From Individual Intuition to Collective Design:
Teacher Involvement in an Emerging Curriculum Project

by

Darren A. Bryant

B.A., Simon Fraser University, 1993
B.Ed., The University of British Columbia, 1994

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to the required standard

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The University of British Columbia Vancouver, BC Canada
Abstract

Increasingly around the world, teachers are required to balance instructional independence with schoolwide curricular coherence and accountability to local stakeholders (i.e., parents), political authorities, and accreditation agencies. One way of achieving such a balance is through teacher collaboration in curriculum development around locally defined goals. International Christian School—Hong Kong is at an early stage of aligning its curriculum with Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs)¹ and academic standards.

Through examining the curriculum context, tasks and processes, this case study uncovers key features of collaborative teacher involvement that impact coherence and curriculum development: reliance on teacher intuition, mandated participation in multiple, interrelated tasks, and engagement at multiple organizational levels. Taken together, these features of involvement yield in teachers an increasingly coherent understanding of the purpose, need and function of ESLRs and standards in the curriculum. Yet, challenges to a coherent understanding are faced with implementation. Further, curriculum tasks and processes develop and emerge in tandem with teacher understanding and alignment of curriculum elements. This study, therefore, is located in the theoretical literature on curriculum development and educational change.

¹ ESLRs, according to the school's accreditation agency, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, "state the global knowledge, skills, and understanding students should possess upon exit from the school, or by the time the student completes the planned program. [Student] attainment of [ESLRS] drives the instructional program... of the school" (WASC, 1997, p. 2).
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CHAPTER I: Introduction

Typically, the process of curriculum development and its implementation is one of great complexity, including multiple layers of stakeholder involvement. In most public educational systems, curriculum change is mandated at the level of the state, where content, core skills, performance standards and even certain instructional strategies may be determined with the resulting curriculum changes being promulgated to schools via ministry designed curriculum documents, such as Integrated Resource Packages (IRPs) in British Columbia or curriculum frameworks in California. Normally, local authorities, such as school districts, devise the policies, and allocate the funding and resources required for implementing the curriculum. But schools and teachers must determine how to apply ministry and district directives in order to realise the curriculum in the classroom, whilst simultaneously attempting to implement locally defined schoolwide goals and be responsive to local stakeholders: teachers, parents, and students (Sowell, 1996). The massive network of stakeholders involved in curriculum change presents significant challenges for implementation. As Kirst and Walker (1971 in Marsh and Willis, 2003) point out, curriculum development is fraught with contention among stakeholders at all levels. Can coherence, clarity, and common understanding of curriculum occur within such a massive structure? Change research suggests that such factors must be effectively addressed to sustain successful change (Fullan 1993, 1999, 2003). Yet evidence as far back as the Eight Year Study in the 1930s (Tyler, 1984) suggests that teachers seldom implement curriculum as intended, and offer resistance to new curriculum initiatives, situations that persist (Marzano 2003; Sowell, 1996). If common understanding (or at least awareness) of these factors is not reached, innovations are doomed to failure.
Whilst public schools face the challenges of implementing curriculum change across multiple levels, international schools offer an alternate context. Unlike their public counterparts, American international schools in East Asia possess a great deal of independence. Typically, such schools are held accountable most immediately to their stakeholders, of which parents, normally the primary source of funding, have a significant voice. To ensure credible programs, such schools will maintain accreditation with an external authority, be it a government or agency. Under the auspices of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), the agency that accredits American schools in East Asia, accreditation is contingent on a school striving for improvement by applying a prescribed set of protocols and designing a schoolwide program that meets its stated purpose and defined goals (WASC, 1997; NSSE, 1998). Given a greater degree of independence and, in some ways, narrower scope of stakeholders, international schools provide a much different context for the study of educational change than broad-based public school systems. One such school, International Christian School—Hong Kong (ICS), provides an apt case study of the features of teacher involvement in developing a curriculum based on locally defined, broadly phrased learning goals termed Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs).

1.1: Purpose of the Case Study

In keeping with Fullan’s (1999) insight that the implementation of educational theory requires application of a change theory that carefully attends to local context, this study identifies characteristics and dynamics of teacher involvement and evaluates their impact on the development of the school’s curriculum. In examining the impact engendered by teacher involvement, this study aims further to understand the nature of the early phase of curriculum change.
1.2: The Research Question and Thesis

Given the purpose of this study, research was organized around one central question:

How did features of teacher involvement impact the development, at the early stage, of school-based curriculum in International Christian School's independent, international school context?

Answering this question required investigation into the following sub-questions:

- What was the context of teacher involvement?
- What was the curriculum development task?
- How were teachers involved in the process?
- What was the impact of teacher involvement?

Analysis of evidence gathered through documents, questionnaire responses, and interview transcripts uncovered that teacher intuition, when applied to mandated participation in multiple tasks at multiple organizational levels, yielded the impact that curricular clarity and coherence emerges with teacher understanding of curriculum tasks and processes. As understanding develops, curriculum tasks, processes and documents are redefined and clarified in light of new understanding. In this sense, the creation of curriculum is an ongoing task reflecting teachers' alignment of instruction to new understandings.

1.3: Significance of the Study

As indicated in the literature review that follows, curriculum development projects have tended to follow procedures akin to either Decker Walker's (1971) naturalistic or Ralph Tyler's (1949) rational-linear models. Marsh and Willis (1999) note that the curriculum projects Walker studied were large, well-funded and resourced and staffed by full-time experts. The realities of small, school-based projects differ significantly, lacking capital and drawing upon busy full-time teachers who are unlikely to be curriculum experts. While, as Marsh and Willis (1999) contend,
numerous studies suggest that teachers are unlikely to follow linear models by beginning their planning with objectives, in “individual schools, there may be little incentive for teachers to engage in full-scale deliberation” (Marsh and Willis, 1999, p. 34) as endorsed by Walker. Thus, as this study contends, how teachers in independent schools grapple with curriculum development differs from those involved in large school systems. Although the result may appear linear, the process is not.

Congruent to Marsh and Willis’s observations, Sowell (1996) notes that teacher developed curricula may have a strong instructional basis and tends to develop along nontechnical lines. That is to say, rather than designing curriculum premised on clear objectives defined at the beginning of the curriculum project, teacher developed curricula typically stem from teachers’ experiences in the classroom, knowledge of the needs of students and their families and available resources.

Marsh and Willis’s criticisms suggest significance of this study in that it provides insight to the unique challenges faced by small, independent schools (such as charter schools) as they endeavour to engage teachers in developing curriculum. Moreover, such a study could prove relevant to the numerous small schools operating in the international context which, in preparing a highly diversified community of students for an immensely broad range of post-secondary experiences, find it inappropriate simply to adopt wholesale a curriculum developed by large school systems. Such schools rely strongly on teachers to piece together an appropriate curriculum based on available resources, intuition, instructional expertise and contextual needs, rather than implementing a curriculum designed elsewhere. Some teachers, however, may lack such support and insight.
In informing the issue of school-based curriculum development, this study specifically considers the early stage of such a project. Such a focus will provide insight regarding concerns such as inspiring and sustaining teacher motivation to engage in curriculum projects. As teacher involvement in developing an instructionally based curriculum is a requirement of the school, the study’s conclusions indicate the extent to which characteristics of involvement in mandated participatory curriculum development can avoid the characteristics of contrived collegiality.

Finally, as standards have been employed by numerous jurisdictions world-wide, this study, involving a small independent, international school’s attempts to implement standards, provides a unique focus with implications of high currency for similar institutions, of which there are many.

1.4: Thesis Framework

The literature review, which follows the second chapter on methodology, suggests room to study teacher involvement in such a context. The first part of the review examines trends in school improvement literature which point to the utility of using broad objectives, such as Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs), to promote curricular coherence and instructional improvement. ESLRs are locally written statements, encapsulating a school’s goal(s) for student learning. They are written broadly enough to provide direction for all school programs, academic and otherwise. Part two applies action research literature to explain the nature of faculty involvement in defining the school’s ESLRs and to suggest criteria for authentic collaboration, a significant topic in the action research literature. Next a review of the history of curriculum perspectives points to increased emphasis of curriculum on instructional needs, and understanding of curriculum development as a complex and participatory act in which teacher involvement is significant. Finally, examination of educational change literature serves to
corroborate the importance of teacher collaborative involvement in designing curriculum, develop characteristics of involvement, and suggest challenges to it. The literature survey suggests room to examine the nature of teacher involvement in school-based curriculum development. Therefore, this study of teacher involvement in the early stage of a school-based initiative in the independent, international school context contributes to the literature on curriculum development and change. Throughout, the survey defines terms important to the study.

Subsequent to the literature review, three major chapters provide analysis of the case. Chapter five examines the context, illustrating how ICS, as a small independent school, is highly dependent on teacher professionalism to devise meaningful and relevant curricula. Such dependence, however, relies upon teacher collaboration to provide schoolwide coherence. And, in situations where teachers, lacking curriculum specialists, simply must instruct courses prior to the development of a documented curriculum, movement towards an articulated curriculum requires judicious application of teacher intuition. The analysis of the curriculum tasks and processes in Chapter Six reveals the features of mandated involvement and participation in multiple tasks and processes. Chapter Seven explains the impacts yielded by teacher involvement. Finally, the conclusion serves to explain the nature of the relationship among context, tasks, processes and impacts, and to suggest resulting implications.
CHAPTER II: Methodology

2.1: Rationale for the Qualitative Case Study Method

This study applies a qualitative case studies approach. Merriam (1998) argues that the qualitative case study, "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 27), provides an effective research strategy when variables prove inseparable from the context. Case studies, she argues, are useful when considering group dynamics in problem solving and for providing formative feedback on the implementation of innovations. As this study considers problems related to teacher involvement in developing and implementing curriculum, the case study approach provides the most appropriate research strategy to enable the researcher to account for contextual variables pertinent to the international and independent school setting.

Sturman (1997) suggests that case studies enable researchers to carefully account for context. He argues that through providing thick descriptions, the case study method accounts for the "wholeness" of "human systems" (p. 61). Case studies indicate how elements of the study fit within the pattern of "a unified system" (p. 62). Case studies possess the potential of explaining how components and participants function within the complexity of an "integrated system" (Stake, 1995, p. 2). Thus, through detailed explication, a case study "offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education" (Merriam, 1998, p. 1).

Stake (2000) suggests that case studies fall into three categories. Intrinsic cases are studied because of their specific value to a researcher, whose interest emerges from close proximity to the case, such as participant in the subject under study. Scrutiny of a "particular child, clinic, conference, or curriculum" (p. 437) exemplify intrinsic cases. An instrumental case,
however, is of interest beyond the context in which it is located. Stake (1995) provides the example of conducting a case study of one teacher’s grading practices in order to understand the impact of a marking system newly mandated by government. Such a study is designed for interest beyond the immediate context. Stake (2000) calls case studies that compare a phenomenon in various contexts collective case study.

In terms of this research project, Stake’s (2000) comment that “there is no line distinguishing intrinsic case study from instrumental” (p. 437) certainly applies. This case is primarily intrinsic in nature, holding interest to the researcher in terms of how curriculum planning takes shape at the school of which he is a member. But, the case is also intended to appeal instrumentally by contributing to the field of knowledge regarding teacher involvement in the international and independent school context.

According to Merriam (1998), a case study is marked by the essential criteria of intrinsic boundedness. She argues that a case is bounded when it considers a defined field of data and a limited number of people over a finite period of time in order to uncover specific and complex interactions. The fit of this study to these criteria are accounted for in the research question and are further explained in the research design below.

Congruent with qualitative case studies methodology, the research design allows for the emergent nature of case studies research (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2000). Although data collection and analysis are explained in distinction, in practice the two are often blended. As understanding develops, analysis frequently suggests to the researcher the data which should next be considered or new data to be collected. Hence, categories and steps outlined in the research design are enacted with some fluidity. Indeed, Stake (2000) suggests that “in many studies, there are no
clear stages" (p. 445). Nevertheless, each component of the design contains a rationale informed by the literature on qualitative research methodology.

2.2: Limitations of Case Studies

The requirement of balancing the intrinsic and instrumental aspects presents the challenge of providing substantial specificity whilst suggesting generalization. Stake (2000) notes that uncovering the particular develops in competition with generalization. Explaining how a case is atypical suggests it is not congruent to trends and is possibly irrelevant. Therefore, Stake, in considering the presumption that case studies should possess generalization, notes that most case study researchers are ultimately interested in the intrinsic merits of the case “within its own world” (p. 439). However, instrumental approaches, he cautions, are framed by “the concerns of researchers and theorists” rather than “the case’s own issues, contexts, and interpretations” (p. 439). Further, generalizations form in the minds of intrinsic case study readers, who apply a rich narrative to their own context, drawing their own conclusions. Thus, Stake claims that the richness of a case study can be compromised “when the commitment to generalize or to theorize runs so strong that the researcher's attention is drawn away from features important for understanding the case itself” (p. 439). Creating a framework that uncovers typicality and is true to the case is therefore a challenge in the case study approach.

Limits to the amount of time available to the researcher to collect and analyze data provide added constraints (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). Furthermore, Merriam (1998) notes that respect for participants' confidentiality and sensitivity to the researcher's position within the organization could prevent full disclosure of findings in the report. As an on-leave member of the organization under study, all of these limitations obtain in this study.
The emergent nature of case studies makes for considerable ambiguity (Merriam, 1998). Analysis of a case requires a high degree of intuition as there are few firm guidelines and procedures to follow. Such open-endedness provides a great deal of challenge to the novice researcher. For instance, Stake (2000) warns, even researchers who are highly familiar with the context of the case, can create instruments which do not reveal the complexity of the case or address pertinent issues that later emerge. Therefore, exaggeration and simplification of the case itself becomes an inherent risk (Merriam, 1998).

2.3: The Boundaries of the Case

This case examines teacher involvement in a curriculum development task that is ongoing. Therefore, it examines only the foundational stages of the project in which the essential elements of the curriculum were laid and the beginnings of aligning the components to each other. Primarily the case focuses on the time period of August 2001 to December 2003 in which teachers created ESLRs, selected standards, documented the instructional curriculum, evaluated the relationship among these components and began to align each to the other through a new approach to unit planning. However, examination of the context explains the significance of these curriculum elements and reveals others that are also relevant. Likewise, some recent developments will be discussed when they bring clarity to the uncovered features of involvement and their impacts.

2.4: Subjects

The subjects of the study will be teachers and administrators at International Christian School – Hong Kong. As new teachers have not experienced the curriculum tasks and processes examined in this study, all interviewees will be returning teachers except where the participant is a member of the curriculum committee.
2.5: *The Researcher*

The researcher has worked at ICS as a social studies teacher for eight years, has coordinated follow-up to the school's accreditation for two years, and has served on the school's curriculum committee as the humanities chair for one year. Beginning August 2004, he will become the school's curriculum coordinator. Although the closeness of the researcher to the case risks bias, intimate understanding of the context increases the potential of providing a thick description, which lends validity to the case findings (Merriam, 1998; Palys, 1997). The researcher as a participant, therefore, provides information and insight that otherwise might not be uncovered. Researcher bias will be countered through employing the strategies for validity described below.

2.6: *Instrumentation and Data Collection*

Qualitative case studies typically employ nonprobabilistic sampling methods and data collection strategies that are purposeful, targeting the sample from which most can be learned (Merriam, 1998). As all members of the school were available as potential participants, a questionnaire, containing both structured and open-ended questions, served to collect data regarding members' opinions. Additionally, fifteen administrators and teachers participated in individual interviews representing three groups within the school: administrators, teachers involved in the curriculum committee, and teachers not involved in the curriculum committee. Results from the questionnaire and interview formed the primary evidence about teacher beliefs, understanding, and perceptions of ESLRs, standards, curriculum, and their own involvement in curriculum development. The questions for both the interview and questionnaire were developed in light of the literature on educational change and curriculum development discussed in the following chapter. Therefore, the questions were designed to uncover the degree to which the
ICS experience was typical of curriculum change initiatives. The questions considered the following issues in relation to ESLRs and standards: coherence of understanding; perceptions on need and purpose; the nature and extent of collaborative involvement; teachers' perceptions of their role in curriculum development; implementation of curriculum initiatives; beliefs about curriculum development.

Document analysis served to provide historical data and as a "check on information obtained by [the] interviews [and] surveys [i.e., questionnaire]" (Merriam, 1998, p. 118). Therefore, the purposes of collecting the data were to gather evidence regarding

- curriculum development practices and processes at ICS;
- teacher belief and understanding about ESLRs and the impact on curricular coherence at ICS;
- the early stage of implementation of ESLR-based curriculum development;
- the state of teacher involvement at ICS and their corresponding opinions;
- the context of teacher involvement in curriculum development at ICS.

**Questionnaire and Participant Selection Process:**

All full-time teachers and administrators were asked to take part in the completion of a questionnaire (see appendix 1) focusing on teacher belief and understanding about ESLRs, curriculum and involvement in the professional community. The questionnaires were administered during faculty meetings. Because the faculty meetings occurred simultaneously at three different campuses, the questionnaires were not administered in a like manner. For instance, at two campuses the administrators, after having given instructions, permitted teachers to complete the questionnaire at home to return it later in the week. This may have resulted in a lower than anticipated participation. Also, teachers absent from the faculty meetings may not
have been provided the opportunity to participate. Overall, 27 of 56 full time employees submitted the surveys. Questions were of varied type: structured, open-ended, combined structured/open-ended, rating scales and categorical. The variation in type was intended to permit comparisons amongst responses and to generate quantifiable evidence to provide some measure to compare against teacher's comments.

Interview and Participant Selection Process:

All members of the school's Curriculum Committee (four teachers, one teaching administrator, and four full-time administrators) and six additional teachers were interviewed (see appendix 2 for interview script). The additional teachers represented a range of grade levels: one from kindergarten, two elementary, two middle school and one high school. The teaching members of the curriculum committee consist of one elementary teacher and three high school teachers. The administrators include the Headmaster, the Academic Dean (whose duties are split between administration, curriculum coordinating, and teaching), and the three principals leading the kindergarten, elementary and secondary schools. In selecting the additional teachers to be interviewed, all faculty members were placed on a list. Part-time teachers, first-year teachers, and members of the curriculum committee were struck from the list. The first two groups lacked involvement throughout the curriculum development process; members of the third group were interviewed separately and were hence removed from this list. Each remaining member on the list was assigned a two-digit number. A random digits table was used to select six teachers from the list until the desired representation was achieved.

The interviews took an open-ended format and lasted from 20 to 70 minutes. The interview were recorded on audio-tape and transcribed.
Documents

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of how faculty participation impacted curriculum design at ICS, and to adequately capture the context of the case, this study analyzed school created curriculum documents. The following data were collected:

- Accreditation documents: self-study and annual reports to the accreditation agency and accreditation agency evaluations of the school.
- Curriculum and instructional planning documents and templates, specifically: curriculum overviews, unit plans, subject-area standards, curriculum evaluation and relevant in-service documents.
- Minutes, findings, and reports of the school’s Curriculum and Instruction Focus Group and subject area departments
- Minutes and documents created by the school’s Curriculum Committee and subject-area departments.

The school’s chief executive (the Headmaster) provided permission for use of the documents prepared by administration, committees, departments and accreditation agency.

2.7: Analysis of data

The data collected fell into three categories described below.

Open-ended questions

Responses to open-ended questions were collected through interviews and several questionnaire items. As the aim of the thesis is in part to assess teachers’ beliefs and opinions regarding their own involvement in the early stage of curriculum development, open-ended questions allowed teachers a great deal of opportunity to express their beliefs. The interviews provided opportunity to interact with teachers to probe for answers in greater depth than the
questionnaire allowed (Palys, 1997). However, as the investigator was limited by a two-week time frame to administer the instruments, it did not prove to be feasible to use the interviews to follow-up the questionnaires subsequent to their analysis. This may have limited the researcher’s ability to focus questions in a most appropriate manner.

The data collected was analyzed by clustering responses. Initially, the clusters reflected the sub-question topics: context, tasks, processes and impacts. However, analysis of the data required the creation of other clusters as varying themes and issues emerged within each topic (Glanz, 2003). Ultimately, the researcher clustered interview data under the following headings: context, tasks and processes; the role of participants; instruction by intuition versus design; emergent articulation of curriculum; emergent understanding of ESLR and standards; emergent understanding of tasks, processes and roles; and implementation challenges. Within each cluster, the information was grouped by source category: administrator, teacher, curriculum committee member. As the information was categorized, it was concurrently compared to the relevant questionnaire responses and documents. Open-ended questionnaire responses were also grouped into categories which emerged through comparison of themes, ideas and key words expressed in the responses.

Structured Questions, Rating Scales and Categorical Questions

The closed nature of responses to the questions in this category, which were collected through the questionnaire, permitted some quantification of teacher beliefs. Questionnaires were sorted according to new and returning teachers and by campus: kindergarten (including preschool), elementary and secondary. Each participant was assigned a number. Responses to each question and comments, when provided, were recorded by participant number, grouped according to campus, and coded red for new teacher or black for returning teachers. Such coding
permitted the comparison of responses across campus levels and between new and returning teachers. Furthermore, it permitted the researcher to identify trends in responses, for instance the extent to which congruent responses were provided by the same participants. The quantitative data collected was analyzed by creating histograms representing frequency, range and central tendency to permit efficient analysis.

Documents

The documents indicated above were initially evaluated and grouped into three categories, context, tasks and process, and impacts according to the type of information they contained. Generally, accreditation related documents yielded much information pertinent to context. Committee, department, and administrative documents, such as directives and minutes, tended to provide information regarding tasks and processes. The documents were analyzed for contextual data such as the average tenure of faculty members, explanatory content such as rationales for curriculum tasks and, when applicable, for validation of interview and questionnaire findings. Documents pertinent to context were sorted chronologically. The researcher read each document highlighting segments relevant to curriculum and instruction.

2.8: Coding, Citations and Referencing

In order to clearly indicate the source of documents, a separate list for ICS documents has been included after the reference list entitled "ICS Documents". This includes accreditation reports, self-study reports, department and committee minutes and documents, administration directives and curriculum templates. Within the text, these citations will be prefaced with the notation "ICS." Hence, for example, the citation "ICS-unit" refers to the ICS unit plan template.

As questionnaire responses have been grouped by school level, evidence drawn from the questionnaires will indicate the question number and the teachers' appropriate school level: pre-
school and kindergarten (K), elementary (E) and secondary (S). To preserve anonymity, the specific participant number will not be cited. Hence, Q5K would indicate a response from a kindergarten member to question number five. References to quantitative data or questionnaire items will cite only the question number. Hence, Q21 would indicate that the question or data discussed was compiled from responses to question number 21.

Finally citations from interview transcripts will indicate the source of the comment according to the group from which the comment is derived: teachers (T), curriculum committee members (C), and administrators (A). (N.B. all administrators are curriculum committee members; hence, (C) refers only to teachers who are members of the committee.) Teachers are numbered one through ten and administrators one through five. Therefore, C4 would cite a comment made by the fourth teacher member of the curriculum committee. Figure 2.1 illustrates the coding for interviews.

