



Curriculum and Instructional Methods for the Elementary and Middle School

THIRD EDITION



Johanna Kasin Lemlech

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University of Southern California

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Curriculum and Instructional Methods for the Elementary and Middle School

**This text is dedicated to my granddaughters,
Lauren and Samantha Stieger**

Preface

This text was written for both prospective teachers and experienced teachers studying curriculum and instructional processes. The text is intended as a reference and to raise critical questions about professional practice and provide dialogue about professional concerns. Preparation for teaching has changed considerably through the years. In our early educational history, no preparation for teaching was needed; teachers drifted into the educator's role. Current professional preparation is based on a great deal of research on how teachers teach and how students learn. We recognize that teachers need knowledge of the subject matter disciplines, knowledge of pedagogy, and knowledge of how to put the two together to create the curriculum and the delivery system. This book is directed at some of those skills, values, and decisions teachers need to make to be curriculum and instructional leaders.

The text provides perspective on how the schools, the curriculum, professional preparation, and pedagogy have developed through the years. The first section of the book examines the foundations of American education; the second section is focused on pedagogy—the delivery system for the curriculum; the third section provides a broad view of the content of the elementary and middle school curriculum; and the last section focuses on the teacher as a professional.

There are four chapters in Part I. In the first chapter the focus is on the school as a social institution and how the school responds to societal challenges such as poverty, equal opportunity, and national standards. In chapter 2 the focus is on change—how teachers, schools, and curriculum developed from colonial days to the modern era. Chapter 3 examines the ways in which schools, classrooms, and curricula

have been organized and how the organization affects teaching and learning. The chapter particularly highlights the current emergence of middle schools. Part I concludes with a look at the learner's characteristics and developmental patterns.

The focus of Part II (chapters 5–12) is the teaching process. This section of the text features much of the current research on teaching. Research on time and learning, classroom management, grouping for instruction, and motivating students for achievement can be found in the chapter on how children learn, chapter 5. Chapter 6 discusses what teachers do the day before school formally begins, how to plan the first day of instruction, and the daily tasks of teachers.

Chapters 7–9 illustrate expository teaching, guided discussion, and inquiry instructional approaches through a variety of teaching episodes. These episodes or vignettes serve to demonstrate several teaching models: direct instruction, comprehension model, the advance organizer, group investigation, backward problem solving, and role playing. Classroom management hints are included in the discussion and demonstration of each model.

Chapter 10 provides several examples of how to plan a teaching unit using three current methods for curriculum development; the chapter gives special attention to interdisciplinary connections and integrating the curriculum. Chapter 11 discusses the role of technology, how to critique materials for classroom use, and the role of the teacher as a resource developer. Chapter 12 concludes Part II with discussion of formal and informal means to assess and evaluate learning progress. The chapter highlights the current trend toward using performance assessment and

student portfolios. Chapter 12 concludes with a section on parent-teacher conferences.

Part III (chapters 13–18) presents the content of the curriculum as well as teaching approaches, goals, objectives, resources, and methods of evaluation for different subjects. For example, performance assessment is discussed in each chapter as it relates to the subject field. Actual teaching examples pertinent to the subject field are included in each chapter. Particularly useful are the suggestions for learning centers and learning packets included in each chapter.

Part IV (Chapter 19) which examines professional growth as a personal responsibility, discusses cooperative collegial development, clinical supervision, school improvement through staff development, and issues related to restructuring and the work of teachers. Also important is the discussion of laws

affecting teachers, including concerns about professional liability and malpractice. This third edition of the text includes new sections on teacher portfolios and the teacher as researcher.

Certain aspects of teaching are of particular importance to new teachers. Classroom management, mainstreaming, and the integration of subject fields represent ongoing concerns. As a consequence, the text includes these elements throughout so that pertinent ideas and teaching hints are related both to specific subjects and to general instructional strategies.

I want to emphasize that most teaching strategies require planning and practice. Teaching with strategy is difficult; teaching skills are developmental and beginning teachers should not expect everything to be perfect the first, or even the second, time that an instructional technique is tried.

