

Curriculum Implementation Study Highlights: Elementary School Teachers

The Planning and Research Branch of Manitoba Education recently conducted a large study concerning the process of curriculum implementation. The objectives of this study were to evaluate the effectiveness of the current implementation process and to recommend strategies to improve the current implementation process.

The new social studies curriculum was selected to provide a focus for the study. Over 450 elementary (Grade 1-6 teachers, highly representative of the teacher population in Manitoba, participated in this study. A comparative group of teachers (those not teaching social studies) was also included in the sample. Response rate (approximately 70%) indicated good co-operation and a high degree of interest. Survey questions were analyzed, taking into account teachers' location (urban, rural, or northern); years experience; age; grant classification; degree of implementation, satisfaction, and overall preparedness. Differences that arose according to these characteristics are noted below.

1. Approach to Curriculum Implementation

Almost all the teachers (97%) were aware that a new social studies curriculum had been introduced in Manitoba. The majority of teachers (56%) indicated that they were first informed about the new curriculum by the principal.

There was strong support for the changes in the social studies curriculum — approximately 75% of teachers felt that change was necessary. The most oft-cited reason was that the old curriculum, texts, and supplementary materials were outdated, and secondly that they were not relevant to students' needs.

Regardless of the number of years experience as a teacher and of geographic location, Manitoba Education curriculum guides and supplementary resource material for classroom use were considered important in the implementation of new curricula, compared with individualized assistance from consultants and professional development.

A large number of teachers indicated that "availability of model units prepared specifically for the new approach at your grade level" was the best way to assist teachers to implement the new social studies curriculum. At the local level, the principal and other teachers were considered the most helpful in initiating the new social studies curriculum by offering encouragement and advice.

2. Role of the Teacher

Teachers felt that they had "great" influence on what happened in their classrooms i.e., their own teaching strategies (79%), and allocation of time for teaching social studies (68%). However, professional development was one area in which teachers felt they had little influence. In terms of actual implementation of the new social studies curriculum, one-third of the teachers indicated that they were trying out several new ideas fairly extensively, one-quarter of the teachers indicated it was their major focus, and one-fifth indicated a complete focus. Over three-quarters of the surveyed teachers felt that their level of implementation would be increasing. The major concern expressed by approximately two-thirds of the teachers was in the area of textbook/supplies choice.

3. Professional Development

Almost 70% of the teachers surveyed attended workshops/in-services concerning the new social studies curriculum. However, when examining urban, rural, and northern locations, teachers from urban centers attended over twice as many workshops/in-services compared to teachers in northern centers (74% vs. 36%). The school division was the organization which sponsored the majority of inservices/workshops. When asked who **should** sponsor workshops/in-services, teachers also indicated a divisional responsibility, followed closely by Manitoba Education. Classroom activities were the number one area in which teachers indicated a desire for inservices/workshops concerning the new social studies curriculum.

The degree of implementation was related to attendance at inservices/workshops. Eighty-three percent of teachers who had a higher degree of implementation had attended inservices/workshops, as compared to about 65% at other levels of implementation. However, it is noteworthy that there exists no definitive relationship or pattern between degree of implementation and the number of actual hours spent attending workshops/in-services.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Regardless of teachers' location, both social studies teachers and non-social studies teachers indicated that it was Manitoba Education's responsibility to provide professional development workshop/in-services. However, in terms of individualized assistance to teachers, a higher percentage of urban teachers and northern teachers felt it was the school division's responsibility, as compared to rural teachers who indicated Manitoba Education's responsibility. The Manitoba Teachers' Society and Special Area Groups were viewed as having little to no responsibility in the process of curriculum implementation.

5. Overall Satisfaction

Approximately 70% of elementary social studies teachers felt they were moderately prepared or well prepared to begin the process of implementing the social studies curriculum. When teachers indicated a lack of preparation to begin implementation, the reason most cited was inadequate inservicing. Similar results occurred when teachers were asked for their overall satisfaction with the process used to implement the social studies curriculum. Approximately 75% indicated a moderate or high degree of satisfaction. When dissatisfaction was raised, the reason most cited was insufficient professional development. How well-prepared teachers felt to implement social studies was related to their degree of satisfaction towards the process used to implement the curriculum. Teachers who indicated dissatisfaction were also more likely to feel ill-prepared.