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Figure 2.1: Interview citation grid

2.9: Validity and reliability

The literature on qualitative case studies suggests that triangulation provides an effective means of promoting accuracy because applying varied perceptions, sources, methods and theories to the study permits clarification of meaning (Stake, 2000; Sturman, 1997). Denzin (1997) posits that triangulation accounts for bias and clarity not because it leads to "a coherent picture" but because triangulation opens the possibility for "different pictures" (p. 321) to be represented. The varied data sources available to this study were compared and categorized to allow for triangulation in that the different sources and participants provided for a range of perspectives.
Cresswell (2003) suggests five strategies, inherent to qualitative research, that ensure validity and which this study has employed:

- Solicit feedback from participants on identified themes, descriptions, portions of text or the entire report. Sharpe (1997) suggests that researchers confront participants with an emerging theoretical explanation... inviting them to respond to its status with respect to reality” (p. 314). Such a strategy allows the researcher to verify emerging theories and understandings. For this study, the researcher has obtained frequent feedback from International Christian School’s Academic Dean, who serves as chair of the Curriculum Committee. A summary of findings was presented to the Academic Dean and to a member of the school’s curriculum committee to permit them to comment on emerging themes. The Headmaster has also commented on portions of the text. Finally, the previous Headmaster, past Secondary Principal, and two long term teachers have been contacted to confirm specific contextual details.

- “Present negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes” (Cresswell, 2003, p. 196). This creates a sense of realism as “life is composed of different perspectives that do not always coalesce” (p. 196). Every attempt has been made to present dissenting information. Comments made in reaction to questionnaire items have proved particularly rich in this regard.

- Clearly detail the researcher’s bias to establish an “honest narrative” (Cresswell, 2003, p. 196). This has been accounted for on page 11 above.

- Richly and thoroughly describe the case and the study’s findings.

- Invest a great deal of time in the field in order to craft “an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study and ... convey detail about the site and the people that lend
credibility to the narrative account” (Cresswell, 2003, p. 196). As some researchers contend that validity requires close understanding of participants, the researcher’s closeness to the case serves as a strength. “You must spend time with [participants], get to know them, feel close to them, be able to empathize with their concerns, perhaps even be one of them, if you hope truly to understand” (Palys, 1997, p. 19). Having spent eight years at the school, the researcher is well positioned to account for this strategy of validation.

Finally, to locate the context of the study firmly in the relevant literature, the review that follows draws on the literature of school improvement, action research, educational change and curriculum development and expresses the literature’s relevance to the actual case.
CHAPTER III: Review of the Literature

3.1: School Improvement Literature and the Role of Expected Schoolwide Learning Results

Given the centrality to this study of ESLRs in the development of curriculum, an examination of the scholastic rationale for ESLRs is appropriate. WASC's FOL protocol derives from developments in the school improvement field during the mid-1990s. Hopkins and Reynolds (2001) provide a brief history of the school improvement movement. Familiarity with the field's development frames the context in which ESLRs emerged and clarifies their role. Hopkins and Reynolds contend that, with antecedents in the 1960s, school improvement emerged as a fully systematic discipline only in the mid-1980s. They note that, at this first stage, the movement emphasized school self-evaluation and "ownership of change" but only made a loose connection to student learning. The result lacked impact on curriculum and instruction.

By the following decade, an articulation between school improvement and school effectiveness movements developed. The latter approach had emerged over the previous twenty years and emphasized quantitative assessment of schools. From such studies checklists of effective schools were developed and applied to school evaluation. Dimmock (2000) criticizes this approach as it made no contribution to understanding the process of how to make schools effective. But Hopkins and Reynolds (2001) counter that effectiveness literature contributed an improved scholastic methodology, an understanding of "effective" schooling practices, and analytical approaches to evaluating components of school operations (i.e., curriculum, teachers, departments).

Since the mid 1990s, a third and continuing phase of school improvement, referred to in the literature as the "Third Age" of school improvement, recognizes that previous reforms had not met with widespread success in student achievement of educational outcomes. In this phase,
a "synergy" (Reynolds, Teddlie, Hopkins & Springfield, 2000, p. 216) of effectiveness and improvement paradigms focused on student performance predicated on schoolwide outcomes. Such outcomes may be social and cognitive as well as academic. School policies, curriculum, standards, finance, and resources should work in a coherent manner to achieve success in these goals. In other words, every aspect of the school program is to be evaluated against the same list of learning outcomes. So, this third stage merges the components developed by the effectiveness circle with a focus on improvement through evaluation against outcomes, not checklists. It is this phase of school improvement history in which the WASC approach is grounded.

Harris's (2000), qualitative review of British case studies places school improvement models into two broad categories which she titles organic and mechanistic. In the former, evaluation originates at the school level and is guided by broad principles. It operates from the premise that deliberate change occurs only when accepted at the teacher, committee and whole school levels. No amount of pressure can affect change without the consensus of these three operational levels. Thus the internal condition of the school is of utmost importance. This, she argues, contrasts with the mechanistic approach, which often takes the guise of an externally mandated, "top-down" prescription. She asserts, as does Dimmock (2001), that such approaches do not account for the unique cultural contexts that shape each school's program.

Although Harris (2000) does not provide much evidence about the effect of these models upon school improvement, she does attempt to identify essential features of the evaluation process. Important to the discussion on ESLRs, Harris notes that school improvement is best facilitated when schools generate their own clearly articulated vision. Furthermore, she argues that, in the cases she studied, school improvement was most effective when focused on
outcomes. Unfortunately Harris does not evidence how common vision and student learning guides school evaluation. Rather, like Hopkins and Reynolds (2001), she merely notes a lack of educational research to support the trend of concentrating improvement strategies on a limited number of objectives. This case study, therefore, examines the impact of a project in which teachers were involved at multiple organizational levels in, using Harris's language, an organic type of curriculum initiative centered around locally determined goals.

Newman, Smith, Allensworth and Bryk's (2001) school improvement model, which they entitle "instructional program coherence" (ICP), provides appropriate lessons for outcomes-based evaluation. They argue that a "common framework" (p. 459) must coordinate all school programs lest resources and personnel become inefficiently distributed towards good but diverse ventures. A smorgasbord approach to school improvement, of testing a sampling of various programs, consumes energy and eventually saps enthusiasm. In contrast, a coherent instructional program, they argue, meets three requirements: (a) clear student learning expectations are supported by curricular, instructional and student support programs; (b) accountability for teachers to implement the program, supported with appropriate personnel development; and (c) the appropriate allocation of money, time and other resources to meet specific objectives. The focus must be to advance learning. Newman et al. reached these conclusions, amongst others, through a four-year study in Chicago. In 1994 and 1997, researchers surveyed over 500 teachers and administered a standardized test to 80,000 students. The academics then assessed the surveys, along with interviews, observations of lessons and committee meetings, and school improvement plans, to rank program coordination, continuity and communication effectiveness. Coefficients between better program coherence and academic improvement implied a high
correlation. Newman et al. explained this improvement by referring to the three primary attributes mentioned above.

Newman et al. (2001) rely on standardized tests that assess only academic improvement. Although this is a more limited purview than that of ESLRs, the study’s findings are appropriate for assessing the conditions for the success of schoolwide objectives on impacting curriculum and instruction. It emphasises a strong consensus on clear goals. Furthermore, Newman et al. note that several management studies show that simply the process of stakeholders working to establish common goals results in an improved product (in this case academic results). The coordination of resources and personnel to meet both student learning and schoolwide cross-curricular articulation of learning, they argue, serve to strengthen school improvement.

The Third Age only recently began. Thus Hopkins and Reynolds (2001) note that the basic premise, that strategies addressing schoolwide outcomes will foster schoolwide improvement, remains unsubstantiated. And, “‘experimental/control’ or ‘before/after’ [studies] have yet to be undertaken” (p. 463). However, a survey of school improvement literature indicates that WASC’s approach to accreditation is at minimum congruent with the trends of the field. Furthermore, selected studies, such as that of Newman et al., suggest that where school goals have, like ESLRs, been clearly focussed on curriculum and instruction, student achievement has improved. Thus school improvement literature implies that the ESLR-based curriculum is a topic worthy of further study.

3.2: Action Research Literature on Participatory Involvement

In 2001, induced by WASC, ICS began to address its curriculum and instructional practices by embarking on a process to develop its ESLRs. ICS’s teachers, students, parents and management collaboratively defined the school’s ESLRs. The process was highly participatory,
adhering to three criteria which, articulated by action researchers Guba and Lincoln, serve as important measures of appropriate involvement: “full participatory involvement; political parity of those involved; consensual, informed, sophisticated joint construction” (in Stringer, 1996, p 22). Action research literature offers much commentary on the nature of effective participation and therefore requires some consideration.

**Full Participatory Involvement**

As Gitlin and Hadden (1991) imply, building relationships that respect people, leads to authentic participation. Given WASC’s critique, it seemed essential that parent, student, faculty and management opinions be highly valued in the process. Stringer (1996) confirms this perception arguing that using stakeholder groups for decision-making works to ensure the well being of all members of an organization. Furthermore, he notes that when all stakeholders are active participants, they develop “immediate and deeply relevant understandings of their situation” (p. 32). As ICS teachers had not been previously consulted, the administration hoped that practical responses to their insight would foster commitment to the school improvement process.

The 2001-02 school year began with a retreat for the board, administration and faculty. Heterogeneous groups evaluated the existing learning objectives against WASC’s criteria that ESLRs apply to all students, are assessable, are interdisciplinary, and guide school improvement (WASC, 1997). Participants quickly realized that the SWLOs were inappropriate. The groups worked on devising new learning results. Each developed and presented proposals to the assembly. After the retreat the accreditation follow-up coordinator collated the proposals into thematic groupings. After another two months of discussion, the faculty agreed upon five essential statements (see appendix 3).
The process was highly consensual. Administration did not drive the process, but found points of agreement with faculty. Although, unlike models of authentic collaboration, faculty participation was required (Evans, 1996; Wells, 2001), the commitment to consensus building nullified the likelihood of authoritarianism resolutions, which Stringer (1996) warns against. Administrators let faculty lead the process and at this point did not use levers of power to influence the group consensus. But for a truly community-based outcome, students and parents also needed to have genuine input (Gitlin and Hadden, 1991).

**Political Parity of Those Involved**

With the aim of involving students in the process, the student council was invited to propose their own ESLRs. The student council members brainstormed some ideas and then met with each high school class to collect additional ideas from their peers. As Atweh et al (1998) have found, when students are trusted “for their ability to find creative solutions” (p. 115) they provide serious and meaningful contributions. Within one month, the student council presented its unique proposals (see appendix 1). While the faculty had emphasized the cognitive and emotive domains, students gave greater attention to practical application of knowledge, social awareness and character development.

Student input significantly improved the substance of the developing ESLRs. This seems to affirm Stringer’s argument that only when all stakeholders are involved can programs and services “take into account the multitude of factors that impinge on people’s lives” (1996, p 20). Student input provided an important check to teacher assumptions of what comprised important outcomes (Winter, 1996). The result was achieved only because student contributions were valued equally to those of other stakeholders.
Consensual, Informed Sophisticated Joint Construction

Finally, the Parents Association (PA) made their contributions. The PA executive council (Exco) felt that a meeting of all parents was impractical. Therefore, the Exco distilled a list of potential learning results from the faculty and student contributions, and created some of their own. A total of thirty-one statements were placed in a five-point likert-type survey with a space for individual parents to add their own suggestions. Sixty-four per cent were returned within one week. A parent who is a professional statistician analyzed the results. According to the survey findings, parent concerns favored balanced living, creativity and independent thinking (ICS-Parent, 2002).

To complete the process, twelve representatives of the various stakeholders defined the final product. The participants themselves suggested a strategy to approach the task. After three-hours, the group had developed a set of six ESLRs. The meeting was marked by careful consideration of phrasing. As alternate options were suggested, different members challenged interpretations. The dialogue served to clarify perceptions and meanings from different cultural and idiosyncratic perspectives, a process Winter (1996) calls reflexive critique. Six clearly and simply worded statements resulted. These were forwarded to the faculty, the PA Exco, and the student council executive for comment. A sincere and concerted attempt was made for consensus in the process, and no dissenting feedback was received.

That same year, the administration established a curriculum committee and a departmental structure to guide curriculum development. By administrative directive, the curriculum committee guided teachers in subject-area departments to select content and skills standards drawn from American state and national standards documents. Departments were given latitude to select standards that most closely matched their intended curriculum and that
promoted by the defined ESLRs. Standards at ICS, therefore, were meant to define high level academic outcomes (Newmann, 2002; Scherer, 2001) to guide instruction and assessment by providing grade-level appropriate learning goals, but not to impose accountability through high-stake exams that test immense numbers of discrete items.

ICS has attempted to avoid the weaknesses of standards as articulated by Falk's (2002) discussion. Falk's argument that effective standards must be grounded in common goals, strengthens the schoolwide outcomes approach. Interestingly Falk's practitioner directed article expresses qualified scepticism of the standards movement. She argues that when standards are applied as an imposed list of numerous discrete content items, they serve to deter student learning. Falk draws on others' research, position statements from educational and psychological organizations, and a number of case studies to illustrate that imposing multiple standards leads to "tracking" students through a dictated and stringent instructional schedule. As Robert Marzano notes (in Scherer, 2001), when state standards are synthesized they number over 3,000 distinct items. Further, teaching these, he (Marzano, 2003) estimates, would require 15,465 hours of instructional time where as on average the school system provides an average of 9,042 instructional hours. When standards are too numerous, they become an impossible instructional expectation for teachers and deny students the "opportunity to learn" (Marzano, 2003, p. 24). This, Falk argues, deflates enthusiasm for learning and increases social and economic inequity. Standards in that context serve to label students and do not serve to promote or to measure the achievement of clear and specified learning goals.

Despite her criticisms, Falk believes that standards are beneficial under specific circumstances. Falk maintains that standards promote learning when articulated through clear, common goals. Then standards work to promote learning for all students. The results, she says,
are instructional program coherence and evidence-based evaluation practices. So, clarity of purpose and inclusion of all learners could obtain when standards are applied affectively.

Susan Drake (1998) contends that standards should hold a prominent place in a school’s curriculum: “Standards need to be a part of a dialogue towards a major rethinking of school and teaching practices” (p. 124). She points out that implementing standards requires significant change as they serve to align content with instructional practices and assessment. Drake’s comments are consistent with the ICS administration’s intentions: that having a discrete and limited number of standards to drive curriculum and instruction towards the achievement of ESLRs.

Taken together ESLRs and standards would impact the school’s curriculum and instructional practices in order to meet the WASC requirement that schools provide a challenging, coherent and relevant curriculum for each student that fulfills the school’s purpose and results in student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results through successful completion of any course of study offered. [And that] the professional staff… designs and implements a variety of learning experiences that engage students at a high level of learning consistent with the school’s purpose and expected schoolwide learning results” (WASC, 2002, p. 8).

Implications

Flexibility in allowing stakeholder groups to direct their own approach (Stringer, 1996) to the process permitted unique contributions, genuine participation, and increased confidence in the administration. All contributions were equally welcomed, with no single viewpoint dominating (Winter, 1996). However, the process lacked a structure for ongoing, continuous reflection and contribution (McNiff et al, 1996). While broad input was solicited, a rushed
conclusion provided little opportunity for stakeholders to provide feedback or authenticate the results (Stringer, 1996).

This review of action research literature in the context of the development of ESLRs offers an insightful characterization of effective participation, pointing to self-direction, broad opinion base, political parity, and ongoing dialogue as necessary traits, which, in fact, the research on educational change corroborates (see below).

3.3: The Literature of Curriculum Development

Although ESLRs are intended to form the basis of curriculum and instruction at ICS, are they sufficient for this purpose? A review of the literature on the field of curriculum suggests that curriculum and its development have over time been conceived with increasing complexity. Although containing important elements of curriculum, prescriptive linear models, such as that articulated by Ralph Tyler (1949) have been shown to lack real world applicability in actual implementation (Walker & Solis, 1986). Congruently, curriculum that is focused upon meeting broad schoolwide goals like ESLRs is complex, often unpredictable and depends upon an ongoing interchange of discourse between implementation (i.e., instruction) and design. In other words, instruction does not merely flow from curriculum, rather it helps to identify strengths and weaknesses and provide a basis for the evaluation and re-design of curriculum. The discourse is ongoing, with instruction informing design decisions. The following review of developments in the field of curriculum studies suggests the importance of teacher involvement in curriculum development and of conceiving curriculum development as a complex task that interacts with instruction.

Throughout the twentieth century, the fields of curriculum studies and curriculum development have engaged in debate over paradigms of scientism and progressivism (Egan,
The former viewpoint, variously represented in modernism, formalism, traditionalism, and dominatism, emphasizes objectivity, efficiency, measurement, order and means-ends in its approach to curriculum development. Progressivism, observed also in the strains of neo-progressivism, post-modernism and reconceptualization, locates the curriculum in the natural propensity of children towards learning and desires the school to act as an extension of the real-life learning environment. Thus it is broadly conceived and emphasizes social concern (Ried, 1998; Hunkins & Hammil, 1994; Egan, 2002). These paradigms have impacted the task of curriculum design. Ralph Tyler, although long considered the father of the linear approach to curriculum development and a subscriber to scientism (Flinders & Thornton, 1999) shows the influence of both traditions, drawing inspiration from Bobbit and John Dewey. Tyler’s disciple Hilda Taba further developed the prescriptive linear model by infusing elements of the then prominent structuralism, which had been articulated by Jerome Bruner (1960). In contrast, Joseph Schwab’s (1969/1997) neo-progressive reaction against structuralism placed emphasis in the complexity and unpredictability of curriculum development, which Decker Walker (1971) further delineated in his descriptive naturalistic model of curriculum development. In more recent times, national efforts to increase accountability of teachers and schools through measurement have led to a resurgence of scientism-like curricula, they have been offset by an equally extreme manifestation of progressivism now known as reconceptualism. The debate between the schools of progressivism and scientism has led to increasingly complicated conceptions of the curriculum development process, suggesting that, while designers would like to control the process, it is convoluted and not as rational as might be desired.
Ralph Tyler's Contribution and Context

Ralph Tyler’s (1949) seminal, Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction, provides a convenient point of departure for discussing curriculum development, for he was the first to articulate a widely accepted procedure that explained how educators could determine, instruct and measure defined goals for student learning (Marsh & Willis, 1999). While the necessity of objectives and measurement had been previously argued by Franklin Bobbit, it was Tyler who delineated a procedure that placed objectives and other hitherto disjointed elements into a coherent step-by-step curriculum design framework. The apparent logic and rationality of Tyler’s linear approach leant itself to ready adoption by followers of scientism. Tyler himself, however, made clear and blatant overtures to progressive ideology. Distinguishing Tyler from “Tylerism” (Helsby & Murray, 1993, p. 55) leads to clearer understanding of the layers of complexity to curriculum development that are typically attributed to Tyler’s work.

Tylerism and Scientism

Tyler’s historical antecedents provide insight to the emerging process of curriculum development. Helsby and Saunders (1993) draw a causal link between Tyler and the American management pioneer, F.W. Taylor. Taylor’s approach to manufacturing emphasized the development of systems and standards to increase production and efficiency. His contemporaries helped to set the fundamentals of scientism, one of the prominent paradigms through which later curriculum initiatives, including Tyler’s, would be created and understood. Franklin Bobbitt, like Taylor, developed his scientific approach to curriculum in the height of the Progressive era which, in the United States, marked the dual advance of rapid industrialism and wide-ranging social concern. Bobbitt’s aim of achieving the highest degree of student achievement at the lowest cost reflected an industrialist paradigm, placing emphasis on the
“finished product” of schooling (Bobbitt in Tanner & Tanner, 1990, p. 180). Therefore, Bobbitt’s (1918/1997) approach to education emphasized the formation of children into “useful” adults, the teaching of “what men need” (p. 11) as suited for the industrial era. Interests of the child were not of concern (Flinders and Thornton, 1997). Rather, Bobbitt (1918/1997) envisioned a system of education that would support rapid social and economic progress. This meant technical specialization towards the goal of creating “proficiency” (p. 10) in citizenship, health, and application of science. Utility and efficiency meant that “Bobbitt did not want to invest scarce resources in subjects such as literature, history, and geography” (Flinders and Thornton, 1997, p. 3). Mere knowledge and child interest would thus be eliminated from Bobbitt’s curriculum.

Bobbitt’s (1918/1997) conception of curriculum development required the application of the scientific rationality, which he thought should permeate all aspects of education including, “budget-making, child-accounting, systems of grading and promotion” (p. 11). Application of a scientific approach to curriculum development would be inevitable and essential for the efficient, effective, and appropriate instruction. Thus, Bobbitt attuned educators to an understanding that, like industry, standards (which he called objectives) could be established by which achievement could be measured. Properly selected objectives would point instructors towards the resources needed to meet the objectives. Given the industrial emphasis of his society, Bobbitt argued that industry leaders should work to set the standard to which education would train students for the industrial age (Tanner and Tanner, 1990). The outcome would be a high level of achievement: “Education will aim, not at average bricklayers, but at the best types of bricklayers” (Bobbitt, 1918/1997, p. 15). Quite possibly, Tyler’s strategy of making the identification and evaluation of objectives bookends to the curriculum development process, placed him, in the view of many,
in Bobbitt's scientific management camp (Hunkins & Hammil, 1994). Yet this vantage ignores the progressive tone of Tyler's work.

*Tyler and Progressivism*

The Progressive era, as an epoch of United States history, gave rise to many reform movements. A varied array of social liberals, politicians, writers and others, in reaction to the excesses of unbridled industrialism argued for the regulation of industry in recognition that attending to the interests of the worker would promote, along with better health and welfare, increased efficiency. In this context, concerns for human welfare were extended into educational reform. To the progressives, schools could be conceived as agents of social change and child nurture (Tanner and Tanner, 1999). It is to this vision of education that the term progressive has adhered. And its most prominent apostle was John Dewey.

If industrial-scientism provided one pole of educational thought, the reaction of Dewey and other progressive thinkers formed the second. In contrast to Bobbitt, Dewey viewed the growth experience of the child as the focal point of curriculum. Curriculum, therefore, should be planned with the involvement of the teacher and child to guide "the child's natural curiosity in educationally productive directions" (Flinders & Thornton, 1997, p. 4). The fusion of the child's experience with education reflected the impracticality of focusing learning on an ever-changing context. Rather than emphasizing industrial need, curriculum should serve to direct the teaching of "how to think" (Ornstein & Hunking, 19998, p. 46). Understanding the natural learning pattern of children would guide the curriculum (Egan, 2002).

Dewey viewed the individuality of the student as the essential premise of the curriculum. Thus education, for Dewey, is successful only when it results in "the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself" (Dewey, 1929/1997, p.
Thus content knowledge was valuable only in so far as it helped students to make sense of their world (Egan, 2002). In that regard, Dewey (1929/1997) claimed that science is of value because it gives the ability to interpret and control the experience already had. It should be introduced not as so much new subjetmatter [sic], but as showing the factors already involved in previous experience and as furnishing tools by which that experience can be more easily and effectively regulated” (pp 20- 21).

