited the example of a teacher whose regression equation contained no significant weights for the cues upon which she had been asked to deliberate. When questioned about her thinking in reaching her decisions, she explained that she had been attempting to form mixed groups and had thus been randomly selecting children for each group.



Another shortcoming of the policy-capturing approach is the limitation on the number of cues which can be studied. Because the number of vignettes increases exponentially with the addition of cues, practicality considerations limit the number which can be included in a given analysis. The decision regarding which cues to use, therefore, becomes a critical one. Clark, Yinger, and Wildfong (1978) conducted a study to identify the cues used by teachers in selecting language arts activities. These cues were then used in a policy-capturing study to identify teachers' judgment policies in selecting these activities (Yinger, Clark, & Mondol, 1981). A wide range of individual differences was found, suggesting the operation of highly idiosyncratic processes. Because the model accounted for less than one-fifth of the variance in judgments, the researchers speculated that the teachers were using a variety of cues not included in the study, in spite of their previous efforts to identify relevant cues.

Yinger and Clark (1983) recently concluded that the nature of the task and the experience of the teacher should be considered when selecting methodology for a decision-making study. According to them, policy capturing is not well suited for the modeling of complex tasks involving many cues or for the modeling of experienced teachers' decisions, which are often based on highly elaborated mental models.

### Repertory Grid Technique

The repertory grid technique was developed by Kelly (1955) for his personal construct theory. This theory holds that each person makes sense of the world through the application of a personal theoretical framework, or personal construct system. Within this framework are bipolar constructs which serve as the bases for the organization of experience. The purpose of the repertory grid technique is to map this theoretical system through the eliciting of personal constructs. The technique has few rules and has been adapted to a number of purposes. Its strength lies in its capacity to apply complex statistical methods to a single subject.

Munby (1982, 1983) adapted the grid technique to elicit teachers' beliefs and principles. The grid consists of a matrix of cells in which an individual enters associations between his experiences and his constructs. In Munby's adaptation, the list of experiences which comprise the vertical axis of the grid are elicited during an interview by asking the teacher to list statements describing what a visitor to his or her class might observe. These "elements" are then grouped by the teacher according to any criteria he or she wishes to use. Next, the teacher is asked to describe the similarities within the groups and the differences between them; these statements become the "constructs" across the top of the grid. Care is taken at each stage of the process to ensure that the elements and constructs are in the language of

the teacher. The last step in this first interview is the coding by the teacher of the cells in the grid to represent the degree of association between the elements and constructs.

This grid of associations is factor-analyzed between interviews. The resulting factors of related constructs, which are often bipolar, become the focus of discussion for the second interview, as the researcher and teacher together work toward understanding and describing the beliefs and principles which underlie the factors. (Further illustration of the use of this technique is contained in Chapter 3.)

#### Summary

While studies of teacher thinking, planning, and decision making have addressed the topic of content, they have not attended directly to content decisions in a potentially controversial high school course which is only minimally text-bound. This study thus addressed teachers' content decisions in a Home and Family Living course. The methods of case study and process tracing appeared from the literature to yield the most useful information about the processes by which teachers make complex decisions, so these were the methods used in the study. Munby's adaptation of Kelly's repertory grid technique was used to elicit additional information about the teachers' beliefs which might impact their content decisions.

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## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURES

#### Research Approach and Design

A case study approach using qualitative data collection and analysis procedures was selected for this study for the following reasons:

- 1) The goal of the study was description of the decision-making strategies of a small group of teachers. The intended result of this description was increased conceptual understanding rather than large-scale generalization.
- 2) The ecological context of this problem was considered critical for its understanding; participant observation and a phenomenological approach to elicit subjects' meaning structures related to the context were the appropriate data collection methods to describe this setting.
- 3) Influences upon the teachers' content decisions would be inferred from self-reports during the study and then examined as subsequent data were collected, following the "grounded theory" approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A priori specification of hypotheses to be tested was neither possible nor desirable.

- 4) Detailed information was sought on a number of interrelated factors, some of which would emerge only during the course of the study; controlled experimentation was therefore not practical.
- 5) Data would consist of transcripts and documents for which qualitative content analysis was best suited.

The research design for the study was the collection of data from several sources, triangulated through the use of observation, interviews, and document collection in order to increase the internal validity of the findings (Denzin, 1978). Specifically, the researcher attended all curriculum meetings beginning in the spring of 1982, repeatedly interviewed the subjects during the fall, 1982, semester, and collected a number of curriculum documents in order to build a data base from which to infer the teachers' decision-making strategies related to course content. The independent variables were the factors impinging upon their decisions about what to teach; the dependent variable was the content covered in the course by each teacher during the semester.

The researcher's entry into the context of this study was facilitated by the fact that she had been known for several years by all the subjects, first as a fellow teacher and subsequently as the district evaluator responsible for conducting a community needs assessment for the home economics curriculum. That this study had nothing to do with her official capacity and was in no way a teacher evaluation was

made clear to the subjects. They were told that the purpose of the study was to find out how experienced teachers select content, with the hope that effective strategies eventually could be identified and taught to beginning teachers. Each teacher was asked to participate in the study, and all consented.

### Subjects

The subjects for this case study were the four teachers of Home and Family Living, a home economics elective for eleventh and twelfth grade students in a large suburban school district in Texas. To avoid the influence of selection effects on internal validity, the teachers of this course at all of the district's high schools were included. Following the proposal of the study, but prior to the beginning of the fall semester, one of the original subjects was reassigned to another campus due to reduction in force, so the teacher who took her place as Home and Family Living teacher at her original school became one of the four subjects for this study. Because of her experience in teaching the course, the original subject remained on the district curriculum development committee for Home and Family Living, which was composed of the teachers of the course, and she attended several of the meetings which were monitored during the study. The home economics curriculum consultant for the district also attended most of these meetings and was

interviewed at the conclusion of the study for her perceptions of influences on the content of Home and Family Living from the time it was first taught in the district.

Pseudonyms selected by the teachers were used throughout this report to provide anonymity. Ann, the oldest of the teachers, was in her 40's, had a master's degree, and had taught for seventeen years. Stacie and Roxanne were in their late 30's and had nine years of teaching experience each. Stacie had a bachelor's degree, and Roxanne had earned her master's. Wendy, the youngest of the subjects, was in her late 20's, had a bachelor's degree, and was in her eighth year of teaching. All of these teachers were white females. Further relevant descriptions of them will be incorporated into the summaries of their content selection strategies in the next chapter.

### Data Collection

#### Advisory Council Meetings

Data collection began in the spring of 1982 with participant observation and audiotape-recording of two advisory council meetings. The district advisory council for consumer home economics was composed of community members who had been asked by home economics teachers to participate. A needs assessment had been conducted recently to determine appropriate content for home economics courses in the district, and the purpose of the two advisory council meetings

was to review and respond to the needs assessment findings. Because a large number of people were involved in these meetings, small groups of community members, teachers, and district personnel were formed to discuss selected topics. At the first meeting, the researcher observed and audiotaped the group which Stacie led. The group observed at the second meeting was again led by Stacie and included Roxanne. The subjects were told to try to remember their thoughts during the meeting, as they would be interviewed subsequently about them.

Following the advisory council meetings, the subjects who had been observed were interviewed using the stimulated recall procedure. During these interviews, the audiotape of the meeting was played, and the teacher was instructed to stop the tape at any point at which she wished to comment upon her thoughts during the meeting. In addition, the researcher occasionally stopped the tape to ask a question and sometimes followed up the teacher's comments with a probe for clarification. These stimulated recall sessions were audiotape-recorded, as were all meetings and interviews in this study.

The interaction pattern between researcher and subject in these first interviews with Roxanne and Stacie differed greatly and, to a large degree, remained consistent throughout the study. Roxanne verbalized quickly, easily, and at great length, needing little probing by the researcher. The

transcripts of her interviews reflected this pattern, with long passages of her responses punctuated only occasionally by a remark or question from the researcher. Stacie, on the other hand, tended to respond with brief, parsimonious answers and required much more probing by the researcher to draw her out. The transcripts of her interviews revealed almost equal participation of interviewee and researcher, with the researcher adopting a casual conversational tone, particularly in the first interviews, in order to put her at ease. Interviews conducted later with the other two subjects in the study, Wendy and Ann, fell between these two interaction styles, being more conversational than the interviews with Roxanne but requiring less probing than the sessions with Stacie.

#### Curriculum Meetings and Biweekly Interviews

Data collection during the fall semester of 1982 began with participant observation of a curriculum meeting held after school and attended by all the subjects for the purpose of completing the semester "block plan" suggested by the district as a means for organizing course content for the semester. This form required the specification of the topics to be taught each week. In the original proposal, the researcher had planned to conduct a think-aloud session with each teacher as she completed her block plan. Because the teachers decided to work on the form together, this was not



possible. Instead, the researcher observed the meeting, taking notes, and questioned the subjects about their actions and decisions at the first of the biweekly interview sessions. This curriculum meeting inadvertently was not audiotape-recorded, but the field notes, coupled with the subsequent interviews, captured the significant data. Additionally, copies of the resulting block plan were obtained from each subject.

Throughout the fall semester, at approximately biweekly intervals, unstructured interviews were conducted with each subject to identify the topics being covered, the sources of those topics, and any inputs influencing course content which had been received during the intervening period. Factors which required modification of the planned content also were discussed. (An example segment from one of the interviews is given in Appendix A.) This biweekly interval for data collection was consistent with the procedure developed by Schwille et al. (1981) in their case study. Multiple sessions with each subject allowed time for the generation and checking of inferences during the data collection period.

Eight interviews, averaging about thirty minutes in length, were conducted with each subject. These interviews were unstructured in format so that responses would be in the subjects' own language, thereby helping to increase construct validity. The teachers' weekly lesson plans formed the basis for the interviews and were collected at the close of the

sessions, thus providing documentation of the subjects' self-reports of content covered. An additional question asked at the first biweekly session concerned the subject's opinion of the new textbook which had been selected during the previous semester and, if the subject had participated in the selection process, the factors she had considered in her choice. The researcher's aim during these interview sessions and during the curriculum meetings was to observe and describe events in their natural context without conscious effort to manipulate those events.

In addition to the curriculum meeting at which the block plan was completed, three other curriculum meetings were held during the semester and attended by the researcher and all the subjects. Two of these meetings were held after school; the third was held on the morning of a staff development day. At the biweekly session following each of these meetings, a modified stimulated recall procedure was used to elicit each subject's responses to the salient features of the meetings. The time constraint posed by the length of the teacher's conference period necessitated the selection of segments on the audiotape for response rather than allowing the subject to listen to the entire tape and stop it when she desired to comment.

The first of these curriculum meetings consisted of three major segments, so a selection from each of these segments was played for each subject's response. At the second meeting the

teachers worked on the course outline and objectives the entire morning. Random segments of the tape of the meeting were played for response, and each teacher was asked to comment on anything else that had occurred at the meeting which she felt was important. The third meeting was short and involved the presentation of a section of the course outline with corresponding objectives which Ann had prepared, followed by the unanimous approval of the others. At the subsequent interviews, the subjects were simply asked if they needed to hear segments from the tape of the meeting to stimulate their recall. All refused, having no problem by this time with recalling the salient features they wished to comment on.

Regarding the use of the stimulated recall technique, the researcher found it a useful procedure at the beginning of the study for providing a basis for the initial interviews and for assisting the subjects with recall, particularly following the advisory council meetings at which the large groups present prevented the subjects from responding on the spot with their thoughts and feelings during the meeting. (This is what makes it such a useful technique for studying teachers' thoughts during classroom interaction.) It was also helpful following the first of the curriculum meetings to help the subjects recognize the researcher's intent to draw upon their memories of the meetings and therefore the importance of their taking note during the meetings of things they wished to comment on later.

The procedure thereafter became less effective and was abbreviated for three reasons. First, the teachers were well aware that they would be asked for comments after each meeting and had no difficulty identifying and remembering the salient features. Second, since the participants in the curriculum meetings were few, the subjects generally spoke their minds during the meetings and simply repeated the same thoughts when asked to comment later. Third, the amount of time needed to complete a full stimulated recall procedure made it burdensome when used in addition to the topics routinely covered at the biweekly sessions.

#### Teacher Beliefs Methodology

Munby's adaptation of Kelly's Repertory Grid Technique (Munby, 1982, 1983; Kelly, 1955) was used following mid-semester to elicit each teacher's educational beliefs. This methodology, a type of participant construct survey, was piloted by the researcher on another teacher during the summer to gain familiarity with the technique. It was then used in two consecutive biweekly sessions, in addition to the routinely covered topics, to obtain an additional perspective from which to view these teachers' strategies. In the first interview, each teacher was asked to list twenty brief statements describing what a visitor to her Home and Family Living class might observe on a representative day. These statements were written on cards and numbered consecutively.

They became the "elements" associated with the vertical axis of the grid. Next the teacher was asked to group the cards in any way she would like, and then to explain why each group was composed as it was. The statements used to describe the groups became the "constructs" associated with the grid's horizontal axis. The teacher was then asked to code the association represented by each cell of the grid as "definitely associated" (3), "neutral" (2), or "definitely not associated" (1). Figure 1 presents an example of a section of a completed grid.

Between the two interviews, the matrix of associations obtained from each teacher was subjected to factor analysis (principal components solution with varimax rotation) to determine how the constructs on the horizontal axis grouped together. These groupings, or factors, some of which had positive and negative poles, were then written out and became the basis for the second interview. The teacher and researcher together explored the meanings represented by the groupings and worked toward producing a label representing one of the teacher's educational beliefs for each factor. In this way, these beliefs were indirectly elicited using the language of the teacher and based on classroom events, thus attempting to overcome such problems associated with direct questioning as the difficulty of articulating on the broad topic of "educational beliefs" and the tendency to give socially acceptable or superficial answers.

3 = Definitely associated  
 2 = Neutral  
 1 = Definitely not associated

1. T. lectures	3	3	2	3	1	3
2. T. writes major points on board	3	3	1	3	1	1
3. T. expands on points	3	3	3	3	1	3
4. S. give input and examples	1	3	3	2	3	3
5. T. moves ahead from S. comments	3	3	3	3	3	3
6. S. read Current Lifestudies	1	3	1	3	1	1
7. S. discuss	1	3	1	3	3	3
8. S. plan role-play in groups	1	2	1	2	3	
9. S. present role-plays to class	1	3	1	3	3	
10. S. discuss role-plays	1	3	1	3		
11. T. adds information left out	3	3	1			
12. S. read from book	1	3	1			
13. S. write answers to questions	1	3				
14. S. discuss questions	1					
15. S. view filmstrip						
16. T. previews filmstrip						
17. S. discuss points						
18. S. write						

Figure 1. Section of completed grid.

While the use of this methodology provided information which validated data collected through the teachers' self-reports, its usefulness for the purposes of this study was limited by its tendency to produce instructional beliefs rather than curricular beliefs. This occurs because the list which is elicited and manipulated is of classroom events rather than curricular topics. Nevertheless, the data thus collected added an additional dimension to the description of the teachers' strategies.

The researcher found the methodology to give extremely valid results based upon her personal knowledge of these teachers and upon the consistency of the findings with the data collected through the other interviews during the semester. The technique takes everyday classroom events, which for most teachers are quite simple to list, and seemingly magically converts them into entities representing the teachers' underlying principles and belief structures. It is a most useful supplement to the participant observation and key-informant interviewing used in many case studies and ethnographies in educational research and provides an additional methodology with which to triangulate data collection procedures. The fact that it is a statistical technique which is appropriate for a sample of one is especially appealing.

Three caveats may prove helpful to others interested in using this methodology. First, the conceptual level and

verbal fluency of the teacher affected the ease with which the technique was used in this study. As might be expected, the interaction pattern between teacher and researcher established in earlier interviews carried over to this interview method, with some teachers finding the listing of events and the analysis of the subsequently generated factors to be simple and interesting, while others found these tasks extremely difficult, thereby requiring much more skill on the part of the researcher. Since the methodology requires analytical ability, the greater the degree this ability is possessed by the researcher, the greater the degree of success with which the technique can be used, particularly when dealing with teachers who lack either the skill or the inclination for this type of thinking.

Second, the beliefs which are generated may be related to the particular classroom setting considered by the teacher as the list of classroom events is generated. This was not a factor in the present study because the teachers were all instructed to think about a representative day in their Home and Family Living class, thereby insuring comparability of their responses. The teacher on which the technique was piloted, however, described events in a class which was conducted in a laboratory setting rather than in large-group instruction, and her responses tended to reflect the influence of the setting, with several references to the relaxed atmosphere and individualized instructional pattern. Further



exploration of the influence of setting on the beliefs which are generated with this technique is needed. In the meantime, it is the opinion of this researcher that it may be important for users of this technique to keep in mind that what are generated by this methodology may be some of the teacher's beliefs, specifically, those related to the setting described in the instructions.

Finally, it is important to remember that although this technique uses factor analysis and is therefore mathematical and quantitative, the data that are generated are qualitative in nature and subject to the advantages and disadvantages attendant to that type of data. The statistical technique simply facilitates eliciting verbal data in an interview; it does not produce information which is itself amenable to further statistical manipulation.

#### Final Interviews and Document Collection

Two additional questions were asked at the final biweekly session at the close of the semester in January. Prior to the interview, the questions were mailed to each subject to give them time to consider their answers. First, the researcher asked each subject to describe any ways in which the content covered during the semester differed from previous semesters. That is, they were asked to list any topics which had been added or deleted. Second, they were asked to describe how their participation in this study had affected

their behavior, specifically, what they had done differently because of the study. This question addressed the degree to which observer effects had threatened internal validity.

Wendy's response to the second question was typical:

Well, you wrote that question, and I laughed to myself when I read it, because I had really planned, since we were doing this, to spend a lot more time on my lesson plans.... I did not do it the first week; I didn't do it the last week. Never.... So it really hasn't had an effect on me. I wish it had. I was hoping it would make me better....

Ann agreed that the study had had a minimal effect:

I don't think I've made any changes in the way I've taught. I do not believe that your studying has changed anything.... I really cannot think of a thing, and I've thought about it ever since you sent the letter.... The only thing is that I have watched my spelling on my lesson plans.

Roxanne felt that the study had provided her with an impetus to be better organized, a result with which she was pleased:

Well, maybe created more awareness sometimes of where I'm pulling some of my ideas from. You know, maybe really study myself a little more. Probably more than any other one thing, it helped me to stay on top of the course and maybe doing a little bit more organization.... But I don't think there's been any difference in what the students have received, necessarily.

Stacie felt, and Roxanne agreed, that the researcher's prior relationship with the subjects had limited any effect on their behavior:

I thought about it a lot. I think if it had been anybody but you, I'd have been real uptight about it, but I think knowing you previously helped.... I didn't view you as some monster coming in to do a big whoopee study.... I think because of that, probably you had a much better study than if you had gone into a school system cold and not known anybody.... I

haven't tried to make it pretty and nice just because somebody's gonna be looking at it.

Finally, at the close of the semester, the researcher interviewed the district consultant for home economics curriculum to get a historical view of influences on the Home and Family Living curriculum in the district and a description of the development of the district's curriculum guide and its modification through the eight years the course had been offered. She was also asked to describe her view of her role as curriculum consultant and her perception of the way in which the teachers were expected to use the curriculum guide. The following documents were obtained from her: the table of contents of the textbook, district course outlines (original and revised versions), and state course outlines (original and revised versions).

#### Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was an ongoing, iterative process which occurred both during and after data collection. During the semester the researcher watched for emerging patterns in the responses of the subjects, seeking major influences on content selection and strategies for using those influences. Hypotheses which emerged were checked as further data were collected. For example, when a teacher mentioned a content influence such as the textbook, the researcher watched for references to that influence in subsequent interviews with that teacher, in order to determine

the extent to which the influence was occasional or consistent throughout the semester.

All audiotape recordings of meetings and interviews were transcribed to written format. For the most part, these transcriptions were verbatim; occasionally a passage of irrelevant conversation was omitted. Inaudible segments and sentences which were not completed were indicated by ellipsis points (...). A total of 411 pages of typed transcription resulted.

When the semester ended and all data collection was completed, the transcripts were content-analyzed in the following manner. First, all transcripts of meetings and interviews with one teacher were read, and passages to be coded were underlined. During this procedure the researcher identified potential categories for coding that teacher's content influences. Then the transcripts were read a second time, and underlined passages which contained implicit "because" statements related to content choices were coded in the margin. For example, the following passage from an interview with Ann was coded as indicated on the left:

Teacher values	Maslow's hierarchy of needs--I think it's very, very important that they understand this and how a family meets needs. I don't know that they would ever understand self-actualization in this semester, but if they are aware of it....I used the world situation
Outside influences	for survival, food, clothing, shelter, and the fact that a country would fight if they don't have enough to eat. I used an example

Teacher experiences of seeing a bum go through a trash can in Vienna and how shocked I was.

After the transcripts of all meetings and interviews in which a teacher had participated had been coded, they were read again to fine-tune the coding categories, to make sure they were exhaustive, non-redundant, and consistently applied. Coding categories used for each teacher varied slightly, as some influences were not mentioned by all teachers. Overall, the categories fell into six groups: teacher variables, student variables, administrative constraints, curriculum resources, personal influences, and other influences. (Appendix B contains a list of the 55 categories used, along with the definitions with which they were applied.)

Once the researcher was satisfied with the coding categories used for each teacher, the frequency with which the teacher referred to each category was tallied. This elaborate coding and tally system was used to check the researcher's observations and resulting hypotheses for each teacher, in order to refine those hypotheses. The frequencies which were generated were not viewed as representative of absolute magnitudes, as some influences which were mentioned only occasionally proved to be more salient than other influences mentioned more frequently. The coding and tally system simply provided another perspective from which to view the data and a method for comparing responses across teachers.