About 80% of elementary teachers indicated satisfaction with the general overall process of curriculum implementation in Manitoba since 1980. For teachers who indicated a degree of dissatisfaction, the principal reason was too many curriculum changes made in too short a period of time.

Additional publications concerning the curriculum implementation study are available. In addition, the Planning and Research Branch will make presentations of the findings to interested groups. If you are interested in further information concerning this study, please contact Katherine Wong at:

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Curriculum Implementation Study Highlights: Principal Survey

The Planning and Research Branch of Manitoba Education recently conducted a large study concerning the process of curriculum implementation. The objectives of this study were to evaluate the effectiveness of the current curriculum implementation process, and to recommend strategies to improve the curriculum implementation process.

All principals were surveyed and almost 500 elementary and secondary principals responded, for an overall response rate of 90%. The area of focus for elementary school principals was the new social studies curriculum, and the area of concern for the secondary school principals was the science curriculum. All questions were analyzed, taking into account principals' location (rural vs. urban vs. northern), school schedule, and length of time as a principal. Differences that arose according to these characteristics are noted below.

1. Process of Curriculum Implementation

There was strong support for current changes in the science/social studies curriculum; 87% and 91% respectively felt the change was necessary. The most oft-cited reason for the change in curriculum was that curriculum, texts, and supplementary materials were outdated and not abreast with contemporary society. Regardless of the number of years as a principal, Manitoba Education curriculum guides and professional development workshops were considered most important in the implementation of new curricula.

For all school principals, workshops/in-services by specialists were seen as the best way to assist teachers in implementing curriculum. Textbooks/supplies choice concerns were a problem for 68% of principals of elementary schools (social studies), as compared to only 26% of principals of secondary schools (science).

2. Role of the Principal

Principals felt that they had "great" influence on allocation of time for teaching. However, 41% of principals in urban centers felt they had great influence regarding professional development for teachers, as compared with only 18% of principals in rural centers, and 17% of principals in northern centers. Length of time as a principal was related to the degree of influence principals felt they had over teaching strategies. Principals with 15 years or more experience felt they had greater influence over teaching strategies than did principals who had less than 5 years of experience (80% vs. 62%).

3. Professional Development

Almost all of the elementary and secondary principals surveyed indicated an involvement in professional development workshops/in-services, individualized assistance to teachers, and implementing curriculum guidelines. Overall, 76% of elementary principals, compared to 23% of secondary principals, had attended inservicing on social studies and science, respectively. Many more urban and rural principals attended 1-6 hours of workshops/in-services, as compared with northern principals. For the science curriculum, there were no location distinctions.

4. Roles and Responsibilities for Implementation

About two-thirds of the surveyed principals indicated that Manitoba Education should be chiefly responsible for providing professional development workshops/in-services. However, a majority of principals felt that school divisions should be responsible for individualized assistance to teachers (72%); and, implementing the curriculum guidelines (59%). The Manitoba Teachers' Society and Special Area Groups were viewed as having little or no responsibility in the process of curriculum implementation.

5. Overall Satisfaction

Regardless of location, school schedule, or length of time as a principal, about 70% of principals were satisfied with the overall process used to implement new curricula since 1980. For the principals who indicated a degree of dissatisfaction, reasons included too many changes made in too short a period of time, and not enough direction and follow-up by Manitoba Education. When asked specifically about social studies or science curricula, the level of satisfaction was higher, with over 80% expressing some degree of satisfaction.

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Curriculum Implementation Study

Highlights: Secondary Science/Math Teachers

The Planning and Research Branch of Manitoba Education recently conducted a large study concerning the process of curriculum implementation. The objectives of this study were to evaluate the effectiveness of the current curriculum implementation process and to recommend strategies to improve the curriculum implementation process.

The new science curriculum was selected to provide a focus for the study. Over 400 secondary (100 and 101) science and mathematics teachers, highly representative of the teacher population in Manitoba, participated in this study. Response rate (77%) indicated good co-operation and a high degree of interest. Survey questions were analyzed, taking into account teachers' location (urban, rural, or northern); years experience; age; grant classification; degree of implementation; satisfaction; and, overall preparedness. Differences that arose according to these characteristics are noted below.