Likewise, language should be studied as a “social instrument” (p. 21) rather than as a method of dispensing information. School, was thus to be an extension of the students' actual social life and not a means to achieve adult-oriented objectives, like training for the industrial age, the contextual origin of which was ever changing (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998).

By the 1940s, progressive education had earned a strong place in American education. But, in attempting to focus on child-centered instruction, many progressive curricula lacked focus and clear planning. For his part, Dewey regarded progressive curricula that provided neither planning nor guidance as “really stupid” (1926, in Null, 2000). Into this context Tyler, like Bobbitt, promoted the use of objectives in defining curriculum. Yet Tyler also attempted to account for progressive thought in his explication of the manner in which objectives are to be selected.

**Tyler’s Treatise**

If anything is clear about Tyler, it is that he made no pretension that his work should provide the structure for curriculum development. Tyler (1949) cautioned in his introduction that his work “is not a manual for curriculum construction since it does not describe and outline in detail the steps to be taken...to build a curriculum” (p. 1). Yet Tyler’s work has been received as just that: a rational, scientific, step-by-step guide to curriculum development (Marsh & Willis,
1999; Walker & Soltis, 1986). Perhaps this obtains because the scientific approach to his work
provides a hopeful sense of expertise and objectivity through a “technological orientation”
(Hunkins & Hammil, 1994, p. 8) otherwise lacking in the teacher’s context of “endemic

Put simply, Tyler (1949) promoted four ordered processes by which to create a coherent
curriculum: first curriculum developers should identify educational objectives; next learning
experiences appropriately matched to objectives would be selected; third, learning experiences
were to be organized into instructional segments – lessons, units, courses. Finally, methods of
evaluation, to be administered at early and late points in instruction would assess students’
 improvement towards meeting objectives. While the linear approach was scientific in its
rationality, structure and implication that achievement was objectively measurable, areas of
particular concern to Tyler seem more akin to the progressive legacy.

While Tyler’s emphasis that instruction and evaluation must be oriented towards the
meeting of pre-selected objectives appears akin to Bobbitt’s scientism, Tyler, rather, intended to
synthesize the strengths of both traditions:

The progressive emphasizes the importance of studying the child to find out what kinds
of interests he has, what problems he encounters, what purposes he has in mind. The
progressive sees this information as providing the basic source for selecting objectives.
The essentialist, on the other hand, is impressed by the large body of knowledge collected
over many thousands of years, the so called cultural heritage, and emphasizes this as the
primary source for deriving objectives... Each of these sources has certain values to
commend it. Each source should be given some consideration in planning any
comprehensive curriculum program (Tyler, 1949, pp. 4-5).
Thus Tyler stipulates that while objectives are to be set, they must be drawn from a careful examination of influences including both knowledge and student interest:

It should be clear that the kind of experience the student needs to have in order to get understanding of important facts and principles is more than that required to memorize these things; it will involve analysis, interpretation, application to various illustrations to see the meaning; that is, it will involve the kind of mental operations that lead to a clearer interpretation and understanding (p. 51).

Yet in the spirit of Dewey, Tyler unequivocally argued that education was to be an active process hence “it is essential to see that education provides opportunities for the student to enter actively into, and to deal wholeheartedly with, the things which interest him” (p. 11). Learners’ needs and interests, not industrial interests, were to form a source of educational objectives in Tyler’s model. In drawing upon a hybrid of sources for setting objectives, Tyler suggested additional consultation with subject specialists as well as philosophers and psychologists. The learner could also be consulted through questionnaires and interviews. Thus Tyler’s guiding principles for the selection of learning experiences also drew upon both educational paradigms, suggesting that learning experiences be selected to meet previously defined objectives, but on the basis of both contemporary concern and student interest, for “learning takes place through the active behaviour of the student; it is what he does that he learns, not what the teacher does” (Tyler, 1949, p. 63).

The final two stages of Tyler’s curriculum development model lend themselves more securely to the scientific paradigm. Emphasizing that learning experiences be organized on the basis of logic and order giving consideration to: continuity, sequence, psychological concern, chronology and by discipline. Likewise, the emphasis placed upon measurement of objectives in
order to trace student improvement resonates more closely to Bobbitt's paradigm than Dewey's. Likely for this reason Tyler was attacked for being too "scientific" in orientation (Reid, 1998). However, Helsby and Murray (1993) point out that, by placing the emphasis squarely on the curriculum and the teachers' role in learning, Tyler moved educational thought away from the use of psychometrics to classify students and towards the measurement of learning objectives, making Tyler a liberal for his time.

**Hilda Taba and the Bruner-Tyler Dialectic**

Within one decade of Tyler's treatise the American historical context shifted yet again, giving rise to new conservative and liberal curriculum strains. During World War II, armed forces recruiters reported astonishing deficiencies in the mathematics and sciences competency of conscripts (Goodlad, 1964/1997). Conservative education critics explained the situation, claiming that progressive pedagogy emphasized child centeredness and social preparation to the detriment of essential subject-specific skills and content (Marsh and Willis, 1999). In 1957, the conservative argument appeared vindicated when the Soviet Union succeeded in launching, Sputnik, a satellite which successfully orbited the earth. The resulting American security angst led to a thoroughgoing revaluation of the school curriculum. Two prominent approaches to curriculum emerged from this context.

In 1959, the American government, defense industry and scientific community funded a conference of eminent scientists, mathematicians and psychologists (Bruner, 1960). Meeting in Cape Cod at Woods Hole the scholars, chaired by Jerome Bruner, set out to devise a curriculum which would address the "long-range crisis in national security" by developing a "well-educated citizenry" (Bruner, 1960, p.1). The outcome was an approach to curriculum that addressed what Bruner termed structure, age readiness for learning, and intuitive thinking. Within two years of
Bruner’s treatise, Hilda Taba (1962) published her seminal work, *Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice*. Taba, responding directly to the concerns of the period, accounted for Bruner’s worries. But Taba built upon the foundations of Tyler and Dewey, both of whom she had worked with previously (Costa & Loveall, 2002).

Bruner’s contributions to curriculum development were rooted in an unusual historical context and, when the context changed, its more extreme forms became irrelevant. By the end of the 1960s, the emphasis on developing content knowledge to address defense concerns paled in comparison to the need to address social concerns. However, aspects of curriculum development posed by Bruner were to become lasting considerations in the curriculum development process and were, in fact, promoted by Taba.

Bruner (1960) theorized that all disciplines contain structure, by which he meant foundations, generalizations, underlying principles, or thinking patterns. The learning of the structure of a discipline, he argued, formed the basis of true understanding. In mastering fundamental principles, students would be provided with a cognitive schema on which they could affix details, as values may be inserted into a mathematical formula. A structural approach would facilitate understanding as opposed to rote memorization. Further, Bruner argued, structure would allow skills and principles to be transferred across contexts and disciplines. As the structure of a discipline is fundamental, it could be taught to students of any age so long as it was presented in an age appropriate manner. Having been exposed to these principles earlier, the potential of learning abstract representations through “re-experiencing” the structural principles would be greater than waiting until a later age to learn the abstractions through rote memorization and drill alone. This approach to structure, which he called spiraling, drew upon the best contemporary understanding of educational and developmental psychology (ten of the
34 conference participants were prominent psychologists), fitting well with progressive psychology, such as Piaget's theory of age appropriate instruction (Egan, 2002). However, the complexity involved in identifying the structure of disciplines and their age appropriate manifestation relied upon expertise beyond the realm of most educators. Curriculum development, to Bruner, became the role of subject area specialists and psychologists, with teachers to be trained in proper implementation of the new curriculum. Teachers, students and families, lacking expertise, were removed from the development process. Social concerns were irrelevant to the content focused curriculum. While structuralism appeared hopeful that all students could learn, it was premised on psychological readiness and not students’ natural interest. Dewey’s view of education as an extension of the child’s social reality had no presence in Bruner’s model. Likewise, Tyler was marginalized in that structure and psychological readiness were Bruner’s fundamental criteria for determining objectives and ways to organize the curriculum.

In reaction, Taba (1962) noted that the conservative criticisms of education were flawed, having “a simple logic that... stem from generalizations that tend to overlook the complexities of the educational process” (p. v). But she was also quick to recognize the contributions made by Bruner and by investing aspects into Tyler’s paradigm, new complexities to the curriculum development process emerged. As Taba (1962) explained:

The sources available to educational thinking have...expanded tremendously [making] available concepts that can be used to strengthen the conceptual framework of educational thinking. If this new knowledge is to be used profitably, educational writers and planners need to free themselves of the predilections to special ways of thinking that limit the possibility of accommodating concepts from other fields. They also need to
recognize that knowledge from other fields does not yield direct answers to educational problems. Productive thinking in education can come about only when this knowledge is used within the framework of an educational thinking free of limitations from doctrinaire positions and ambiguities (1962, p. v.).

Further, Tada blatantly voiced her objection to fragmenting curriculum into distinct “child-centered, society-centered, and subject-centered” (p. 3) models, which she argues should instead serve to inform a single “comprehensive curriculum theory” (p. 3).

At first glance, Taba’s work clearly resembles Tyler’s (1949) – they were colleagues in the University of Chicago’s Eight Year Study. Both lay out a step-by-step, definitively sequential process to curriculum development in which curriculum components can be managed prior to implementation (Hunks & Hammil, 1994). Both view the selection of objectives as essential to provide focus, criteria for content selection and a basis for evaluation (Fraenkel, 1994). But Taba added much greater detail and complexity to the process.

Initially, Taba argues that a scientific approach to curriculum requires a methodical basis for decision-making. The criteria stem from a careful examination of “society and culture, studies of the learner and the learning process, and analyses of the nature of knowledge” (Taba, 1962, p. 10) and form the rationale of the curriculum. Such a study is therefore foundational to subsequent curriculum decisions and must occur at the outset of the development process. This criteria setting provides a significant development from Tyler (1949) who placed the study of the learner and society within the objective setting process. Taba, rather, promotes the separation of rationale from decision-making. Basing decisions in the learner and social context hearken back to Dewey’s emphasis on the school as an extension of the learning environment, whilst her validation of psychological grounding of the curriculum in the developmental stage of the learner
echoes Bruner. As does Taba’s assertion that “there are differences in the structure of the various disciplines” (p. 11), indicating that the content of each subject requires unique organization.

Taba also differed from Tyler in placing the selection and organization of content before the identification of learning experiences. Taba rationalizes her decision by noting that the organization of content must be sensitive to criteria additional to objectives. Reflecting Bruner, these include a careful consideration of the level at which it is appropriate to introduce the content and appropriate continuity and sequencing of the content based, partially, in the content structure.

Borrowing from Bruner, whom she cites directly, Taba (1962) suggests that knowledge consists of three levels: facts which quickly become obsolete and are viewed as “static” (p. 175) forms of knowledge which “have only a temporary utility as means of acquiring ideas” (p. 212); basic ideas, which she equates to Bruner’s “structure” (p. 176); concepts, such as democracy or interdependence, which are “highly abstract ideas which [congruent to Bruner’s spiral curriculum] can be built only by successive experiences in a variety of contexts” (p. 178). Taba, again consistent with Bruner, held that the curriculum should focus on the latter two forms of knowledge “that are accepted widely by specialists in the various disciplines” (Fraenkel, 1994). In her explication she notes that Dewey understood these distinctions of knowledge and those progressives who deny the validity of the knowledge-based curriculum fail to recognize his criticism of directing instruction to the first form only (Taba, 1962). Taba drew further on Bruner to argue that structure must by introduced to students in a manner appropriate for their age level (Costa & Loveall, 2002) and that transferability of knowledge be a basis for selection of objectives and content. She viewed attention to structure and transferability (on which she
includes a full chapter) as essential to minimize the gap between abstract understanding and application (Taba, 1962).

In sum, Taba's contributions represented a synthesis of Tyler's structure with new understanding developed by Bruner (and many others) in the intervening years. Specifically, Taba, like Tyler, held to a highly rational, manageable, objective-centered, scientific method to curriculum development which included all of Tyler’s steps. Drawing on new understandings, Taba contributed greater complexity (and rationality) to the curriculum development process by arguing for the development of a rationale that considers progressive concerns of the learner and society prior to selecting objectives, separating the content selection and organization from devising learning experiences on the basis of structure and psychological readiness for learning, to which Bruner had earlier spoken. Taba drew new insights into Tyler’s established framework.

Bruner’s approach to curriculum had emerged in response to a perceived national security threat, was a focal point of curriculum discourse for the decade, and shifted perspectives on how curriculum should be constructed. But by 1970 America had “won” the space race by placing a man on the moon. Moreover, public sentiment was moving against military-like concerns as evidenced by the proliferation of anti-Vietnam War protests, with the president promising withdrawal from the war. Social concerns now dominated the American psyche. Government supported the civil rights and anti-poverty movements with the powerful legislation and funding of Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society. American education could not sustain an apparently irrelevant national reform movement (Marsh and Willis, 1999). Education had again become the means to affect social change and demands for a socially relevant curriculum reflecting social concern (Marsh and Willis, 1999; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998; Goodlad, 1964/1997) began to edge out even moderate scientific approaches like Taba’s. While Bruner’s ideas continued to
remain influential, his highly subject specific curriculum projects were shelved. Into this situation stepped Joseph Schwab, a scholar and former University of Chicago colleague of Ralph Tyler who saw deductive theory as inappropriate for the classroom (Null, 2000) and articulated a new direction for neo-progressives.

Schwab, Walker and the neo-progressives

Fundamentally, Joseph Schwab (1969/1997) argued that curriculum scholars had become obsessed with a theoretic subject-focus that ignored the primary concern of the classroom and the impact of curriculum on the end users, being teachers and students. Therefore, Schwab called for curriculum development that focused on the practical realities of the classroom through a deliberative process involving teachers and scholars. Supporting his claims, Schwab criticized a fragmented approach taken by curriculum scholars, grounding their criticism in singular views of learning, society, personality, or mind theory. (Interestingly, Taba (1962), addressing curriculum developers, accounted for each of these constructs in the first 190 pages of Curriculum Development.) He noted that this approach to curriculum led to a segmented rather than holistic understanding that would provide practical insight helpful in the classroom. An adequate curriculum theory, Schwab (1969/1997) argued, accounts for the interaction of all “individuals, societies, cultures, patterns of enquiry, ‘structures’ of knowledge or of enquiries, apperceptive masses, [and] problem solving” (p. 106). Furthermore, developing the concept of transferability, the interaction between content areas must be analyzed and accounted for in curriculum theory, noting that the curriculum and instruction of literature affects how social studies and sciences are perceived and learned.

Schwab provided a new direction for curriculum development by attempting to define an interactive role among curriculum theorists, curriculum historians, curriculum developers,
psychologists and teachers, each of whom should apply their perspectives with the goal of contributing to the comprehensive understanding of the complex, interdisciplinary, dynamic and interwoven web of curriculum. This approach of disdaining fidelity to any single theory and of analyzing multiple perspectives, Schwab terms eclectic.

For Schwab, it was insufficient for curriculum studies to ignore actual classroom practice. Schwab contends that the environment of the practical is richer than theory. So, a rich curriculum is dependent upon interaction with the practical. For Schwab, the potential of theory being derived inductively from the classroom was greater and more appropriate than theory being applied deductively to the classroom (Null, 2000) because the relationship of theory to practice was too often viewed as ambiguous and irrelevant to teachers (Reid, 2003). Given the intersection of theory and practice in developing, implementing, and analyzing curriculum, Schwab argued that specialists, theorists and practitioners must collaborate in curriculum thought and development. In this approach, which he termed deliberative, curriculum is defined through ongoing discussion, interplay, and continuous revision of means in light of emerging ends. Curriculum theory, development and implementation would, therefore, be dynamically fused. Participants in this deliberation would have curriculum decision-making power (Null, 2000).

In his analysis of Schwab’s entire corpus of literature, William Reid (2003) argues that the contribution of Schwab’s eclectic and deliberative emphases was to draw attention to the importance of a “moral community” (p. 37) to curriculum development. Curriculum-making should be the job of a practically focused learning community not that of theoretic scholars or pragmatic policy makers. In attacking scientifically-based curricula Schwab, Reid claims, was attempting to wrest curriculum development from segmented groups of scholars and place it within “a more inclusive view of the world” (p. 33). Schwab’s emphasis on the practical thus
injected the concept of deliberative community into the neo-progressive paradigm, which was further developed by Decker Walker.

Walker (1971, 1975) argued that the prescriptive approaches of traditional rational-scientific curriculum development were artificial and did not reflect how curriculum development actually occurred in practice. Observing that curriculum design should be conceived “as a series of decisions” (Walker, 1971 p. 53) not steps, he noted that frequently development teams began with neither objectives as advocated by Tyler (Pinar, 1978) nor data collection as per Taba. Rather, participants, bringing their own unique understandings to the process, began to find points of agreement about educational principles and theories, practices, procedures, aims and basic knowledge through on-going discussion. Objectives were seldom discussed early on. Goals represented only a minor 30% of conversation (Walker, 1975). An emerging consensus and “justification” of beliefs, values, and vision, which Walker (1971) called the “platform” (p. 52) for the development process, formed the premises for a successful project.

Walker identified a second phase of decisions made in the curriculum development process which, inspired by Schwab, he termed the deliberative phase. At this stage, participants engage in discourse to determine the alternatives for achieving the means and ends of a curriculum project. Objectives are discussed late in the deliberative stage in the context of addressing curricular concerns, not at the outset of the process. As participants attempt to weigh pros and cons they determine and solicit the information needed to make decisions, concurrently setting goals for the program and constructing the curriculum and supporting materials. “Deliberation and construction proceed concurrently, with deliberation sometimes initiating or modifying construction and construction sometimes generating ideas for deliberation” (Walker,
1975, p. 129). After some consensus about beliefs and approaches have been achieved, curriculum projects enter the design phase in which the curriculum is actually created.

Walker’s findings are echoed by Shipman’s (1974) case study of curriculum change in a network of 38 schools in Great Britain. The study considered how “innovations are organized and spread” (p. vii) by examining the implementation of an integrated studies curriculum. As Shipman notes, most of his case study “revolves around the problems of reconciling the different perspectives of the Schools Council, university, local authority and trial teachers” (p. 2).

Shipman found that at various levels “contrasting views” had to be discussed and resolved. Like Walker’s conception of the platform phase of curriculum development Shipman observed that:

Within each group there were a number of contrasting views. It is misleading to think that there is a clear definition of a curriculum project from the start. Even the project team had to establish objectives, definitions and modes of operation. (p.43)

This stage was followed by discussion about “design, introduction into schools, implementation, publication and diffusion” (p. 43), like Walker’s deliberative phase. Similarly, Shipman observes that concerns were resolved as they emerged and that objectives were modified as the project developed. “Curriculum change does not proceed through a clear cycle from a statement of objectives to an evaluation of learning strategies used. It is a process of bargaining, negotiation and horse-trading” (43).

Walker’s (1975) study of the naturalistic curriculum argued that the “logical essence of curriculum development” (p. 132) was to be found not in an imposed linear process, but in the “practical reasoning” that occurs in group discourse. Pinar (1978) opines that Walker’s work moved curriculum development away from the popular scientific approaches towards “the
practical concerns of school people and school curriculum.” But Marsh and Willis (1999) criticize Walker’s work. They allege that Walker only studied large curriculum projects in which participants were experts, typically curriculum and subject area specialists, thereby having some common theoretical ground and practical experience. Furthermore, the projects that Walker studied were large and well-funded. In contrast, Marsh and Willis (1999) point out, members of school based curriculum projects lack such expertise and support, relying on the participation of full-time teachers who are unlikely to have training in curriculum development. As Walker focused his studies on large scale projects, Marsh and Willis argue that the effectiveness of the naturalistic model in school-based curriculum projects is unclear. Further, they note that the firm guidelines of the prescriptive models can provide helpful guidance. But Walker in 1975 did not bill the naturalistic model as the ideal approach to curriculum development. Rather he called for the development of “hybrids which graft some of the formalized, systematized procedures deriving from the traditional ideal onto the basic stock of the deliberative ideal would prove more desirable than either of its parents” (Walker, 1975, p. 133). Could some sort of hybrid prove most appropriate in the independent school context?

Walker’s studies suggest that curriculum development is not as linear as the traditional model portrays it. Rather than prescribing an approach, his naturalistic model attempts to explain how curriculum development typically occurs. And he suggests that collaborative discourse such as that found in his platform and deliberation phases may occur within a more prescriptive framework. The Schwab-Walker vantage, therefore, suggests that curriculum development must allow for fluidity between steps, contextualization within the context of the classroom, and objectives set as outcomes of agreements achieved through debate and discussion rather than the basis of curriculum development itself. Thus within less than two decades, the
conceptions of curriculum development put forth by Bruner, Taba, Schwab and Walker proposed increasing layers of complexity suggesting a high level of teacher involvement in a process which, while conceptually linear is more often convoluted in practice.

Walker (Walker & Soltis, 1986), while conceding that Tyler accurately outlined essential components of curriculum, argued forcefully that his descriptive model captures the actual practice of curriculum development more accurately than do rational-linear prescriptions. Nonetheless, by 1978 William F. Pinar alleged that curriculum designers were in fact predominantly traditionalists, influenced by scientism. Pinar, most closely associated with the reconceptualists, represents one of the many varied understandings of curriculum that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, possibly in response to Schwab (Flinders & Thornton, 1997). He claimed that curriculum developers continued to subscribe to Tyler’s rational model and wrote curriculum to suit the purposes of schools, and not necessarily those of students.

Pinar (1978) believes that curriculum developers in practice subscribe to the industrial-scientism of Bobbitt because too often aspects of curriculum and individuals are treated as interchangeable parts which, if properly adjusted, may achieve a performance more closely aligned with stated objectives. Pinar also criticizes all previous modes of consideration of curriculum noting that even Schwab and Walker relied on anthropological rather than educational methodology to derive their conclusions. Pinar (1969/1997) finds fault with previous approaches to curriculum, viewing them as politically constraining. Rather, the reconceptualists take an emancipatory perspective of curriculum and disdain the “technician’s mentality” (p. 126). Curriculum should therefore be located in the student.

Marsh and Willis (1999) summarize Pinar’s position, pointing out his perspective that nobody can create a curriculum for another. Therefore, there are no steps involved in curriculum
development. Rather, a teacher’s role is to help guide students to an understanding of their own experiences. For instance, in reading a text, students would identify passages of interest. The teacher’s role would be to discuss with the students the themes found in the passages and draw comparisons to the students’ own life. This emphasis on individuality echoes Dewey (Marsh & Willis 1999). Pinar, therefore, serves to draw attention away from broad aspects of curriculum development outlined by Tyler and focus on the experience of individual students. His writings reflect a general trend by contemporaries such as Paulo Freire and Maxine Greene to move beyond the perceived traditional and subject-centered curriculum to account for the emancipatory needs of the learner (Flinders & Thornton, 1997).