Next, a comparative procedure was used to identify the content which was taught by the teachers during each week of the semester. Each teacher's lesson plans were searched and compared with her block plan and her interview descriptions of content covered. The resulting weekly summary of topics for each teacher was compared with the objectives in the needs assessment, the textbook table of contents, and the state and local curriculum outlines.

Finally, all data for each teacher were compiled and analyzed to produce an outline of the factors which appeared to exert major, minor, and little influence upon her content choices and the strategies she appeared to employ in using those influences. The researcher presented these tentative findings to each teacher in a summary interview in the semester following the study to obtain her response. This use of subjects as participant researchers to confirm tentative findings is another method of triangulation to insure internal reliability (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982b). With only slight modifications, the subjects confirmed the researcher's conclusions, and their comments were incorporated into the descriptions of each teacher's content selection strategies contained in Chapter 4. Qualitative comparison of influences and strategies across teachers resulted in the overviews of curriculum content influences and teacher content decision making strategies which follow the teacher summaries.

Qualitative researchers strive for comparability and translatability of findings rather than for generalizability (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982b). To achieve these goals, the findings of qualitative studies are reported using "thick description" (Ryle, 1971). Comparability is the qualitative analog to external validity, while translatability relates to external reliability, or replicability. The extensive descriptions used in the presentation of findings in Chapter 4 serve as a basis for comparison with other teachers in other settings. These thick descriptions, along with the extensive use of primary data through quotations, also serve to increase the internal reliability of the study, as readers have the opportunity to check the researcher's inferences for themselves (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982b). Similarly, procedures and coding categories were carefully described in this chapter and Appendix B to facilitate translatability of the methodology used in this study to other settings.

#### Summary

This case study utilized qualitative data collection and analysis procedures to describe the content decision making strategies of four Home and Family Living teachers. A triangulated data collection procedure including participant observation of curriculum meetings, biweekly interviews of the teachers, administration of a participant construct technique to elicit teaching beliefs, and collection of curriculum

documents was conducted to build a data base from which to infer influences upon the teachers' content decisions and the strategies they employed in decision making. Coding of transcripts and comparative analysis of documents were used to supplement and refine observational inferences, following a grounded theory approach.

Thick description was used to facilitate comparability and translatability of procedures and findings. To increase internal reliability, the researcher used primary data liberally in reporting findings and conducted summary interviews in which the subjects confirmed tentative inferences. Factors which increased internal validity were the triangulation of data collection procedures, multiple interviews with each subject over a semester, and lack of manipulation of the natural context of the study. Additionally, selection effects were controlled by including all district teachers of the course, and observer effects were handled by having them described by the subjects. Use of unstructured interviews to elicit subjects' comments in their own language contributed to construct validity.



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## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The results from the case study are presented in this chapter in four sections. The first section describes the historical flow of events related to developing the Home and Family Living curriculum in the district, both before and during the study. The second section provides narrative portraits of each teacher. The third section lists and describes the influences on content decision making which were identified. Finally, the fourth section summarizes the curriculum decision making strategies used by the teachers during lesson planning and curriculum development.

#### Chronology of Events

##### Prior to the Study

Curriculum development and revision. Home and Family Living had been taught in the school district for seven years prior to the study. Before that, a semester course called Home Management had been taught. Ann, one of the teachers in the study, taught Home Management to Wendy, another of the subjects, during that time. The content of Home Management was very similar to that of the present Home and Family Living course. According to Ann, community controversy over the title resulted in the district's decision to call the course

Home Management rather than Home and Family Living at that time. When Texas secondary schools converted to the quarter system in 1975, the district wanted to offer a wider range of courses, so the decision was made to add a two-quarter elective called Home and Family Living.

The teachers of the new course formed a committee to develop a curriculum guide. Wendy, who was then in her first year of teaching, served on the committee. The other teachers in the study were not teaching the course at that time. The committee used the state curriculum outline provided by the district consultant for home economics to develop a local scope and sequence for the course. This original local curriculum outline (Appendix C) was patterned almost verbatim after the suggested outline disseminated by the Texas Education Agency through Texas Tech University in a publication called Conceptual Framework for Homemaking Education in Texas (1971). The main topics of this state outline for Home and Family Living are given in Appendix D to document the similarity. The teachers were not told that they were required to teach the content in the state outline, but rather that the state outline could be used as a guide to help them decide what they wanted to teach. The state outline was comprehensive, covering more than could be taught in two quarters. It apparently was viewed by the teachers as authoritative, for they chose to use it, along with the curriculum guide that supplemented it (referred to by the

teachers as the "Tech guide"), in designing their course, even though no direct power from the state or the district required them to do so.

With the return to the semester system in 1980, the curriculum guide which had been designed for a 24-week course had to be revised for a course of eighteen weeks. The curriculum committee by that time included the other two teachers in this study, Roxanne and Stacie; Ann then was teaching other courses. The teacher from her school who originally was selected for the study, but was later transferred, served on the revision committee along with Wendy. (Ann's predecessor is hereafter called Becky.) These four teachers had reworked the course outline prior to the study, eliminating topics which were being taught in other home economics courses in an effort to trim the course to its shorter time frame. Cutting the course back from its original dimensions was a major problem which repeatedly was mentioned by the teachers during the course of this investigation. Their reluctance to omit content parallels the findings of the policy-capturing study by Floden et al. (1981), in which teachers were much more willing to add content to a course than to delete it.

Role of consultant. In an interview, the curriculum consultant for home economics for the district provided the following information. She oversees home economics curriculum development in the district and views her role as one of

facilitator, encouraging teachers to make their own decisions about course content and activities, while making sure that the content selected reflects community values. She provides a step-by-step process for them to follow in curriculum development, beginning with the selection of topics and followed by the writing of objectives and learning activities for those topics. She provides curriculum resources such as the state curriculum guide for the teachers to use as references.

The consultant encourages some overlap between topics in the state and local guides but allows flexibility in content selection and sequencing, believing that the local curriculum guide should be developed by the teachers to reflect their priorities for the purpose of providing them with a usable tool for preparing lesson plans. According to her, the resulting guide is to be used flexibly, allowing for variation in teachers' priorities and their classes' needs, but at the same time providing some degree of standardization of topics across the district. Because there is no district-wide test to enforce this standardization and principals have little to do with the home economics curriculum, the teachers' use of the guide is substantially voluntary. However, since all teachers who teach the course participate in the development of its guide, this voluntary system appears to work quite well.

Influences on content. According to the consultant, only two events have occurred during the history of the course to interfere with teacher autonomy in content selection. The first involved a phone call to the consultant made by a high school teacher who was concerned that students were being presented with information from Planned Parenthood without hearing the perspective of adoption agencies. The teachers now schedule regular visits to the class by representatives from an adoption agency to ensure that students receive information from more than one viewpoint.

The second incident was a challenge to the inclusion of the topic of birth control in Home and Family Living classes by a conservative church group. This group succeeded in getting a front-page story in the local newspaper about their objection to a presentation to Wendy's class by a Planned Parenthood representative. Although the district had received no other complaints from the community in the five years the topic had been taught, the vocational director and two assistant superintendents instructed the consultant to remove the topic from the curriculum pending further study. Wendy was forced to sign a reprimand for having a speaker without prior approval of the principal (a practice which apparently had been routine in that school up to that time).

Needs assessment. During the fall of 1981, the district research department began a needs assessment process, surveying parents, teachers, and high school students within

the district to ascertain their opinions about which home economics objectives should be included in the secondary home economics curriculum. Home economics teachers submitted lists of objectives which were compiled by the consultant and this researcher in her role as district evaluator into a survey instrument containing 98 representative objectives in the six subject-matter areas of home economics (e.g., Food and Nutrition). Random samples of parents, teachers, and students were asked to rate these objectives as essential, desirable, of little importance, or not necessary. The Home and Family Living section contained fourteen objectives. All of these objectives were rated as essential or desirable by at least three-fourths of the parents, teachers, and students. The objective about birth control was rated as essential or desirable by 85 percent of students, 92 percent of parents, and 97 percent of teachers (see Appendix E).

Textbook selection. Just prior to the beginning of this study, a new textbook for Home and Family Living was selected by the teachers. Their choice, Relationships: A Study in Human Behavior (Westlake, 1980) was a revision of the textbook which had been used previously in the course. Although they stated that they had not been satisfied with the former edition and they perceived a potential problem with the high reading level of the revised version, it was selected primarily because it followed their curriculum guide more closely than the other two books under consideration. The textbook table of contents is given in Appendix F.

### During the Study

Advisory council meetings. Two meetings of the district advisory council for consumer home economics were held in the spring of 1982 to review the needs assessment data. Participants in these night meetings included the district's home economics teachers (including the teachers of Home and Family Living), the consultant, the vocational director, other district personnel, and community members who had been nominated by the teachers. At each of the meetings the large group present was divided into smaller discussion groups. The procedure followed was to discuss the response to selected objectives on the needs assessment to draw out the opinions of the community members. Stacie led the group which was monitored at the two meetings, and Roxanne participated in that group on the second night.

Discussion at the first meeting centered around four objectives, those dealing with laws, self-concept, values, and marital adjustments. Comments about laws were brief. Stacie mentioned the difficulty of getting a lawyer to speak to the class. The students' increased interest in common law marriages, sparked by the then recent Lee Marvin trial, was discussed. The conversation quickly moved to comments related to the self-concept objective. One of the teachers related an incident in which a student had refused to complete a self-concept worksheet, citing invasion of her privacy. The vocational director questioned the teachers about how such



worksheets were handled, stressing the need for confidentiality of the students' responses.

Discussion then moved to the values objective, centering on potential criticism of the terminology "values clarification." The consultant stressed that particular values were not being taught, but rather that students were taught to be aware of their own values and tolerant of the values of others. The instructional administrator at Wendy's high school suggested avoiding the offending terminology. The community members had little to say about any of these first three objectives.

The bulk of the meeting was spent discussing the marital adjustments objective. A lengthy discussion of financial problems in marriage ensued, with the community members strongly urging inclusion of budgeting in the Home and Family Living curriculum and making suggestions for learning activities. The teachers explained that because this topic was covered in other courses, particularly Consumer Education, and a number of students took both courses, the decision had been made to limit its coverage in Home and Family Living, especially since the course had been reduced to eighteen weeks. The community members then reiterated their belief that it should be emphasized.

Community members supported coverage of the topic of sexual adjustment, but they suggested that boys and girls be separated for that discussion, with a male doctor or nurse

brought in to teach the boys. The importance of encouraging students to talk with their parents and the possibility of an evening seminar to teach parents how to handle sexual topics with their children were brought up by community members and discussed. One member suggested a child care project to provide care for the babies of teenage mothers as a means of emphasizing to students the possible consequences of their behavior. The teachers discussed the difficulty of teaching sex education without allowing their personal values to show. They also mentioned an awareness of the conservative community and the need to tailor material to the maturity of individual classes. Stacie emphasized her belief that students should be taught that if they choose to be sexually active, they need to demonstrate responsibility by using birth control.

At the second meeting the objectives dealing with birth control, single living, parenting, mate selection, and stress were discussed. This time, no community members were present in the group led by Stacie and attended by Roxanne. The teachers again discussed whether to divide the boys from the girls for the sex education material. Stacie related her opinion that having the boys and girls together was important because one of the big problems in marriage is lack of ability to communicate about sexual problems. Roxanne suggested waiting to teach sensitive material until later in the semester to give the teacher a chance to judge the students'

maturity level. Roxanne and Stacie both expressed concern over having a speaker deal with these topics, since the teacher had little control over what a speaker might say. The teachers were in agreement that the sex education objectives should be taught, with one of them pointing out that the community obviously wanted them taught, judging by the response to the survey. That teacher emphasized her belief that birth control should be discussed within the context of marriage. Roxanne expressed the opinion that particularly controversial areas such as "sexual feelings" should be avoided, and Stacie added that she was not going to "say anything that I think a parent could get that upset about."

Discussion of the single living objective was brief. Roxanne and Stacie indicated that they did not spend much time on that objective, but that it "needs to be mentioned." They both said that they avoided discussion of controversial topics such as homosexuality. The parenting objective was considered by all to be very important, and reference was made to the large response it received on the survey. Roxanne and Stacie discussed the problem of running out of time at the end of the semester when that objective is covered and the need to "whittle somewhere, probably at the first of the course."

Overall, the participants at the two advisory council meetings agreed that all nine of the objectives discussed were important and should be taught. The only substantial inputs from community members in the group monitored were that the

financial aspects of marriage should be stressed to a greater degree and that boys and girls should be taught the sex education objectives separately (neither of which were implemented by the teachers during this study).

Curriculum meetings. Four meetings of the Home and Family Living teachers were held during the fall of 1982. The first of these meetings was held after school in early September and was attended by the four teachers, the consultant, and Becky. The purpose of this meeting was to complete the semester "block plan," a standard district form on which the content to be taught each week is listed. This voluntary form provides teachers in this district with a tool for semester planning, as well as a means for standardizing curriculum across the district. It normally is completed individually; however, this semester the Home and Family Living teachers chose to work on it together.

Each teacher brought materials for reference. Stacie brought notes she had been working on, as did Roxanne, who also brought the textbook. Ann brought the text and teacher's guide and the local curriculum guide. Wendy brought the curriculum guide and a tentative block plan which she had prepared. The meeting consisted primarily of her reading this tentative plan and the others copying it down with few changes. They were basically in agreement about what topics should be taught, having revised the curriculum outline the previous year.

A problem surfaced at this meeting which was to continue throughout the semester. Ann, who had not taught the course for two years and had discarded her files, expressed frustration over the fact that the curriculum outline did not match the sequence of topics in the textbook. Because she had three class preparations and therefore little time to devote to lesson planning, she wanted the curriculum outline to follow the textbook, thus making lesson planning easier. Stacie reported that she, too, had had difficulty in trying to teach using the textbook sequence rather than the order she had used in the past. The other teachers did not perceive a problem, saying that they simply pulled a topic from the book as it was needed, rather than going chapter by chapter. Stacie seemed relieved to hear this, having believed that they were required to follow the textbook. She appeared satisfied to give up that effort and go back to following her previous plans, as reflected by the curriculum outline. Ann, however, continued to lobby throughout the semester for changing the outline to match the text. (It should be remembered here that, ironically, the text had been selected for its close match with the curriculum outline. Comparison of Appendices C and F will bear out this similarity. What seemed to concern Ann, and to a lesser degree, Stacie, was minimal rearrangement of topics, not major differences.)

Following this meeting, during the first of the regularly scheduled interviews, each teacher was asked for comments.

Wendy described feeling nervous that the other teachers had copied what she had very hurriedly prepared. She had based her tentative block plan on what she had done in the past, cutting back the first part of the course by a week because of student course evaluations at the end of the previous semester. She expressed satisfaction that there was apparently so much agreement about what to teach in the course and indicated that it was important to keep the curriculum outline general enough to please everyone.

Roxanne explained that the notes she had brought with her to the meeting were made during the summer, when she had worked on speeding up the pace of the course to get through all the content she wanted to cover. This was her major concern throughout the semester, and she viewed the joint preparation of the block plan with the other teachers as an impetus to keep her moving through the content. During the semester she often referred to trying to stay together and stick to the block plan, though the other teachers seemed not to share the importance she attached to that effort. In her work during the summer, she had used her old lesson plans, the textbook, the local curriculum guide, and the state curriculum guide, which she particularly liked. Her results were "fairly close" to what Wendy had done, but she felt that the engagement and wedding unit should be de-emphasized and expressed that opinion at the meeting. The response by Becky that that unit was the reason many students took the course

troubled Roxanne, as she had considerable concern over the declining enrollment in home economics courses at that time.

Stacie expressed relief that the other teachers were not following the textbook as she had believed they all were expected to do. The notes she had taken to the meeting had been made using the text, and when she saw that Wendy and Roxanne were continuing to follow the curriculum outline, she took out her old block plan and used it and the curriculum outline to complete her current block plan, referring to the text occasionally for new ideas. A teasing remark made at the meeting that Stacie's students were "not as smart" as the students at the other schools had caused her eventually to conclude that it was probably true and that the curriculum in her classes might need to be modified for their ability level. In particular, she decided that less time should be spent on the first part of the course (self-understanding), and more time should be spent on relationships with others.

Ann reiterated her frustration with the textbook following the first curriculum meeting. She had not been teaching Home and Family Living when the text was selected and made it clear that it would not have been her choice. Although she wanted the curriculum outline to match the textbook, she nonetheless had problems with the order of the topics in the book. This dilemma continued for her throughout the semester. Ann echoed Roxanne's sentiments about de-emphasizing the engagement and wedding and stated that more

time should be spent on parenting. She reported that following the meeting she had made out her block plan using her notes from the meeting, the text, and her past experiences in teaching the course. She also reported that she considered available filmstrips, personal experiences in her own and her children's lives, and comments made by former students in designing her course.

The second curriculum meeting was held after school in late September and attended by the same participants. The two purposes for this meeting were to review the resource list for the course and to write a new course description. Roxanne had redone the resource list and read it to the others, requesting suggestions for additions or deletions. The list included filmstrips, books, curriculum guides, and other materials considered necessary to teach the course. The filmstrip section was particularly long, and a number of additions were suggested by other teachers who had used them or seen them in catalogs. Roxanne reminded the group to be careful about keeping materials for the various courses separate because of overlapping students (those who took more than one home economics course). The consultant suggested that the teachers recommend purchase of filmstrips for the district's resource center rather than buy individual copies for their buildings. In later interviews Roxanne and Stacie were negative about this suggestion. They found it more convenient to have the filmstrips in the building rather than try to



obtain them from the resource center, particularly since all four teachers would be needing particular filmstrips at the same time as the result of their efforts to standardize the course.

The teachers and the consultant then began work on a new course description for the student catalog. Their assigned task was to produce a description in language appealing to students which would help to check their declining enrollment. Ann read phrases from the teacher's guide to the textbook as stimuli for the others to brainstorm short descriptions which could serve as advertisements for the course without misrepresenting the content. The product was later returned to the teachers by the consultant for suggested modifications.

Several minor changes were recommended. Ann objected to the first sentence, which began, "Spend an exciting hour each day," saying that her students would not think the class was particularly exciting, so that word was deleted from the final copy. Stacie suggested putting a sentence about weddings close to the beginning to "catch the kids' eyes," and that was done. Wendy expressed concern that emphasis on particular topics in the description to draw students would force her to spend more time on those topics in class, but the other teachers felt that the description would have little impact on content because they were already covering those topics and because the students would not remember what was in the description by the time the class began.

Several other topics were discussed briefly at this second curriculum meeting. Roxanne expressed concern about having sophomores in the class as the result of new enrollment requirements for the course from the state level. She feared this would affect the course's content because of the effect it would have on the class's maturity level. Discussion of the new textbook revealed that they were in agreement that it was too difficult for the students and that the teacher's guide suggested activities which they considered very impractical, given the limited time available for the course. Because they intended to use the next meeting to write learning objectives for their revised course outline, they divided the outline into parts, each taking a section to write objectives for, with the intention of discussing those objectives together at the next meeting.

One final segment of the second meeting deserves mention. In regard to the administrative ban on sex education and birth control which had been in effect the previous year, Wendy asked the consultant, "Is there anything specific about what we can and cannot say this year?" The consultant replied, "No, uh-uh, I knew you were gonna ask that," and related her intention to take their content outline and course objectives to the assistant superintendent, along with the needs assessment data, for her final approval. (The consultant later stated to this researcher that seeking approval on content was an unusual procedure, but one she felt

necessary to protect the teachers in this instance.) Interestingly, both Roxanne and Stacie said in their follow-up interview that they interpreted the consultant's statement to mean that they were free to teach the material as they had done before the ban. Wendy understood that final approval had not yet been given and expressed the need for "something definite." Ann was not concerned with the matter, as she had never included those topics anyway.

The third curriculum meeting occurred in late October for the purpose of writing objectives for the curriculum guide. Again, the participants included the four subjects and Becky, with the consultant moving in and out of the meeting to check on progress while monitoring concurrent meetings of other committees. She instructed them at the beginning of the meeting to go through the new state curriculum guide and compare it with their outline, stating, "Now, remember this is just a guide. We don't have to teach all this.... I just want to be sure that we're kinda on target, we're doing some of the same things the state recommends."

The teachers spent the meeting working together on selecting objectives for the topics in their outline, each reading the objectives she had prepared for the others' response. Wendy had taken hers from the former state curriculum guide. She read them out one by one, and the others approved or modified each. Stacie then read her objectives, having taken them from the new state guide and the

textbook teacher's guide. Becky read several objectives for each of her topics, asking for the preferences of the others. She had gotten them from the textbook teacher's guide and another teacher's guide.

Roxanne had not done hers, but she read out a list of verbs from another teacher's guide to provide some variation for the others' objectives. She expressed concern over the form of the outline, wanting the wording to be consistent throughout. She and Wendy felt that using the objectives in the state guide would be a good way to achieve that consistency. Ann contributed objectives out of the new guide and the textbook teacher's guide to supplement those the others read, but she had not yet done her section. She asked for the others' advice on compacting her part of the outline, as it had been overly lengthy for the short time span it covered.

The result of this meeting was the draft of a number of objectives, as well as several slight modifications in the outline. Two topics which inadvertently had been left off the outline when it was revised were added, one topic was deleted because the teachers felt it could be covered in Ann's section, and one topic was reworded because they liked the wording in the new state guide better.

As they worked, opinions they held about the curriculum development process emerged. Ann wanted the objectives broadly worded so that each teacher could choose how to cover

them. Wendy wanted them to be at a minimal level, because she felt that although they should strive to attain higher levels with the students, the guide should reflect a minimum that all students could attain. She, like Ann, wanted the objectives general, or as she put it, "specifically vague." Roxanne felt that as long as an objective was included in the guide, a teacher could "include it as much or as little" as she wanted, and Stacie, too, expressed the need for adjustment by each teacher during implementation.