Acknowledgments

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PART I

Challenge, Choice, and Responsibility of Elementary and Middle School Teachers

Teaching in elementary and middle schools requires knowledge of the past, present, and future. Teachers influence the lives of students and the quality of future life. Curriculum decisions are based on understanding developmental needs and interests of children, the learning process, our society, our history, and the possibilities for the future.

INTRODUCTION: TEACHERS' LEADERSHIP ROLES

Mary Hogan, Greg Thomas, and Karen Adazzio are three fictitious teachers who will be encountered from time to time throughout this text. Brief sketches of the teachers will highlight their experiences, attitudes, and beliefs about teaching. Each, in his or her own way, can be considered a teacher-leader.

Mary Hogan

Mary Hogan is in her second year of teaching. She teaches second grade at a large urban elementary school. There are 1,300 students at the school and 85 percent of them are native Spanish speakers. Her school district, located in the western United States, enrolls 625,000 students.

Hogan was educated at a private university in a collegial teacher preparation program. In her student teaching experience she was paired with another student teacher, and together they practiced in the same classroom. The two student teachers planned lessons together and often taught side by side. They were responsible for observing each other teach and for providing each other with feedback. As a consequence of this experience, Mary is quite comfortable with having colleagues come into the classroom to observe. She continues to keep in close touch with her student teaching colleague, and they talk frequently about teaching.

Hogan's preparation program emphasized several models of teaching, and Mary became expert at applying a variety of instructional approaches to accomplish her instructional purposes. She considers the classroom environment extremely important for motivating students, and she frequently uses learning centers to differentiate curriculum content and skill activities.

As a second year teacher, Mary is not totally comfortable with her own classroom management skills, but she believes in helping students become responsible for their own behavior. Her classroom rules were set by the students and are extremely simple.

("We are responsible for our own behavior. We respect others.")

Because Mary is so skilled in her use of teaching models, she has been asked by her principal to demonstrate lessons for other teachers. She gained considerable respect from the other teachers at her school for what they consider innovative approaches and for her willingness to allow others to observe in her classroom.

Greg Thomas

Greg Thomas teaches fifth grade in a southern rural school. His school district enrolls 3,200 students. The school where he teaches has an enrollment of 475 students. Greg has been a teacher for seven years, five of which have been at his present teaching assignment.

Greg likes to use the project method for teaching. He involves students in choosing an in-depth investigation, such as the study of early civilization rock art or colonial furniture. His class may study a topic for several days or weeks with individuals or small groups responsible for different aspects of the study. The project method facilitates both an interdisciplinary conceptual focus and the integration of skills across subject fields.

Students in Thomas's classroom are highly motivated due to the nature of his projects and their own involvement in curriculum decision making. As a result parents are always anxious to see that their children are placed in Thomas's class.

Greg Thomas is considered a curriculum innovator. Recently his principal suggested to the superintendent that Thomas be asked to work with other teachers to develop new curricular approaches. As a consequence, he is relieved from teaching responsibilities two days per month for district curricular planning and for working with other teachers. He also has developed a special parent workshop program to in-

form parents about the curriculum and to enlist parental assistance in obtaining special funds for resource materials and field trips for students.

Karen Adazzio

Karen Adazzio teaches seventh grade in a middle school in the northeastern United States. The school district has a school population of 32,075 students and has just recently reorganized the schools in the district changing from the concept of grades K–6, 7–9, and 10–12 to grades K–5 in the elementary schools, 6–8 in middle schools, and 9–12 in the high schools.

Karen is a very unusual teacher. She began her teaching career as an elementary teacher. Then she obtained a secondary credential and taught at the senior high school level. Recently, after seventeen years of teaching, she asked to be assigned to one of the new middle schools. Because Karen believes that adolescents often feel displaced and unconnected in the departmentalized structure of "junior" high schools, she was active in convincing other teachers to experiment with her in a new structure, sometimes referred to as a "house," that groups teachers and students together as a team.

This new approach, popularized by Ted Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools, has cast Karen in the role of the instructional leader for her team. Karen works with five other teachers, 160 students, and parents. Two periods a day she is released to help improve curriculum, instructional approaches, and the counseling of students.

Think about teachers you have known. Which would you most like to emulate? Why? Describe the teacher's characteristics and behaviors.

CHAPTER 1

Teachers, Schools, and Society