Implications

Over the course of the twentieth century, conceptions of curriculum development have become increasingly complex. Initially, the paradigm of locating the curriculum in the subject-centered needs of industry competed with the learner-centered approach of Dewey. Tyler, in attempting to account for both traditions, appropriated scientism’s objectives as the basis of curriculum design, but accounted for progressivism by suggesting that the needs of the learner be considered as well as those of society in the creation of objectives. As Walker and Stolis (1986) note, curriculum scholars often credit Tyler with having created “the paradigm” (p. 49) for curriculum development. Approaches in the two decades following Tyler tended to follow a path close to Tyler’s, allowing for elements of progressivism to exist within a scientific methodology. However, Tyler’s model, while rational, proves somewhat idealistic. Walker confirmed what Schwab suggested, that curriculum development is a messy business. Those involved often ignore the detailed sequential processes advocated by Tyler and Taba, focusing instead on forging agreements regarding shared beliefs about teaching, learning, and educational planning.
and theory. While Tyler’s model requires objectives to be determined from the outset, the Schwab-Walker model suggests that objectives can be redefined in light of emerging ends and redefined understandings. It posits that curriculum development is a reflexive act in which participants redefine understandings through a process of ongoing discourse. When such agreements are not encouraged, the development process can be challenged by participants. This approach to curriculum placed high value in individual members of curriculum design teams. Pinar pushes the point further to re-establish the primacy of the learner in the curriculum, which he doubts can be effectively predetermined.

This brief overview of a few snapshots of curriculum history reveals three trends. Firstly, that curriculum development typically has been conceived as centered on either the learner or the subject-matter or some synthesis of the two. As observable in Tyler’s work, curriculum models have been most widely accepted by educators when elements of both approaches are present, permitting the application of a technical language while addressing squarely learner needs. In contrast, curriculum that has been extremely subject-focused (like the “new” curriculum of the 1960s) or radically learner-focused (like Pinar’s) has tended not to be accepted by teachers as effective model of curriculum (Marsh & Willis, 1999).

Secondly, layers of complexity have been added to the process of curriculum design. Initially, the development of objectives and the consideration of the needs of learners formed two, at times polar and at other times conjoined cores for curriculum. Tyler and Taba overlaid complexity on the processes of selecting appropriate objectives and on the significance of appropriate instructional design. Tyler specified procedure while Taba stressed philosophical and sociological foundations of curriculum. Schwab and Walker, while not rejecting Tyler (Walker & Soltis, 1986), focused on the nature of participation in the curriculum process, noting
that the practical concerns of the classroom and the interaction of theory and practice may only be accounted for by the interaction of a deliberative (in Schwab’s sense) community. While not invalidating Tyler and Taba’s elements of curriculum, Schwab-Walker suggest strongly that the simplicity of the linear model is inadequate to deal with complex sets of beliefs and understandings. The deliberative learning-community thus becomes another layer of complexity added to the elements of curriculum development.

Finally, the scientific-progressive dialectical debate will likely never abate and will continue to serve as a constant reminder of the need to consider both viewpoints in the development of curriculum. Even during eras in which discourse seems to pull to one extreme, the other soon pulls back. For instance, during the height of neo-progressivism, performance-based and competency-based movements, owing their lineage to scientism, emerged (Walker & Soltis, 1986). And, as if to counteract the child-centered and emancipatory educational movement of the 1980s, standards-based education with high-stakes standardized exams and accountability checks have become prominent features in educational systems throughout the United States (Flinders & Thornton, 1997) adding those respective features to curriculum design. By 2003, therefore, curriculum designers have much to consider. The ideal straightforward linear approach seldom obtains as instead the pressures on curriculum developers to design learner-centered and objectively assessable curriculum have increased. Accountability to varied levels of government and the local community has involved more stakeholders participating in the development process. So curriculum development, whilst informed by a rational-linear model, seldom resembles it in practice.

For this thesis, several implications emerge from the historical progression. If one takes a linear view of curriculum development, such as Tyler’s rationale, the early stage of curriculum
development should focus on selection of objectives. However, Walker suggests that the early stage is marked by discourse and debate and, in contrast, when objectives are selected they usually are developed closer to the end of the curriculum development project. Therefore, Walker contends that the early stage of curriculum development is marked by negotiation for the purpose of defining the platform of curriculum. If Walker’s findings obtain at ICS, the early stage of curriculum development should involve discourse about ESLRs and standards and approaches to the curriculum development process itself. Organizations learn through adaptive, “nonlinear-feedback networks” (Fullan, 1999, p. 5). This implies that currency in curriculum must be achieved through similar structures.

Through extrapolation, Walker’s naturalistic curriculum provides insight to the ICS context. The degree and nature of teacher involvement in curriculum development may impact the success of the ESLR / standards-based curriculum. To this point in the process, has participation been deliberative (in Schwab’s) and has an effective platform for curriculum development been established?

3.4: Definition of Curriculum

The increasing complexity by which curriculum and its development has been conceived leads to a corresponding definition of curriculum advanced by Colin Marsh and George Willis (2003) who reject the traditional view of curriculum as planned learning with instruction as the means to achieve the curricular ends. Marsh and Willis note that such distinctions, while logical and technically useful, are unnatural. Rather, they “hold an organic, holistic view of curriculum and instruction consistent with many recent trends that encourage teachers to be directly involved in making decisions about both curriculum and teaching by constantly monitoring and adjusting ends and means within unfolding classroom situations. This, we think, is what good
teachers always do” (p. 13). The independent school context, takes Marsh and Willis a step further in that the practice they describe must impact the written curriculum as well. Thus, the findings and modifications made by teachers in the classroom should become part of the formal documentation of the school. Such documentation, therefore, includes instructional planning documents, such as unit and lesson plans, as well as externally defined directives, such as standards. Teacher made documents thus become instruments of program evaluation and curriculum definition. While such considerations seem ambitious in light of the multiple levels of curriculum involvement, independent schools, such as ICS, may have a greater hope of achieving this goal. Given these considerations, Curriculum in this case study, therefore, refers to that which is taught in the classroom and the corresponding alteration of documents rather than a document that prescribes instruction.

3.5: Educational Change Literature and Teacher Involvement in Curriculum Projects

Given the suggestion that curriculum development should consider the practical needs of the school and classroom level, how should teachers at ICS be involved in developing an ESLR and standards-based curriculum? The literature on educational change provides insight to the challenges that ICS will likely experience with the involvement of teachers in the curriculum development process. The literature suggests that in situations of change a coherent understanding, defined as shared meaning about the need and nature of a proposed change, is essential yet difficult to achieve. It indicates that the involvement of teachers in collaborative discussion presents the best strategy to create such coherence, but that collaboration itself is problematic. Thus a survey of the literature on educational change serves to uncover possible characteristics of involvement that ICS may experience in its curriculum project.
The implementation of ESLRs and standards in curriculum and instruction requires the involvement of all teachers in modifying curriculum documents and instructional planning. The involvement of teachers in the implementation of ESLRs and standards through curriculum development and instructional practices requires coherent understanding of the new approach to curriculum. The review of educational change literature that follows uncovers the issues of creating a coherent understanding of the change and involving teachers effectively in a collaborative process. It suggests implications for evaluating the ICS case.

Coherent Understanding of Need

As the endeavor of developing and implementing an ESLR and standards-based curriculum proceeds, all teachers need to be engaged on a long-term basis if ESLRs and standards are to penetrate instruction throughout the schoolwide program. Immediately, problems of coherent understanding about the need and nature of this change are likely to emerge. Coherence in this thesis is employed in two senses. First, it refers to the alignment of the schools' curriculum, with all aspects working to achieve clearly delineated ends. Secondly, as used in this section of the literature review, it refers to a shared collective understanding amongst faculty and administration about the innovation (Fullan, 2001). Newman (2002) argues that "shared understanding" permits individual teaching styles to be enacted in the classroom, but holds teachers to a "collective schoolwide commitment" (p. 31). As all teachers are significantly affected by change, teachers inevitably will have questions about the need for change (Werner, 2002). To complicate matters, teachers' understanding of need shifts during implementation (Fullan, 2001; Werner, 2002), and tends to be evaluated on the basis of practicality (Evans, 1996).
Fullan (2001) establishes the significance of need through his analysis of the Rand Change Agent, Experimental Schools and New American Schools change studies. In each situation change failure occurred partially because of a lack of teacher understanding about the need for change, a consequence of a process of gaining initial teacher support while lacking in-depth examination and discussion about the reason and purpose of the change. Further, as other priorities emerged, agreement about need and the innovation's goals shifted and impetus for change declined. These findings suggest that the concept of need must be discussed thoroughly at the outset and revisited and redefined frequently during the implementation process (Werner, 2002; Werner and Case 1991). In the case of ICS, teachers may query the premise that standards-based instructional planning engenders increased curricular coherence, or that the current curriculum lacks such coherence. Such concerns are likely because the administration selected the standards-based curriculum approach with minimal faculty involvement in the decision. Therefore, even the goal of curricular coherence itself might be misunderstood.

Questions about need are also likely to surface as teachers begin to evaluate need on the basis of practicality.

Teachers measure the utility of a proposed change through a conception of practicality that requires a high potential for classroom use (Lieberman and Miller, 1990) and delineation in classroom relevant language, which Doyle and Ponder (1978) term instrumentality. To teachers, innovations are practical when they fit the pre-existing context:

Practical ideas require little additional work or preparation; they fit into the existing rhythms of the school. Practical ideas are immediate and concrete and can be affected with the resources and structures that currently exist... To be practical means to concentrate on products and processes; to draw on experience rather than research; to be
short-range and not predictive in thinking or planning” (Lieberman and Miller, 1990, p. 158).

In other words, practicality entails little or no requirement for meaningful change because a “practical” innovation does not challenge teachers’ beliefs or practices. Rather, changes are welcomed or spurned depending upon the degree of congruence between teachers’ own beliefs and the innovation (Werner, 2002). So conceptions of practicality are shaped by teachers’ beliefs, about the fit of an innovation with their perceived context (Doyle & Ponder, 1978).

If ICS teachers evaluate change by the normative conception of “practical”, the need for an ESLR and standards-based curriculum initiative is likely to be viewed as filling no niche. Although stemming from the goal of shaping teachers’ instructional focus and assessment practices, thereby bringing continuity across grade levels and focus to the schoolwide curriculum, if the curricular change appears to teachers as unlikely to provide a close match to current classroom practices and could be resisted or misunderstood on that basis. Further as the task of curriculum preparation is removed from the immediate concerns of the classroom, teachers may perceive a lack of instrumentality. The lack of practicality may be further exacerbated by the source of the curricular change.

The perceived source of a change proposal can adversely impact teachers’ acceptance of change, if the innovator appears theoretically and not practically minded (Liebermann and Miller, 1990; Evans, 1996). Thus Evans (1996) reports that change agents such as policy makers and academics face “a serious credibility gap” (p. 83). The practical changes to which teachers associate need address working conditions, class sizes, resources, and discipline. These needs differ greatly from the externally imposed concerns of competency, professionalism, accountability, prescribed standards and student-centered instruction (Evans, 1996; Werner,
2002). Not only do externally mandated changes lack practical appeal, they may not "address what are perceived to be priority needs" (Fullan, 2001), in light of other concerns (Evans, 1996), which for teachers tend to center on the classroom. On the other hand, if a change is proposed by an agent reputed to be practically-oriented, such as a fellow teacher, it is more likely to be accepted by teachers (Lieberman and Miller, 1990). At ICS the issue of source could adversely impact teachers' perception of practicality and hence need as the initial impetus for change (WASC) is far removed from the immediacy of the classroom.

The ICS experience, however, is consistent with the literature in another regard. As Peter Ramsey (1994) found in his study on the application of power to change, unless "jolted... most people in our study would have continued to do as they were doing" (p. 518). Congruently Hargreaves (2003) advocates policies that mandate "professional learning teams that include all staff" (p. 173). Interestingly he views inspection and accreditation as the appropriate instruments to encourage such involvement. So despite a normally poor fit between the innovator and implementer, external agitation and pressure often is required before need is perceived. As Fullan (1999) argues, outside pressure can serve to create a sense of urgency which motivates change. Without WASC's impetus, would teachers feel any urgency at all to create a coherent curriculum?

In the case of implementing ESLRs and standards into the ICS curriculum, potential for a lack of coherent understanding of need obtains. The literature suggests that changes perceived to lack instrumentality and practicality, which originate from outside agencies and are devoid of early teacher involvement in conceptualization, are unlikely to find faculty consensus regarding need. Therefore, clear understanding of the innovation as the school moves further into the implementation process may prove problematic.
Coherent Understanding of the Nature of the Innovation

Even if the ICS faculty agrees that a curriculum based on ESLRs and standards is needed, understanding about the full nature of the change, its actual impact and requirements of teachers could remain unclear and incoherent. Given the innovation’s schoolwide impact, coherent understanding is essential for a consistent curriculum to emerge. However, change literature suggests that initially the implementation of an innovation tends to be marked by confusion about duties, authority, procedures, roles, requirements and new skills. Fullan (2001) calls this pattern of “prevailing uncertainty” (Evans, 1996, p. 35) the “implementation dip” (p. 92). But only after encountering difficulties can they be dealt with. This makes extensive long-term planning impossible and unadvisable (Fullan, 2003). Any attempt to manage confusion by creating firm plans risks oversimplification of the change, which Fullan (2001) terms “false clarity” (p. 77). False clarity inhibits thorough and coherent understanding of the change, causing it to lose impact (Evans, 1996).

Difficulties in achieving clarity are compounded because individuals’ understanding of the change shifts constantly. Participants in change continuously redefine the meaning of innovations through conversation with others (Hall, 1992; Fullan, 1999). Thus Werner (in Fullen, 2001) says, “Implementation is an ongoing construction of shared reality among group members through their interaction with one another” (p. 124). If not brought into an open forum, private discussion could lead to further misunderstanding of the innovation.

For ICS, the challenge at the beginning of change is to encourage teachers to suspend disbelief as they encounter a lack of clarity and to understand that problems can be dealt with as they emerge, and secondly to provide opportunity for high quality discussion about curriculum development in order to achieve coherence. Uncertainty, therefore, is a necessary phase of
implementation through which leaders need to guide with a judicious measure of “pressure and support” (Fullan, 2001, p. 91) needed to sustain change when confusion sets in.

At ICS clarity may be difficult to achieve given the inherent complexity of the curriculum initiative. Implementing this change requires the faculty to develop an appreciation of the nature of ESLRs and standards, their interaction, and their implications for instructional planning and assessment – a tall order on top of understanding their own role in the curriculum development process.

**Teacher Belief and Coherent Understanding**

As suggested above, teacher beliefs impact their assessment of need. But as beliefs vary widely amongst teachers, achievement of coherent understanding is further complicated. For each teacher, beliefs shape perceptions of an innovation, promoting or inhibiting understanding and possibly willingness to engage in change.

As teachers begin to write units based on ESLRs and standards, some teachers will need to develop new sets of skills or change their instructional style. This requires a shift in personal “beliefs about instruction and learning” (Dwyer, Ringstaff & Sandholtz, 1991). At ICS, where teachers have independently developed and shaped entire courses and programs, curricular change will likely have a deep personal reach, potentially challenging routines, practices, habits, values, theories and even competency (Fullan, 2003, Fullan & Miles, 2002). Individuals may need to re-assess years of formation of instructional beliefs in order to implement the change authentically. Evans (1996) points out that a cognitive schema through which beliefs are understood may need reconstruction in order for a teacher actually to understand the change. If understood, such dramatic change could mean, or be perceived to mean, loss of significant investment or, as Evans (1996) puts it, bereavement.
Shipman's (1974) case study substantiates Evan's claims and relates the concept of loss to teachers' concerns of practical application. In interviewing teachers about challenges they faced in implementing the integrated studies curriculum, Shipman uncovered that teachers' concerns regarded having to change their accustomed approaches. Specifically:

1. The need to learn new knowledge.
2. The need to become involved in new conceptual frameworks.
3. Separation from class teaching [in favor of team teaching].
4. Separation from subject teaching [i.e., loss or expertise]. (p. 82)

In each of these points, Shipman noted that teachers sensed some form of deprivation and desired the security of the familiar and ultimately preferred to concern themselves with the concerns of the classroom:

The teachers were mainly concerned with the immediate problems facing them in the classroom. They were grateful for the ideas and the materials, and often were convinced that integrated studies was both educationally desirable and liable to motivate children more than traditional subject teaching. But their main concern was with concrete problems of discipline and the maintenance and assessment of standards of work. Principles of integration, the niceties of team teaching, and the commitment to feed back experiences to the project [coordinators] were often ignored. (p. 87)

The literature also suggests that teachers' placement on the career span informs their conception of change and their willingness to engage it and converse about it. In their analysis of six views of the teacher career cycle and the change formation process, Lieberman and Miller (2002) indicate that the career stage creates immense degrees of variation within a teaching faculty. New teachers may be struggling with survival, while the eldest experience
disengagement and choose to avoid participation in change efforts (Huberman, 1992). Lieberman and Miller (2002) contend that support for faculty members, regardless of their career stage, may occur through collaborative groupings such as “study groups... or curricular groups providing teachers with choice, interest, and appropriate experimental levels as well as attending to different needs” (p. 78). Hence, while variety in career stage and cognitive states impact teacher willingness to embrace change, collaboration is viewed as a strategy to remediate the situation.

Collaboration Brings Coherent Understanding

While achieving coherent understanding of a change, and need of it, is shaped by a teaching faculty’s collective perceptions of practicality, personal belief and experience, effective collaborative involvement of teachers is frequently touted as the solution to problems of coherence. Hargreaves (1994) observes that “the creation of productive and supportive collegial relationships among teachers has long been seen [perhaps mistakenly] as a prerequisite for effective school-based curriculum development” (p. 186). In its broadest sense, collaboration may be defined as a high degree of collegial interaction (Little, 1990). The literature indicates that collaboration limited to collegiality is normally insufficient to support change. As teachers tend to act out their profession in isolation, strategies that guide “improvement-oriented” collaboration (Little, 1990, p. 509) and the development of school culture towards a change orientation need to be enacted.

Improvement-oriented collaboration develops from appropriate teacher behavior in a conducive school culture. The case of Archer Elementary school illustrates the potential of collaboration. Strahan, Carlone, Horn, Dalla and Ware (2003), in examining improved student performance, noted that success came through “a shared stance towards learning” (p. 211) regarding instruction, responsibility for learning and ongoing curriculum articulation. Newman
and Wehlage (1995 in Fullan, 1999) corroborate the argument that teacher collaboration brings coherence. In their study of Chicago area schools, they found that where a high degree of collaboration exists, scores on standardized tests tend to be higher. The researchers found that in such contexts teachers participate together in purpose-targeted activities, accepting responsibility for student learning and assessment, and refining instruction. Hargreaves (1994) provides the negative argument that “the failure of many school-based curriculum development initiatives is attributable, at least in part, to the failure to build and sustain the collegial working relationships essential to their success” (p. 186). Adams (2002) pushes the point further. In his assessment of collaborative teacher networks in California, he writes that collaboration serves to provide broad support to teachers through the change experience by addressing “teachers’ personal needs (social interaction, reassurance), pedagogical needs (advice, subject matter expertise), and organizational needs (coordinating students’ learning, maintaining standards, initiating and sustaining energy)” (p. 22). For collaboration to actualize such potential, the literature suggests, collegial behavior is insufficient; rather participants must observe certain criteria of interaction.

Werner (2002) identifies four criteria to guide teacher discourse about change. He argues that both formal and informal collegial “talk” have the potential to shape teachers’ beliefs to support or counteract change. He contends that unless discussion is marked by focus, depth, insight and ongoing discourse, the intended change may not occur. Instead, discussion could lead to “the closing of minds to change” (p. 5). Similarly, Little (1990) finds that group conversation can be either conservative or “improvement-oriented” (p. 509). To support intended goals, appropriate talk must be “frequent, continuous, concrete, and precise” (Little, 1989 in Speck, 1999, p. 105). Professional collaboration is thereby distinguished from mere conversation.
The literature indicates that collaboration works best when it is focused on issues that have relevance to teachers’ practice. Inevitably, these are issues of the classroom. Therefore, Hargreaves (2003) posits that the concrete focus of effective collaboration should be on “improving teaching, learning, and caring” (p. 172). Congruently, Fullan (2001) suggests that when teachers join together to study student work and the correlation of achievement to instruction, they can develop strategies for improvement as a professional community. The practical focus of such collaborative involvement in instruction results in school improvement (Hargreaves, 2003). Odden and Busch (1988 in Adams, 2000) evidence the impact of a practical focus. They found that when teachers collaborate “around instructional program issues [they develop] improved curriculum units” (p. 22). Taken together, the literature suggests that focused discourse around instruction is positively correlated to school improvement. Likely this development results from focusing discussion on matters that teachers intuitively value.

Improvement compounds when professional communities take an insightful and informed perspective, applying data gathered from within as well as expert knowledge from without to inform discussion about an innovation (Hargreaves, 2003; Fullan, 1999, 2003; Werner, 2002). By examining data together, Fullan (1999) suggests that understanding of “values, goals and what [teachers] should be doing” increases (p. 27). When teacher discussion about student performance and instruction is located in rich internal data and outside information, the characteristics of inquiry and learning obtain, resulting in knowledge creation and improved teaching (Hargreaves, 2003; Fullan, 2001). Little (2002) adds that informed content “improves the quality of ideas, plans and solutions” (p. 51). Conversely, discussion that excludes both internal data and outside knowledge inhibits new learning and therefore change.
Another benefit of examining quality information is that it engages interest and provides the level of challenge required to sustain teacher motivation (Guskey, 2003).

In addition to practically-oriented, informed discussion, collaborative talk must continue frequently throughout the change process (Hargreaves, 2003; Werner, 2002; Little, 2002). Fullan (1999) notes that contextual factors such as personnel change make "coherence-making ... a never ending dynamic balancing act" (p. 40). Furthermore, as teachers attempt to apply new ideas their understanding shifts impacting implementation of change. Therefore, Werner (2002) advocates engaging users and innovators in collaborative discussion throughout the process of change itself: "Frequent opportunities for ongoing conversation allow participants to revisit their shifting interpretations and experiences with the innovation" (Werner, 2002, p. 5).

The literature of professional development also asserts the value of frequent discussions of practical emphasis. Linda Campbell-Evans (2000) argues that "professional development must be more clearly related to and integrated with the teachers' work ... Ideally professional development ought to be an ongoing part of professional work and renewal" (p. 97). Lieberman and Miller (2002) concur that professional development is ineffective when viewed as a one-off event in which teachers import ideas to the school. Both sources suggest that most effective professional development strategies respect the importance of the context of the classroom to teacher-directed learning and provide the opportunity for teachers to clarify understanding as implementation proceeds.