While the teachers agreed on the topics and objectives and on the need for individual discretion in teaching them, one important difference in their philosophies of curriculum development became more apparent at this meeting and its follow-up interviews. Ann reiterated her earlier statement about wanting a curriculum guide which would save time in lesson planning. She felt that by patterning it after either the text or the state guide that lesson planning would be easier than if it followed the sequence of neither resource. Becky agreed, saying that a new teacher needed "something to go on." While the other teachers concurred that this method would be simpler for new teachers (or teachers like Ann who had not taught the course for some time), they preferred to pattern the guide after the way they had been teaching. What happened in this case was that they succeeded in keeping their curriculum outline intact, without modifying it to fit either the new text or the new guide. Wendy stated that even if the

outline were changed, she would continue to teach the course as she had in the past.

As at the last meeting, discussion of the new textbook was primarily negative. Roxanne felt that it was too hard for the students, that it was very different from the earlier edition, and that its construction made using parts of it independently or out of sequence difficult. Ann agreed that trying to skip around in the text was not working in her class, but she felt that using a textbook was very important, stating, "These kids have got to have facts. They have to know. I will not stand up there and have them question everything I say."

Regarding the new state guide, Ann felt that it was very different from their outline, stating that it was not "headed toward a family," placing more emphasis on single living. Wendy's response was that there was not enough time to go into single living in depth and that her students "aren't in there for that.... They're in there to get married." Ann pointed out that the outline in the new guide was meant to replace the outline in the Conceptual Framework upon which their curriculum guide had been based. The others strongly disagreed, with Roxanne and Stacie saying that if that were true, they would have to redo their outline.

Several other topics from previous meetings came up again briefly at this third meeting. The teachers still were very concerned about declining enrollment and again mentioned the

problem of overlapping students who might see the same supplemental materials used in different home economics classes. The consultant mentioned that the resource center could obtain multiple copies of filmstrips, and that alleviated some of Roxanne and Stacie's previous misgivings about that service. Finally, the teachers continued to share recommendations for various curriculum resources.

The fourth and final curriculum meeting during the fall semester was held after school in mid-November and was attended by the four subjects and the consultant. The purpose of this meeting was to finish drafting objectives for the curriculum outline. Prior to the meeting, Ann had revised the last part of the outline, the sections dealing with parenting and careers, by leaving out some topics which she felt were being taught in other home economics classes. For each remaining topic, she had selected objectives from the new state guide and the textbook teacher's guide. She also borrowed objectives from a video series on parenting which she used in her classes during the parenting unit. She took the objective on birth control from the needs assessment, stating that she had used it because it had been "documented."

Perhaps because Ann had prepared the outline, there was no disagreement this time about the sequencing of topics. The other teachers discussed what she had presented and heartily approved, praising her work. They again discussed the problem of finding enough time to teach everything they wanted to

cover and agreed that they had stayed very close together on the timing of topics during the semester. Suggestions for speakers, films, and filmstrips were exchanged. They looked over the typed resource list which they had worked on at the second meeting, and Wendy commented that she wanted it to include a reference to new resources that may become available, so that they could order the latest products, not just the ones they had listed.

The consultant told them that when the outline and objectives had been disseminated to them, that they were to fill in the activities they used for each objective as the next step in their curriculum development process. She told them to be sure to cite the textbook pages to be used for each part. She again stated that when the outline and objectives were finished (Roxanne still had not done her section, nor had Becky's part been completed), that she would take them to the assistant superintendent for approval. She also clarified the fact that the outline in the new state guide was meant to replace the Conceptual Framework.

In summary, during the curriculum development meetings this semester, the course outline which had been revised the previous year was fine-tuned, and objectives were written for most of the topics. There was little disagreement about which topics to teach. The disagreement which did occur was about whether to sequence the topics as they had done in the past or to follow the order of the textbook or the new state



curriculum guide, and the past position won. Their outline was not revised to match the new state outline, even though some of the teachers saw them as quite different. (Appendix G presents the new state outline, and Appendix H gives their outline as it stood at the end of the semester.) Plans were made for future work on their curriculum guide to begin with the listing of activities for each topic. The sequence of curriculum development in this case, therefore, was: selecting topics, followed by writing objectives for those topics, followed by adding learning activities for each objective. The teachers borrowed extensively from curriculum resources such as the textbook teacher's guide and the state curriculum guide for these topics and objectives. It should be noted that the sequence they used is consistent with the findings of recent research (e.g., Zahorik, 1975).

The curriculum development and revision process used by home economics teachers in this district, both before and during the study, could be categorized as operational planning rather than planning for change (Walker, 1983). Their decisions involved manipulation and transformation of prepared curriculum materials rather than the creation of an original document. Their work took place at meetings held after school and on staff development days. They were not compensated, but their participation on the curriculum development committee led to their "ownership" and use of the resulting local guide, as will be documented later in this chapter.

This lengthy section has described the cooperative decisions and curriculum development which occurred during the study, as well as external events which influenced those processes. It provides the context within which the decision making of the four individual subjects occurred. The next section of this chapter describes these teachers' content selection strategies and the major influences which appeared to affect their decisions.

#### Narrative Portraits of the Teachers

##### Stacie: Repertoire and Curriculum by Default

Stacie, a vocational home economics teacher in her late 30's, had taught Home and Family Living for five of her nine years of teaching. The most important influence on what Stacie taught during the semester appeared to be what she had taught in the past, or her teaching repertoire. When she first started teaching the course, the consultant gave her the local curriculum guide and the block plans of other teachers to use as examples. She used these, along with suggestions from her sister Wendy, to set up her course.

Since then, she has followed that repertoire, making out her lesson plans from her block plan, which each year she bases on the block plan from the year before. Comparison of the content she taught during the study (Figure 2) with the local curriculum outline in Appendix H will reveal that she covered virtually all the topics in the guide in roughly the

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topics</u>
1	Basic needs, values
2	Character development, personality development
3	Maturity, adjustments to frustration
4	Values, standards, goals, attitudes, philosophy of life
5	Communication
6	Relationships with parents
7	Relationships with family members, old people, employers
8	Dating relationships, moral behavior (alcohol, tobacco, drugs, sex)
9	Engagement and marriage (preview)
10	Moral behavior, role concepts, mate selection, engagement
11	Mate selection, mixed marriages
12	Weddings, honeymoon
13	Adjustments in marriage, finances, loss of employment
14	Crisis (separation, divorce)
15	Crisis (death)
16	Preparation for parenthood, special parenting (adoption, single parent), meaning of Christmas to family
17	Preparation for parenthood, infant care
18	Child abuse, children's fears, discipline, joy of being a family

Figure 2. Topics taught by Stacie.

same sequence. She apparently has developed a firm conception of the subject matter and the sequence in which it should be taught, and this repertoire has become very comfortable to her. As she put it, "Once you've done it a few times, you find out your students and the way it's easiest for you to let it flow."

At the beginning of the semester, she tried to revise the sequence of topics to match the new textbook, having been under the impression that she was expected to do that. Although the changes in sequence seemed minor, she had a very difficult time trying to do this, reporting later that, "When I threw 'values' in there in the wrong place, it's like I put my dress on before I put my undergarments on. It felt funny." After she learned at the first curriculum meeting that Wendy and Roxanne were using the sequence they had always followed, she immediately began doing the same, saying, "It's much more natural because that's the way we've been teaching it, and then use the book as a supplement, even though you have to flip around in the book."

Although Stacie's block plan can be traced to the curriculum guide, which in turn was based on the state outline, she stated that she used this block plan flexibly, not hesitating to modify it when unforeseen interruptions or unavailable resources required her to make changes. She stated that she felt that she should cover the "big topics" in the curriculum guide and follow the prescribed sequence to

increase standardization across the district, but that it was all right for each teacher to adjust the content according to her beliefs about her students' needs. References during the interviews to Stacie's values and priorities and to her perception of her students' interests and needs far outnumbered references to any other influences. These factors apparently determined the emphasis she placed on the various topics. For example, she felt that mate selection was critically important and wedding planning only marginally so, and these priorities influenced the emphasis those topics received. She used lack of sufficient time in the course as justification for limiting the coverage of topics she believed belonged in other courses, such as finances and parenting.

The importance of student interest to Stacie was emphasized by the results of the teacher beliefs exercise. The factors which emerged from the class activities she listed and the resulting categories she identified are given in Figure 3. Discussion of these results with Stacie revealed that three of the four factors (factors 1, 3, and 4) related to student interest. Factor one highlights her attention to the characteristics of a class, such as maturity, and her belief that class activities must be varied in order to appeal to students of all levels. Factor three points out her preference for activity lessons instead of lectures because she believes the students gain more through participation. Factor four illustrates her belief that teaching methods must be varied to hold student attention.

1. Students discuss  
Teacher varies by maturity of class as a whole  
(-) \*Students get bored
2. Beginning of class period -- time  
Students discuss filmstrips  
Teacher sums up -- time
3. Students are active  
(-) Students visit during lecture
4. Teacher uses different methods  
Teacher gets student attention

\*Negative items indicate the opposite end of a continuum defining that factor.

Figure 3. Factors extracted from Stacie's grid.

Although she limited the amount of textbook reading she required of her students because of their dislike of that activity, she did select several new topics from the book to add to the course content. She chose, for example, to cover the chapters on adjustments to frustration and on relationships with employers and with older people. Her personal values appeared to influence her selecting these topics from the book, all of which fit under existing topics in the course outline.

The new state curriculum guide also provided Stacie with new teaching ideas, such as attention to the manners needed when visiting a grieving person, a topic Stacie reported that she had previously not thought of in relation to her usual unit on family crises. She viewed the state guide, like the textbook, as a "supplement," or source of new teaching activities. She did not feel compelled to cover all the topics it included or to follow the sequence it used, an order she saw as very different from the sequence of the local guide, nor did she hesitate to use a topic that was not included in the state outline.

These additions to the course content from the new textbook and the new state guide are examples of the way Stacie flexibly uses the curriculum outline. She stated that she modifies her repertoire a little each semester because "life changes," the students change, and she becomes "bored with doing it the same way all the time." She described the

way she constantly fine-tuned her course activities: "If something didn't work real well, then I delete that and add something new. And if it did work real good, then I expand on it."

Regarding the curriculum development process used in the district, Stacie values the opportunity to meet with the other teachers, but she finds making the time to do so a problem. In curriculum writing during the semester, she drew upon the state guide and the textbook teacher's guide for ideas. She was pleased that the finished outline matched her repertoire so closely.

Stacie's strategy for dealing with controversial content merits examination. She appears to employ what will be termed here a "curriculum by default" policy, an allusion to a default option in a computer program. In this option, the computer follows a predetermined instruction unless told specifically to do otherwise. As Stacie described her philosophy, "I'm just gonna do my own thing and if somebody throws a fit, I'll say I was in the wrong. I shouldn't have done it maybe, but I did it anyway." And again, "I try not to ask too many people what to do. I'll probably get in big trouble one of these days. I figure the less that's said about it, the better off...." In other words, Stacie appears to feel that as long as she is not directly told otherwise, she can teach what she feels is important for her students.



Stacie's "default option" comments were made in reference to sex education, a topic which had been removed by the school administration prior to the beginning of this study because of a controversy which occurred in Wendy's class. No decision to resume teaching the topic had been made by the administration by the end of the study, but both Stacie and Roxanne apparently construed the very positive response to birth control by parents in the needs assessment to mean that including that topic was once again left to their discretion. While Stacie had cut back on the amount of discussion related to sex and birth control during the first year the constraint was in effect, during the semester of the study she indicated that she had covered the topics as she had in the past, although she reported that she would not feel entirely comfortable teaching those topics until the teachers were given a direct statement that they would be backed. As she put it, "I think we all feel like we're sticking our necks out, but it needs to be taught." She felt, however, that unlike the first year of the constraint, "The heat's off. Everybody's kind of forgotten about it." She reported, "Nothing's been said, so I'm just gonna teach the way I want to," hence, curriculum by default.

This strategy does not imply total disregard for potential criticism. As Stacie stated, "I kinda know what boundaries I shouldn't step over, and I just kinda go with that." Her acknowledgment of boundaries is similar to the

concept of "zone of acceptance" in administrative theory (Simon, 1957). This concept refers to the range in which decisions made by superordinates such as principals are accepted without question by those under them. Barnard (1938) referred to this as a "zone of indifference." Stacie appears to be using a similar concept in her curriculum by default strategy. That is, within certain limits, she can choose the content she feels is important and needed by the students, but that discretion is not without boundaries. Her own operational definition of the boundary she observes is, "I know what I wouldn't want -- I wouldn't want some teacher telling my child certain things, and I just kinda leave it at that."

An example of the way in which she observes these boundaries is her practice of covering sex education topics herself, rather than bringing in a speaker. She stated, "I know I'm not gonna say anything that I think a parent could get that upset about." Again, "I don't use any extras. I just think it's a little safer that way." And, "I think they could handle it better from me. I know my students well enough to know just how much information I could give them about it." She related that, "The thing that made me quit having Planned Parenthood was the fellow that came out and sat there and popped the rubber in front of the class and kept playing with it." She added, "I could see that if some girl went home and said, 'Well, there was a man that came to class,

and he popped a rubber all period,' that some mother could get really hyper about that." Her curriculum by default strategy, therefore, is not a license for doing anything she pleased, but rather, a zone of decision making within which teacher values and student needs determine what gets taught.

In summary of Stacie's content selection strategies, she followed her repertoire, which had developed to a large degree from the local curriculum guide, which in turn was based on the original state outline for the course. Her personal values and her perception of student needs determined the emphasis each topic received. She modified her repertoire with inputs from the new textbook and the new state guide. Finally, she employed a curriculum by default strategy in dealing with controversial topics.

#### Roxanne: "Pulling, Stretching, and Sliding"

Roxanne, like Stacie, is in her late 30's. She, too, was in her ninth year of teaching, having taught Home and Family Living for seven years. The step-parent of a teenage daughter, she had experienced a divorce and several years of single living, personal background which was reflected in her content decisions during the semester.

The most influential factor in Roxanne's decision making was the block plan which she and the other teachers had constructed from the topics in the local curriculum guide at their first meeting. Figure 4 presents the topics she taught

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topics</u>
1	Problems facing families, basic needs
2	Character development, values, goals, and standards
3	Personality development, values, goals, and standards, maturity
4	Communication
5	Communication, parents and teenagers, home projects
6	Defense mechanisms
7	Family life cycle
8	Siblings, aging
9	Love relationships, dating
10	Love stages, single living
11	Choosing a marriage partner, engagement, wedding plans
12	Family forms
13	Teenage marriage, family law, home projects
14	Adjustments in marriage
15	Financial adjustment
16	Crisis
17	Preparation for parenthood
18	Family planning, single parenting

Figure 4. Topics taught by Roxanne.

during the semester. As in Stacie's case, comparison of her scope and sequence with the local curriculum outline in Appendix H will reveal their similarity. Roxanne indicated that she had been very concerned over her difficulty in previous semesters in covering all the topics in the curriculum outline, a problem she felt was rooted in the reduction of the course from 24 to 18 weeks. During the summer before the study, she had spent some time working on time allocation in an effort to address the situation. As she stated, "I think everything that's in the curriculum is good, so it's got to be streamlined somewhere." Her primary concern during the semester under study was "to try to stick to our block plan and keep it moving," a goal she referred to repeatedly.

She used her perception that the teachers were all trying to stay together as a personal incentive to accomplish her goal. Midway through the semester she reported, "I am feeling some pressure from trying to stay with where we've said we'll stay. It's not anything that I object to doing, because if I really objected to it, I just wouldn't do it." It is interesting to note that the other teachers apparently did not share her perception of the importance of staying together.

Roxanne's concern about covering all the topics in the curriculum guide may be related to a personal emphasis on structure which emerged in the teacher beliefs exercise. The first factor (Figure 5) was identified by Roxanne as

1. Discussion and recording to reinforce  
Organization for studying  
Group work -- student participation (all)  
Teacher varies activities  
  
(-) Beginning of class -- time
2. Filmstrips for visual effect  
Teacher teaches some topics for enrichment rather than  
accountability
3. Teacher disciplines -- gets students' attention (all)  
Teacher uses nonverbal communication
4. Introduction of lesson  
  
(-) Student has responsibility in class

Figure 5. Factors extracted from Roxanne's grid.

"classroom management." She emphasized that organization and order in the classroom were very important to her. Likewise, the third factor, which she described as "discipline," was related to a preference for structure. She stated,

I can't talk when someone else is talking. I cannot discuss. I can't do anything without the students' attention. And I don't want eighteen listening and four not listening. I want all of them listening.

She attributed her attention to structure to "an awful lot of immaturity in the students," stating that immaturity "means that there needs to be more structure, and it has got to be a little tighter."

Interruptions were a frequent irritation to Roxanne as she attempted to remain on schedule. She cited many examples, from having to leave class to attend a special education meeting, to assemblies, to the disruptive effect of holidays as causes of frustration. On the whole, however, she felt that she was successful in moving more quickly through the material and therefore in being able to include more topics during the semester than she had in the past.

As with Stacie, Roxanne's topics came from the local curriculum guide, which in turn had originally come from the state Conceptual Framework. She felt that her topics were prescribed, stating,

We're governed by the state Conceptual Framework. We gear towards the Texas Tech guide.... I do not feel very free to add over what they -- I think you can stretch where you think it's more important to stretch, and I have done that.

She liked the state curriculum guide and used ideas from it. It held authority for her, as indicated by her statement, "The Tech guide was worked on for a long, long time, and it takes hours. It just goes into more depth, and then I can cut from it." As indicated in this statement, she appeared to view the state guide as comprehensive rather than minimal; she did not feel she was required to cover everything in it. She also viewed it as helpful in curriculum development, stating, "The objectives that are in there are always good. They're clearly defined, and they're easy to work with." She felt that taking the objectives for the local guide from the state guide would provide consistency of wording, which she believed was important (another example of her desire for structure). She did not, however, feel that she had to follow the sequence of the revised state guide, stating, "I use the things out of it, but I use them when I need them. I just look it up."

She applied this same attitude about sequence to the textbook, reporting, "We're just gonna have to pull from it." As she related,

I've never seen a homemaking teacher yet that covered a book. Now, that was one of the most frustrating things to me when I started teaching that there was, that you went from chapter one to two to sixteen, back to thirteen.

As she built up her teaching repertoire, however, that repertoire dictated the sequence, and she "pulled" from new materials such as the new state guide and the new textbook as she needed the information. But even this sequence was not



set in stone. She, like Stacie, occasionally "pulled" topics out of sequence because of unavailable resources or other uncontrollable factors. She explained, "I do not feel bound to this outline to a point to where I can't pull something."

In regard to the use of the textbook, Roxanne reported, "I had hoped that when we got a book, that we were going to be able to use it in the course." She was disappointed because she felt the book was too difficult, but she made an effort to use it anyway, stating, "We did go pretty well through it, skipping places, but we did move right through the book." She felt that having the students read in the text reinforced what they were covering in class.

Roxanne made extensive use of resources such as other textbooks, films, and particularly filmstrips, feeling that the visual reinforcement aided learning. She did not, however, feel that these resources altered the content of the class, stating that they were selected to go with topics already in the curriculum. She also liked to make use of popular media, frequently discussing topics from the news, newspaper, cable television, or popular magazines which related to course content. She was distressed that the students were so unaware of current events and emphasized the importance of a teacher's staying "totally abreast of everything that's going on right now." She reported that she tries to "read something about anything that relates to whatever I'm teaching," stating that that was where a lot of her background information came from.

While Roxanne took her topics from the curriculum guide, elaborating upon them by "pulling" from a variety of resources, the emphasis each topic received apparently was determined heavily by her own values and experiences and her perception of student needs and interests, as was true for Stacie. Roxanne used the terms "stretch" and "slide" to refer to the amount of emphasis with which she addressed a topic. For example, she stated in reference to the topic of sibling relationships, "I'm sliding on this pretty fast," because she felt that her students were past the point in their development that that topic was important. As she put it, "We bat it around, but I sure do slide over it." On the other hand, in reference to the state guide, she stated, "I think you can stretch where you think it's more important to stretch." In another reference to the concept of emphasis she stated, "If there is a need for it and it's expressed, I see no reason not to do it and slide in other directions."

Referring to the curriculum guide, Roxanne explained, "I think what is determined if it's in there at all, we can include it as much or as little as we want." She implied that in curriculum development she makes an effort to have the topics she considers important included in the course outline, stating in reference to another course, "I have enough wording in there that I can go ahead and teach what I felt like was important in the course." Having the topic included in the guide was important to her because, as she put it, "If it's

not in the guide, I'm not gonna teach it." The policy she followed, therefore, was that only topics in the guide could be taught, but the emphasis, that is, the "stretching" or "sliding," that a topic received was up to the teacher's discretion, to be determined by her values and perception of student needs. In her words,

I think what we do probably is we choose -- all of us choose from the curriculum guide, but we choose what part interests us most, and I think that's good 'cause I think we should be able to slim some of it down and build some of it up as an individual. Because I think that the things that you do better, you know, you're probably gonna spend a little bit more time on, the things that you feel more comfortable with, and I don't see anything wrong with that. But I think we've got to have some kind of continuity all over the system.

This policy regarding the use of the curriculum guide is virtually identical to the consultant's philosophy, as reported in the first section of this chapter.

The influence of Roxanne's personal experiences on content emphasis is illustrated by her statement,

Your own home life has to be a part of how you teach this course. And you can't be too personal about it, but yet you realize that if you're having problems and you see that other people are and that it's a pretty universal thing, then you can bring it down to where they can relate to it a little bit more.