1. Approach to Curriculum Implementation

Almost all the teachers (95%) were aware that a new science curriculum had been introduced in Manitoba. About one-half of the teachers indicated that they were first informed about the new curriculum by Manitoba Education.

There was strong support for the changes in the science curriculum—approximately 70% of teachers felt that change was necessary. The most oft-cited reason for change in the science curriculum was that subject material and topics were outdated and not abreast with contemporary society. Manitoba Education curriculum guides and supplementary resource material for classroom use were considered most important in the implementation of new curricula, compared with individualized assistance from consultants and professional development. In addition, a large number of science teachers indicated that workshops and seminars conducted by specialists were the best way to assist teachers to implement the new science curriculum. At the local level, other teachers were considered the most helpful in initiating the new science curriculum by offering encouragement and advice.

2. Role of the Teacher

Teachers felt that they had "great" influence on what happened in their classrooms i.e., their own teaching strategies (81%), and allocation of time for teaching specific topics (65%). However, allocation of time for teaching science, and professional development were two areas in which teachers felt they had little influence. In terms of actual implementation of the new science curriculum, one half of the teachers indicated that the new approach was their major or complete focus of attention, while the other half indicated it was less than their major or complete focus. About two-thirds of teachers felt that the level of implementation would be increasing. Teachers most often experienced textbook/supplies choice concerns (65%), followed by class size concerns (36%).

3. Professional Development

Almost 80% of the teachers surveyed attended workshops/in-services concerning the new science curriculum. There was no significant difference between teachers of different regions when attending workshops/in-services. Manitoba Education was the organization which sponsored the majority of in-services/workshops. When asked who **should** sponsor workshops/in-services, teachers also indicated Manitoba Education first, followed by the school division. Classroom activities were the number one area (followed closely by teaching strategies and development of teaching areas) in which teachers indicated a desire for in-services/workshops concerning the science curriculum.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Regardless of teachers' location, both science and math teachers indicated that it was the responsibility of Manitoba Education to provide professional development in-services/workshops. However, in terms of individualized assistance to teachers, a higher percentage of urban teachers felt it was the school division's responsibility, as compared to rural and northern teachers who indicated Manitoba Education's responsibility.

5. Overall Satisfaction

Approximately 85% of the teachers were moderately or well prepared to begin the process of implementing the new science curriculum. Similar results occurred when teachers were asked for their overall satisfaction with the process used to implement the science curriculum. Approximately 75% indicated a moderate or high degree of satisfaction. When dissatisfaction was raised, the reason most cited was lack of teacher involvement in the process of implementation.

Both science (70%) and math teachers (80%) indicated a satisfaction with the general overall process of curriculum implementation in Manitoba since 1980.

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CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

In the spring of 1984, the Planning and Research Branch conducted a large study concerning curriculum implementation. The study was designed to explore the process of curriculum implementation as it operates in Manitoba, to assess its effectiveness, and to suggest strategies to improve the process.

METHOD

Data collection took a number of different forms. Surveys were sent to all principals in the province, as well as to samples of teachers at the elementary and secondary levels. The focus of the elementary teachers' survey was the new social studies curriculum, while at the secondary level 100 and 101 science were targeted. Survey response was high with 90% of principals, 77% of secondary teachers, and 68% of elementary teachers responding.

As a follow-up to survey work, case studies were conducted at the elementary level in ten schools across Manitoba. The case studies were designed to focus on issues raised by survey data, and to provide a description of the implementation process in specific settings. Consequently, case study schools were chosen to illustrate diverse situations.

REPORTS

In order to provide information in a clear, comprehensive, yet flexible manner, a series of reports will be available concerning the Curriculum Implementation Study.

	Report #
— Curriculum Implementation in Manitoba: Results, Issues and Strategies	84-03 (a)
— Curriculum Implementation in Manitoba: Literature Review	84-03 (b)
— Curriculum Implementation in Manitoba: Case Studies	84-03 (c)

Any or all of the above reports may be obtained by contacting:

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