While Werner and Little address the nature of change-oriented discussion, Fullan (1999) notes that group dynamics also impact the depth of coherence-making. Contrary perhaps to common intuition, diversity and disagreement (but not discord) marks the membership of improvement-oriented collaborative groups. Collaborative communities should contain
members who willingly raise points of disagreement about change (Little, 2002; Fullan, 1999). Such a representation reflects the composition of the broader professional community (i.e., all teachers in the school) by accounting for variation in experience, skill, and teaching style (Pajak, 2003). A diverse community opens the flow of a wide range of information and varying perceptions. This encourages participants to raise challenges (Little, 1999) that permit problems to be anticipated and counters trends towards groupthink by revealing the complexities inherent in the specific context of change (Fullan, 2001), what Werner (2002) calls depth. Hence Rosenholtz (1991) asserts that “when collaborative norms undergird achievement-oriented groups, they bring new ideas, fresh ways of looking at things, and a stock of collective knowledge that is more fruitful than any one person’s working alone” (p. 41).

Challenges to Collaboration

Although improvement-oriented collaboration may promote coherent understanding, studies conducted by Little (1990), Rosenholtz (1991) and Hargreaves (1994, 2002) indicate that teachers normally interact in modes of privacy and isolationism which are unhealthy for change. This social construct must be accounted for to engender effective collaboration. Little (1990) notes that teacher’s tend to limit interaction to a few distinct behaviours. Typically teachers favour ad hoc sharing of classroom and school experiences as a means of soliciting support and gaining information, but tend to do so to uphold and justify their current practice; they offer advice and help, but only when asked; they share resources and ideas, but withhold comment on actual instructional practice; finally, teachers participate in collective joint work, but only when goals cannot be achieved independently. These characteristics of teacher interaction, Little says, reinforce an ethic of isolationism in which conversation is removed from the context of the classroom and is more likely to reinforce poor practice than challenge teachers to change. Such
behaviours support claims of teacher autonomy but prohibit critical examination of practice in which teachers must “initiate open and critical discussions of instruction” (Little, 2002, p. 51). Little’s argument suggests that involving teachers in implementing change requires behavior that acts against teacher preferences and norms, thus supporting the contention that while teacher involvement is essential to change, unless appropriately channeled, it may be a barrier.

Hargreaves’s (1994) tact corroborates Little’s findings, noting further that some teachers view collaboration as an obstacle to autonomy. Hargreaves argues that organizational factors create cultures of predominant individualism. These include working conditions that attack “the confidence … knowledge, wisdom and credibility of [the school system’s] best teachers” (McTaggart in Hargreaves, 1994, p. 172). Administrative structures also serve to prohibit effective collaboration. Space arrangement, lack of release time, scheduling, and imposed activities all force teachers to be “strategic” about their use of time and cause them to view collaboration as a distraction “from the central task of classroom instruction” (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 181). Individualism, according to Hargreaves, is symptomatic of a cultural condition leading teachers to prefer privacy and fear criticism.

While Hargreaves shows that school culture may shape teacher behavior to favor the norm of privacy, Rozenholtz’s (1991) findings suggest that school culture can be modified to facilitate change-oriented collaboration. Arguing that collaboration does not emerge from mutual respect, but from the deliberate structuring of opportunity for faculty collaboration into the school’s operational norms, Rozenholtz proposes that through organizational change “teachers may become sensitized” (p. 44) to the benefits of collaboration. In highly collaborative change-oriented schools she found that principals create opportunity and set the tone for improvement-oriented collaboration by offering feedback in a neither threatening nor defensive
manner, recognizing teachers' strengths, sharing authority, and encouraging teacher-leaders to help others develop skills.

Collaboration in certain manifestations can work to retrench privacy, conservativism and poor practice, and could "become comfortable and rewarding for the staff without any check on whether [it] really benefit[s] students" (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 165). But such conditions can be changed through modifying school structure to encourage effective faculty-involved collaboration.

For ICS, the literature implies that collaboration can support teachers as they grapple with ESLR and standard-based curriculum development and serve to uncover and resolve complexities. However, for improvement-oriented collaboration to be well received by teachers, ICS needs to ensure that discourse is focused on instructional concerns, is informed and frequent, and represents diverse opinions. The extent to which these measures are respected and structured, along with other collaborative opportunities, into school life may indicate the degree of likelihood that the school will succeed in involving its faculty in the curriculum development enterprise despite possible teacher privatism.

Another challenge to involving teachers in collaborative curriculum development could surface at ICS. The mandated nature of participation in curriculum development risks creating a context of contrived collegiality, a term coined by Hargreaves (1994) which refers to required collaboration over "what to plan or learn, with whom to plan or learn it, and where and when to undertake the planning and learning" (2003, p. 265).

In Hargreaves’ (1994) paradigm, collaboration is defined narrowly and clearly distinguished from contrived collegiality. He views collaboration as voluntary, spontaneous, development-oriented, unbounded by time, and unpredictable. In this conception of
collaboration, teachers participate of their own volition in projects they value. They determine when and where to meet and make decisions that impact the actual construction (or contextualization) of the innovation. The administration cannot control the outcomes of such collaboration. This type of collaboration suggests difficulty for schoolwide initiatives which lack any of Hargreaves' descriptors. Indeed, the ESLR-based curriculum development initiatives bear the hallmarks of Hargreaves (1994) description of contrived collegiality: administratively driven, compulsory, implementation oriented, fixed in time and space and predictable. Where teachers are directed to participate in mandated meetings for the purpose of discussing implementation, Hargreaves predicts resistance. Yet, despite agitating teachers' preferences for autonomy and practicality, and thereby lacking appeal to teachers, induced collaboration tends to dominate schoolwide change.

Hargreaves (1994) points out that by forcing participation, contrived collegiality shows disrespect to teachers' expertise and insights and therefore does not serve to affect teacher empowerment. Contrived collegiality places the burden of accountability upon teachers, corrupting collaboration, giving teachers responsibility for administratively developed goals. This prevents teachers from adjusting innovations to suit their own contexts and forces them to pursue goals that they may not understand with colleagues they may find unnerving. This saps energy, preventing teachers from pursuing their own collaborative projects (Hargreaves, 2003). While appearing to decentralize power, contrived collegiality prevents teachers from resolving problems they identify independently. The overall result could be a lessening of interest in collaboration.
**Implications**

A review of educational change literature suggests that attempts to foster schoolwide curricular change face many challenges. Effective schoolwide change must be implemented through achieving a coherent understanding among administration and teachers of the need for an innovation and its nature. In order to account for shifts in understanding and diversity of perspectives, shared meaning develops through involvement in frequent and meaningful collaborative discussion. Such discussion requires planning and, likely, pressure (Fullan, 1999) for it to be improvement-oriented and not change-prohibitive. Fullan's (1993) claim that “every person is a change agent” resonates with a participatory approach to curriculum implementation. He notes that participation is essential as “each and every teacher has the responsibility to help create an organization capable of individual and collective inquiry and continuous renewal, or it will not happen” (p. 39). Yet mandated participation in schoolwide initiatives risks contrived collegiality and therefore resistance. Perhaps the suggestion that the school leadership can shape an environment conducive to involvement offers possibility for a form of mandated collaboration that mitigates the effects of contrived collegiality. In such a circumstance, has ICS a context for teacher involvement in curriculum development that yields coherent understanding but does not lead to contrived collegiality?

Despite the apparently substantive implications of change literature for ICS, all of the research discussed above is derived from studies of change and curriculum development in huge educational systems at national, provincial and district levels. When studies refer to individual schools, their culture was shaped by structures, norms and pedagogies defined in part by the state and school district. Such a situation does not obtain at ICS which, as a private-independent school, is accountable only to its accreditation agency and stakeholders, most of whom are at the
school by self-selection. Therefore, there is room in the literature to study the extent to which norms of teacher privacy obtain at independent schools, whether teacher interaction in such settings tend to be improvement-oriented, and if administrative structures in these contexts are more readily adaptable to support effective collaboration. In cases such as ICS where most teachers have developed their own programs, participated in decision-making committees, determined ESLRs, and selected standards, would mandated participation yield contrived collegiality and threaten high-quality teacher involvement? In schools such as ICS, would coherent understanding be easier to achieve? How do teachers perceive and value their role? Can the curriculum development process incorporate the traits of effective talk? And what are the traits of collaboration at the beginning of a change effort? Thus examining the case of ICS offers the possibility to compare the findings of the educational change literature to an environment less encumbered by multiple-levels of authority and one in which teachers, as opposed to government, have prominent roles in making curriculum decisions.
CHAPTER IV: The Context of Teacher Involvement

In considering the impact of features of teacher involvement on the curriculum initiatives at ICS, careful attention needs to be given to the context of this involvement. Aspects of the context, this study finds, served to yield a very significant feature of teacher involvement: that teachers’ intuitive understanding and experience provided the most significant source of insight for curriculum decision making. The emergence of the feature of teacher intuitive involvement is observable through evaluating the history of ICS.

Although ICS came into being in 1992, it was not until 2001 that a concerted effort at involving teachers collaboratively in creating a coherent curriculum began. Until the fall of 2000, teachers implemented courses quite independently. Instructional planning fitted into no predetermined philosophy or structure and followed no prescribed curriculum document. Rather, teachers developed their own curriculum based upon their professional judgment and available resources, which typically were textbooks with accompanying ancillaries, and a general course description. A collegial but isolated and non-collaborative curriculum development ethos emerged of necessity given the small school context of the school’s foundational years 1992 – 1994. As the school continued to grow in its next two phases of expansion, 1994-1997 and 1997 – 2001, the established curriculum ethos did not mature along with the school. This shaped the context of curriculum development at the beginning of the most recent phase of school development, 2001 – 2003 and established the feature of intuitive teacher involvement.


ICS was first established in 1991 by a consortium of seven missionary agencies with the “preliminary goals and objectives [of meeting] the need for a Christian school which is Bible based, affordable and college preparatory for the U.S. in particular” (ICS-Self Evaluation, 1995).
At that time, the missionaries perceived that no school in Hong Kong met the four criteria: Christian, affordable, college preparatory, American. While the school had not disseminated a clearly articulated mission statement to stakeholders, these four stipulations appear repeatedly throughout early ICS accreditation documents (ICS-Candidate, 1993; ICS-Candidate Report, 1993) and formed the school’s *de facto* mission.

Thus ICS opened its doors in 1992 with a population of 56 students in grades six through eleven, eleven teachers and one principal. Most students were the children of missionaries and all full-time faculty members were professing Christians. The following year, one class was added for each of kindergarten through grade five and grade 12, and Lead Teachers, along with eight new teachers, were hired to administrate the elementary and secondary programs. Each Lead Teacher took an administrative load of 20% (ICS-Candidate 1993). Thus, in only its second year, the school’s student population numbered 268.

In providing affordable, Christian, university preparatory education, the school had found a niche with non-missionary families who fueled demand for the school’s program. By 6 September 1993, the school reported that 30% of its student population were children of missionaries with the remainder comprised of returning (i.e., overseas) Chinese (30%), Hong Kong Chinese (15%), and “expatriates from various countries” (ICS-Candidate 1993). With the school campus approaching its capacity, ICS took the decision to search for “additional property to house the secondary program. This would allow the school to accommodate approximately 500 students” (ICS-Candidate Report, 1993, p. 1). Thus from its very foundation, the attention of the administration would be dominated by school growth concerns relevant to accommodating rapidly increasing numbers of students and to locating facilities. Curriculum matters were not of foremost concern.
In these early years, all teachers and administrators needed to be generalists. The teacher who taught several levels of band, physical education, computer studies, and Bible classes provides a case in point. The principal, in addition to maintaining his administrative duties, promoting the school in the community and astutely managing the school’s limited funds—100% of the school’s operating costs came from tuition fees (ICS-Candidate, 1993), could frequently be spotted replacing door knobs, repairing the gym floor and stocking the soft drink machine.

Likewise, students were generalists. In order to maintain a comprehensive educational program at a reasonable cost (in 1993, K-5 fees were USD 3,500 per annum while 6-12 were USD 6,100), all students were required to study a broad range of courses with almost no choices provided. All secondary students at each level, therefore, were required to take courses in Bible, visual art, chorus, band, English, social studies, math, science, computer, physical education, and introductory Mandarin (ICS-Candidate, 1993). To accommodate such prescription, some courses were offered on a half-credit basis.

Funding provided yet another challenge for the school. When ICS opened its doors, it did so with a loan of USD 300,000 to cover start up expenses. Although ICS had only tuition fees to cover its costs, under the skilled financial guidance of the school’s headmaster, it quickly repaid its loans and improved its facilities and the range of its instructional resources. But the requisite conservative spending habits meant that no money was available to release teachers to write curriculum or to hire curriculum specialists to guide curriculum development and implementation. Rather, annual surpluses were saved to account for the expenditures anticipated with rapid school growth.

The nuances of the school’s birth and early growth illuminate the development of ICS’s curriculum. Working in a small school with limited funds and time at a premium, teachers could
not reasonably be expected to document a unique, comprehensive and coherent curriculum. Neither could administrators dedicate precious time towards achieving such a goal. Therefore, at the school's inception, its founders convened a curriculum committee tasked with providing a comprehensive and credible curriculum for the fledgling school. The committee selected textbooks, workbooks, science equipment kits and supplementary reading materials used by Morrison Academy, a kindergarten through graduation Christian school in Taipei, Taiwan, in order to provide a viable curriculum that could be procured efficiently and affordably (ICS-Self-Study, 2001). Thus, from its establishment, the intended curriculum was provided by textbooks and other materials issued to teachers. Teachers' involvement in curriculum planning extended to implementing the textbook and applying their own professional intuition regarding the appropriate content selection, instruction design and assessment strategies. No document provided such guidance. One of the school's founding teachers summarized the foundational years at ICS:

our original curriculum was a combination of what Morrison used as textbooks—no curriculum document was given, and who [the headmaster] could hire that was able to teach many subjects… ICS was pretty much [the headmaster's] show as far as what subjects were offered. I think the actual content/skills were up to the individual teacher. There was VERY LITTLE [emphasis original], if any, vertical alignment (personal communication, February 19, 2004).

By September 1993, ICS took the initiative to apply for candidacy for accreditation with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ICS-Candidate, 1993). In November, WASC's visiting team identified, among ten recommendations for ICS, three needs pertinent to curriculum and instruction:
- The board and principals publish a statement of school mission and educational goals for current and prospective parents.

- The administration and staff develop a written sequential curriculum consistent with the philosophy of the school.

- The board and administration make commitment to training teachers in teaching strategies to ensure a common thread of instructional practice throughout the school and to give a common professional language to use in reflecting on professional practices at the school. (ICS-Candidacy Report, 1993, p. 3)

Notwithstanding its recommendations, WASC granted ICS candidacy as the first step towards achieving full accreditation in February 1994 (ICS-Haught, 1994).


1994 marked a significant year in ICS’s short life. The school graduated its first class of students (ICS-Candidate, 1993) and officially responded to WASC’s recommendations. The school’s responses served to set the tone that its curriculum would follow for years to come: instructionally based and premised on teachers’ individual understandings of best practice. A written curriculum was created by requiring teachers “to complete a quarterly overview of each area of curriculum. The overviews provide the basis of a written curriculum. Currently, these have been compiled into curriculum outlines which reflect actual classroom practices” (ICS-Progress Report, 1994, p. 2). The instructed curriculum thus became the documented curriculum. However, the curriculum documents were not disseminated to new teachers as an intended or official curriculum guide. As a senior teacher recalled arriving at ICS in August, 1994, “I was not given any (nor saw any) curriculum documents when I arrived. In fact, some of the courses... were designed by me. All I had were textbooks” (personal communication,
February 19, 2004). This experience corresponds to that of this study’s researcher who, when he joined the school in the 1995 – 1996 academic year, was given no curriculum document to follow and, in some cases, no textbook.

Congruently, the school’s mission remained undocumented. Rather than disseminating a written mission statement and educational goals, prospective parents, as indicated in ICS’s response to the WASC recommendation, were “given a personal orientation to the school by the principal. During the course of the tour, parents view the classrooms and see the philosophy of the school in action” (ICS-Progress Report, 1994, p. 2).

Interestingly, ICS rejected WASC’s proposition that the school “ensure a common thread of instructional practice” (ICS-Candidate, 1993, p. 3) on the grounds that the transient nature of the international community prohibited institutionalization of a coherent framework of instruction: “many students attend our school for only one or two years before retuning to their home country and teacher turn-over rate is approximately 20% in overseas American schools” (ICS-Progress Report, 1994, p. 2). Thus, an ethic of isolationism developed, with no structure, save administrative directives, supporting collaborative or coherent instructional planning. The school justified this approach as providing a “centralistic view of teaching” (ICS-Progress Report, 1994, p. 2), meaning a stable core curriculum acceptable in most American jurisdictions.

By the fall of 1994, the school, with approximately 300 students was large enough to increase the time load for the administration. The board promoted the two Lead Teachers into Assistant Principal positions. The following year, in the fall of 1995, the official titles of the administrative officers changed. The original principal now was deemed the Headmaster and the subordinate positions were titled the Elementary and Secondary Principals. The Headmaster took responsibility for the general operations of the school, including budget, public relations,
facility maintenance, human resources, and, with the board, policy formation and long-term planning, whereas the principals took responsibility for implementing policy, discipline, student life, and instruction at their respective levels (ICS-Self Evaluation, 1995). At the secondary school, a new principal was hired to replace the departing head teacher. Mysteriously, this administrator left the school that December, never to return. His replacement was not hired until a full year later in January 1997.

Although the teaching faculty remained small in number, fitting comfortably into a small classroom, school growth allowed high school subjects to be taught by specialists rather than thinly spread generalists. Teachers would teach all levels of one subject (i.e., 9 – 12 math) and one Bible class, which also served as a homeroom class for which the teachers became “the main counselor and advisor” (ICS-Self Evaluation, 1995, p. 22). This structure permitted high school teachers to design and resource their own courses within the constraint of only a prescribed course title. In several situations where teachers have had a long tenure the practice proved beneficial. “In some subjects [the curriculum] is quite consistent where a teacher wrote the whole curriculum for the secondary level” (C03). Yet in other disciplines in which teacher turnover was high, a coherent curriculum did not emerge. “We went through SEVERAL… [subject area] teachers in only 2 years. They taught whatever they felt like teaching with NO guidance from the administration. Each time a new… teacher came in, they would teach different things” (personal communication, February 17, 2004; emphasis original). In the elementary school, one teacher was employed per grade level. Additionally a few specialists were responsible for physical education, visual arts, band, choral music, Mandarin and French (the latter three were hired as part-time teachers) throughout all levels of the school. Thus vertical coherence was created by the employment of specialist teachers developing the courses determined by the
headmaster (C03), but with teacher attrition the curriculum was subject to change. During the 1994-1995 school year, teachers worked to create descriptions of all courses offered by the school. These documents, which were published and mailed to parents “in conjunction with the spring registration” (ICS-Action Plan, 1995, p. 1), provided the only documented curriculum alignment.

By 1995, therefore, curriculum was guided by concise course descriptions and textbooks. Indeed, until he left the school in July, 2000 the first headmaster during in-services at the beginning of each academic year, would comment that textbooks served to ensure a comprehensive curriculum in a context where teachers, often only at the school for two years, could not. The practice of using the textbook to guide curriculum is reflected in the curriculum review cycle which was unpublished and established based on the anticipated textbook lifespan of five to seven years (ICS-Self Study, 2001) rather than to reflect changing school objectives.

In 1994 – 1995, ICS prepared a self-evaluation in anticipation of WASC’s first accreditation visit. Each academic department reported on the state of its curriculum and instructional practices. Interestingly, the departmental reports indicate a continued emphasis on the teachers’ ability to rationalize textbooks and resources with instructional practices. None of these practices were articulated in a curriculum document, however. For instance, the English department reported that “reading and literature are taught through textbooks and library books” (ICS-Self-evaluation, 1995, p. 64). Likewise, the social studies department noted that a textbook series, rather than a curriculum document, provided “continuity with regard to content in grades 3 – 5, and facilitates transition from grade 5 to the middle school curriculum” (p. 70). Several departments provided a record of instructional strategies that had been practiced by teachers and resources that had been purchased by the school.
The social studies curriculum includes not only the acquisition of chronological events but also the cultural understanding of other countries. This is achieved by a variety of methods which include lectures, story telling, reading of historical novels, guest speakers from other countries, organized research, group activities, class discussions and fieldtrips. (p 71)

Much emphasis was also given to the availability of instructional resources. Congruent with the overall findings, the Bible, foreign language, mathematics and physical education departments identified further definition of curriculum as priorities for improvement (ICS-Self-evaluation, 1995). Yet, this recommendation was not met.

The 1995 WASC visiting team corroborated ICS’s self-evaluation findings and went further to emphasize the need to improve the vertical and horizontal articulation of the curriculum, recommending “that the administration and faculty develop a systematic and efficient process of K-12 vertical and horizontal communication within the faculty to articulate, integrate and coordinate instruction, which is essential to the successful development and implementation of the curriculum” (ICS-Report, 1995, p. 6). The WASC report stressed the importance of improving the articulation and documentation of curriculum no less than fourteen times. A second area of concern was the definition and dissemination of school mission and objectives and their articulation with the program. This concern was expressed no less than four times in the WASC report.

Despite WASC’s observations, administrative attention to curriculum continued to be overshadowed by the demands of school growth. Over the years, a shift occurred in the student population. Expatriate missionary children comprised a smaller and smaller proportion of the school population. As early as 1995, the largest segment of the student population was overseas
Chinese, the children of Hong Kong Chinese parents returning from North America, and other Asian professionals. (By 2000, only 14.4% of families were Christian workers with only 5% being expatriate missionaries.) To accommodate its growth and to stay true to its mandate of providing families access to a low-cost Christian education, the ICS Board redoubled its efforts to seek additional space to accommodate students placed on the school’s lengthy waiting list, a consistent priority for school improvement (ICS-Self Evaluation, 1995). As ICS’s Focus on Learning Self-Study Report (2001) states:

In 1997, the Hong Kong government granted International Christian School the use of an existing primary school building... This became our satellite campus located approximately five miles, northwest from the main campus. This satellite campus, ICS-West, was opened for operation in September 1997 with classes from Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 6. Currently, it offers classes Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8, with an enrolment of 140 students. The Head of School and the School Management Committee supervise both campuses.” (p.54)

4.3: Late Childhood: 1997 - 2001

With the opening of the new campus, the total student enrolment at ICS numbered approximately 400. For the first time, the school enrolled two classes of students for each grade level through to grade six. However, these grade levels were split between two campuses, replicating the original one class per grade K-12 structure at the original campus at a parallel K-6 satellite campus. Thus the elementary and middle school programs were offered in separation at two different campuses. Initially the elementary principal took responsibility for the new campus until a new principal was hired commencing the 1998 – 1999 school year. Consequently, from 1998 the ICS academic program fell under the auspices of three different principals (see figure
The result of the school expansion, however, was to entrench teacher isolation horizontally and to maintain the small school approach to vertical articulation.