Several times during the semester she justified her emphasis on a topic by its importance in her personal life. She included a discussion of older people because of a retired couple she admired who lived next door. Although that topic was in the curriculum, she had not covered it in the past. She emphasized communication and budgeting because of personal

experiences in her marriage, and she spent some time on single living because she wished that she had realized when she was younger that she "didn't have to get married to be fulfilled in any way." Her own experiences, therefore, were a factor in which topics from the curriculum she chose to "stretch."

These personal values and experiences and the curriculum interacted in an interesting way as Roxanne developed her repertoire when she first began teaching the course. In discussing her coverage of Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs at the first of the semester, she stated, "When I first taught the course, I know that Maslow's needs just -- I thought, 'Oh, you know, fine.'" Then she added, "As I've taught the course and as I've moved along, I have found that Maslow's needs was a lot more important than I thought it was." She explained, "I did the same thing with a number of things.... I did it just because it was in the guide, but now maybe it has helped me grow." Roxanne appears to be describing an interactive transformation of the curriculum into her own value system, a process by which she made the curriculum her own. This process may be similar to McLaughlin's (1976) concept of "mutual adaptation," the process by which a new curriculum changes and is changed by teachers as they implement it. Later in the semester Roxanne described the same process in regard to the communication topic, saying that in the past she had "slid" over it, but had later begun to realize its importance.

While Roxanne's values and experiences clearly influenced which topics from the curriculum guide received emphasis, her perception of student interests and needs was the dominant factor to emerge from categorizing her responses during the semester. Over and over again she referred to her students, both collectively and individually, demonstrating a keen awareness of them and their problems. Several quotations demonstrate the importance she placed on attending to their needs: "You have got to gear your class towards that class that's sitting there." Again, "You could have the greatest topic in the world, but if they go to sleep, you haven't accomplished anything." And, "If you're not listening to your kids and not figuring out where they're coming from, then you're not getting anywhere, anyway."

In describing how she remained aware of student needs even as she pushed to follow her block plan and cover the curriculum, she said,

It does not push me to the point to where I will skip something that I think they need, or if we need to slow down and we need to take a couple of days, we may eliminate something. If we have to eliminate something, if there's a need in the classroom, you know, we'll eliminate it, if it satisfies another need."

She emphasized that this flexibility was limited to a degree by the curriculum, stating,

If they guide you too much, they're liable to guide you right out of the book and the curriculum and everything else, but within the curriculum, you know, I do think we need to really try to work with some of their needs.

One factor which appeared to increase the importance Roxanne placed on addressing student interests was the declining enrollment experienced by the home economics program as the result of increased graduation requirements in the district. This trend greatly concerned her because she enjoyed teaching the course and wanted more sections of it. A topic which she chose to emphasize to a greater degree because of this situation was the engagement and wedding. A comment made by Becky at one of the curriculum meetings to the effect that many students took the course for that topic had concerned Roxanne, and because she decided it was true, she "stretched" the topic, stating, "We can stretch in some places to where I think it will be beneficial to the students and maybe create enough talking outside of class and everything." She felt she had benefited her cause when, following a presentation by a wedding photographer, the students walked out into the hall talking about it.

The clearest example of the way in which Roxanne's perception of student needs influenced her was in regard to the administrative directive forbidding the teaching of the topic of birth control until a final decision on that matter had been handed down. At the beginning of the study, she stated, "Now that I've been cautioned and slowed down, I just pulled it from the curriculum." While she firmly believed she should follow the directive ("I'm not gonna blindly go ahead and teach things that I don't think the system wants taught

right now"), she also believed strongly that the students needed the information. After describing the lack of knowledge about birth control of one of her male students, she said, "You think about things like that and it scares you so badly that you know you need to put it somewhere and you need to handle it some way."

At the second curriculum meeting, the consultant told the teachers that she would take their curriculum outline to the assistant superintendent for approval when they had finished their objectives. Roxanne had an interesting interpretation of that statement. She reported, "Evidently we've been given the right or the opportunity to go back and do what we were doing before as far as just covering our course curriculum." She added,

I just feel like as long as we cover our subject matter in good taste and it is part of our curriculum, and the needs assessment has said that it is something that the community wants, and I don't see how we're gonna have any problems with it. And I'm probably gonna cover mine basically just like I have.

She elaborated that she preferred to teach the topic herself rather than have a speaker, as Stacie had said. She stayed with "facts and figures," avoiding discussion of "sexual feelings," stating, "Now, to me that's sticky ground, and that's when you get in more trouble than anything." She still felt uncomfortable about teaching the topic at all, reporting, "It makes all of us nervous," but her perception of student needs pressured her to include it anyway: "I really think we

have a tremendous obligation to these students to talk to them, if for nothing else, for health purposes."

Later in the semester she reiterated, "I'm not gonna go against the system. If the system says I need to handle it this way, then I can either do that or I can find another system or another job." But after the curriculum meeting at which they followed Ann's suggestion to use the objective on birth control from the needs assessment in their curriculum guide, Roxanne stated,

The other day in the meeting, it was mentioned 'preparation for parenthood,' and that was changed enough that we can -- I mean, if it's all approved -- at this point we will be able to teach birth control.

Then at the last interview during the semester, she reported that she had covered "actual use of different contraceptives." She said, "We did family planning and spent quite a bit of time on it because ignorance was running rampant all over the room."

At the summary interview in the spring, the researcher described to Roxanne these apparent inconsistencies, and she replied that after the semester she had discovered her misinterpretation of the ruling and reported that she had "panicked." She explained, "In my mind we'd been given the okay, " adding, "I want it in there, and I think it needs to be in there, so maybe I didn't listen right," a powerful example of the impact of teacher values and perceived student needs on curriculum decisions. In this case, Roxanne's



beliefs were strong enough to negate an administrative directive which had been previously implemented with sanctions against a fellow teacher.

In summary, Roxanne placed great importance on following the block plan in order to cover the content in the curriculum guide. She "pulled" material to supplement curriculum topics from the textbook, the state guide, and resources such as filmstrips and the popular media. Regarding the emphasis a topic received, she chose to "stretch" or "slide" based upon her personal experiences and values and her perception of student needs. Her personal values influenced her interpretation of the administrative directive against teaching sex education. In turn, the curriculum appeared to influence her personal and pedagogical values as her awareness of topics increased as the result of teaching them.

#### Wendy: Curriculum as Flexible Framework

Wendy, in her late 20's, is the youngest of the four teachers. When she was in high school, she took Home and Family Living, then called Home Management, from Ann. Her first year of teaching was the year the course was first offered in the district under the name of Home and Family Living, and she had taught it continuously for seven years. Two years before the study, she had been involved in a protest by a church group, in which they had objected to the presentation of birth control methods to Home and Family

Living classes by Planned Parenthood representatives. As a result, Wendy had had to sign a reprimand for having a speaker without permission from her building principal.

Like Stacie and Roxanne, Wendy's scope and sequence (Figure 6) followed the local curriculum guide closely. She reported that when she first taught the course, she relied heavily on the local curriculum outline, a textbook, and material from her college classes. She stated,

When I first taught Home and Family, I used the guide a lot. I used the Tech guide a lot because I didn't know what I was doing. Really, every new course that I've taught, that's where I've started from is what was in the guide. And then I just used my own -- you know, you always start out, the first year you do it one way -- the first year you do it right by the book because you don't know anything else to do, and maybe include a few of your pet interests. And then the next year, you see what the students enjoyed, what the students needed, and what you should have included that wasn't. If it didn't round out real well, you add that in every year.

Through the years her repertoire of topics and activities had developed to the point that she used her old block plan when making out a new one and used her old lesson plans when writing new plans. She stated, "Most of the things that we've done are real pat because I've done this a lot of times and it's worked out real well, and we just continue it."

While she felt obligated to cover the topics in the local guide, she also felt free to add to those topics anything that was not controversial. She explained,

Our guide is pretty minimal, and if you want to add to it, then you can go to the Tech guide and add things that we haven't covered. But I personally feel like if G.I.S.D. -- you know, that's the curriculum guide that's

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topics</u>
1	Self-concept, home project, basic needs
2	Values, goals, and standards
3	Self-concept, personality development, home projects
4	Character development, maturity
5	Maturity, shyness, decision-making process, philosophy of life
6	Stress, communication, home projects
7	Communication, family relationships
8	Family conflicts, pecking order, communication
9	Dating
10	Love relationships
11	Mate selection
12	Role concepts, home projects
13	Wedding planning
14	Marriage, adjustments in marriage
15	Adjustments in marriage, family crises
16	Family crises (death, divorce), Christmas
17	Parenting, pregnancy
18	Parenting, laws, home projects

Figure 6. Topics taught by Wendy.

approved by the school board and by our superintendent. If we're going to say this is what we're teaching -- and I think it's wonderful that they're giving us the opportunity to say what it is we want to teach -- that we are obligated to teach that. That's the reason that at those meetings I try to keep the objectives down at minimum levels and keep it really simple so you can add to it.

Wendy lobbied at the curriculum meetings to keep the curriculum guide not only minimal but also "specifically vague," stating, "You gotta have something real general to please everybody a little bit." She felt that a general guide afforded her the opportunity to fit in related topics of interest to her students. As she said,

I am just very good at looking at a general, vague curriculum and looking at something I want to teach and seeing how it fits in the curriculum. I can find a spot for it, especially if the objectives are general enough, if the topics are general enough.

She did not add controversial topics in this way, however, stating that she would seek permission now for adding anything of that nature. She reported that in the past she had included anything the students demonstrated an interest in or a need for, but that since her reprimand she had become very cautious. She reported that if the objective on birth control was approved, "That's something that I would cover right out of that outline. It would be exactly the way Ann did it, because it's a controversial topic...."

Wendy liked the opportunity to work with the other teachers on the curriculum guide, although she had difficulty making the after-school meetings because of her infant son.

She was pleased that all the teachers were in agreement about the topics to be included in the course. She wanted to write the objectives and activities together at the meetings, rather than doing assigned sections independently, so that the wording would be consistent. She agreed with Roxanne that using the wording from the state guide was a way to solve that problem. She felt that doing so would make the guide easier for new teachers to follow and that it was also a good idea for "outside people" who might want to look at the curriculum. When she wrote her section of objectives, she took them from the state guide. She viewed it as comprehensive, containing more material than could be covered in a semester, but she did not feel limited to the topics it included, nor did she feel they needed to modify their local outline to match more closely the new edition of the state guide. In particular, she did not want to copy its increased attention to single living, stating that her students were more interested in marriage.

At the meetings Wendy lobbied to have the local curriculum guide match her repertoire as closely as possible, a curriculum development strategy which could be termed "curriculum by repertoire." As she put it, "My philosophy is everything that is important to me, I argue with them about [it] in the meeting and get them to do it my way." When the disagreement with Ann over sequence occurred at the meeting, Wendy argued for the order she was used to. Her repertoire

appeared to have become her conception of the structure of the subject matter, and at one point when they were discussing moving the topic of values to a place in the outline consistent with the textbook sequence, she stated, "If we want to move 'values, goals, and standards' for the group to the bottom, it will not bother me, but I will continue to teach it at the top." The topic was not moved.

Wendy's rationale for wanting the curriculum guide to match her repertoire involved more than just her conception of the subject matter. She also viewed it as justification for what she wanted to teach. She stated,

I helped write the outline, so pretty much the outline -- I'm in control of the outline instead of the outline in control of me. When you get right down to it, I see it more as protection more than anything else, as a defense for doing what I want to do.

Wendy's past experience, undoubtedly, made this particularly important to her.

While Wendy's topics were at least loosely connected to the topics in the curriculum guide, she, like Stacie and Roxanne, used material from other sources to flesh out her course. She had several speakers and took time after their visits to discuss ideas that they had brought in. She, like Roxanne, frequently used filmstrips, and she sometimes strayed from the curriculum topic as the result of material in the filmstrip. In discussing the topic of shyness, for example, she stated,

When I show the filmstrip on it, I'm going to go into it in detail, depending on how the person that wrote the script for the filmstrip covered it. And sometimes that causes problems because of our time limit. We're under such a strain timewise that sometimes I'll show a filmstrip that will bring in something that is not exactly on the outline or is not exactly what I had planned to cover on my block plan. Say I have one week to cover this topic, and I have the whole week accounted for, but the media brings in another good topic that the students are interested in, and I'll almost always go with it.

Because she used so many filmstrips and the students sometimes tired of them, she felt that it was very important to keep up with and purchase "the newest thing that's available," and she often spent time reviewing catalogs and previewing new filmstrips.

Another resource Wendy used frequently was a student magazine called Current Lifestudies. She had taken several of her favorite lessons from previous editions of the magazine, and she preferred having her students read the magazine rather than the textbook because its reading level was not as difficult and the students enjoyed it more. She reported that, like filmstrips and speakers, the magazine often brought in new topics which interested the students. She did not use the textbook frequently, although she had originally chosen it for its match with her repertoire, because she felt that she could cover a topic more quickly by telling the students what she wanted them to know than by assigning a chapter for them to read.

Time limitation was a problem for Wendy, as it was for Roxanne, and she reported frequent interruptions by

assemblies, pep rallies, announcements, and even a rock concert. She was particularly annoyed when unexpected interruptions interfered with a scheduled speaker. As the result of the numerous interruptions, several times during the semester she reported having to move along faster than she would have liked, in order to cover more of the course topics.

Wendy's values influenced the emphasis she placed on various topics. In discussing the topic of self-concept, for example, she said,

I think one influence that's worth mentioning on self-concept is myself. You know, I can see how over the years I have changed my image of myself and my personality through conscious effort. And I think it's real important that my students see how that could be done, because I'm better for it, and I want them to be better for it.

Over the years she had increased the emphasis on self-understanding and communication and reduced the coverage of management topics because that reflected her own beliefs about their relative importance in marriage.

While Wendy's values were a factor in her decisions within the curriculum framework, the most dominant influence seemed to be her students -- their interests, needs, characteristics, experiences, and cognitive levels. Examination of her responses during the interviews revealed student variables as clearly the most frequently mentioned category, with nearly twice the number of references as teacher variables or curriculum resources. She sought student input formally by asking them at the beginning of the semester



what they were expecting out of the course. During the course itself, she had the students periodically write an evaluation of the class to that point. She used the student evaluations completed during the previous year when she made out the block plan which she presented at the first curriculum meeting and the other teachers adopted. Several times during the semester she mentioned stressing a particular topic (for example, family conflict) as the result of student comments on evaluations.

She had frequent visits from former students and paid attention to their assessment of which topics had been most worthwhile. She cited the example of a student who reported that their study of the grief process had been extremely helpful during the death of her father, and she used that student's comments when presenting the topic to her classes.

The student variable which appeared as the most dominant factor in her teacher beliefs exercise was cognitive level (see Figure 7). She stressed the importance of helping the students move up to higher levels of thinking, stating, "That's something that I constantly think about in that class, is are they doing more than just being a little sponge soaking in information." The second and third factors in the beliefs exercise also related to cognitive level, although they approached it from other angles. She described the second factor, source of information, by explaining that, "I can think of no instance where I have had them get information and

1. Students are free to create  
Students get information independently  
Students analyze selves  
  
(-) Teacher lectures  
(-) Students use low-level skills
2. Teacher expands lecture from student comments  
Teacher reinforces  
Class discusses  
  
(-) Students get information independently
3. Students take in information  
Students take in information from audiovisuals  
  
(-) Students are free to create

Figure 7. Factors extracted from Wendy's grid.

not done anything with it." She actively assisted them in taking information and then applying and evaluating it. She felt that basic information was important as a basis for using higher-level skills, as illustrated in the third factor, creativity. She explained, "We can't just go in the classroom and start discussing all these great problems, great things they want to talk about. They've got to have some background."

Wendy's emphasis on students' cognitive level was also revealed in her comments at curriculum meetings and during interviews. In writing the curriculum guide, she wanted the objectives written at the minimum level which all students could be expected to reach. At the same time, she emphasized the importance of assisting the students to as high a level as time and their ability would allow. In planning her lessons, she stated that she was "trying to be more concrete this year" because of input she had received from student evaluations. When discussing several topics during the semester (shyness, philosophy of life, stress, communication), she described her efforts to present them on a level the students could understand, through the use of concrete examples, thereby attempting to reach the students operating at lower cognitive levels.

In addition to input from students through course evaluations and attention to their cognitive level, student interest was very important to Wendy. She stated, "It's real

important that we do all these things in such a way that they're fun, and that the things that are not fun, we keep to a minimum." As reported earlier, student interest sparked by a filmstrip, speaker, or magazine article often caused her to stray from planned lessons. Even the time limitation came second, as illustrated by her explanation for including family conflict as the result of student evaluations: "I went ahead and left that on there, and I hated leaving it on there because we're already short on time, but the students get so much out of it." In reference to the Current Lifestudies magazine, she stated,

A lot of times that will cause a change in the curriculum just because if there's student interest, I feel like you have to go with it. You've got to spend some time on it. And that forces you to look at what you were supposed to be doing and see where you can do it faster.

As described above, Wendy's willingness to modify the curriculum based on student interest no longer extended to controversial topics. Following her reprimand in the birth control incident, an example of power being brought to play in a curriculum matter, she had become more cautious about what she covered. As she put it, "I just feel like in my position, since I'm the one that all this occurred with, that I can't do that until I have word that says I can. I have to make the house payment," adding, "I don't want to be anybody's scapegoat." At the second curriculum meeting she asked the consultant for specific guidelines about what they could cover in class and was told that when the curriculum objectives were

finished, permission would be sought to include the sex education topics once again.

Wendy reported that she was relieved to have a direct answer to her question, but she was faced with a dilemma by the fact that the curriculum administrator in her building did not see a problem with her including the topics in answer to student questions, so long as she didn't initiate anything. She stated, "I have too many people in charge of my curriculum." She explained, "I feel like I'm the -- you know, there's the king and there's the queen, and here's the little pawn down here going, 'Aaa!' And I'm the one that's gonna get stomped on." She felt that on the one hand, the needs assessment data from the community said "absolutely, definitely teach it," it was included in the textbook and the state guide, and her building administrator saw no problem, while on the other hand, the consultant was delaying a decision pending formal approval. Wendy's own feelings were, "I want to include that because it's good for the kids, and you talk about concretes that they understand, they understand that."

What she decided to do was to get permission from the curriculum administrator to have a gynecologist speak to her classes and answer any questions the students might have. She reported that the questions they asked were less informed than they might have been had she been able to teach background information in preparation for his visit. She also felt that

because she had a number of "less mature students and quite a few low-level students," that those characteristics limited the depth of coverage appropriate for them.

In summary, Wendy viewed the curriculum outline as a general framework into which she could fit related topics she wanted to teach. She allowed resources such as speakers, filmstrips, and Current Lifestudies magazine to bring in content related to topics in the guide as the students indicated interest. Emphasis on topics was influenced by her values and especially by input from her students. She stressed the importance of developing higher-level thinking skills and of making her class fun for the students. She exercised caution in regard to controversial topics because of the reprimand she had received in the past, and she wanted the curriculum guide to match her repertoire to provide her with protection (curriculum by repertoire).

#### Ann: Curriculum by Authoritative Resource

Ann, in her 40's, is the oldest of the four teachers and had taught the course the longest, beginning when it was first taught in the district under the name of Home Management. After teaching it for nine years, she had a particularly bad semester with a class and asked not to teach it again. For two years Becky, the original subject for this study who was transferred, taught the course. Following her transfer, Ann was assigned to teach it again. During the intervening period

she had discarded her teaching files, believing she would not be teaching the class again. During the semester under study, she experienced a continuing and painful problem with her foot which required surgery during the Christmas holidays. In discussing influences on her decisions, she stated, "Another thing that has influenced me is my health.... When you feel bad, you get depressed."

Curriculum resources played a major role in Ann's content decisions during the semester. Although she had a conception of the subject matter from her years of teaching the course which was consistent with the local guide, she had no files of previous block plans or lesson plans to go by. Because she had three lesson preparations each day and therefore little time for planning, she chose to follow the textbook, supplementing with material from a guidebook for teaching family living and from films and filmstrips. While she followed the block plan the teachers had developed together from the local guide for her topics (see Figure 8), her primary sources of activities during the semester were these curriculum resources.

Her attempt to follow the textbook caused her problems for two reasons. First, her students had difficulty understanding it. Second, she did not like its sequence, stating, "The order is strange to me," and skipping around in the book did not prove successful. Nevertheless, she continued to use it extensively throughout most of the

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topics</u>
1	Families, basic needs, character
2	Character, self-concept, personality
3	Values, personality
4	Self-esteem, goals, decision making, adjustments to frustration
5	Defense mechanisms, maturity, mental health, home projects
6	Philosophy of life
7	Relationships with parents, developmental tasks of adolescents, relationships on the job
8	Relationships with siblings, communication
9	Stress, pecking order
10	Love relationships, dating
11	Love, mate selection
12	Engagement, marriage laws, wedding customs, marriage
13	Honeymoon, home projects
14	Teenage marriage, marriage, single living, role expectations
15	Marriage agreement
16	Family crises, money management
17	Parenting
18	Parenting

Figure 8. Topics taught by Ann.



semester, stating, "I keep thinking, we've got it, we ought to use it." She frequently had the students read out loud and do the questions at the end of the chapter, explaining, "I've been doing a lot more out of the textbook because the class I have is not very easy to control in discussion." Another reason she gave was,

I'm doing my very best to use the textbook as much as I can because I think that's important. Again, I keep saying, those kids have got to have a way to get the information that is reliable.

As she told the other teachers,

These kids have got to have facts. They have to know. I will not stand up there and have them question everything I say, which is exactly what they do to me. 'Where did you get this?' That is the way I am using the textbook.

In addition to heavy use of the text, she drew a number of lessons from the guidebook, which contained student activities to duplicate, and from other personal reference books. She also used a number of films and filmstrips, teaching her parenting unit entirely from a series of films called Footsteps which had been produced for public television. She had used this series in the past and liked it very much because she felt the students enjoyed it and gained a lot from it.