![Enrollment History Graph]

**Figure 4.1: ICS growth in student enrolment, 1992 – 1999 (ICS-Focus, 2001)**

In the spring of 1997, the newly hired secondary school principal established dual goals of improving intra-secondary campus (i.e., within the main campus, secondary school only) communications and curriculum documentation. Finding "minimal if any curriculum documentation [and that] people tended to do their own thing and take any of their documentation with them when they left ICS" (personal communication, February 25, 2004), he instituted subject-area departments, typically of two or three grades eight through twelve teachers each, a system of faculty heads, and promoted systematic curriculum documentation. "In 1998 I asked teachers to set about formally documenting what they were teaching. Each subject had to state a rationale [or philosophy], a list of desired student outcomes, how the subject would be assessed, and resources used" (personal communication, February 25, 2004). Creating philosophies and outcomes marked the school's first attempts to involve teachers in collaboration related to curriculum development. This was also the first significant attempt at the secondary level of having teachers document the instructed curriculum in a consistent and formal
manner. However, the course overviews were created individually by teachers and both initiatives were accomplished in isolation from elementary school teachers. Teachers did not participate in discussions about K – 12 curriculum alignment; neither did they analyze the taught curriculum to ensure a K – 12 continuum of skills and content. Any K – 12 alignment was a result of conversations amongst the principals, their direction of faculty meetings, and the sequencing designed in textbook series when used. However, as the then principal acknowledges, “The Reception-12 [alignment] happened when the three principals got together to discuss whole school day-to-day issues but not a lot happened in terms of developing a ‘seamless’ curriculum from [elementary] to [secondary school]” (personal communication, February 25, 2004).

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<tr>
<th>Main Campus</th>
<th>Satellite Campus</th>
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<td>Elementary School (K – 5)</td>
<td>Pre- Kindergarten</td>
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<td>One principal</td>
<td>Elementary School (K – 5)</td>
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<td>Secondary school (6 –12)</td>
<td>Middle School 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>One principal</td>
<td>Middle School 7(added 1998-1999)</td>
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<td>Middle School 8 (added 2000-2001)</td>
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</table>

Figure 4.2: Fragmentation of teachers and administrators at ICS, 1997 - 2001

The five years from the school’s foundation to its second growth spurt in 1997 had established, of necessity, a “just do it” approach to the curriculum. Teachers, in covering multiple disciplines at the elementary level, or courses in the secondary school, had no time to participate in collaborative curriculum development, and busy administrators did not budget such time into the school’s calendar. In any case, there had been no other teacher covering the same course at the same level at the same campus with whom to collaborate. Even department head “meetings tended to be informal because each subject area had so few teachers” (Secondary
Principal, 1997-1999, personal communication, February 25, 2004). Indeed, in some cases the department head was also the only teacher in the subject area. Degrees of vertical and horizontal coherence were enacted in instructional practices and developed within the minds of teachers who were responsible either for all courses in a given subject area (8 - 12), or the only class at a grade level (K -12). In a small school environment, teachers could easily find each other for hallway curriculum conversations and or to take initiative in collaborative planning. Vertical alignment, therefore, would emerge through informal discussion rather than documentation. The practice persisted as the school continued to grow. “In the past we’ve never had collaboration between... grades, although I’ve had teachers ask, ‘what do [students] need to know by [your] grade? What are you looking for?’ But it wasn’t based on standards and benchmarks because we didn’t have any” (T07).

Despite the lack of formal mechanisms, the small size of the faculty permitted a degree of coherence to adhere in the secondary school simply because lone teachers taught specific subject areas to several grades of students. At the elementary level, a single teacher per grade level permitted horizontal articulation and subject-specific textbook series, which teachers were held accountable for teaching, facilitated vertical alignment. In the absence of a documented curriculum, the textbook, provided helpful guidance to some teachers.

When I first got here, I was told to use the book. ‘Just do that.’ There wasn’t any freedom to that, [but] I continued in that manner... That was expected at the time. And I’d bring in my own stuff too. That was kind of a relief to me at the time because I was unsure of myself as a beginning teacher. But, as time goes on, I’m realizing that you can have a lot more fun with this stuff. I don’t know if what we’re doing is what is expected, but then I see that kids still graduate and they do well. (T06)
School growth after 1997, occurred in a manner that perpetuated a small school ethos, but undermined the natural coherence that had developed. With the establishment of a satellite campus in 1997, the ICS elementary and middle school teaching faculty became split between two campuses with little interaction between them. New teachers were hired, one of whom became principal of the satellite campus in its second year of operation. While, for the most part, the two campuses used the same textbooks and resources, elementary teachers never met each other for the purposes of curriculum alignment discussion. The two programs developed in isolation. From 1997 to 2001, the satellite campus grew steadily and in its last year of operation, 2000 – 2001 offered courses through middle school. The growth meant that horizontal alignment of curriculum was now required through nine grade levels as there were two classes at each level. But, given the administrative structure, and the physical distance separating each campus, the school maintained the small school ethos of teachers working in isolation from peers instructing the same courses, and remaining very much unaware of how curriculum was implemented by their colleagues. At the main campus Elementary and Secondary faculty worked in distinction from each other, as did the two elementary and middle school programs. Thus, ICS became fragmented on horizontal and vertical axes. Consequently, ICS still relied upon the mechanisms of the small school, namely informal discussion, and a curriculum driven by textbooks or the instincts of teachers but in a context where such strategies were insufficient to promote curriculum cohesion.

While the administrative framework had ensured some curriculum cohesion, this began to collapse with the frequent change of secondary principals. Through to 2001, there had been five administrators holding the leadership position in the secondary school including the Lead Teacher (1994-1995) and headmaster (1992- 1994 & 1996). Such frequent change inhibited the
development of the curriculum, or so the school reported (ICS-Focus, 2001). Figure 4.3 tracks the movement of ICS’s twelve administrators. Each number represents one individual. The figure indicates a high degree of administrative instability in the secondary school, which impacted curriculum continuity. With the arrival of a new secondary school principal in August 1999, subject area philosophies and quarterly overviews (thereto, along with textbooks, the only curriculum documents) were no longer disseminated to teachers, and the department structure was dissolved (ICS, Focus, 2001).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Kindergarten Administrator</th>
<th>Elementary Administrator</th>
<th>Secondary Administrator</th>
<th>Headmaster</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992-03</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-04</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7 / 11 (vice principal)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.3: Transience of administrators at ICS, 1992 - 2004**

In the 1999 – 2000 school years, as ICS approached the end of its first accreditation term, the principals once again encouraged teachers to document the taught curriculum by writing course overviews and unit plans. However, each principal used a different template. The secondary principal’s unit template (ICS-Unit A) contained the fields of goals, objectives, materials, teaching strategies and assessments. However, the satellite campus principal framed his unit plan around headings and guiding questions:

- Content/skill objectives—what specifically should students know or be able to do at the end of this unit?
- Major Assessments—what will students need to demonstrate to show that they have learned what they are supposed to?

- Key Learning Activities—what are some things that students will actually be doing, developing, participating in to help them learn?

- Resources—what materials will students be using during this unit? (ICS-Unit b)

In that same year the ICS elementary teachers compared their instructed curriculum with the New Jersey State Standards and “found them to be very similar to what ICS students were to know and understand by the end of each school year” (ICS-Self-Study, 2001, p. 38). True to the small school ethic, secondary school teachers took no part in the discussion, no K-12 alignment was established and no official ICS curriculum documents were created to verify the comparison or to mandate the standards for future teachers. During 1998 – 1999, “the [main campus] elementary teachers and the principal examined three Language Arts series and came to an agreement as to which would be best” (ICS-Self-Study, 2001, p. 38). Again, the record specifies only the involvement of the main campus elementary teachers in selecting resources and indicates neither the involvement of the secondary faculty members nor those in the parallel elementary program.

By 2000, the impact of ICS’s rapid growth had instilled a curriculum ethos which utilized a familiar small school climate that focused on discussion, accepted habit and administrative links, rather than teacher collaboration and documentation. The ICS 2001 self-study provides examples of such practices, noting that “the elementary principal attended the discussion about adopting a new middle school reading curriculum.” Further, “teachers often discuss curriculum with each other, as do administrators, with teachers and each other, to ensure continuity.” (ICS, 2001, p. 39). Thus curriculum coherence continued to be vested primarily in informal discussion
and administrative knowledge. In the context of a much larger school, such practices inadequately addressed the concerns for developing a schoolwide language articulated much earlier by the 1995 WASC Visiting Team. Teachers frequently reported that they never saw curriculum documents that previous teachers had created and had to rely on their own intuition and expertise in designing instruction.

I'd say that when I came here, I didn't have what a student needed to learn. That wasn't given to me. But I knew. In terms of the documented material, there really wasn't anything. I wasn't given anything that a past teacher was given. From what I was told later on, there was someplace [where documents were kept], but I was never told where to look or even given hard copies. (T05)

4.4: 2001: The Year of Transformation

The need to find space for students continued to impact the delivery of the school's program. In early 2001, the Hong Kong government chose not to renew ICS's lease on the second campus. As a result, the board searched for new classroom space, eventually settling on a retail location. The structure of two parallel elementary and middle school campuses feeding into one secondary program continued until August 2001 when the two elementary programs were collapsed into a single program at the new location and the satellite middle school program merged into the secondary program at the original campus.

In July 2000, just prior to the school's restructuring effort, the original headmaster did not renew his contract. His replacement coordinated the facility search and urged the board to open a third campus to house an expanded pre-school and kindergarten program. By March 2001, the new head had resigned, but not before the school had committed itself to opening the pre-school
program. So, from September 2001, the school had three campuses for three different school levels with corresponding administrators, faculty and support staff (ICS-Interim, 2001).

Curriculum essentially followed the textbook, or was designed by individual teachers from their own idiosyncratic viewpoints. However, despite this lack of coherence, teachers provided a solid academic program for the school. Students found admission to a wide range of well-regarded universities. ICS's 2001-2002 School Profile documented that graduates were currently attending universities such as: Johns Hopkins, Vanderbilt, Carnegie Mellon, Univ. of Penn., Wheaton College and Boston University in the U.S.; University of British Columbia, Queen's University, University of Waterloo and University of Toronto in Canada; and Hong Kong University. ICS graduates also study at universities in Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Korea, France and Norway. (p. 2)

With graduates' overall university admission rates approaching 100% each year (e.g., 96% in 2000 and 100% in 2001), the school had earned favor with parents, of whom 20% worked at tertiary institutions. Enrollment continued to grow, reaching 620 students for the 2001-2002 academic year (ICS-School, 2002), and students continued to perform well. As one school teacher commented, "I came from public schools in America. What we teach here is definitely above grade level there" (T07).

But, by 2001, the school still lacked a structure to encourage kindergarten through graduation curriculum discussion. The "common professional language" that WASC encouraged in 1994 had yet to develop. Hence the WASC (2001) visiting team reported:

There is evidence of standards-based curricula in certain subject areas, but student learning in other areas seems to be largely textbook-driven. The school acknowledges
the need to evaluate their entire curricular program based on curriculum standards from various states in order to ensure a high-quality education. (ICS-WASC Visiting, 2001, p. 15)

WASC was urging ICS to get its curriculum house in order.

The 2001-2002 academic year proved to be pivotal in ICS history. It saw the beginnings of wide-ranging restructuring of the school. A new administrative team set an ambitious agenda of designing new structures or approaches to administration, budgeting, human resources, public relations, school development, facilities management, and governance. In terms of the curriculum, emphasis was placed on teacher involvement in collaboratively setting schoolwide learning outcomes for students and in evaluating the academic program (ICS-Interim, 2002; ICS-Annual, 2003). Essentially, within two years the school was transformed from a large school still utilizing small school structures and practices into one designed to accommodate not only its current size but further growth.

ICS's accreditation agency provided a major impetus for curriculum change as WASC's 2001 visiting team determined that ICS had not met WASC's requirements to earn a full term of accreditation. In 1995, ICS had received a full six-year term of accreditation. However, in 1997 WASC introduced a new accreditation process which entailed involving stakeholders in collaboratively evaluating the school's operations and setting goals for improvement. Stakeholder focus groups were to evaluate school purpose, governance, leadership, staffing, environment, improvement process, curriculum, instruction, assessment, reporting, parent and community involvement, student support services, resources and resource planning. Preceding the self-study process, WASC expected its accredited schools to clarify school purpose through defining expected schoolwide learning results (ESLRs) for students, assessing the impact of the
program on student learning vis-à-vis the learning results, creating focused action plans to facilitate growth, and developing accountability systems for monitoring the action plans. In sum, WASC expected the school to take an orientation towards continuous improvement in supporting students to achieve its ESLRs. This was to be accomplished by galvanizing the entire community towards this focused purpose (WASC, 1997). But, from 1997 until its term of accreditation expired in 2001, ICS continued in its small school administrative and curricular framework. Time and personnel were not allocated to planning the involvement of all stakeholders in the thorough examination of the schoolwide program. Rather, in keeping with its practices since ICS’s formation, the self-study process was undertaken largely by the school’s administration which solicited only minimal feedback from teachers and parents. Coherence-making remained an administrative task, not one perceived to require teacher involvement (ICS-Interim, 2002).

In gearing up for the March 2001 accreditation visit, the school began to create student learning objectives which it termed Schoolwide Learning Objectives (SWLOs). The SWLOs were intended to target goals for student learning and therefore should have impacted curriculum development. However, the process of minimal teacher involvement resulted in a product that was not clearly understood and not authentically applied. In its Self Study Report, ICS (2001) documented the process of devising the SWLOs:

- June 1999 - The Memorandum and Articles of incorporation were formally amended to accommodate the changing mission of ICS.

- September 6, 1999 - Board of Directors approves a membership change in the School Management Committee which allows for a broader representation by school parents. A sub-committee consisting of members of both the School Management Committee
and the Board of Directors was formed to review the mission of the school and to assist in the development of Schoolwide Learning Objectives.

- October 15, 1999 - Parents, students, faculty, and staff met to discuss and amend the mission statement and the schoolwide objectives formulated by the board committee.
- February 21, 2000 - The Board of Directors approved the revised mission statement and objectives. (p. 20)

In the process, teachers and parents had only one day to evaluate and provide input into the SWLOs. This did not match WASC's vision of broad, comprehensive and authentic stakeholder involvement. As teachers did not participate in creating the SWLOs, they were not understood and therefore not up to the task of driving curriculum and instruction, which had been effectively designed by teachers. SWLOs were created, in essence, for the purpose of WASC accreditation and not for driving curriculum. For instance, while teachers were asked to indicate on unit plans the SWLOs that the units met, the task was completed post hoc and not as part of the instructional design. Teachers were also tasked with collecting samples of student work and indicating the SWLOs that students met. Likewise, this endeavor was intended to meet the WASC (1997) requirement that schools examine evidence of student achievement of learning outcomes. But in reality, student work was linked to the SWLOs after the fact with no actual analysis of achievement or collaborative discussion of their significance. However, this process missed the point of using SWLOs deliberately to plan instruction and of collecting student work to evaluate student progress towards meeting the SWLOs. Similarly, the school did not use stakeholder focus groups to evaluate its schoolwide programs as stipulated by the new WASC protocol. As confessed in the school's 2002 Interim Report:
During the last self-study, the school did not authentically implement the *Focus on Learning* process. While focus groups were created, they met only twice; the board devised Schoolwide Learning Objectives and a mission statement with minimal stakeholder input; academic standards were not developed; the administration evaluated the school program with little stakeholder contribution; teachers collected evidence but no analysis followed. By marginalizing the *FOL* parameters, a self-study lacking depth of inquiry and an action plan that resembled a "to do" list resulted (ICS, 2002). (p. 3)

A long-time faculty member reflected that the process was problematic:

> I would recall that WASC required us to have some ESLRs. The board hammered out a list of about a million different purposes of the school. It was about three pages long or something. And, we all viewed that as a rather a sham process. But I think it wasn't so much that we were thinking about why we need these or why was it important; we just were saying "this process is a sham." (A01)

As a result, in part, of not following the FOL process, WASC granted ICS only a three year term of accreditation. Occurring on the heels of the headmaster’s resignation, the lower accreditation term steeled the new administration’s resolve to institute an authentic process of involving stakeholders in creating ESLRs, teachers in selecting standards, and in evaluating the instructed curriculum against those measures. These tasks formed the foundation of the ICS curriculum reform that was pursued over two academic years from August 2001 until June 2003. And the three year term imposed a sense of urgency.

### 4.5: The Context of Curriculum Change at ICS

By 2001, rapid growth with little capital increase served to establish a specific curriculum culture. The inability of administrators to find time, energy and money with which to direct
curriculum tasks led to an ad hoc resolution of entrusting the curriculum to the design of textbook series and teachers' initiative and intuition. Although the school grew larger, the curriculum strategy did not change. Consequently a culture developed in which teachers could either act independently (especially at the secondary level), making curriculum decisions with little accountability, or become textbook-driven. Having no prescribed curriculum, teacher's instructional design, documented or not, creative or textbook oriented, became the curriculum. As documentation efforts of 1998 and 2000 concentrated on post hoc recording of instruction, the resulting documents were completed to varying degrees of excellence and were not disseminated to new teachers as curriculum guides. Coherence across a subject area and from year-to-year resulted only when the school was able to retain teachers for several years or when teachers closely followed the textbook. But as teachers independently determined how to use the textbook, the teacher became the sole arbiter of the curriculum, setting all goals, instructional strategies and assessment strategies. Subject area meetings were infrequent and lacked strategic purpose. Even schoolwide goals (SWLOs) were superfluous as teachers were not required to design instruction with the SWLOs in mind. In fact, involving teachers in curriculum documentation had essentially been busy work as documents were never used purposefully after they had been created, except to indicate to WASC that ICS actually had a curriculum (Secondary principal, 1997-1999, personal communication, February 25, 2004).

To meet its accreditation requirements, WASC expected ICS to prepare a self-study report, documenting the state of its entire program. By 2001, ICS provided as "evidence that each subject K through 12 is coherent with no gaps or duplications" only that Scope and sequence documents are available for elementary Bible, language arts, math, social studies, and science. Subject philosophies have been written for each core subject
at the high school level. Published course guides are distributed to elementary school, middle school, and high school parents, as well as prospective parents." (ICS-Self-Study, 2001, p. 37)

Little had changed in the curriculum since 1995. While teachers were independent in the classroom, they lacked involvement at the broad decision-making levels.

Interviews with teachers hired prior to 2003 indicate how the experience of coping with a non-written curriculum has shaped the curriculum ethic. Teachers, ranging from 2 to 10 years of experience at ICS noted an ethos of independence, which they attribute to teaching a largely unwritten and non-prescriptive curriculum. Teachers “have a direct impact on what is taught here. And there is quite a lot of freedom in terms of what we teach. Part of that is due to the fact that before we didn’t have a written curriculum at all and it was just what the teacher thought was best practice” (C01). For some such independence meant a reliance on the textbook. “When I got here, [teachers] had similar textbooks, but it was not certain that one child in 3rd grade would get a similar education to another” (A04).

Despite the inconveniences and ambiguities of having to develop courses, and sometimes entire subject-area programs, several teachers reported that they highly valued such academic freedom, as the following comments indicate:

- I didn’t have any documents when I came and there weren’t resources either. So, one thing I’ve had to do is document what am I doing and what I intend to do. The other main thing has been to develop resources. It is something that is quite positive. (T08)
- We have free reign. (C03)
- In my case, when I came to ICS there was no written curriculum. So, I had quite a lot of freedom, which was nice. (C04)
From my first year I've found that I'm like the Lone Ranger. You have to fend for your own and make sure the students get what they need. That is not bad. I'm not dependent on somebody to feed me. I research and try to get the best for my students. I have enough support in that I'm encouraged and am free to teach the children. I can always ask somebody else and that helps. (T10)

Such experiences seem to have shaped the school's curriculum conscience. When asked in a questionnaire "have you enjoyed an appropriate amount of curricular freedom at ICS?" (Q19), of the 24 participants, twelve teachers selected "just the right amount." Five indicated that too much freedom resulted in a lack of accountability, four indicated a resulting lack of support, and an additional three indicated both deficiencies. No teacher selected the option "Too little. I feel dictated to."

4.6: Implications

The ICS context had significant impact on shaping the curriculum tasks and processes in which teachers were to be involved from August 2001 to December 2003. Specifically, two contextual features were to be addressed. First, teacher involvement in curriculum had become highly independent and isolated. A school divided across three campuses prohibited vertical and horizontal collaboration. No administrative or documentation structures were developed to promote coherence. No collaborative planning time was provided. The school had not developed a "language" of curriculum and instruction. Teachers were not involved in collaborative decision-making about program goals. And, no structures involving teachers, such as subject area departments, had been maintained to plan for curriculum consistency. This feature of teacher isolation from each other, as well as from a clear school purpose, was the target of change. Teacher isolation was reflected in curriculum documents which, varying from
faculty-to-faculty, lacked coherence having no clear relationship with each other or with the stated school goals, the SWOLs.

Teachers at ICS had become the *de facto* curriculum creators. Long staying teachers had a high degree of autonomy in the classroom and had developed entire courses, and sometime programs, from scratch. But newer teachers tended to rely on the textbook.

It is only those teachers who understand their subject quite well that, I think, can not depend on a text book to guide them. In my case, I feel comfortable with or without a textbook. After 16 years I can put together a pretty decent...class. But that's after 16 years. This year I'm teaching a ... class for the first time. In that situation I need the textbook and am following it. I think a lot of us are in situations where we need that guidance. (C04)

With the exception of the SWOLs, teachers had created all curriculum documents, which were essentially *post hoc* records of instruction. As the curriculum was not guided in any way by the SWOLs, coherence existed within the minds of teachers or the pages of textbooks. The curriculum was thus instructionally based and rooted in individual teacher’s intuitive sense of appropriate use of resources and personal insight. The tasks and processes of collaborative curriculum development, therefore, drew heavily on teachers’ intuition and experience (or lack thereof) as an essential feature of involvement in order to create curriculum coherence.
CHAPTER V: Tasks and Processes of the Curriculum Development Project

5.1: Introduction

By September 2001, ICS had a new administrative team in place with the goals of authentically involving the school's stakeholders in defining school purpose and of propelling teachers towards the creation of a coherent school curriculum. The tasks described below were intended to meet these goals, conforming with WASC's expectations and to the new administrations' understanding of best practice.

By 2001, the ICS context had shaped a curriculum culture that significantly lacked teacher involvement in collaboratively creating and strategically pursuing learning results through a systematic articulation of content and skills throughout the grades, careful horizontal alignment of the curriculum, and dissemination of curriculum documentation to inform new teachers of expectations; collaborative planning and strategic coordination of the curriculum seldom occurred. The result was often frustration for new teachers who knew neither where to begin their planning nor what goals should guide their instruction.

Despite these limitations, several strengths of the ICS program had emerged: courses had been developed that were unique to the ICS context; student achievement tended to be high; secondary teachers who remained at ICS for several years essentially created their subject area or grade-level curriculum; elementary teachers became the de facto expert for a specific grade level; because teachers were depended upon entirely for the creation of a viable curriculum, many who remained became highly invested in their programs. Unfortunately most faculty members only remained at ICS for a short period of time, typically less than four years. In May 2000, only 16% of faculty had taught at ICS for longer than three years (ICS-Self-study, 2001). Such a short tenure prevented faculty from fully developing courses. When teachers left, much
of what they had developed tended to leave along with them. Institutionalization of the curriculum was lacking. In these cases some courses became textbook driven. Furthermore, a top down administrative structure had negated the role of the teacher in defining school purpose.

To redress the deficiencies, the new Headmaster set out several strategies. These included involving the school’s teachers, with all other stakeholders, in re-defining the school’s purpose, documenting the instructed curriculum in a manner consistent across the entire school, selecting standards and benchmarks for their subject areas in order to bring about curricular coherence, and engaging teachers in analyzing the curriculum to determine the extent to which the school was meeting its ESLRs and standards. Subsequently, teachers began to write unit plans to address standards and ESLRs. Administrative structures were created to support the process, which occurred over two years, with ESLRs being defined in the 2001 – 2002 school year, and the remainder during 2002 – 2003. Each initiative was pursued to document and improve curriculum coherence. Much of this work involved moving the instructed curriculum from the heads of teachers into a consistently documented format.

5.2: Defining Expected Schoolwide Learning Results

The Task

Propelled by the urgency of a brief term of accreditation, the new school Headmaster and his appointee as Accreditation Follow-up Co-chair (the author), worked to involve all school stakeholders in defining Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs). ESLRs were to provide overall learning goals for all students towards which all school programs (curricular and otherwise) would be directed, thereby establishing a basis for curriculum improvement and coherence (WASC, 1997). The primary task became defining a discrete, manageable number of
ESLRs phrased broadly enough to capture the school's entire program but with enough focus to provide guidance.

The decision to scrap the SWLOs in favor of ESLRs was first indicated in ICS's Revised Schoolwide Action Plan (RSWAP), a document created in response to the March 2001 WASC Visiting Team report. Representatives of each of the school's stakeholder groups formed a leadership team which revised the March 2001 "Schoolwide Action Plan" (in ICS, 2001a, Focus) in light of WASC's recommendations. As the RSWAP noted,

"Through revising the schoolwide action plan, the need for all stakeholders to become active in the school improvement process became obvious. As the school's leadership responds by consulting and activating all stakeholders, it will be better able to define whom the school serves, how that community changes, and what stakeholders want from the school. In the follow-up process, it is therefore necessary to develop new demographic profiles of the school's stakeholders, and to determine how they affect the school's mission and schoolwide learning objectives." (ICS-Revised, 2001, p. 6)

Specifically, the RSWAP called for the school to "Revise the SWLOs to meet the WASC ESLR criteria, and develop a motto, through meaningful dialogue of all community stakeholders" (ICS-Revised, 2001, p. 6).

The Process

Put simply, an ESLR is an interdisciplinary statement about "what each student should know, understand and be able to do upon exit (e.g., graduation) from the school" (WASC, 1997, p. 11). This definition was first disseminated to faculty in a September 2001 handout adapted from WASC's 1997 accreditation protocol, Focus on Learning. Quoting WASC, the document indicated that "An ESLR of significance is an expectation that as a result of meaningful and
authentic learning experiences over time, learners will be able to exhibit a culmination of their learning in a real world context that has significant purpose and meaning for them and others over time” [Emphasis original] (WASC, 2002, p. 90; ICS-ESLRs, 2001). It stipulated WASC’s criteria that the ESLRs, “apply to all disciplines, include all students, be assessable through measurable indicators, [and] reflect what we wish our students to do, know, understand and value” (ICS-ESLRs, 2001; WASC 2002) Finally, the document indicated the purpose of ESLRs: “Taken together, ESLRs form the cornerstone of school improvement along with academic standards (that is to say, ESLRs drive organizational change in order to promote student learning) [and] enable teachers to implement programs and conditions that maximize learning successes for ALL students” (Emphasis WASC, 2002, p. 90; ICS doc, 2001). ESLRs therefore, would provide the basis for curriculum development, instruction and school improvement. And, given the intent explained in the RSWAP, ESLRs would be created and implemented through the involvement of all stakeholders, particularly teachers.

The ESLR creation process was described in the literature review (see section 3.2 above) from the perspective of what action research literature says of stakeholder involvement in school projects. It indicated that the process involved all stakeholders, board members, administrators, teachers, parents and students, as full and equal participants in a process of joint construction of the statements. This section will analyze the process from the vantage of teacher involvement.

In the first stage of creating ESLRs, a two day process, the teaching faculty was divided into seven small groups, interspersed with administrators and board members. After receiving an explanation of the criteria and purpose of ESLRs each group brainstormed possible ESLRs which they wrote on poster paper and displayed around the room. Each group’s proposals were later recorded and disseminated by e-mail to all participants (ICS-Review, 2001). One month
later, the same participants worked to refine and present their proposals to the entire faculty. Collectively, the faculty organized the proposed statements into five similar categories reflecting attributes emphasizing the development in students of cognitive processes, Christian faith, communication ability, range of abilities, and cultural sensitivity (ICS-Review b, 2001). Again, this categorization was typed and disseminated to all participants for reflection. Through the process it became evident that as a whole the board, administration and faculty shared the same overarching goals for students. As one teacher recounts, “I felt both processes were quite adequate. I like the way we did it. We had different discussion groups that would come up with lists of proposed ESLRs. I remember thinking how remarkable that was. There were clear trends. Various groups were heading in the same direction” (C04).

At a subsequent meeting, faculty reflected on each category of statements. Four categories were collapsed into single statements. Together, teachers split the category related to student ability into two areas of concern; one emphasized the identification and development of ability and the other a balanced approach to life. Thus teachers created six clear statements which were forwarded to the school’s leadership team, a group containing representatives of all of the school’s stakeholders, including four teachers. From November to March, students and parents developed their contributions.

On 11 June, the Leadership Team, which included four teachers, analyzed contributions from teachers, students and parents, noted learning goals common and unique to the stakeholder groups. From these the leadership team created six ESLRs that represented what it perceived to be a consensus position (see figure 5.1). All teachers were given the opportunity to comment on the ESLRs prior to board approval. Nobody voiced a dissenting opinion. As one teacher
observed, “The ESLRs look great, and I can feel the weight of all the stakeholders behind them!” (personal communication, June 12, 2002).

| Faculty Group A proposed ESLRs, 21 Sept 2001 | - Demonstrate effective communication.  
- Exercise higher order thinking skills.  
- Identify and develop God-given abilities.  
- Demonstrate behavior consistent with values and morals of the Christian faith.  
- Imitate Christ’s compassion for the world through Service.  
- Demonstrate skills for life-long learning. |
| Sample categorization of proposed ESLRs. Faculty meeting 26 Oct, 2001 | - Exhibit a balanced and healthy lifestyle  
- Demonstrate an understanding of the fine arts and personal wellness  
- Identify and develop God-given abilities through participation in academics, fine arts and physical education.  
- Identify and develop God-given abilities.  
- Demonstrate an understanding of the fine arts, physical education, and health through performance and participation.  
- Demonstrate a balanced approach to life emotionally, socially, physically, mentally and spiritually. |
| Final faculty proposals November, 2001 | - All students will think independently, creatively, and analytically  
- All students will demonstrate an understanding of Christian faith and its application to life.  
- All students will apply effective communication and research skills, utilizing various media.  
- All students will identify and develop god-given abilities.  
- All students will practice a balanced approach to life emotionally, socially, physically, mentally and spiritually.  
- All students will understand and respect other cultures. |
| Leadership Team Proposed ESLRs, June 2002. Approved by Board, September 2002 | All students will  
- Identify and develop their God-given abilities  
- Communicate effectively  
- Strive for excellence  
- Act as responsible members of the global community  
- Know and apply biblical principles  
- Think independently, creatively and analytically |

Figure 5.1: Example of ESLR creation process

ICS teachers had never before been involved in such a process and had not ever discussed issues pertaining to school purpose and student learning in a structured, authorized, collaborative setting in which teachers had political parity to administrators and other stakeholders (see Chapter IV above). This also represented the first step in transferring a set of undocumented individual understandings into a collective written agreement about the school’s purpose for student learning. The process, therefore, called on teachers to generate possible ESLRs based
upon their understanding and experience of the school’s *de facto* purpose and learning goals. Given that the process relied on individual teachers articulating their opinions in a collaborative setting, it is interesting that a high degree of coherence among teachers’ understanding of school purpose was evident early on. This may imply that a degree of coherence had existed prior to the ESLR creation effort, although it had been undocumented and not formally discussed. Such coherence is likely accounted for in the school context, being a small, familial, Christian school.

Evidence of such coherence is found in examining documents that predate the ESLRs. Subject area philosophies written as early as 1999, evidence purposes and goals from learning similar to those expressed in the ESLRs. These similarities and their significance are discussed in chapter VI (below) delineating the impacts of teacher involvement.

It should also be noted that teachers were involved in the ESLR creation process on three organizational levels. First teachers were engaged as an entire faculty. Secondly, four teacher representatives participated in the leadership team: one teacher from each school campus, i.e., kindergarten, elementary and secondary, participated as did the Accreditation Follow-up Co-chair who, on another organizational level, worked alongside the headmaster to develop the approach to identifying the ELSRs. Involving teachers in multiple organizational levels is a feature evident throughout the processes described in this chapter.

5.3: *Selecting Standards, and Creating Curriculum Overviews and Unit Plans.*

*The Task*

As indicated in WASC’s accreditation manual, ESLRs do not stand alone. They are to work in complementary fashion along with academic standards (WASC, 2003). The RSWAP provided direction and articulated the need for setting academic standards among other strategies.
Action items in [the] category [of curriculum and instruction] highlight the need to develop a more coherent and comprehensive approach to curriculum development and instructional practice. Curriculum was previously developed on an *ad hoc* review basis. While some sound principles guided the procedure, i.e., new textbooks were ordered every four-to-five years, the process was not thoroughly codified. The development of a formal curriculum review process, a standards-based approach to curriculum, and regular K-12 vertical team meetings will lead to a more comprehensive approach to curriculum development. (ICS, *Focus*, 2001, p. 6)

Thus an early conception of goal and support structure was laid out. Specifically, the RSWAP indicated that ICS would “Adopt state / provincial standards supplemented with locally developed course standards or write ICS standards for all courses based on state / provincial standards” (ICS, Oct 2001, p. 25). Thus the RSWAP, laid out the task of standards selection.

In September 2002, the Headmaster, in a letter to all faculty members and principals, articulated curriculum tasks in which he envisioned faculty participating. These tasks included the selection of subject area standards, and the creation of curriculum overviews and unit plans. The headmaster articulated that the purpose of the initiative was to focus teachers’ energies on providing the school with essential learning objectives, with attention to be given to assessment strategies and instructional strategies in the following academic year (i.e., 2003-2004), after standards had been selected. Standards, overviews and unit plans would help to provide a format by which ICS could document “what students will know, be able to do, and the attitudes and dispositions that they will hold as a result of completing a school’s program” (Betts in ICS-Headmaster, 2002). Subject area standards would provide K – 12 and vertical coherence of instructional goals for each subject area. Curriculum Overviews would indicate “a synopsis of
what students will be learning, doing, and studying during each course,” whereas unit plans provide the “whole design, delivery and assessment package used in teaching to learning outcomes / standards that have been determined as critical to student learning” (Betts in ICS-Headmaster, 2002). Beginning in autumn of 2003, it was envisioned that teachers would begin to align assessment and instruction with the selected standards and adjust the curriculum documents accordingly. Thus, in the unit plan template disseminated to teachers in 2002, the Headmaster allowed for space to insert standards later on.

The bases for focusing teachers’ efforts on these tasks lay in articles written by Bambi Betts, Director of the Principal’s Training Center, an organization well esteemed in the international school circuit and tailored to its needs. In her articles, which the Headmaster disseminated to faculty in September 2002, Betts (1997a) notes that a clear written curriculum “is the single most important vehicle for transmitting what the school values and for driving daily instruction. [Yet], “for every five international schools surveyed in 1996, four either had no such written curriculum or had a textbook-driven curriculum, with no particular guidance for the new (or the ‘veteran’) teacher” (p. 1). Betts’s work, given its credibility in the community of international schools, provided the rationale for creating a curriculum based on standards, assessment and instructional strategies and for using unit plans and curriculum overviews as at least an initial framework for achieving the relevant documentation. Her articles were disseminated to all faculty members as a justification for involving teachers in the curriculum tasks.

The Process

To support the tasks, the Headmaster established a curriculum committee and a divisional system. All administrators and four divisional chairs represented two or three subject areas on
the curriculum committee. The divisions were organized as follows: the humanities division comprised the English, social studies and languages departments; the sciences division represented math, science and information technology; the fine and performing arts (FPA) division was composed of music and visual arts; and the life studies division was fashioned from the physical education, health and Bible departments. Teachers were asked to collaborate in divisions or in k-12 department teams to select subject area standards and benchmarks that best reflected skills and content to which teachers already taught and believed they should teach. Teacher concerns and decisions were fed back to the curriculum committee through the divisional chairs.

In his letter of September 2001, the Headmaster asked teachers to consider two sources for standards and to “comment on whether or not you think these standards are consistent with what you teach at ICS. You may also wish to advise your Divisional Chair and/or Principal which standards best ‘fit’ the courses that you teach at ICS” (ICS-Headmaster, 2002). By engaged teachers intuitively, basing standards selection on teachers’ beliefs and intuition about their own instructional program, he endorsed the contextual feature of teacher involvement, that the fit of curriculum elements required the judicious application of teacher intuition and experience. What else could be drawn upon?

The design of the process, therefore, was intended to allow teachers a great deal of autonomy and to draw upon their intuition to select appropriate standards. With no curriculum specialists, teachers had come to be viewed as the actual authority over the programs which they had been teaching. Engaging teachers to work collaborative to select from sources standards and benchmarks meant that teachers, once again, were involved in selecting goals to which they intuitively believed that they were teaching. That the standards and benchmarks selected were
agreed to by K-12 vertical teams (i.e., subject area departments) meant that, at least superficially, some sort of agreed upon vertical curriculum alignment was documented for the first time in the school’s history through collaboration. “In working out standards, we did that at the divisional level. I could have input in it. It wasn’t something that was just given to me. I was involved in the process” (T08). Thus the process represented transference of individually held, and probably undefined and undocumented, instructional goals to collectively agreed-upon written standards and benchmarks. Thus, teachers were the actual arbiters of the standards to which they would agree to teach. “We’ve been given freedom, a carte blanche, to create in the sense that we were expected to come up with them, to implement them, and we were also expected to produce professional work.” (T05). This comment points to a challenge for the school. Would teacher intuition lead to quality products?

One strategy intended to compensate for a lack of experience and, perhaps, competence was the use of collaboration in subject-area departments. But, although the process was meant to involve teachers collaboratively, actual implementation tended to vary among departments. One curriculum committee member reported “I’m not sure that we had time for everybody to thoroughly look at all of the options. I felt that as a divisional head I drove that process more than I should have. But people had good opportunity to participate” (C04). In a, smaller department, one teacher indicated that the process was somewhat isolating and therefore lacked support.

I was asked to come up with the standards and benchmarks. I appreciate the opportunity, but I have to admit that I started out without even knowing what a standard is or how to go about writing one. We ended up researching it and then taking the US standards and using them, just because they were the best for our school. (T05)
In this case, the teacher felt that the final product was solid and that the standards are important aspects of curriculum yet experienced some frustration from “not knowing if you’re on the right track.” Especially in cases where collaboration was lacking, teacher independence in the process led to uncertainty regarding competence. “My only fear would be that the standards and benchmarks that we did create are they right ones? In my case, I believe that they really are because we did a lot of work on them” (T05). The problems surrounding confidence and, perhaps, perceptions of a lack of competence were echoed by other teachers. “We have not had the people who are knowledgeable” (T06).

After teachers defined appropriate subject-area standards, they keyed the standards to ESLRs on a template created by the curriculum committee. Teachers indicated beside each standard the corresponding ESLRs that they believed the standard clearly addressed. Again, this was a post-hoc activity. The ESLRs did not drive the creation of the standards. Rather, the standards emerged independently from the ESLRs and connections were made after selection. This, however, is consistent with WASC’s vision of ESLRs being complimentary to standards. The act of keying ESLRs to standards relied, again, entirely upon teachers’ intuitive understanding of the instructed curriculum. Further, it engaged teachers in considering tangibly and concretely the extent to which they actually were addressing, or would likely address, ESLRs through taught skills and content.

Teacher involvement in documenting their taught curriculum was primarily an independent task of recording their instruction in curriculum overviews and unit plans. The Headmaster presented templates, in a format developed by Bambi Betts (see p. 105-106 above) to the curriculum committee, which suggested the addition to the unit plan of a checklist for teachers to indicate ESLRs addressed. The unit plans also contained space for teachers to insert
the relevant standards, which were yet to be determined. Thus, teachers were documenting their instruction even prior to the selection of standards. The templates were then disseminated to teachers along with completed exemplars (ICS-Unit, 2002). Teachers were asked to complete each curriculum overview by the mid-point of the semester and each unit plan after actual instruction. The Headmaster's conception from the outset was that the process of defining the curriculum should be developmental over time. "Don't strive for perfection but do the job well. Your plans will become better developed as the years go by. The point is not to develop the perfect written curriculum...the point is to have one! - one that will be instructive to faculty and helpful to students, parents, administrators and the Board" [emphasis original] (ICS, Headmaster, 2002).

Again, the process of documentation required a high degree of faculty involvement. Indeed, the creation of curriculum documents was entirely reliant on teachers, who alone knew how courses had been developed. In this aspect of the process, teachers worked individually. Departmental chairs, who were not responsible for teacher supervision, were not requested to provide feedback on the documents. And, in most cases, teachers did not submit their completed work to principals until the end of the school year.

5.4: Analysis of Curriculum Documents and Student Work

The Task

The next task of the curriculum initiative was to engage teachers in analyzing the curriculum documents and exemplars of student work to determine the extent to which the instructed curriculum actually met the created ESLRs and chosen standards. A major impetus for this task lay in the intention to initiate teachers in the process of authentically implementing the WASC model of school improvement. The results of this task would provide a basis for
knowing areas of curriculum to improve in order to bring greater coherence to the school’s curriculum. A major aspect of WASC’s (1997, 2002) Focus On Learning protocol is that areas for improvement are uncovered through the analysis of student learning. Comparing the ESLRs to evidence of student learning and documented instruction would serve to familiarize teachers with the practice of using student work for curriculum improvement purposes, attune teachers to ESLRs and their purpose, and demonstrate to WASC that ICS was serious about following the Focus on Learning accreditation protocol.

The Process.

Over the second and third quarters of the 2002-2003 school year, teachers were asked to reconsider the relationship of ESLRs to the taught curriculum through two additional strategies. Teachers, indicated on their unit plans the ESLRs met through instruction of the unit and tallied the number of times they had indicated each ESLR was addressed in their units. Again, the process did not force teachers to design units with ESLRs in mind, but to indicate post hoc the extent to which ESLRs were being met. Teachers were also tasked with collecting eighteen samples of assessment of student learning over the first four months of the school year. Ideally the collected work would illustrate a variety of assessment strategies and provide samples of how, or whether, teachers were assessing each of the ESLRs. Teachers were asked to provide, ideally, but not to contrive assessments to force a fit that they deemed unnatural. “When collected the combined evidence should cover the six ESLRs. However, do not contrive assessments to fit every ESLR. In other words, over the evidence collection period, attempt to represent the broadest range of ESLRs that students normally work towards in your classes” (ICS-Evidence template, 2002). They were also asked to represent a range of quality to represent what they deemed typical for high, middle and low achievers. For each item collected, teachers
completed an evidence label on which they indicated the ESLR addressed, student profile, and description of the task. Teachers attached handouts and rubrics and affixed the label to the work sample. Thus teachers interacted with the ESLRs, by looking for connections with standards, instructional planning and assessment practices. Further, as the standards had been set by this point, teachers were asked to compare their standards and ESLRs to the curriculum overviews and report their findings to their departments.

As a final step in identifying the extent to which ESLRs were actually met in the taught curriculum, teachers worked in department area groups to synthesize their findings, determine the extent to which each subject-area was instructing to the ESLRs. Using their unit plans and student assessments, departments aimed to answer questions, set by WASC, designed to uncover the relationship of the school’s curriculum to the ESLRs. The curriculum committee, a group of the school’s four administrators and four teachers-leaders, broke the questions down into a series of smaller tasks culminating in teachers collectively answering the questions. The task began with department members working together to collate their data by tallying the ESLRs addressed in the units and student work and the standards addressed in the curriculum overviews. Departments then answered the questions about the extent to which their programs addressed the standards and ESLRs. Teachers were asked actually to evaluate ESLRs and the appropriateness of using them to guide curriculum and assessment.

The exercise revealed that across the faculty, a lack of clarity about the meaning and purpose of ESLRs prevailed. Through the process, teachers found that many subject areas did not address certain ESLRs and standards, even though the same teachers who designed the instructional plans and assessment activities had participated in defining the ESLRs and selecting the standards. For instance, the fine and performing arts, social studies, math and sciences
departments found that they did not significantly address, in a deliberate manner, the ESLRs that “student will act as responsible members of the global community” and “will know, understand, and apply biblical principles.”

In responding to their findings, teachers offered hypotheses regarding the lack of representation of certain ESLRs in the curriculum. Often teachers observed a lack of clarity regarding the actual meaning of the ESLRs, despite their involvement in creating the ESLRs. It seems that the ESLRs were not so easily understood in actual application, even though all teachers had participated in their creation. The FPA teachers noted that “we discussed the uncertainty we had with what it means to act as members of the global community” (ICS-Curriculum review #2, 2003). The humanities department commented that lack of use of ESLRs may reflect that “we do not understand the ESLRs, know how to integrate it into our units/lessons, or how to assess it” (ICS-Curriculum review #2, 2003).

While the ESLRs were designed for broad application to the whole school program, teachers expressed further concern that the interpretation of the ESLRs was problematic. The foreign languages teachers found that “Members of our group have different understanding of the definition of ESLR [A]” (ICS-Curriculum review #2, 2003). The social studies teachers noted that “The terminology may be too vague (e.g., biblical principles, what are they? What does it mean to strive for excellence?)” (ICS-Curriculum review #2, 2003). And, as the English teachers observed, “It may be that many teachers have too narrowly defined the ESLR. For instance, oral presentations and persuasive writing equip students to powerfully communicate their opinions—a vital function of members of communities—but these assessments were not necessarily labelled as addressing ESLR A” (ICS-Curriculum review #2, 2003). Thus confusion
over the interpretation of ESLRs prohibited teachers from knowing with certainty when students were or were not accomplishing the ESLRs.