During curriculum development, Ann followed a strategy which could be called "curriculum by authoritative resource." This strategy involved pressing for changing the local curriculum guide to follow the textbook. She had two

rationales for this strategy. The first rationale was that the textbook was a highly credible source which would be respected by students. Her second rationale was that following the textbook sequence would save time during lesson planning. She also wanted textbook pages listed as the first activity for each objective in the guide.

The other teachers, however, wanted the sequence of the guide to remain the same, since they had each built their repertoire around it. They did not plan to use the text a great deal because they already had activities for the objectives within their repertoire. Ann argued, "I'm just saying I think you all are really making it hard to try to use this."

Failing to convince them to follow the text sequence, she proposed following the sequence of the new state guide, which she viewed as comprehensive and authoritative, stating, "I think surely those people know more than I do." This suggestion received no more support than her previous one, because the new guide had been changed somewhat from the earlier edition upon which their local guide was based, so, like the textbook, it did not match their repertoire. Ann pointed out that the new guide was meant to replace the original Conceptual Framework, but the other teachers did not agree. She responded, "The way we're writing, these objectives are not following anything, either any order in this [textbook] or any order in this [state guide]." What the

objectives were in fact following was the other teachers' conception of how to teach the course based upon their past experiences, and this is what they preferred. Ann understood this, explaining later,

I think I finally, after last week, have decided why our differences are there, philosophically what the difference is. I do not believe that the others in that group see writing curriculum as an aid that you can -- to give you something to fall back on. That they are seeing curriculum writing as something we have to do, and that bothers me because using -- that's the reason I keep saying this about the textbook. The order, whatever you want to say that it is, I don't think it matters what order we teach it in. That's not the point I'm trying to make with them at all, other than the fact that if you -- you could teach it like this book is, write the curriculum -- or teach it like the Texas Tech [state] guide, write the curriculum -- and then you would not be doing all this mess all the time. They're not doing all this planning because they've taught it.

Interestingly, although Ann argued to have the local guide follow the textbook or the state guide to simplify lesson planning, she did not like the sequence of topics in either of them. She felt they were not "headed the same way" as the course had been taught in the past, because they emphasized independent living more and marriage less than the local guide. There was no solution for her dilemma, and after a frustrating semester she stated, "I really think next time I teach it, I'm gonna do it more like I've done it before."

Ann stated that she would have preferred for the consultant to hand them the topics and have them fill in with activities. She wanted to work on the activities in smaller groups, stating that it was difficult to get much work done

with four people. For her part in the curriculum work at the meetings, she relied heavily on the textbook teacher's guide and the state guide for ideas and wording, frequently reading passages out loud to the group as suggestions.

Regarding the curriculum guide, Ann felt that she should teach all the topics, and for this reason she wanted them broadly worded, as Wendy did, to allow her flexibility. She felt that the sequence and amount of emphasis should be up to the teacher, stating,

Part of my frustration with my classes this year, I think, has been that we are expected to be at the same place. You're expected to move on whether they understand it or not. And to me, that's not right.

She preferred to individualize the curriculum, "not necessarily for individual students, but for individual classes," citing the example of once spending three weeks on the topic of credit because the class became so involved.

Like the other teachers, Ann was influenced by personal values when deciding which topics to emphasize. For example, one topic that she believed was very important was parenting. She had become a parent at nineteen and stated, "Had I not had my mother around, it would have been really hard for me. And with our mobile society, these kids may not have their mother around." She felt that the course should devote more time to that area and stated, "I really think that's the place that homemaking is falling down is parenthood preparation."

She felt that her age influenced her relationship with her students because she identified with their parents. She stated,

You know, my age -- I'm the oldest one that's teaching -- my past personal experience and what has helped me make it through some things that I've been through -- that's probably as big an influence on my curriculum choices as anything -- my personal background.

Her experiences as a parent influenced her decisions in several instances. She reported that her son had had self-concept problems and had experienced a divorce, so she felt both of those topics were very important. Her daughter had adopted a child; Ann included "alternatives to natural parenting" from the textbook when she wrote her section of the curriculum outline and objectives.

Another way in which Ann's values influenced her was in her decision not to teach sex education. The administrative directive had less effect on Ann than on the other teachers because she had not taught the topics in the past. She explained her position with the following statements: "I think we can teach parenthood and preparation for parenthood without teaching birth control." And, "I firmly believe that birth control information comes from the family." She had discussed the subject with her principal in the past, and she reported that he had said not to teach it in a mixed class, a position she was comfortable with. She did express some doubts about her position because of comments a minister on the advisory council had made, her awareness of her students'

experiences, and the needs assessment data. When writing her section of the objectives for the curriculum guide, she included the needs assessment objective on birth control, knowing that all the other teachers were strongly in favor of teaching it and that it was included in the text and the state guide. The closest she came to teaching any sex education topics, however, was showing a film which contained a short segment on childbirth. She sent home parent permission slips which had been approved by the principal for this film. While Stacie used her "curriculum by default" policy, teaching what she wished until controversy arose, Ann took the opposite approach, stating, "I don't like controversy," and simply avoiding the topics she felt could be questionable or going out of her way to get approval from parents or her principal in order to cover herself. This strategy could be labeled "curriculum by approval."

Ann's students were also a very strong influence on the way she handled the course topics, as indicated by more references to student variables during the interviews than to any other category. A particular concern to her was what she perceived as their "unresponsive" behavior and negative attitude toward the class. This frustrated her throughout the course as indicated by the following statements,

This class has puzzled me so. I don't know whether they're just so totally turned off by the topics, or whether they just aren't interested in much of anything. I have not been able to put my finger on why I've had such a problem.... But I have hunted activities

trying to overcome that. They sit and say nothing lots of times.

Their lack of willingness to participate in class discussion was particularly difficult for her because discussion was her preferred mode of teaching. She tried group work and role playing with the class without success. She reported problems with two boys in particular, stating, "No matter what you talk about, it's got sex in it." She attributed the attitudes of the students to negative family experiences and cited numerous examples they had related in class. Their attitudes, coupled with the pain she was experiencing with her foot made the semester a difficult one. She stated,

When you go in there with something planned and they are so unresponsive, then the next time I really do hesitate to do something. My real gut feeling lots of days and lots of weeks when I'm planning this stuff is to say, 'Okay, you're going to read out of the book and answer the questions at the end of the chapter.'

She was also very concerned about their lack of basic skills, citing problems with reading, vocabulary, spelling, and paragraph writing. District-wide, there was a great deal of emphasis on basic skills because of the state minimum competency exam, and in Ann's building this emphasis appeared particularly strong. Ann made efforts to have the students do more writing in her class, and she prepared multiple-choice exams to familiarize them with that format. Part of her emphasis on having them use the textbook was to improve their reading skills, and she coded her lesson plans to the

objectives of the state exam, which was a requirement on her campus. This emphasis on basic skills, however, was more influential regarding her choice of activities than her decisions about the topics themselves.

In Ann's teacher beliefs exercise, she reported that, "My main objective is to try to get them to apply what we learn in class to their life now and later." She called this "application," and that was the label she gave to her first factor (see Figure 9). This factor related to her problems with the students' attitudes, in that she felt they did not "view family life realistically." The second factor, she felt, related to the influences on her curriculum decisions. Of prime importance to her was getting to know the students so that the curriculum guide could be applied flexibly to meet their needs. She described the third factor as "the whole problem area that I'm seeing," explaining that she had been trying without success to use outside readings and class organization to motivate the students. Here she related once again her problems with the sequence of the course topics. Her beliefs exercise, then, reflected the problems she had been experiencing during the semester with the students and with the sequence of topics.

In summary, Ann, like the other teachers, took her topics from the curriculum guide. Since she had not taught the course recently, she made extensive use of curriculum resources, particularly the textbook, in planning and teaching



1. Teacher tries to evaluate  
Teacher leads students to draw conclusions  
Teacher leads students to view family life realistically
2. Student characteristics  
Teaching methods  
Influences on teaching methods
3. Teacher emphasizes outside reading  
(-) Class organization

Figure 9. Factors extracted from Ann's grid.

her lessons. In curriculum writing, she wanted the curriculum guide to follow the sequence of the text or the state guide because consistency would make using those resources easier (curriculum by authoritative resource). Her personal experiences and what she perceived as a negative attitude from her students influenced the topics she chose to emphasize. She preferred not to cover the sex education topics, feeling they should be taught at home.

#### Influences on Content Decision Making

The influences identified as impacting the content decisions of the teachers in this study are discussed in this section under the following categories: curriculum resources, teacher variables, student variables, administrative constraints, personal influences, and other influences. Many of the results of this study are consistent with those of previous research in different settings. These consistencies will be indicated as they are reported.

#### Curriculum Resources

Curriculum resources appeared to be the predominant source for decisions about content taught by the teachers in this study. In particular, the district curriculum guide had the major impact on their content selection, as revealed by comparison of the topics they reported teaching (Figures 2, 4, 6, and 8) and the revised outline from their curriculum guide (Appendix H). The predominant influence of the district guide

on content selection in this study is consistent with the findings of Floden et al. (1981), Porter and Kuhs (1982), Leithwood et al. (1982), and Alford et al. (1983).

All the teachers had used an earlier version of the district guide (Appendix C) when they first taught the course. Those topics had become their repertoire, which they continued to follow during this study. Because their repertoires had developed from the same source, the content they taught was quite similar, and there was virtually no disagreement at curriculum development meetings about what content should be included in the course.

The district did not have a strong policy requiring the teachers to follow the curriculum guide. No monitoring to check compliance or standardized testing to measure coverage took place. The teachers appeared to follow the guide voluntarily rather than because of power exercised by the district through rewards or sanctions. (The one exception to this, the administrative ban on the teaching of sex education which had been backed up by sanctions against Wendy, will be discussed under the category of administrative constraints.)

Their high degree of compliance with the guide appeared to be related to several factors. First, it was consistent with their repertoires, or what they felt comfortable teaching. Second, all of them participated in on-going district-wide curriculum development and revision for the course, meeting together to revise the outline and write

course objectives. Because they had participated in developing the guide, they appeared to feel obligated to follow it, a sentiment Wendy stated explicitly. Third, at the beginning of the semester they voluntarily had prepared together from the guide their "block plan," the weekly plan of content for the semester. The effect of this meeting was to create a social norm for standardization across the district. The perceived importance of this norm varied across teachers, as did its perceived value. Roxanne, for example, expressed strong support, while Ann felt pressured by it.

It is interesting to note the variations in the views of the teachers toward the guide. All of them felt obligated to teach the "big topics," to use Stacie's expression, and all of them felt free to vary the sequence and emphasis. Wendy and Ann expressed the desire to make the guide general, allowing individual teachers to include related topics of their choosing. Roxanne, on the other hand, felt governed by the topics in the guide, stating that she did not feel free to add to them, although she felt that deletion of topics was acceptable.

While the repertoires of these teachers governed their content selection, and their repertoires in turn had developed from the district guide, the district guide itself had been developed originally from the state Conceptual Framework (Appendix D) and its accompanying state curriculum guide. This was the reason Roxanne gave for not being able to add

topics of her choosing. Like the district policy regarding use of the guide, the state policy was based on voluntary compliance, rather than prescription. This direct relationship between local and state policies regarding the use of their guides, that is, both being based on voluntary compliance rather than prescriptiveness enforced by power, is consistent with the findings reported by Alford et al. (1983) of a study of local and state curriculum policies.

The lack of perceived prescriptiveness of the state guide is indicated by the decision the teachers made not to revise their district guide to match the outline in the revised state guide. They felt the new guide moved too heavily into alternatives to marriage, while they perceived the emphasis in the course to be on marriage, which was consistent with their repertoires. (Appendix G contains the new state outline.)

The teachers viewed the guide as a comprehensive list of suggested topics to be elaborated, rather than a set of requirements and constraints on their teaching. While they drew upon the guide for objectives during curriculum development and used it as a source of ideas for new activities, it did not produce a major realignment of content. Ann, whose repertoire was weaker as the result of not having taught the course for two years, was the only one who suggested patterning their local guide after the new state guide. The others preferred to retain the district guide which reflected their repertoires.

Besides the district and state curriculum guides, another curriculum resource which influenced content selection in this study was the new textbook. All the teachers but Ann had participated in its selection the previous year. During the study, the textbook was used by the teachers primarily as a supplementary resource from which to "pull" sections which dealt with topics from the curriculum guide. In several instances they covered chapters from the text which included content they had not previously emphasized, such as adjustments to frustration, aging families, and relationships with employers, but in all of these instances the new content related at least indirectly to existing topics in their curriculum guide. No district policy existed regarding use of the textbook, and none of the teachers viewed its adoption as a prescription dictating content they had to cover.

Textbook usage patterns varied across teachers. Stacie and Wendy reported using the text very little in class, feeling that content coverage could be accomplished more quickly and enjoyably through activities from their repertoire. Roxanne used the book to a moderate degree because she believed it reinforced class discussion. Ann, however, used the book extensively, believing that because of the attitude problems she perceived in her students, they needed an objective source of information. Her heavy reliance on the text appeared to be related to the weakness of her repertoire of activities for the course. She lobbied at the

curriculum meetings for having the district guide follow the text to simplify her lesson planning, but, as reported earlier, the others were successful in retaining the outline which matched their repertoire.

The teachers had selected the textbook primarily for its consistency with their district guide (see Appendix F for the textbook table of contents). Despite the close match of topics and sequence, the minor differences which did exist gave problems both to Stacie and Ann. The solution both chose, Stacie early in the semester and Ann at the end, was to resume following their repertoires rather than the textbook.

Across teachers, then, the textbook was less influential than the district guide in determining course content, with variation among the teachers in usage patterns. This is consistent with the findings of Floden et al. (1981), Freeman and Schmidt (1982), and Leithwood et al. (1982). In the present study, the primary factor related to low text dependence appeared to be the existence of an established repertoire of activities for teaching the course.

All the teachers felt the text was too difficult for many of their students, and they disliked its teacher's guide because of what they perceived as its impracticality. The influence of the text guide was slight, with its being used only for an occasional idea for a new activity and for the wording of objectives during curriculum development.

All of the teachers made extensive use of curriculum resources such as films and filmstrips in their classes. They reported that, for the most part, these resources were used to reinforce class discussion of topics from the curriculum guide, with little unrelated content being introduced. Wendy, however, reported that student interest sparked by a filmstrip or an article in Current Lifestudies, a student magazine she frequently used, often caused class discussion to turn to areas she had not planned to cover. Her flexible use of the curriculum guide as a general framework, however, allowed her to justify most unplanned content under some topic included in the guide.

Roxanne and Ann reported frequent use of other books in lesson planning, particularly other family living texts and teacher's guides. Ann used a guidebook for teaching family living for many of her activities during the semester. Both teachers reported using another family living text with their students to cover engagement and weddings, topics not included in their regular text. Ann's students used library books to do individual self-improvement projects. There was no evidence that the use of these other books and guides introduced new content into their classes; they were used instead as supplementary sources for covering content in the curriculum guide.

Three of the teachers reported bringing in material from outside sources to use in covering topics from the guide. Ann



used a video series taped from public television to cover the parenting topic. Wendy used a communication inventory from a professional journal on marriage. Roxanne emphasized the importance of staying current on topics related to the course and sometimes used magazine articles from popular magazines in her classes. Again, these outside resources were used in a supplementary fashion in covering topics from the curriculum guide.

To summarize the influence of curriculum resources on these teachers' content decisions, the primary factor which determined the content they covered was their local curriculum guide, which had been developed from the state guide for the course. The textbook was used to varying degrees by the teachers to cover the topics in the guide, as were curriculum resources such as the new state guide, films and filmstrips, other textbooks and teacher's guides, and outside resources such as popular magazines. These other curriculum resources occasionally prompted the teachers to cover topics they had not previously emphasized, but those topics were usually related to content included in the guide.

While the potential for a significant change in the curriculum existed during this study because of the adoption of a new textbook and the receipt of a new state curriculum outline and guide, the teachers chose to follow their established repertoire, modifying it only occasionally as the result of these new inputs. Their unwillingness to change

contradicts the findings of the policy-capturing study by Floden et al. (1981), in which teachers reported willingness to change, whatever the source of new input. This discrepancy might be explained by the difference in the settings of the studies. The policy-capturing study was conducted in a laboratory setting, where teachers might indicate more willingness to change than they would implement in a natural setting. Ann was the only teacher in this study who wanted to make more changes to match the text or state guide, but even she expressed dissatisfaction with both of these new resources because they did not match her repertoire.

#### Teacher Variables

Although curriculum resources played the primary role as the source of content, teacher variables exerted influence in a number of ways. Teacher repertoire, or what the teachers had taught in the past, appeared to be a critical factor in determining what the teachers taught during the semester and the ways in which they dealt with new curricular input. In their questionnaire study of factors perceived by teachers to influence their curriculum decisions, Leithwood et al. (1982) found the strongest influence to be the teachers' past experiences in the classroom. According to the model of teacher content decision making by Schwille et al. (1982), repertoire is the starting point for teacher decisions upon which other influences act. The findings of the present study

support the critical importance of teacher repertoire, at least in a minimally constrained course.

All of the teachers in this study had a repertoire from teaching the course in the past. Ann's was the weakest, since she had not taught Home and Family Living the previous two years. Their repertoires were in basic agreement, since all had developed from the same curriculum resource, an earlier version of their district curriculum guide (Appendix C). Revision of the course outline during curriculum development, therefore, generally proceeded smoothly, with the teachers in agreement on the content of the course. The one exception to this was Ann's belief that birth control was not an appropriate topic, but she did not object to including it in the guide. In the debate over whether to change the sequence of their guide to match the text or new state guide, it appeared clearly that the strength of teacher repertoire was responsible for Ann's failure to convince the other teachers.

A teacher variable closely related to repertoire is conception of the subject matter. The teachers in this study made repeated references to their idea of the structure of the content for the course. For example, Wendy commented:

I just don't see how you can teach and not teach the decision-making skills. And a lot of that is my approach, because my approach to dealing with, like communication problems, is to use decision-making.

Similarly, Stacie described her conception of the course:

Yeah, we talk about the option of being single, but we don't dwell on it because the course is about marriage, about selecting a marital partner, about having kids.

A distinction between conception of subject matter and repertoire is that conception deals with course topics and sequence, while repertoire subsumes those factors and also includes learning activities. Clearly, these teachers' conceptions of course topics and sequence were important factors in their decisions, as illustrated by the difficulty Ann and Stacie experienced trying to follow the new textbook which did not match their conception of the course sequence. As Stacie put it, "It's like I put my dress on before I put my undergarments on. It felt funny."

Another teacher variable with a strong influence on decision making in this study was teacher values. All the teachers made frequent references to their personal beliefs and priorities about which topics were most important. For example, Ann related, "Maslow's hierarchy of needs -- I think it's very, very important that they understand this and how a family meets your needs." Roxanne admitted, "It's easy to bog down on something that's your favorite part. That's just real easy to do, especially in Home and Family Living." Her statement illustrates the principal effect that teacher values had on content selection, their influence on content emphasis. Roxanne's decisions about which topics she would "stretch" and which she would "slide" over were based in part on her own values regarding which topics were most important, and this finding holds for the other teachers as well. Within the structure of the curriculum guide, all the teachers manipulated time allocations to fit their own priorities.

In addition to the influence of teacher values on content emphasis, use of curriculum resources was affected by the teachers' beliefs and values. While Ann valued the textbook as an objective source of information for her students and therefore used it frequently, Wendy's priority was for her students to enjoy the class, and since they did not like to read the text, she rarely required it. Roxanne made extensive use of filmstrips because she believed the visual input reinforced class discussion and enhanced learning; Wendy limited her use of filmstrips because of student response.

The relationship of teacher values to the curriculum appears to be reciprocal, in that not only do values influence the curriculum, but the curriculum influences teacher values. As described in the discussion of Roxanne's decision strategies, a process of transformation occurred when she began teaching the course. She taught the content initially because it was in the curriculum guide, but did not attach much importance to some of the topics, such as Maslow's hierarchy and communication. After learning more about the subject matter as the result of teaching it, however, those topics took on more personal relevance. The curriculum, therefore, influenced her values. This process of transformation, or making the subject matter one's own, appears to be one of the dynamics which operates in the formation of teacher repertoire. It was Roxanne's unique awareness of this process which facilitated its identification in this study.

Another way in which teacher values operated in a significant way in this study was the interesting interpretation by the teachers of the administrative ban on the teaching of sex education. Three of them felt very strongly that those topics should be taught. Each of these three also expressed that it was important to follow the district's directive and wait for approval before covering those topics with their classes again. Although their curriculum consultant told them at two different meetings that permission would be sought to reinstate the content, the very positive results of the needs assessment and comments from the advisory committee presented enough inconsistency of message to allow their personal values to operate. In addition, Wendy was receiving inconsistent messages as the result of her instructional administrator's approval of the topics.

What occurred was that all three of the teachers who believed strongly that the topics should be taught chose to include them to some degree, even though formal approval had not been granted. It appears that because the teachers received inconsistent messages, their values influenced which message they chose to follow. Likewise, Ann followed her values by not teaching the topics in spite of the needs assessment data, the advisory council input, and the inclusion of the topics in both the textbook and the new state guide, sources she valued highly. Nevertheless, she chose to follow the message which was consistent with her values.

Closely related to teacher values are teacher experiences. All of the teachers in this study except Wendy made a number of references to personal experiences as influences, particularly on their decisions about content emphasis. For example, Roxanne talked about her marriage, Ann described experiences her children had had, and Stacie talked about her conservative upbringing. The nature of the subject matter in this course probably increased the influence of personal experiences. As Roxanne put it, "Your own home life has to be a part of how you teach this course."

Other teacher variables which were mentioned occasionally included knowledge level and characteristics such as age. Lack of personal time for planning and personal absence or illness were mentioned as factors which constrained content decisions and occasionally required alternate plans for content coverage. Use of the textbook was cited as an activity frequently planned for substitutes to use in place of the discussion format which most of the teachers utilized when present.

In summary, teacher variables influenced content decisions in this study in several ways. All of the teachers had established a repertoire from having taught the course in the past, and that repertoire functioned as the starting point for their content decisions, with the teachers using their past experiences as the basis for planning the semester. Part of their repertoire was a conception of the subject matter,

that is, its scope and sequence. Attempts to depart from this repertoire generally made them uncomfortable and were dropped. Teacher values and experiences played a large part in determining the emphasis placed on topics. A reciprocal relationship between teacher values and the curriculum was identified, with each having an effect on the other. In addition, values appeared to cast the deciding vote when the teachers had to decide between inconsistent content messages.

### Student Variables

Student variables were mentioned more frequently than any of the other six categories by three of the teachers in this study. The exception was Stacie, who made equal references to student variables and teacher variables. References to students accounted for nearly one-third of the total coded passages in the study. This dominance of student variables is consistent with the findings of the interview study by Leithwood et al. (1982), in which the category of "Student Needs, Characteristics, and Responses" was the most pervasive cluster of variables identified. Similarly, in their questionnaire study, Leithwood et al. found that teachers ranked student interests and needs second only to teacher repertoire as an important factor influencing their curriculum decisions. Of the student variables in the present study, interests and needs were referenced most frequently. For example,



Say, I have one week to cover this topic, and I have the whole week accounted for, but the media brings in another good topic that the students are interested in, and I'll almost always go with it. (Wendy)

I think we're wrong if our curriculum cannot bend to our students' needs. (Stacie)

If we have to eliminate something, if there's a need in the classroom, you know, we'll eliminate it, if it satisfies another need. (Roxanne)

My kids are so uninterested in dating, because to them we are past that, so I will spend a very little bit of time.... (Ann)

Other student variables which were mentioned frequently by the teachers in this study included experiences, characteristics such as maturity level and gender, attitudes and feelings, and ability/basic skills/knowledge level.

Examples include:

I feel very strongly that you have sex when you're married, but we've got to be smart enough to realize that these kids are not married and they're having sex, and they need to know about birth control. (Stacie)

Guys just look at things differently. They are not as analytical, and they don't respond well to the analytical parts of this. (Ann)

I didn't spend as much time on role. I tried to, but this bunch is so -- chauvinistic is the only word I know to use. (Ann)

I felt like it was over the students' reading level just a little bit. They really would not read that chapter and understand it. (Wendy)

Variables mentioned by one or more, but not all, of the teachers included cognitive level, student course evaluations, input from former students, and student behavior. Differences existed in the student variables considered most important by

the teachers. Interests and needs were mentioned most frequently by all the teachers except Ann, who emphasized interests, experiences, and attitudes. Wendy stressed cognitive level, which the others did not mention, and used frequent student course evaluations, which Ann used once and the others, not at all. Wendy and Ann were the only ones who mentioned occasional input from former students, and only Ann talked about student behavior. Further examples of the teachers' references to students are cited and discussed in the previous section of this chapter dealing with their individual strategies.

The primary effect that students appeared to have on these teachers' content decisions was to influence the emphasis which topics in the curriculum received. Along with their personal values, teachers used input from their previous experiences with students, as well as perceptions of current interactions, to determine whether to "stretch" or "slide" over particular topics, to use Roxanne's expressions. Only Wendy admitted departing occasionally from the curriculum because of student interests, although the subjects which were thus brought in could usually be related at least loosely to topics in the curriculum.

In addition to influencing the amount of emphasis topics received, students influenced the ways in which curriculum resources were used. The perception by the teachers that the textbook was too difficult for many of their students caused

them to limit its use. Wendy used the student magazine Current Lifestyles primarily because her students liked it so well. Ann continued to use the Footsteps films year after year because her students responded well to them.

In their model of teacher content decision making, Schwille et al. (1982) describe students as having a "small" effect, primarily through displays of interest and understanding. In their work they concentrate, however, only upon influences on content selection, not content emphasis. While the present study identified student variables as the most frequently cited influence, that influence was related primarily to content emphasis. The results of the two studies are thus complementary.

Leithwood et al. (1982), in discussing the predominance of teacher and student influences in their study, suggest that the notion of physical and psychological proximity to the teacher developed by Rayder and Body (1975) may explain their findings. The idea of proximity states that those forces closest to the individual have the greatest impact on behavior. That notion applies to the present study, also, in that the two categories of variables closest to the teachers, themselves and their students, along with the curriculum resources upon which their repertoires had been built, accounted in large part for their decisions. As will be seen, other influences such as their principals had much less effect on their decisions.

In summary, student variables were cited by the teachers more frequently than any of the other categories of variables. Student interests and needs, as well as their experiences, characteristics, attitudes, and ability levels, appeared to be major influences on the amount of emphasis curriculum topics received and to affect the ways in which curriculum resources were used. This strong awareness of and attention to student needs supports the hypothesis that variables closest to teachers in their day-to-day functioning have the greatest impact upon their decisions.

#### Administrative Constraints

Several factors in this study served as constraints limiting the teachers' decisions or requiring modification of their lesson plans. Most frequently cited were lack of available resources, lack of time in the course, and interruptions. All four of the teachers frequently mentioned having to make changes in lesson plans for such reasons as a speaker who could not come or a film which did not come in. Resources which the teachers did not have were mentioned frequently. In the questionnaire study by Leithwood et al. (1982), availability of resources was ranked seventh by teachers as an influence on their curriculum decisions and was considered a "medium" influence by the researchers.

Lack of sufficient time in the course was perceived by three of the teachers and was cited several times as their

reason for skipping over or reducing coverage of particular topics. Because the course had been cut from 24 weeks to 18 weeks, they had a difficult time including all of their previously developed activities. Only Ann did not complain about time, perhaps because her repertoire of activities was not as extensive as those of the other teachers. Teacher values appeared to be a factor in their selection of topics for reduction or elimination. For example, the topic of single living suffered from the justification of lack of time.

Because of the perceived shortage of available time, interruptions were particularly onerous to the teachers. At the end of the semester, Wendy reported,

This time I had a lot of interruptions, and because of that, some things got left out that I usually include because I just didn't have the days for it .... Overall, I think I counted that one of my two classes I had lost, like eight days, and when you lose that much, something has to give. And I spent -- some things that I might have spent more detail or that -- some minor topics and things that I thought were interesting, we just didn't do, but none of the major topics. We covered all the major areas.

Interruptions cited by the teachers ranged from pep rallies and assemblies to decorating the classroom door for Christmas.

Grades and tests were also perceived by the teachers as an interrupting factor. They reported that they found it difficult to get grades for the students because of the personal nature of the subject matter and the discussion format most of them used. Stacie reported, "It's hard to grade Home and Family, because so much of the material is not

testable material. It's opinion." Frustration was expressed several times by the teachers over having to stop to give a test in order to collect enough grades for the students.

Another limiting factor, particularly in regard to the use of materials such as filmstrips, was the overlapping of content in several home economics courses. The teachers attempted to limit the use of books and materials to particular courses so that students taking more than one course would not be exposed to the same activities again and again. This was also a factor in the revision of their curriculum outline, in that the content which was removed in the reduction from 24 to 18 weeks was content which was covered in other classes, such as some of the management and child development topics.

Another limiting factor of particular concern to Roxanne was the declining enrollment. Because the district had increased graduation requirements, enrollment in elective courses had dropped. A sociology elective was causing particular concern because although there were similarities in content between the course and Home and Family Living, students received a social studies credit for sociology but not for the home economics course. Consequently, Home and Family Living had lost students to the sociology course. This was especially true at Roxanne's school, and because she enjoyed teaching Home and Family Living, she was very concerned. Her response was to increase emphasis on the

topics which she saw as "fluff," but which the students particularly enjoyed, for example, the wedding. She felt that by catering to their interests in this way, she could generate advertising for the course. If enrollment for the course increased, exposing more students to the content, she felt that the compromise of her own priorities would be worth it.

The most direct administrative constraint in this study was the administrative ban on the teaching of sex education. Because of publicity surrounding Wendy's use of a Planned Parenthood representative as a speaker two years before, she had been reprimanded and the sex education/birth control topics had been removed from the curriculum by a decision made at the assistant superintendent level. Subsequently, a needs assessment had determined that the community strongly supported teaching birth control and sexual adjustment in marriage. Discussion at an advisory council meeting had been equally supportive. During the semester under study, the teachers were to finalize their curriculum outline and objectives, following which the outline would be taken by the home economics consultant to the assistant superintendent for approval to reinstate the topics. The consultant related these plans to the teachers at two of their curriculum meetings.

In contrast to the other district policies related to content, the policies regarding use of the curriculum guide and the textbook, this policy was enforced with the use of

power, the sanctions against Wendy about which all the teachers were aware. The policy was prescriptive, in that they had all been told not to teach the topics until further notice. It was not, however, consistent with other input the teachers were receiving. Both the needs assessment and the advisory council provided support for reinstating the topics, as did their inclusion in the new textbook and state curriculum guide.

This inconsistency apparently provided the opportunity for teacher values to operate. The three teachers who believed strongly that the topics should be taught did in fact include them in their course during the semester under study. All three of them reported using more caution than they had in the past regarding class discussion and Planned Parenthood personnel were not used, but the topics were covered to some degree. Only Wendy had cleared her actions with an administrator in her building before carrying them out. Ann did not believe the topics should be taught and used the administrative ban as justification when her students pressured her to include them. It appears, therefore, that although the policy was prescriptive and had been previously implemented with power, its inconsistency with other factors diluted its strength, allowing teacher values to operate.

The model of teacher decision making by Shavelson and Stern (1981) portrays pedagogical decisions as resulting from the combination by teachers of information about student



variables, teacher variables, and task variables (such as curriculum materials), the entire process of which is influenced by institutional constraints. This model is appropriate to describe the findings of this study. As previously discussed, each of the factors in the model played an important role in the content decisions of the teachers, and administrative constraints served to limit the implementation of these decisions. These administrative constraints, in summary, included lack of available resources and time, interruptions, grading requirements, overlapping students, declining enrollment, and an administrative ban against the teaching of sex education topics.

#### Personal Influences

Several sources of personal influence were cited by the teachers in this study. Taken together, these personal influences accounted for only six percent of the coded passages in the transcripts. Of the personal influences mentioned by more than one of the teachers (other teachers, parents, the home economics consultant, the building instructional administrator, and the principal), other teachers appeared to have a moderate influence on content decisions; the influence of parents and administrative personnel was slight. This finding is consistent with the results of the questionnaire and interview studies by Leithwood et al. (1982), the policy-capturing study by Floden

et al. (1981), and the case study reported by Floden and Knappen (1982).

The influence of other teachers in this study was felt in curriculum development and in a moderate pressure for standardization of pace as the result of the curriculum meetings. In addition, ideas for learning activities and resources were often shared among the teachers. This is consistent with the findings of Leithwood et al., who found that other teachers ranked eleventh of thirty influences and were influential primarily during curriculum development, and Floden and Knappen, who found comparisons of pace and exchange of advice to be the most common influences among teachers.

The consultant in this study was an influence during curriculum development, in that she served as a facilitator by providing instructions for the meetings and a format for the curriculum guide. Her function in the district was to provide assistance to teachers rather than to monitor or evaluate them. Although she attended several of the curriculum meetings, she allowed the teachers to make the decisions regarding course content, asking only that they cover some of the topics in the state guide. She departed from her advisory role in this study only when she instructed the teachers to cease teaching birth control, a directive she was passing along from higher authority. Her minor influence is consistent with the results of the study by Leithwood et al., in which resource staff was ranked eighteenth in influence on curriculum decisions.

Parents had little influence in this study. Only Wendy spoke with a few of her students' parents during the semester, and these meetings were informal, such as a brief exchange at the supermarket, and entirely supportive of her course. Parents indirectly influenced class discussion on several occasions in her class as the result of parent surveys she had assigned, such as one on dating customs. Ann mentioned comments made by parents she had spoken with in the past, but did not have contact with parents of her current students, nor did Roxanne or Stacie. The minimal influence of parents corresponds with the findings of Leithwood et al., in which parents ranked twenty-ninth, and Floden and Knappen, in which the only interaction with parents was related to student progress.

Finally, administrative personnel in the building exerted only rare influence, primarily with regard to controversial topics, and then usually when the teachers initiated the contact. Three of the four teachers had discussed the sex education topics with their principals in the past, but no discussions occurred during the semester under study except for a brief exchange between Wendy and her principal regarding the reprimand she had previously received. He expressed regret over that incident and indicated his confidence in her. Ann routinely notified her principal about speakers and got his okay on a parent approval letter she sent home regarding a film on birth. She also reported discussing her

class with her instructional administrator, a former home economics teacher. Wendy was the only teacher who worked closely with her instructional administrator on course content. She sought his guidance on the sex education topics, and he created a dilemma for her, in that he approved of her teaching the topics with appropriate caution, while the consultant had instructed her not to teach them pending formal approval. She settled on a compromise, having a gynecologist answer students' questions.

In none of the contacts between teachers and principals or instructional administrators was there evidence that the administrator had actively initiated the contact in any attempt to influence the curriculum. Instead, the contacts appeared to be efforts by the teachers to protect themselves by receiving permission for potentially controversial activities. This lack of influence by administrators is consistent with the findings of Leithwood et al., in which principals were ranked twenty-first as a curriculum influence, and by Floden and Knappen, in which teachers reported few messages from their principals regarding curriculum content.

The lack of involvement in curriculum by administrators in this study is also consistent with the theory of "loose-coupling" in school organizations. Weick (1976) described educational organizations as loosely coupled systems in which elements are tied together weakly and infrequently. This type of organization, he proposed, may be more adaptive to local

contingencies. Applying this theory to the present case, loose coupling between administrators and the curriculum may be functional, in that teachers therefore have more freedom to respond to their students' individual needs. The extensive influence exerted by students in this study, along with the minimal influence by administrators, appears to fit the predictions of loose coupling theory.

To summarize, personal influences on curriculum content were not great in this case. Parents, the home economics consultant, and building administrators exerted infrequent influence. The consultant's primary contribution was to serve as a facilitator during curriculum development, and the administrators were used by the teachers as a source of protection regarding controversial content. Loose coupling theory, which predicts that weak linkage between actors will result in greater autonomy and sensitivity to local conditions, may provide an explanation for the lack of administrative influence and strong degree of student influence identified in this study.

#### Other Influences

Several other factors exerted influence over content decisions in this study, among them current events, speakers, the needs assessment, and potential criticism. Each of the teachers commented about outside influences which they incorporated into their classes. For example, Stacie included

a discussion of the effect of unemployment in her coverage of the financial adjustments in marriage. Programs on television and events in the news were also incorporated into coverage of topics they pertained to. Similarly, Leithwood et al. (1982) found that trends or events in the world were ranked eighth as a curriculum influence.

All the teachers used occasional guest speakers to discuss topics in the curriculum. Examples included a doctor, a lawyer, a minister, and a wedding photographer. These speakers at times sparked student interest in a topic not explicitly included in the curriculum, but usually related in some way. Wendy always tried to follow up such visits with class discussion on new points the speaker had introduced and was especially disappointed that scheduling had forced the gynecologist to speak on a Friday, precluding an effective follow-up. She felt that her coverage of sex education had been limited by that situation, since she had been instructed by her instructional administrator to deal only with student questions, and by Monday they had forgotten any questions they had had.

Another factor which was mentioned by all the teachers was the needs assessment. Its primary effect, as previously discussed, was to provide the teachers with support for teaching the sex education topics, support they used to justify teaching the topics without formal approval. Although Ann was the only teacher who did not include the topics, she

used the objective on birth control from the needs assessment when she prepared her section of the curriculum outline, knowing that the others wanted birth control included in the guide. She felt that using the needs assessment objective was the safest way to include it since there was supporting data from the community.

Perhaps because of the incident involving Wendy, potential criticism was mentioned by all the teachers as an influence on what they taught. They demonstrated acute awareness of what a parent might object to and considered that in their decisions. Therefore, although parents had virtually no direct influence during this study, they exerted an indirect influence through the teachers' fear of possible complaints. The following statements provide examples:

You talk about sticky ground, now to me that's [discussion of sexual feelings] sticky ground, and that's when you get in more trouble than anything, and I stay away from that. (Roxanne)

I'll usually suggest people they could talk with and make suggestions as to that [abortion] needs to be a very well-thought out decision before it is made, that that's not something you decide lightly, and go on. But topics along that line I am much more cautious now. (Wendy)

Closely related to the potential for criticism is Stacie's "curriculum by default" strategy, previously described in the section on her decision strategies. This strategy involves teaching what a teacher believes is important for the students until someone complains. As Stacie described it, "I'm just gonna do my own thing and if somebody

throws a fit, I'll say I was in the wrong." In discussing potential conflict over the teaching of the values topic, Wendy expressed the same philosophy, stating, "I don't get too excited about it. I'll get excited if I ever get challenged, probably." Similarly, Roxanne alluded to this strategy, stating,

Surely no one would be completely removed from their job for what they thought they were doing correctly and had not had any complaints about in seven years.

Ann was the only teacher who did not apply the curriculum by default strategy. As described in the section on her decision strategies, she preferred to get explicit permission before risking coverage of anything that might be controversial.

Teacher training through college classes and staff development had virtually no impact on decisions during the semester, at least as reported by the teachers. Wendy was the only teacher who mentioned a college class, and that was in reference to her first year of teaching. Ann mentioned a suggestion which had been made at an in-service meeting about reviewing the day's content at the end of class. The other teachers made no references to teacher training.

Likewise, the advisory council had no apparent impact other than providing additional support for the teaching of birth control. Stacie and Ann referenced suggestions made by a council member, but did not implement them, nor were any of the other ideas suggested at the meetings put into effect, such as the separation of boys and girls for sex education topics.



Classroom management was a negligible consideration, at least explicitly. Only Ann appeared concerned about student behavior, and Stacie mentioned management problems associated with the implementation of one activity. Management may have been an implicit concern, however, as evidenced by the great importance placed on student interest.

In summary of the influences on content decisions in this study, the major influence on content selection when the teachers were forming their repertoires was curriculum resources, particularly the district curriculum guide, which had been based on the state's suggested course outline. During the semester under study, the teachers' content decisions began with their repertoires. Other curriculum resources such as the new textbook, new state guide, and resources such as filmstrips were used as sources of new activities. Teacher variables such as values and experiences, along with student variables such as interests and needs, played major roles in determining content emphasis. Other than the influence of other teachers during curriculum planning, personal influences from parents and administrators were minimal. Administrative constraints such as lack of time and resources served a limiting function. These findings are consistent with previous content decision-making studies, including the policy-capturing study by Floden et al. (1981), the case study by Schwille et al. (1982), and the interview and questionnaire studies by Leithwood et al. (1982).

Two theories provide explanations for this pattern of influences. Rayder and Body's (1975) notion of proximity predicts that sources of influence closest to the teachers will have the most influence. The most influential factors in this study, curriculum resources and teacher and student variables, were those closest to the teachers' daily teaching experiences. Weick's (1976) theory of loose coupling predicts that weak linkage between actors allows greater autonomy and sensitivity to local needs. The pattern in this study of low administrator influence, along with strong student influence appears to fit this prediction.

#### Strategies of Content Decision Making

A primary goal of this study was to uncover the strategies by which teachers determine what content to teach. Selection strategies employed by the teachers in this case were used in relation to selecting topics during lesson planning, dealing with controversial topics, and developing the district curriculum guide at meetings with the other teachers.

#### Strategies for Lesson Planning

The starting point for content decisions during lesson planning for three of the teachers in this study was their repertoire, that is, what they had taught in the past. With the exception of Ann, who had not taught the course recently,

the teachers used their plans from previous semesters when making out their plans for the current one. Their repertoires had begun when they first taught the course with the topics from the district curriculum guide. This local guide, in turn, had been developed by a teacher committee from the suggested state outline for the course. Both the district and state outlines were viewed as suggested frameworks, and the teachers had followed them voluntarily. Their influence, nevertheless, was major.

Over the years the topics and sequence of the district curriculum guide had become comfortable to these teachers. In some instances, teacher values appeared to have been adapted to the topics, as was the case with Roxanne's increased appreciation of Maslow's hierarchy. This transformation of values served to further imbed topics originally taught simply because they were in the guide into an established repertoire for teaching the course, a repertoire which was consistent with the teachers' beliefs. This repertoire became a powerful force, in this case strong enough to overcome the influence of a number of new inputs, among them a new textbook and a new state outline and guide.

Ann was the only teacher who did not fall back on past experiences in planning her lessons. Although she had taught the course previously, she had since cleaned out her files, thinking she would not be teaching it again. A weak memory of scope and sequence along with a few activities remained, but

she did not have copies of old plans to assist her. Her strategy during lesson planning, instead, was to rely heavily upon the textbook, using it in class far more than the other teachers. In the absence of a strong repertoire, therefore, an available curriculum resource provided the source of topics. Her strategy was not altogether successful, however, because her repertoire, albeit weak, kept conflicting with the text, particularly regarding sequence.

New inputs which conflicted with their repertoires were uncomfortable for the teachers. At the beginning of the semester, Stacie tried to follow the new textbook, but she soon abandoned that effort. Even Ann, whose repertoire was weak, said about the book, "The order is strange to me."

The strength of their repertoire resulted in a time squeeze for everyone but Ann, in that the course had been reduced from 24 to 18 weeks, and the teachers found it difficult to teach all the topics they had included in the past. For this reason, the frequent interruptions of class time which occurred because of assemblies and the like were especially vexing to them.

Although repertoire served as the starting point for the selection of content for most of the teachers, they demonstrated flexibility in its application, moving topics around or even eliminating one occasionally because of student response or lack of time or availability of resources. They also added a few new activities from the new text, the new

state guide, and curriculum resources such as new filmstrips. As Stacie put it, "I get bored with doing it the same way all the time." Teacher repertoire, therefore, served as a filter through which new input could pass. Roxanne's term for this was "pulling" information, ideas, and activities from other resources to supplement the activities in the repertoire. Therefore, while repertoire served as the starting point for content selection, it was constantly being fine-tuned. Its basic scope and sequence, however, remained the same.

In the one instance in this case where new input was accompanied by prescriptive power, the administrative ban on sex education, teacher repertoire reinforced by personal values counteracted the ban for three of the teachers. The inconsistency of the ban with other inputs such as the needs assessment apparently facilitated the opportunity to circumvent it.

While content selection strategies centered around following an established repertoire which had originally been based on district and state course outlines, or in Ann's case, the textbook, content emphasis decisions were dependent primarily upon teacher and student variables. Because no time allocations were enforced in this district, the teachers were free to "stretch" or "slide" over topics (Roxanne's terms) as they chose. Teacher priorities based on their own values and experiences, as well as student influences such as interests,

needs, and attitudes, worked together to affect the amount of coverage received by curriculum topics.

The general strategy used by three of the teachers in this study in planning lesson content, in sum, was to teach what they had taught in the past, a repertoire which had been strongly influenced in the beginning by curriculum resources, particularly the district curriculum guide. New input which was consistent with that repertoire was used to provide variety. In the absence of a strong repertoire, Ann tried to follow the text. Time allocations were determined primarily by teacher priorities and student response.

#### Strategies Related to Controversial Topics

Two divergent strategies for dealing with controversial topics were identified from this study, Stacie's "curriculum by default" policy and Ann's "curriculum by approval" strategy. As described in the section on Stacie's decision making, her policy for deciding whether to teach controversial topics was to go ahead and teach what she believed the students needed until specifically instructed not to. As previously quoted, she said, "I'm just gonna do my own thing and if somebody throws a fit, I'll say I was in the wrong." She followed self-imposed limitations, however, stating, "I know what I wouldn't want -- I wouldn't want some teacher telling my child certain things." Within this zone of tolerance, she proceeded with content directed by her values and her perception of student needs.

Ann took the opposite approach, teaching nothing controversial which had not been approved by her principal. She cleared all speakers, as well as a film with a short birth segment. She avoided other sex education topics entirely, stating, "I don't like controversy." Wendy also has adopted this curriculum by approval strategy since her reprimand, though previously she had used the "default" policy. Regarding adding a controversial topic, she reported, "I know I wouldn't add it unless someone that was in charge of curriculum was aware that I was adding it." She followed this policy in clearing the gynecologist's visit with her building instructional administrator. Her reprimand had caused her to be much more cautious. She explained that,

When I first started teaching it, if someone had come up with a topic that I thought was valid, I would hit it. Well, like one year we talked about abortion in great detail, because my students showed an interest in it.

When asked if she would do that now, she replied, "No, no."

In this study, therefore, two factors appeared to determine whether a teacher followed a curriculum by default policy, teaching what she wanted unless told otherwise, or a curriculum by approval policy, seeking administrative protection for anything potentially controversial. The teacher's personal values about whether the topic should be taught, along with her perception of her students' needs, appeared to direct the decision in the absence of other influences. If, however, the teacher had been "caught," fear

of further trouble overrode her personal values about the topics.

### Strategies for Curriculum Development

Two strategies for the selection of content during curriculum development were identified from this study, the "curriculum by repertoire" strategy typified by Wendy and Ann's "curriculum by authoritative resource" strategy. The conflict between these two positions caused an ongoing problem during the curriculum meetings, a problem resolved in favor of repertoire.

Wendy's approach was to lobby for having their curriculum guide match her own repertoire as closely as possible. She stated,

I realize that I've taught this class so long that I want to make the outline the way I teach it because it makes good sense to me.

Her rationale for this strategy was justification for what she was teaching: "When you get right down to it, I see it [the guide] more as protection more than anything else, as a defense for doing what I want to do." She particularly wanted the birth control objective to be spelled out explicitly.

Ann's weak repertoire was complicated by the limited amount of planning time she had because of her three daily lesson preparations. Her strategy was to lobby for rewriting their course outline to follow either the new textbook or the new state guide, in order to simplify lesson planning. She stated,



You could teach it like this book is, write the curriculum -- or teach it like the Texas Tech guide, write the curriculum -- and then you would not be doing all this mess all the time. They're not doing all this planning because they've taught it.

Her rationale, therefore, was the practicality and usefulness of the resulting guide. Because the other teachers had well-developed repertoires and did not have as much need for a guide, its usefulness was not particularly important to them.

It should be noted that when the original committee, on which Wendy served, developed the first local guide for this course, they chose to take it directly from the suggested state outline. A reasonable hypothesis from these observations, therefore, is that teachers without an established repertoire prefer a guide which follows a usable curriculum resource such as a textbook or another curriculum guide, while teachers who have already developed their repertoire want a guide consistent with it. Conflict like that which occurred in this study might therefore be expected on any curriculum committee on which both types of teachers are represented.

Another type of conflict which did not occur here, but which was alluded to by the teachers in discussing other curriculum committees on which they had served, is the conflict of repertoire versus repertoire. This type of conflict may result when teachers on a curriculum development committee have conflicting repertoires. This had created serious problems in the cases the teachers cited, and the

curriculum consultant had been called upon to settle the disputes. In the present case, the repertoires of all the teachers had been based upon the same source, so this type of conflict did not occur.

In summary, two strategies for curriculum development were exhibited in this study. The curriculum by repertoire strategy involves developing a course guide consistent with the teacher's repertoire to justify what she is teaching. The curriculum by authoritative resource strategy involves copying an easy-to-follow resource to simplify the practical demands of lesson planning and to maximize credibility with students.

#### Summary of Findings

This chapter presents lengthy descriptions of the curriculum development for the Home and Family Living course in this district, both before and during the semester under study, and the strategies employed by each teacher in selecting content for the semester. Curriculum resources, particularly the suggested state outline for the course, were found to have been the major impact on the development of their local guide both originally and during its current revision. Curriculum resources, especially the textbook, also played a large role in the content selection of Ann, the only teacher in this study who had not taught the course the previous year. The major influence on the other three teachers appeared to be their repertoire, or what they had

taught in the past. Their repertoire had been based on their local guide; therefore, the content they taught was very similar in both scope and sequence. Other curriculum resources, including the textbook, the new state guide, and filmstrips, were used by the teachers as sources from which to "pull" supplemental material.

Teacher variables such as values and experiences and student variables such as interests and needs were found to be the major determinants of content emphasis. The teachers would "stretch" or "slide" over topics depending upon these variables and administrative constraints which limited them. Other than the influence of the other teachers during curriculum development, personal influences such as from principal or parents played a very minor role. This pattern of content influences is consistent with the findings of previous studies conducted primarily at the elementary level. It also is consistent with two theories, Rayder and Body's (1975) proximity theory and Weick's (1976) theory of loose coupling.

Two strategies for dealing with controversial topics were identified, "curriculum by default" and "curriculum by approval." The former strategy involves teaching what teacher values and student needs dictate unless told to do otherwise. The other approach is to avoid teaching anything potentially controversial unless explicit permission has been obtained from some higher authority. In this study, the three

teachers who valued the teaching of birth control decided to include the topic in the curriculum in spite of an administrative ban against it. Inconsistent messages to the teachers apparently allowed their values to operate. The teacher who previously had been reprimanded obtained permission from a building-level instructional administrator, however, before teaching about birth control. The fourth teacher followed the ban, which was consistent with her values.

Two strategies for curriculum development were exhibited. "Curriculum by repertoire" involves making the curriculum guide match existing teacher repertoire. This was viewed by the teachers in this study as justification and protection for what they were teaching. The other strategy, "curriculum by authoritative resource," was used by the teacher who did not have a strong repertoire. This strategy involves attempting to make the guide follow a useful and highly credible curriculum resource such as the textbook.

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## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

This case study examined the content decision making of four Home and Family Living teachers during curriculum development and lesson planning in a natural school setting. Previous research had examined teachers' curriculum decision making in general (Leithwood et al., 1982) and elementary mathematics teachers' content decisions in particular (Schwille et al., 1982; Floden et al., 1981). The present study addressed the content decisions of secondary teachers in a course which was minimally text-bound and contained controversial subject matter.

Qualitative data collection procedures included participant observation and audiotape recording of curriculum meetings, followed by stimulated recall interviews with the participating teachers. Biweekly interviews over a semester were conducted to ascertain influences on the content in the teachers' lesson plans. A participant construct instrument (Munby, 1982, 1983) based on Kelly's repertory grid technique (1955) was used to elicit their teaching beliefs. The resulting data base consisted of 411 pages of transcripts, as well as curriculum documents such as lesson plans, content "block plans," and curriculum guides.

Data analysis consisted of the use of a categorical coding system for content analysis of the transcripts to identify and describe influences on the teachers' content decisions. Comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) of transcripts and documents resulted in an outline of 55 content influences and a description of strategies the teachers employed to select content during lesson planning and curriculum development. The findings were reviewed and confirmed by each teacher in a summary interview.

The curriculum development which occurred during this study was "operational planning" (Walker, 1983). The teachers revised a previously developed local curriculum guide, fine-tuning the outline and writing objectives for each topic. The procedure they followed was to complete an outline of topics first and then to write objectives. Activities for each objective were to be written later. This sequence for curriculum development is not consistent with Tyler's rational model (1950), but it does support Zahorik's (1975) finding that content rather than objectives are considered first by teachers.

Curriculum resources played a major role in the curriculum development process. Sources such as state guidelines and textbook teacher's guides were used extensively as models. The original local guide had been patterned after state guidelines for the course, and few changes were made in its revision, even though a new textbook had been adopted and



revised state guidelines had been received. This unwillingness to change is inconsistent with the findings of Floden et al. (1981), perhaps because their study was a laboratory simulation where teachers might report more willingness to change than they would implement in a natural setting such as in the present study.

The teachers enjoyed considerable autonomy in the curriculum development process. The district consultant for home economics gave assistance by providing a format for the guide and resources from which to draw. She suggested that some overlap between the revised state guidelines and their revised local guide was desirable, but beyond that, the teachers were free to develop their guide as they wished, with the consultant making occasional visits to their meetings.

There was little disagreement over the topics to be taught, apparently because all the teachers had taught the course using the original local guide and were comfortable with its content. Disagreement did occur, however, over the sequence of the topics. Three of the teachers wanted to continue with the same sequence they had been using, while the fourth teacher, who had not taught the course for two years, wanted to follow the sequence of the new textbook to simplify her lesson planning. The majority ruled.

The pattern of influences on the content selection of these teachers was consistent with Shavelson and Stern's (1981) model of teacher decision making, which depicts teacher

judgments as dependent upon information about students, differences between teachers, and nature of the instructional task (including curriculum resources). In addition, institutional constraints serve as limiting factors in the model. In the present study, each of these components played a major role in the teachers' content selection.

The major influence on content selection when the teachers were forming their repertoire for the course was curriculum resources, particularly the district curriculum guide, which had been based on suggested course guidelines from the state. During the semester under study, the teachers' content decisions began with their established repertoire. They "pulled" from other resources such as the new textbook, new state guide, and new filmstrips to supplement that repertoire or to provide variation.

Students emerged as a very important factor in each of the teachers' decisions, particularly in regard to content emphasis. Student interests and needs were repeatedly considered by these teachers as they planned their lessons. The importance of students in this study is consistent with the results of the study by Leithwood et al. (1982), in which students were the most pervasive influence mentioned by the teachers in interviews about curriculum decisions. Schwille et al. (1982) reported that students had only a small effect on teachers' decisions about content selection, but the apparent discrepancy might be resolved by the fact that they did not examine influences on content emphasis.

Teacher values, along with student variables, determined to a great extent the emphasis received by the topics in the curriculum guide. The teachers chose to "stretch" or "slide" over topics depending upon their own priorities and perceptions of student needs. This finding that teacher and student variables are of primary importance supports Rayder and Body's (1975) notion of proximity, which predicts that forces closest to teachers' daily teaching experiences will have the greatest impact upon decisions.

Finally, institutional constraints such as lack of available resources, lack of time, and interruptions limited the alternatives available to the teachers in their decision making, as predicted by Shavelson and Stern's model. Overall, the pattern of influences in this study is consistent with the findings of previous content selection studies conducted primarily at the elementary level (Floden et al., 1981; Leithwood et al., 1982; Schwille et al., 1982).

Two strategies for content selection during lesson planning and curriculum development were identified. The general strategy used by three of the teachers was to continue what they had done in the past, that is, to follow their repertoire which had been based on the local guide. This strategy was termed "curriculum by repertoire." The rationale for this strategy was described explicitly by one of the teachers as justification for what she had been doing. The fourth teacher attempted to follow the new textbook, a

strategy termed "curriculum by authoritative resource," in an effort to simplify lesson planning and maximize her credibility with students. The attempts by these teachers to implement their opposing strategies during curriculum development resulted in conflict.

Two strategies for dealing with controversial topics were identified: "curriculum by default" and "curriculum by approval." The former strategy involves teaching controversial topics until told not to, as long as those topics are within a "zone of acceptance" (Simon, 1957) perceived by the teachers. The latter strategy involves clearing controversial content with a higher authority as a protective measure.

### Discussion

The research questions addressed in this study serve as the framework for the following discussion. Internal and external factors are separated for conceptual clarity, but it should be recognized that these factors were not always so distinct. At times they were interrelated in reciprocal or iterative ways.

#### Influence of External Factors

A large number of external factors influenced the content decisions of the teachers in this study. The most important of these external influences were curriculum resources, particularly the local curriculum guide. The strong influence

of the guide appeared to be related to the consistency of the guide with the teachers' repertoire and to the participation of the teachers in its development. Other curriculum resources such as the new textbook also were important, but were used less consistently across teachers than the guide.

These teachers' heavy dependence on authoritative curriculum resources for content and objectives, both in the development of the original local guide and in its revision, has important implications for local curriculum development. Teachers planning curricula after school and on staff development days lack the time necessary to do what Walker (1983) referred to as "planning for change." Instead, they typically take prepared materials and fashion a locally acceptable curriculum from them. The quality of the curriculum resources they use, whether state guidelines or commercially prepared materials, is thus important.

The relatively slight influence of another external factor, school administrators, makes the quality of available materials even more critical. Weick's "loose coupling" theory (1976) postulates that loosely coupled elements allow more adaptability to local contingencies. In the present study, administrators exerted little influence, while students had a profound effect on the teachers' decisions. This pattern of influences appears to fit the loose coupling model.

While it may be functional in allowing teachers the autonomy to adapt content to particular classes and students,

loose coupling could also result in a lack of standardization of content across classrooms. In the present case, this was not a significant problem, perhaps because all four of the district's teachers of the course served on the curriculum development committee, resulting in a press for consistency. In a course such as American history, however, only a representative few of the district's teachers could serve on a curriculum development committee. In this situation, loose coupling's dysfunctional effect of lack of standardization could result in the differential distribution of content to students, an occurrence presumably not uncommon in courses which are not standardized by some other factor such as a departmental exam or other standardized test. Of course, the extent to which differential exposure to content is viewed as a problem is a value position.

#### Influence of Internal Factors

Teacher repertoire emerged as an internal factor which served as the prime determinant of what was taught by most of these teachers. All new curricular inputs, such as the new textbook, were incorporated only to the extent that they were compatible with repertoire or provided new information which, in the teachers' view, addressed previously unmet student needs. Repertoire served, in effect, as an elaborate filter screening out much of the new input received during the semester.

The repertoire of each of the teachers had been based on the materials which were available to her the first time she taught the course, particularly the local curriculum guide. Here again, the critical importance of the quality of curriculum materials emerges. If the curriculum materials a new teacher uses as repertoire is developed become the filter through which all subsequent input is screened, the supervision of new teachers becomes a very important function. The provision of quality materials and assistance to new teachers in establishing their repertoire could have a long-lasting impact in a school district. In current practice, however, the establishment of repertoire is often left to chance, with the teacher next door or the materials most readily available to the new teacher exerting critical influence.

Another internal factor with an important influence in this study was teacher values. Along with student variables, teacher values appeared to determine the amount of emphasis a topic received. Although the local guide contained suggested time allocations for the major divisions in the course outline, no monitoring took place to limit the teachers' autonomy in decisions about pacing. The result was a lack of standardization across teachers in the amount of coverage various topics received. For example, one teacher stressed the financial aspects of marriage, spending several days on budgeting, while the other teachers covered the topic in a

more cursory fashion. Significant variation in the emphasis given the topics within a course can produce substantively different courses, even though they carry the same title. The importance of standardization of content emphasis and pace is a policy judgment currently left largely to chance.

### Mediating Effects of Internal Factors

Internal factors appeared to mediate the effects of external factors in several ways in this study. First, teacher values influenced the ways in which curriculum resources were used by the teachers. As mentioned above, the amount of emphasis given to topics in the local curriculum guide was determined in large part by teacher values. Use of the textbook and resources such as filmstrips was also influenced by individual values, with wide variance evident across teachers. For example, Ann's apparent wish for an authoritative base for her course influenced her to use the textbook more heavily than did the other teachers.

Second, teacher values and experiences appeared to interact with the curriculum as teacher repertoire was being formed. One teacher described teaching topics originally only because they were in the guide, but in time she began to see the relevance of the topics in her own experiences and they took on more importance. This transformation of the curriculum into the teacher's own value system is related to the concept of "mutual adaptation" (McLaughlin, 1976) in curriculum implementation, in which a new curriculum both



changes and is changed by the teachers who implement it. This process takes time and appears necessary for full implementation of a curriculum.

Third, teacher values played an important role in the teachers' interpretation of the administrative ban against teaching birth control. Three of the teachers expressed the strong belief that the topic should be taught and took advantage of the inconsistency between the ban on teaching birth control and other messages such as the needs assessment data in order to find ways to include it. The fourth teacher did not want to teach it and chose to ignore the inconsistencies and follow the ban, which matched her own value system. In the absence of a consistent and continuing directive, each teacher interpreted the ban in a manner consistent with her own values, a striking example of the powerful mediating effect of an internal factor.

### Implications and Recommendations

Several implications and recommendations for the various actors in curriculum development and implementation seem appropriate based on the results from this study.

#### Curriculum Supervisors

The findings of this study appear to indicate that curriculum supervisors seeking to optimize teachers' content decisions might achieve the greatest influence through two activities. First, since teachers appear to rely heavily on

curriculum materials, supervisors should provide assistance and direction in the selection of those materials. Second, since repertoire, once it is formed, may serve as a limiting factor in teachers' future content decisions, supervisors should direct special attention to the guidance of new teachers during the period of repertoire formation, making sure to allow adequate time for them to "transform" the curriculum into individual repertoire.

In working with experienced teachers, supervisors should recognize the effect of repertoire as an obstacle to curriculum change. One way to take repertoire into account when developing a new curriculum might be to begin by delineating current practices, perhaps through a process such as "curriculum mapping" (English, 1980).

During curriculum development, supervisors should take care when appointing teachers to district committees, since conflict could result from the operation of different teacher strategies and rationales. In particular, supervisors should watch for a press for "curriculum by repertoire" from some teachers and a press for "curriculum by authoritative resource" from others. These opposing strategies could lead to conflict, as could a situation involving teachers with opposing repertoires. Explication of these strategies and rationales to the teachers could perhaps enable them to find an acceptable compromise. One such compromise might involve the development of two curriculum guides, a broadly worded

official statement of curriculum content for the public and an expanded version containing suggested activities and resources as a practical guide for teachers (Newfield, 1982).

### School Administrators

School administrators desiring to "tighten the coupling" during curriculum development and implementation should increase their visibility during those processes. Providing assistance to beginning teachers during the period of repertoire formation and overseeing the selection of curriculum materials might prove to be the best avenues for influence.

If a directive must be given, it should be issued from a line position rather than a staff position and monitored regularly to increase its authority and power. Administrators should take care that directives are consistent with other messages. While attempting to tighten the coupling through directives and monitoring, however, administrators should keep in mind the strong effect teachers' values have on their curriculum decisions and should allow them enough autonomy to enable individual differences to operate for optimal instruction.

### Researchers

Researchers seeking additional understanding of teachers' content decisions might consider two approaches. First, since the period during which repertoire is formed appears critical, examination of the content decisions of beginning teachers

might prove fruitful. Identification of sources of curriculum materials used by beginning teachers would be particularly informative. Second, a longitudinal case study of individual teachers might enable the identification of influences (if any) which successfully bring about major changes in teacher repertoire after it has been formed.

Other avenues for further research might include the examination of conflict during curriculum development by committees of teachers and the description of the processes by which such conflict is resolved. Examination of the effects of various levels of coupling by supervisors and administrators when attempting to influence teachers' content decisions might also prove beneficial.

### Conclusion

The prevalence of local curriculum development appears to be increasing, both as a result of findings of curriculum implementation studies regarding the importance of the teacher's role and as a result of declining federal involvement in curriculum development. Because content selection has political and sociological implications in addition to its educational significance, understanding of the processes by which teachers make content decisions during lesson planning and curriculum development is important. The findings of this study help to increase the knowledge base describing these processes and the influences under which teachers' content decisions are made.

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## APPENDIX A

### Segment from Interview with Wendy

Researcher: Let me summarize what I've heard you say, and then you tell me if I'm off any on it. As far as the curriculum guide is concerned, as long as the topics are general enough and close enough to what you think is important, then you use your own objectives within that framework, unless it's something that you see as controversial, and in that case you want it in there specifically, and you deal with it just the way it is in the guide.

Wendy: Right. And I think that what I would say is that I always cover the objectives in the curriculum guide, but mine is more a question of time. And sometimes I might take an objective and write something more in a specific area that would still fall under that general objective. And that's the reason I want the guide to be very general so that you can take it where you want to go with it. You know, I think I want it to be used. I don't want it to restrict what you teach.

Researcher: Do you find it useful or do you find it -- do you see the guide as protection, or do you find it as practical to help you structure the course, or do you already have the course structured?

Wendy: Well, there we get into -- I helped write that. I helped write the outline, so pretty much the outline -- I'm in control of the outline instead of the outline in control of me. When you get right down to it, I see it more as protection more than anything else, as a defense for doing what I want to do.

Researcher: Have you taught any courses that you had not taught before in which you were handed a curriculum guide?

Wendy: Uh huh.

Researcher: In that case, did the guide help you?

Wendy: Definitely.

Researcher: What course was that?

Wendy: Well, everything that I first taught. Like, when I first taught Home and Family, I used the guide a lot. I used the Tech guide a lot because I didn't know what I was doing. Really, every new course that I've taught, that's where I've started from is what was in the guide. And then I just used my own -- you know, you always start out, the first year you do it one way -- the first year you do it right by the book because you don't know anything else to do, and maybe include a few of your pet interests. And then the next year, you see what the students enjoyed, what the students needed, and what you should have included that wasn't. If it didn't round out real well, you add that in every year.

Researcher: And then since you have been teaching it, you all have done a new outline?

Wendy: We've redone the outline twice since I've been teaching it.

Researcher: Is it way off from the way it was to start with?

Wendy: No. I would say the only thing that has happened is that we have excluded a lot of things from it, and we have delved a little deeper into some of the things that were already in it. But primarily what we've done is exclude. Every time that we've reworked it, we've taken things out, because of the time.

Researcher: Because it used to be a two-quarter course.

Wendy: We used to have more time in it, and when it first started out, it was really more like Home Management, but we really did not go into psychology. And I think that's something that I keep seeing at the meeting is that I deal more into understanding yourself and the psychology of the human being than some of the other teachers do. They stay more on a lower level....

Researcher: Did that used to be in the guide originally when you first started teaching it, and that section has been expanded?

Wendy: Uh huh.

Researcher: Is there anything in particular that you can think of that's just been added that was not dealt with in the original guide?

Wendy: Well, something that's been added in other people's eyes but not in mine -- this is a point of specifics --



the old guide said we taught family planning. Ever since I started teaching this which was in '75, I taught birth control, because I thought family planning meant birth control, in my opinion, which I don't want it to be open to anybody's opinion. But that's what it meant, and this is something that we changed, because it was a question -- you know, some people thought family planning meant just saying that you should plan your family and, "Do you want a big family or a little family? You should consider that and pray for a small family if you want...." You know, since there was some question, we made it more specific. Instead of it saying family planning, it says birth control, and you'd have to really be an idiot to not know what that means. So that's gotten more specific. Some things have gotten more general, like the guide used to go into a lot of detail on Freudian theory, and in my opinion, high school students really don't need to know a lot about Freudian theory, besides just having respect for the man and telling them who he was. They do not understand their id, their ego, and their superego. That doesn't really make sense to them, and why should it? I can't really justify why that's something that the average high school student ought to know.

Researcher: Well, so are you saying that the original guide that was given to you when you came has been fine-tuned over the years, adding a little here and a little there, but the content is basically the same?

Wendy: Basically. Basically we're still covering the same things. But in the way I teach it, I'm spending more time on understanding yourself and getting in touch with yourself and less time on management-type things. Like, we do get married, but I don't spend a lot of time telling them how to buy a house, how to spend money, and things like that. I spend very little time on that.

Researcher: What is your rationale for those priorities?

Wendy: That if I can get them straightened out where they can talk with their mate, they can communicate well, and they know who they are and what they want out of life, those other things they can deal with. But if they don't have those, you know, if they don't know what they are looking for, well then, they're gonna have problems with those little rinky-dink things.

Researcher: So these are your personal priorities for what....

Wendy: Yeah, I'm prioritizing, myself. But in my opinion, if

you don't know who you are, how in the world are you gonna find a mate. If you don't know what you want -- or like, communication, if I can teach them to communicate well, they can work out their money problems. They can work out their problems with their in-laws. I don't need to spend weeks -- I do spend days on it, though. I'm not saying it's not important. I spend -- for example, I spend maybe two days specifically on money, and some of the other teachers spend a week or more. The first year I taught this when I was student-teaching, we spent two weeks on money management in Home and Family Living.

Researcher: Is that the way it was in the original guide?

Wendy: Yes. Well, it really didn't say that in the original guide, but it left it open to that interpretation. And I probably spend a couple of days, so that's a big difference.

## APPENDIX B

### Coding Categories

#### Teacher Variables

Teacher values -- references to personal beliefs and priorities.

Teacher conception of subject matter -- references to a personal conceptualization of the structure of the subject matter.

Teacher repertoire -- references to what the teacher had done in previous classes.

Teacher experiences -- personal experiences in the teacher's background.

Teacher time -- references to limitations on the available time of the teacher.

Teacher absence and/or illness -- references to being absent or not feeling well in class.

Teacher knowledge -- references to the teacher's level of knowledge related to a topic.

Teacher characteristics -- characteristics of the teacher, such as age.

#### Student Variables

Student interests -- indications of interest in a topic by students.

Student needs -- needs of students as perceived by the teacher.

Student experiences -- personal experiences of students.

Student characteristics -- characteristics of students, such as maturity level and sex.

Student attitudes and/or feelings -- references to students' affective dimension, such as "negative attitude."

- Student knowledge -- references to students' level of knowledge about particular topics.
- Student ability -- student ability to do course work, such as reading level.
- Student cognitive level -- references to students' cognitive level, such as ability to apply knowledge.
- Student evaluations -- course evaluation forms completed by students.
- Student basic skills -- student skills such as writing ability, currently being heavily emphasized by the school district.
- Former students -- communication with former students.
- Student behavior -- students' overt classroom behavior.
- Student miscellaneous -- references to other student variables not fitting into one of the above categories.

#### Administrative Constraints

- Availability of resources -- references to resources which are not available when needed or which are available on the market but not possessed.
- Time -- references to the time limitations of the course.
- Interruptions -- interference with available class time, such as assemblies.
- Administrative directive -- references to the administrative directive removing birth control from the curriculum.
- Grades and/or tests -- references to having to take time out to get grades or give tests.
- Overlapping students -- references to content repetition caused by students' taking several home economics courses with overlapping content.
- Declining enrollment -- references to the decreasing enrollment in home economics courses and consequent efforts to attract students.

### Personal Influences

Other teachers -- references to other teachers, through conversations or meetings.

Parents -- references to communication with parents.

Home economics consultant -- references to the district curriculum consultant for home economics.

Instructional administrator -- references to the building administrator for curriculum and instruction.

Principal -- references to the building principal.

Counselor -- school counselor.

Superintendent -- district superintendent.

### Curriculum Resources

Text -- references to the textbook used in the course, Relationships: A Study in Human Behavior.

Resources -- educational materials other than books, such as films, filmstrips, and the student magazine Current Lifestudies.

Curriculum guide -- locally developed curriculum guide for the Home and Family Living course.

State guide -- state Home and Family Living curriculum guide developed at Texas Tech (referred to as the "Tech guide").

Other books -- books such as library books and other textbooks and teacher's guides.

State outline -- the state home economics curriculum outline, Conceptual Framework.

Text guide -- teacher's guide to the textbook.

Block plan -- the weekly course outline prepared jointly by the teachers in the study.

Outside sources -- references to other resources, such as popular magazines.

Other Influences

- Potential criticism -- references to the possibility of criticism, primarily from parents, for teaching certain topics.
- Outside influences -- societal influences, such as unemployment and the media.
- Speakers -- references to content brought in by outside resource persons in presentations to the class.
- Default -- references to a policy of teaching something until someone raises an objection.
- Needs assessment -- the community survey conducted in the year prior to the study to determine which objectives should be taught in home economics courses.
- School board -- references to the local school board.
- Advisory council -- references to the district advisory council for consumer home economics.
- Course description -- references to the course description written jointly by the teachers in a curriculum meeting.
- Classroom management -- references to classroom management procedures.
- In-service -- references to material covered at in-service for home economics teachers.
- College classes -- references to material covered in college classes.

## APPENDIX C

### Original Local Curriculum Outline for Home and Family Living

- I. Appreciation of self
  - A. Basic needs
  - B. Personality development
  - C. Character development
  - D. Self theory
  - E. Maturity
  - F. Popularity
  - G. Values, standards, goals
  - H. Personal philosophy of life
- II. Self in groups
  - A. Family
  - B. Community
  - C. Interpersonal techniques
- III. Self in the future
  - A. Love relationships
  - B. Preparation for successful relationships in marriage
  - C. Preparation for successful relationships as a single person
- IV. Self in the community
  - A. Interrelationship of family and community
  - B. Family in the world community
- V. Family as managers and consumers
  - A. Management processes
  - B. Consumer education
  - C. Housing for the family
  - D. Managing the home
- VI. Children in the family
  - A. Basic considerations of parenthood
  - B. Preparation for parenthood
  - C. Development of the infant and young child
  - D. Care and guidance of the infant and young child
- VII. Food for the family
  - A. Social and psychological aspects
  - B. Physical aspects
  - C. Management and consumer aspects

- VIII. Clothing for the family
  - A. Social and psychological aspects
  - B. Management and consumer aspects
  
- IX. Relating family living to career and job opportunities
  - A. Job and career opportunities
  - B. Skills and competencies needed
  - C. Educational preparation
  - D. Interrelationships of employment and home life
  - E. Dual roles



## APPENDIX D

### Original State Curriculum Outline for Home and Family Living: Conceptual Framework for Homemaking Education in Texas

- I. Appreciation of self
  - A. Basic needs
  - B. Personality development
  - C. Character development
  - D. Self theory
  - E. Maturity
  - F. Popularity
  - G. Values, standards, goals
  - H. Personal philosophy of life
- II. Self in groups
  - A. Family
  - B. Community
  - C. Interpersonal techniques
- III. Self in the future
  - A. Love relationships
  - B. Preparation for successful relationships in marriage
  - C. Preparation for successful relationships as a single person
- IV. Self in the community
  - A. Interrelationship of family and community
  - B. Family in the world community
- V. Family as managers and consumers
  - A. Elements of management
  - B. Management processes
  - C. Managing the home
  - D. Consumer education
- VI. Children in the family
  - A. Basic considerations
  - B. Preparation for parenthood
  - C. Development of the infant and young child
  - D. Care and guidance of the infant and young child

- VII. Housing the family
  - A. Significance of housing
  - B. Housing decisions
- VIII. Food for the family
  - A. Social and psychological aspects
  - B. Physical aspects
  - C. Management and consumer aspects
- IX. Clothing the family
  - A. Social and psychological aspects
  - B. Physical aspects
  - C. Management and consumer aspects
- X. Relating family living to career and job opportunities
  - A. Job and career opportunities
  - B. Skills and competencies needed
  - C. Educational preparation
  - D. Interrelationship of employment and home life
  - E. Dual roles

Note. From Conceptual Framework for Homemaking Education in Texas, Home Economics Instructional Materials Center, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, 1971.

APPENDIX E  
Needs Assessment Objectives  
with  
Parent, Teacher, and Student Responses

PARENT RESPONSE TO HOME AND FAMILY LIVING OBJECTIVES

for successful living, one should be able to:

1. Identify laws related to marriage and families.
2. Use knowledge of the factors which contribute to the development of personality and self-concept to analyze oneself.
3. Understand how conflicting role expectations, values, and goals can cause stress in a marriage.
4. Analyze the adjustments (financial, sexual, etc.) required for a successful marriage.
5. Understand use of various forms of birth control to postpone parenthood.
6. Identify problems related to family crises such as divorce and death and name community resources available for help.
7. Use effective communication and interpersonal skills to establish good personal relationships.
8. Demonstrate the use of the decision-making process when making personal and family choices.
9. Identify the unique problems of single living and ways to deal with them.
10. Analyze the responsibilities, adjustments, and characteristics of a good parent.
11. Use knowledge of personal values and goals to identify characteristics to look for in a marriage partner.
12. Identify causes of stress and constructive ways to deal with it.
13. Identify the special concerns and problems of the elderly and ways the family can help.
14. Use knowledge of the special problems of the single parent to identify effective means of coping.

Essential	Percent Response		
	Desirable	Of Little Importance	Not Necessary
41.5%	46.8%	8.8%	2.9%
35.3%	52.9%	10.0%	1.8%
62.6%	35.1%	1.8%	0.6%
65.5%	29.8%	3.5%	1.2%
70.3%	24.3%	3.4%	2.0%
79.0%	17.8%	2.0%	1.3%
*On all three forms of survey			
67.8%	26.9%	2.3%	2.9%
62.8%	25.0%	4.1%	8.1%
74.7%	19.3%	1.3%	4.7%
*On all three forms of survey			
51.8%	44.1%	3.5%	0.6%
75.7%	23.7%	0.7%	0.0%
64.9%	31.1%	3.4%	0.7%
26.4%	52.7%	18.9%	2.0%
80.8%	17.1%	1.4%	0.7%
74.7%	22.7%	1.3%	1.3%
69.5%	27.8%	2.0%	0.7%
40.4%	56.3%	3.3%	0.0%
42.7%	49.3%	6.0%	2.0%

TEACHER RESPONSE TO HOME AND FAMILY LIVING OBJECTIVES

For successful living, one should be able to:

1. Identify laws related to marriage and families.
2. Use knowledge of the factors which contribute to the development of personality and self-concept to analyze oneself.
3. Understand how conflicting role expectations, values, and goals can cause stress in a marriage.
4. Analyze the adjustments (financial, sexual, etc.) required for a successful marriage.
5. Understand use of various forms of birth control to postpone parenthood.
6. Identify problems related to family crises such as divorce and death and name community resources available for help.
7. Use effective communication and interpersonal skills to establish good personal relationships.
8. Demonstrate the use of the decision-making process when making personal and family choices.
9. Identify the unique problems of single living and ways to deal with them.
10. Analyze the responsibilities, adjustments, and characteristics of a good parent.
11. Use knowledge of personal values and goals to identify characteristics to look for in a marriage partner.
12. Identify causes of stress and constructive ways to deal with it.
13. Identify the special concerns and problems of the elderly and ways the family can help.
14. Use knowledge of the special problems of the single parent to identify effective means of coping.

Essential	Percent Response			Not Necessary
	Desirable	Of Little Importance		
23.2%	61.1%	15.7%		0.0%
26.2%	63.6%	9.4%		0.9%
56.5%	42.6%	0.9%		0.0%
58.9%	40.2%	0.9%		0.0%
74.1%	20.4%	4.6%		0.9%
72.0%	27.1%	0.9%		0.0%
*On all three forms of survey				
64.5%	31.8%	1.9%		1.9%
65.7%	30.6%	0.9%		2.8%
68.6%	29.7%	0.0%		1.7%
*On all three forms of survey				
45.3%	51.9%	1.9%		0.9%
64.8%	32.4%	2.8%		0.0%
52.8%	41.7%	5.6%		0.0%
34.3%	49.1%	15.7%		0.9%
73.2%	24.1%	2.8%		0.0%
72.0%	28.0%	0.0%		0.0%
59.3%	39.8%	0.9%		0.0%
38.1%	59.3%	2.5%		0.0%
42.4%	55.1%	2.5%		0.0%

STUDENT RESPONSE TO HOME AND FAMILY LIVING OBJECTIVES

For successful living, one should be able to:

1. Identify laws related to marriage and families.
2. Use knowledge of the factors which contribute to the development of personality and self-concept to analyze oneself.
3. Understand how conflicting role expectations, values, and goals can cause stress in a marriage.
4. Analyze the adjustments (financial, sexual, etc.) required for a successful marriage.
5. Understand use of various forms of birth control to postpone parenthood.
6. Identify problems related to family crises such as divorce and death and name community resources available for help.
7. Use effective communication and interpersonal skills to establish good personal relationships.
8. Demonstrate the use of the decision-making process when making personal and family choices.
9. Identify the unique problems of single living and ways to deal with them.
10. Analyze the responsibilities, adjustments, and characteristics of a good parent.
11. Use knowledge of personal values and goals to identify characteristics to look for in a marriage partner.
12. Identify causes of stress and constructive ways to deal with it.
13. Identify the special concerns and problems of the elderly and ways the family can help.
14. Use knowledge of the special problems of the single parent to identify effective means of coping.

Essential	Percent Response		
	Desirable	Of Little Importance	Not Necessary
50.6%	38.6%	8.6%	2.3%
32.1%	48.7%	16.3%	2.9%
54.6%	34.1%	8.8%	2.6%
65.8%	23.7%	8.0%	2.6%
62.6%	27.4%	6.8%	3.2%
66.8%	25.0%	6.6%	1.6%
*On all three forms of survey			
55.3%	28.8%	10.3%	5.7%
56.6%	28.8%	9.0%	5.8%
61.9%	23.4%	11.1%	3.7%
*On all three forms of survey			
51.0%	37.5%	7.5%	4.0%
55.0%	32.9%	10.2%	1.9%
46.7%	39.0%	12.1%	2.2%
36.1%	43.1%	16.6%	4.2%
66.1%	23.3%	7.7%	2.9%
62.3%	27.1%	5.3%	5.3%
48.4%	39.3%	11.5%	0.8%
42.8%	43.2%	10.7%	3.3%
48.6%	37.8%	8.3%	5.4%

## APPENDIX F

### Textbook Table of Contents

#### Unit 1 Understanding Ourselves

- 1 Our Basic Needs
- 2 Our Character Growth
- 3 Our Personality Development
- 4 Our Maturity
- 5 Our Adjustments to Frustrations
- 6 Our Mechanisms for Self-Defense
- 7 Our Attitudes
- 8 Our Mental Health
- 9 Our View of Religion
- 10 Our Insight into Philosophy
- 11 Our Personal Philosophy of Life

#### Unit 2 Understanding Others

- 12 Relationships with Parents
- 13 Relationships with Brothers and Sisters
- 14 Relationships with Older People
- 15 Relationships Outside the Family
- 16 Relationships with Love
- 17 Relationships in Dating
- 18 Relationships with Questions of Behavior
- 19 Relationships in Alternative Life-Styles

#### Unit 3 Understanding Marriage

- 20 Marriage and Family Forms
- 21 Marriage and Commitment
- 22 Marriage and Role
- 23 Marriage and Love
- 24 Marriage and Money
- 25 Marriage and Career
- 26 Marriage and Crises
- 27 Marriage and Counseling

#### Unit 4 Understanding Parenthood

- 28 Reproduction

- 29 Responsible Parenthood
- 30 Childlessness
- 31 A Birthright
- 32 Babies' Needs
- 33 Ages and Stages
- 34 Children's Fears
- 35 Discipline
- 36 For All of Us

Note. From Relationships: A Study in Human Behavior  
(Rev. ed.) by H. G. Westlake. Lexington, MA: Ginn, 1980.



## APPENDIX G

### Revised State Curriculum Outline for Home and Family Living: Family Living and Parenthood

- I. Living independently
  - A. Accepting myself as an adult
    - 1. Basic needs
    - 2. Self-concept
    - 3. Values clarification
    - 4. Character development
    - 5. Mental health
    - 6. Managing throughout life
  - B. Living as a single adult
    - 1. Singles identified
    - 2. Reasons for not marrying
    - 3. Advantages of remaining single
    - 4. Problems faced by single adults
    - 5. Being single again
- II. Establishing a basis for marriage and family
  - A. Dating
  - B. Preparing for mate selection
    - 1. Influences on mate selection
    - 2. Acceptance of increased responsibilities
    - 3. Types of love
    - 4. Stages of love
  - C. Becoming engaged
  - D. Planning a wedding
  - E. Marriage/beginning stage
- III. Parenting
  - A. Definition of family
  - B. Family planning
  - C. Financial considerations
  - D. Emotional considerations
  - E. Special parenting situations
- IV. Living as a family
  - A. Relationships within the family
  - B. Relationships of the family to the community
- V. Completing the family life cycle
  - A. Developing stage
  - B. Launching stage

- C. Middle years stage
  - D. Aging families and family members
- VI. Managing family problems and crises
- A. Crises
  - B. Types of problems and crises
- VII. Relating family living to career and job opportunity
- A. Developing interpersonal skills for job success
  - B. Exploring careers in family service
  - C. Interrelationships of employment and home life

Note. From Family Living and Parenthood, Home Economics Instructional Materials Center, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, 1981.

## APPENDIX H

### Revised Local Curriculum Outline for Home and Family Living

- I. Accepting myself
  - A. Basic needs
  - B. Values, goals, standards and philosophy of life
  - C. Personality development
  - D. Character development
  - E. Maturity
- II. Self in groups
  - A. Communication
  - B. Family
- III. Individual relationships
  - A. Dating
  - B. Love relationships
  - C. Preparation for successful relationships as a single person
  - D. Role concepts
  - E. Preparation for successful relationships in marriage
    - 1. Factors in mate selection
    - 2. Role of engagement
    - 3. Wedding planning
- IV. Marriage relationship
  - A. Adjustments in marriage
  - B. Success in marriage
  - C. Family stresses and crises
- V. Children in the family
  - A. Basic considerations of parenthood
    - 1. Deciding to become parents
    - 2. Alternatives to natural parenting
    - 3. Postponing parenthood
    - 4. Community resources
  - B. Care and guidance of children
    - 1. Nurturance of the children
    - 2. Guidance and discipline
    - 3. Social influences on children
    - 4. Special adjustments of the special parent
- VI. Relating family living to career and job opportunity
  - A. Developing interpersonal skills for job success
  - B. Exploring careers in family service
  - C. Interrelationship of employment and family life

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