A second concern represented the issue of how ESLRs were to be applied. Teachers noted that some ESLRs were more relevant, or fit more naturally with their curriculum than others. In the Fine and Performing Arts department meeting, teachers "discussed our concern over whether this ESLR [K] is applicable as a curriculum item though agreeing about the importance of our personal witness to our students" (ICS-Curriculum review #2, 2003).

Likewise, English teachers noted a lack of representation of ESLR K in the instructed curriculum though "confident that Biblical principles are being explored. This may be because the oral settings in which this learning takes place is not typically documented... We agreed that we could do a better job of assessing students’ understanding of these concepts by more frequently including them as topics of essay questions on tests, for example" (ICS-Curriculum review #2, 2003). In the sciences, "As a division we are in agreement that we ‘sense’ that all the ESLRs are being addressed in the overall ICS school culture, but we realize that this is much different than ‘teaching’ toward the ESLRs. Someone said that the ESLRs are things you ‘do’ rather than ‘teach’" (ICS-Curriculum review #2, 2003). Finally, the physical education teachers corroborated the science teachers’ sentiments, believing that ESLRs are often “covered everyday, even if [they] doesn’t appear in the evidence file. We also feel that in physical education class, it is difficult to obtain pieces of evidence. It is easier to give a description of how a unit covers the ESLRs” (ICS-Curriculum review #2, 2003). Teacher feedback thus revealed a lack of clarity regarding how to apply the ESLRs and their relationship to the curriculum. The confusion appears symptomatic of the intuitive curriculum. Instruction continued to be a matter of “sensing” or “feeling” rather than documenting or designing
instruction and assessments to address the ESLRs. Whether or not the existence of ESLRs should require teachers to shift their planning practices was thus questioned.

After departments had completed their analysis of the presence of the ESLRs in their instructed curriculum, their findings were forwarded to the Curriculum and Instruction focus group. The focus group had been convened for the purposes of examining the school’s curriculum in light of WASC’s criteria for curriculum and the stated school purpose. The focus group’s co-chairs, a parent and a teacher, noted a disparate understanding of the ESLRs. Recognizing that ESLRs were not well understood, the co-chairs decided to use the focus group to initiate the task of ESLR clarification. The minutes of the 7 March meeting record the process:

1. The focus group was split into three sub-groups (Red, Black, Blue). Each group discussed two ESLRs with the aim of finding a consensus as to their meaning. The task was important as minutes of departmental discussions revealed confusion about the exact meaning of some of the ESLRs and their role in curriculum. 2. After discussion, the subgroups recorded and reported their definitions to the whole focus group for broader discussion and elaboration. 3. In the full group discussion, members noted that ESLRs 2 & 6 [i.e., ESLRs C and T] are readily given to application in the curriculum. In contrast, ESLRs 1, 3, 4 & 5 [i.e., ESLRs I, S, A, and K] are values that permeate school, but are less readily applied to the curriculum or to assessment in all courses. (ICS-Focus Group, 2003)

A draft of descriptors of each ESLR emerged as an outcome of the focus group meeting. The Focus Group descriptors were then presented to the entire faculty at an in-service meeting. The faculty participated in much the same process as the focus group had, working in six small
groups to critique a specific ESLR, adding to and revising the descriptors proposed by the focus groups. The ESLRs with descriptors were polished and approved of by faculty in a final meeting.

In summarizing the process, one administrator reflected:

I think the ESLRs fit within the curriculum fine. I don’t think it was artificial when we took the template and did unit plans or overviews and said, “How does this address it?” because it helped to focus our curriculum to align it to our mission. And, I think we found that maybe our ESLRs don’t speak to every issue that we want to. And, obviously, our curriculum doesn’t address all of the ESLRs. (A03)

5.5: Articulating ESLRs and Standards with the Curriculum

The Task

The final task pertinent to the early effort at creating an ESLR and standards-based curriculum was the attempt to engage teachers in modifying unit plans in light of the ESLRs that they had defined and the standards that they had selected, and to create two backwards-designed units. Backwards design calls on the teacher to determine the evidence necessary to evaluate the extent to which a student has met a standard prior to planning the instructional activity. This is somewhat of a shift from an approach in which teachers plan instructional activities and then create assessments that reflect their instruction. While the latter is highly intuitive and experience oriented, the former requires methodical design that aligns instruction and assessment to standards. It represents a significant shift away from how curriculum and instruction had been practiced in the context of ICS.
The Process

To support teachers in this endeavor, all teachers participated in a three day in-service in which an outside expert instructed teachers in standards-based instruction and assessment. Initiating this process, however, propelled teachers further to re-evaluation of the state of their curriculum and clarification of their own understanding. One department realized that the standards which they had selected were not appropriate to the task. Over several months, the divisional chair worked with teacher input to rewrite the standards-based on those originally selected (California Department of Education), those of another international school (Seoul Foreign School) and local needs (C02).

In the math and science department, teachers argued that as they were in the process of selecting new textbooks, writing unit plans would be a wasted effort. The Academic Dean noted that this betrayed a lack of understanding of backward planning in which textbooks should be used as resources and not the curriculum. Nonetheless, the math and sciences head took the project on and used meeting time to work with teachers on backward planning. Later in the school year, the science department shared their work with the entire faculty as a means to reinforce how to approach backwards planning.

By the time the researcher conducted interviews in December 2003, teachers had been engaged in the backwards-planning process for two months. For some teachers, involvement in standards-based planning created concern on two counts. Firstly, the relationship of ESLRs to standards was again called into question as teachers continued to note that several ESLRs had no corresponding standard (T06) and some seemed unachievable in a given subject area (T08). Thus clarity on the actual implementation of the ESLRs into instruction was challenged. Secondly, a tendency to continue planning intuitively was perceived as teachers indicated that, in
their opinion, few people designed instruction based on ESLRs, but rather continued planning using post hoc intuition (T09). (See chapter VI below for more detailed discussion.)

In an attempt to clarify the relationship of ESLRs to standards and the broader curriculum, the Academic Dean wrote a position paper on the matter which he disseminated to the curriculum committee.

Standards and benchmarks are consistent with the ESLRs, but go beyond the ESLRs in detail. For example, studying mathematics is consistent with ESLR “T” (Think independently, creatively, and analytically) but you could conceivably develop ESLR “T” without studying mathematics.

On the other hand, ESLRs go beyond the Standards in that they are transdisciplinary outcomes that should be targeted at various points across our curricula. Even after students have forgotten what they learned in Algebra class, we hope that they will retain these ESLRs as a part of their lives.

Thus ESLRs and Standards are two different yet interpenetrating types of guide that are consistent with each other. (ICS-Draft, 2003)

So, as implementation began, it was necessary again to revisit the purpose and function of ESLRs and their relationship to the curriculum as meaning needed to be re-evaluated and reconceptualized. By 2003, the school leadership was grappling with how best to revisit the ESLRs vis-à-vis the fit with curriculum, but now with a clearer notion of the articulation.

5.6: Features of Involvement

Faculty involvement in the curriculum project applied the contextual feature of teachers’ intuitive understanding and experience. Indeed, intuition for most of the tasks was the major determiner of the task outcomes. The identification of ESLRs, selection of standards,
documentation of the instructed curriculum, and evaluation of the curriculum against the ESLRs were all highly intuitive activities. Teachers suggested ESLRs and selected standards-based on their understanding of school purpose and the existing curriculum. The act of documenting the curriculum was that of teachers recording their practices. Although the format was prescribed, instructional strategies, assessment practices, content selection, resource application was all based on teachers' instructional design. Where outside sources may have been used, it was at individual teachers' discretion. Teachers indicated the ESLRs that specific standards addressed and documented and reported the extent to which ESLRs and standards were represented in their instructed curriculum and addressed in student assessments. All of these associations were made *post hoc* and not by design. Thus intuitive, *post hoc* association became a feature of teacher involvement throughout the process. Such decisions required no justification and therefore were rooted in teachers' beliefs. Thus teachers' collective opinions were valued as accurate and authoritative.

Also, implicit in the tasks was the assumption that there should be a connection between the ESLRs, standards and the taught curriculum because teachers had been involved respectively in creating, selecting and designing each. This understanding illustrates an application of the contextual feature of teacher involvement that curriculum development would rely on teachers experience and intuition.

The tasks and processes reveal more features of involvement. After participating in creating the ESLRs, the design of each task called upon teachers to revisit the ESLRs. In this manner discussion and understanding of the ESLRs was reconsidered throughout each aspect of the curriculum project. Teachers considered how, or whether, ESLRs were represented in the selected standards, the taught curriculum, and evidence of student learning. Revisiting through
Features of involvement emerge as aspects of the process design. In the processes described, teacher involvement can be demonstrated at multiple organizational levels. All teachers were engaged collaboratively on a schoolwide basis in determining ESLRs and teacher representatives participated along with other stakeholders in the focus group activity. All teachers were employed individually and collaboratively in departments to select standards. All teachers worked individually to create curriculum overviews and unit plans. Teacher leaders participated in the curriculum committee to help design and facilitate the curriculum tasks and the collection and analysis of student work, which teachers participated in individually, in department groups and in the focus group. Thus teacher involvement occurred at several organizational levels: all teachers were involved individually, in departments, and as a schoolwide faculty. Further, teacher representatives were involved in the curriculum committee, leadership team, and the focus groups. In the former all administrators also participated and in the latter two representatives of all stakeholders participated. Hence, teacher involvement occurred at every possible level of the school, permitting contact with various stakeholders.

Finally, teacher involvement was mandated. All teachers were required to participate in each of the tasks described. Although some were "quiet" (T06; T10) or less involved than others, all were in attendance.
CHAPTER VI: The Impact of Teacher Involvement

This case of teacher involvement in curriculum making has revealed features of involvement which emerge from the curriculum context, tasks and processes in which teachers were participants. The primary contextual feature uncovered was the application of teachers’ intuitive and experiential understanding of the instructed curriculum to the project. This feature was applied to the tasks and processes as teacher understanding had become the *de facto* source of the curriculum, and intuition the corresponding means to document it. For some, understanding may have been limited to the textbook, for others a more comprehensive set of curricular goals and purposes had developed. Analysis of the curriculum tasks revealed the feature that teachers revisited ESLRs and standards through multiple interrelated ways. Examination of the process uncovered the features that involvement was mandated and applied to multiple organizational levels. This chapter evaluates the impacts of involvement features on curriculum development at ICS.

Primarily teacher involvement improved the coherence of teacher understanding of the curriculum initiatives. This coherence, however, emerged in tandem with the articulation of curriculum elements, and clarification of curriculum tasks, processes and roles. In analyzing these impacts, it is evident that features of involvement correlate to the impacts; however, it is not possible to draw conclusions that a specific feature has a specific impact. Rather it is their combined weight that has general force.

As teachers became involved in curriculum development activities, clarity emerged leading to redefinition of tasks and processes, the involvement in which shaped understanding. Thus the curriculum emerged through the interplay of developing understanding and involvement in tasks. To a large extent, the unique context accounts for this situation. Lacking
technical expertise, teacher intuition and understanding proved crucial to the development and implementation of the curriculum. This emergent curriculum may be analyzed by considering shifting clarity, and the requisite redefinition of tasks, processes, roles, and even overall goals.

This analysis is organized by presenting the general impacts related to curriculum coherence first followed by the increasingly specific and more complex. The impact on school climate will be discussed last. At the broadest level of impact, agreement amongst faculty and staff was most readily found. In the latter, greater complexity and resistance surfaced. As context, task and process features have impact across different impact levels, some reiteration will occur.

The findings of this chapter stem mostly from the analysis questionnaire and interview responses. Overall 27 teachers completed the questionnaire, however in some cases teachers declined to respond to selected questions. Such responses were often given by new teachers who had not experienced many of the tasks and processes described above.

6.1: Perception of School Cohesion

At the most general impact level, teachers sensed that involvement brought about increased school cohesion. Of 24 respondents, 17 affirmed this sentiment, three rejected it and four entered a neutral response (Q11). In their supplemental comments, teachers frequently noted that involvement and participation leads to general support and application in the curriculum of the ESLRs. Some teachers observed that involvement yields the “belief that individuals have ownership” (Q13S) and that “When people participate in creating something, they are more likely to work with it and carry it out” (Q13K). Thus involvement creates ownership which ultimately results in implementation. As one teacher surmised, “With
participation, teachers are more likely to buy into the resulting ESLRs. There would be more consistency from class-to-class and in the way things are done” (Q13E).

Not all teachers are equally enthusiastic, however. Some found that the cost of the process, along with cohesion, brought “frustration” (Q13S) and a preference to “accept whatever leadership decides” (Q13S). Possibly these comments express reactions to the amount of time involved in collaboratively determining the ESLRs and standards. “It was painful. I just detested those meetings. It was swallowing a pill, but we’re better for it. And, we can honestly say it was a group effort. As a result, I feel that the faculty has a greater ownership in the curriculum and in the school. It was a unifying experience” (C03). A second teacher also described the process as involving a “painful” time commitment, yet acknowledged that the value lay in the process if not the final product (C01). Thus despite the time commitment, most teachers perceived that collaborative involvement brought increased clarity, coherence and ownership through the group effort.

Teachers’ beliefs about the importance of participation in the process parallel their belief about their degree of involvement (Q15). Of the 19 teachers who responded, 13 indicated that they had “just the right amount of influence in determining and defining ESLRs,” and five indicated that they were too involved. Three in the latter category were also of the opinion that participation does not yield school cohesion. (Several new teachers did not respond.) Thus with the exception of two teachers, those who believed that their involvement was appropriate also believed that school cohesion resulted. That most teachers supported these positions provide another indicator of cohesion brought through involvement.

One administrator observed an increased coherence in the school through the ongoing use of the ESLRs in the life of the school.
I do recall clearly that the ESLRs were determined by a rather lengthy comprehensive schoolwide process and I think I feel quite happy with them. And I think people have started using the terminology. And, even if there is some difficulty in remembering all six of them off the top of one’s head, nevertheless they will say, “how does this fit with our ESLRs?” or something like that. So, I think it has entered the general consciousness and is valued. (A01)

Likewise, with standards, “I think that people generally accept the need for [standards] because of being involved in that process. I do think so. People don’t really radically question the need for standards and benchmarks, I don’t think because they were involved” (A01).

6.2: Clarity of Purpose and Need

As discussed in the literature review, a major challenge to change lies in teachers’ appreciation of an innovation. If purpose and need are not perceived, the innovation is likely to be resisted. The dilemma is that innovations are seldom understood if teachers are not involved in the process of change definition and implementation. Understanding does not precede involvement. In the case of ICS’s attempts to initiate the process of creating a curriculum based on ESLRs and standards, analysis of interview transcripts and questionnaire results suggests that the involvement of teachers throughout the organization in multiple activities relevant to ESLRs appears to have yielded broad support amongst faculty regarding the purpose and need for ESLRs and standards, which also is indicative of school coherence.

In a broad sense, almost all faculty and administrators developed a shared belief that ESLRs and standards should have a significant role in driving the curriculum. When asked to respond to open-ended questions regarding the purposes for ESLRs (Q2), responses fit into three categories: common school purpose, instructional planning and curriculum coverage. Most
statements fit the first two categories. Three unclassified statements remained. “Common school purpose” statements proved the most frequent response, comprising 17 of 25 responses. Most statements of common purpose were similar in expression to the teacher who commented that ESLRs “establish schoolwide objectives that all agree on. This gives a common goal and encourages unity of purpose [and] create[s] some consistency within the school” (Q2E). Terms commonly used in this category referred to schoolwide goals or mission: e.g., universal, common, philosophy, and unity. Ten teachers provided “instructional planning” statements such as “The main purpose is to have a goal in mind when teaching something to aim for that will ensure student success” (Q2K). However, of these, seven made strong connections between instructional planning and common school purpose. “ESLRs “give us some accountability for planning units & lessons to make sure all subjects align to school mission & objectives” (Q2S).

Interestingly, only one teacher identified accreditation as a reason for adopting ESLRs (Q2E), this despite the fact that WASC provided the initial impetus for introducing ESLRs. The lack of association of ESLRs with accreditation suggests that by December, 2003, teachers had begun to perceive purpose and need for ESLRs as completely independent of accreditation and for legitimate school-specific purposes. The pressure brought to bear by WASC was no longer a factor in teachers’ opinions about the utility of ESLRs. Possibly this situation reflects the observation that ESLRs had become functional in discussing school programs (A01). Moreover, the nature of the most recent task of “backwards planning” called on teachers to revisit ESLRs completely divorced from accreditation purposes. Congruently, when teachers were asked to identify two ways that the school’s ESLRs are formalized at ICS (Q4), 20 of 47 responses indicated that teachers are required to make the association in instructional planning. Most of the responses referred to completing a unit plan or the standards and benchmark templates used in
the respective curriculum tasks. (The next most common response, with only six respondents, referred to posters placed around the campus.) Thus there is a strong correlation between the belief that ESLRs should direct instruction towards school purpose and the instructionally focussed curriculum tasks in which teachers were engaged.

Given the strong association that teachers have made between school purpose and instruction it is not surprising that most teachers are of the opinion “that it is important to be deliberate and strategic about ensuring that the curriculum helps students to achieve the school’s ESLRs” (Q5). Of 26 responses, eighteen indicated that such a goal was important or highly important and five indicated a neutral response, but only three viewed this goal as unimportant. Likewise, in interviews, of 15 participants, only one teacher indicated that ESLRs were not needed, viewing them as redundant to standards (T06), the remainder indicated that ESLRs are needed to provide consistency of purpose. “We need to know what we are trying to do” (T09). “I think that the ESLRs have given us purpose” (C04). “I was really excited to know that this is what we want students to graduate with and our focus is on that” (T10).

Concern about the ESLRs tended to stem from confusion about their function: “I think that ESLRs are sort of unifying no matter what the subject is. At the same time, sometimes your subject area doesn’t fit into the ESLRs, so that can lead to frustration” (T08). A proviso to the perceived usefulness of ESLRs is that they serve to expand options not limit them. As one secondary teacher cautioned, “I think we need to know what we are trying to do and not blindly going along. We need all of them, as long as they don’t drive everything that we do” (T09). Likewise, one elementary teacher commented, “if it is overemphasized, teachers could develop negative attitudes thus making it counter productive for some” (Q13E). This statement was congruent to the response of 24 teachers which indicated that they should have freedom to design
the curriculum as they consider appropriate, but within guidelines. Only two teachers selected
the alternate response that an expert should design the curriculum (and one of these
acknowledged that this was impractical). The third response that no teacher selected was that
“teachers should have complete freedom.” Thus, teachers, while wanting a degree freedom, also
appreciate the structure and guidance provided by ESLRs and standards, reflecting the continued
role of teachers as de facto curriculum developers.

By December 2003, a coherence of understanding about the purpose and need for ESLRs
had emerged at a general level. Similarly, teachers perceived that standards served to provide
more specific alignment of aspects of instruction and assessment. Teachers noted that the
standards would help them in setting the objectives of lessons, evaluating students, and in
selecting resources, each in a manner consistent with other teachers (Q9). Teachers frequently
commented that standards would serve to create consistency in instruction and assessment across
grades and vertically within subject areas. Most often, teachers used terms connoting
consistency (f:6), equality (f:5), focus (f:7), guidance (f:6), and structure (f:6) to describe the
utility of standards. Consistency, equality and focus usually related to how students would
experience instruction as they progressed through the school. Guidance and structure referenced
teachers’ instructional decision-making process. Thus an understanding of standards as closely
related to instructional practice had been achieved. In terms of function, most teachers had
perceived the distinction between ESLRs (alignment to school purpose) and standards
(alignment of skills and content within subject areas) yet believed that a strong connection
between ESLRs and the curriculum was important. “Where ESLRs are extremely broad goals
for the school, and curriculum is kind of the means by which we reach our ESLRs, they
definitely should be linked” (C01). In the questionnaire, 24 of 25 teachers indicated that there
should be "a connection between ESLRs and Standards." (Q7). (Some respondents also noted that such a connection might not be feasible.)

Not surprisingly, a consistency emerges between teachers' beliefs about the relationship of ESLRs to curriculum. As indicated above, 18 teachers reported that the curriculum should deliberately and strategically serve to advance student achievement of the ESLRs, whereas only three rejected the proposition (Q5). Congruently, 18 teachers reported their intention to use standards in their instructional planning, only 2 opposed the concept, of which one had also opposed the implementation of ESLRs (6 neutral responses were provided) (Q8).

Overall, therefore, a strong sense of need supports teachers' belief that ESLRs and standards should serve the purpose of guiding the curriculum. In general, teachers felt that it is necessary to achieve the purposes facilitated by the ESLRs and standards. In terms of specific application, teacher understanding proved to be more coherent where involvement had been more prolonged. Specifically, while ESLRs had been revisited through multiple tasks, standards had not. Thus ESLRs were more clearly conceived by teachers than were standards, as becomes clear in the discussion below on the impact of involvement on instructional planning.

In examining the variance of responses between old and new teachers, coherence is observed on questionnaire responses. New teachers provided similar responses to returning teachers in approximately the same frequency. For instance, of the responses provided for question three, "Does your teaching reflect some of the ESLRs?" seven returning teachers indicated that they deliberately plan such instruction and two new teachers reported likewise. Six new teachers and fifteen returning teachers responded that such instruction was not deliberate. No teacher responded that they did not teach to ESLRs. The proportions of responses are roughly similar (see figure 6.1).
Does your teaching reflect some of the ESLRs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Returning Teachers</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>New Teachers</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliberately</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not deliberately</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 6.1: Comparison of returning and new teachers use of ESLRs*

Responses most favored by returning teachers were also favored by new teachers. On a likert-type item, on a scale of one to five, teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they believe “it is important to be deliberate and strategic about ensuring that the curriculum helps students to achieve the school’s ESLRs” (Q5). The most favored rating by both returning and new teachers was four, important. The pattern of new teachers selecting responses in approximately the same proportion as returning teacher was consistent throughout the survey, with the exception of the question asking teachers to indicate their “belief about teacher involvement in defining the school’s ESLRs” (Q11). To that question, most new teachers, not having been a part of the process, indicated “I do not know.”

The similarity in responses to the questionnaire, however, is not to suggest that new teachers and returning teachers have a shared experience. Rather, while the questionnaire considered general beliefs and understandings, the interviews probed for more specific details. And, as new teachers had not participated in the development of ESLRs and standards, they were not interviewed. Therefore, this study can reach no definitive conclusion about the degree to which new teachers are successfully inducted into the school’s curriculum development practices. Indeed, one interview participant indicated a belief that new teachers have not become well acquainted with the use and application of ESLRs and that the school needs to be more attentive to its induction practices (C02).

Some variation between campus levels does seem to exist. In general, secondary teachers were more likely to return neutral or unfavorable responses to questionnaire prompts than were...
To what extent do you believe that it is important to be deliberate and strategic about ensuring that the curriculum helps students to achieve the school's ESLRs?

![Table showing variation in teacher beliefs about ESLRs and the curriculum](image)

**Figure 6.2: Variation in teacher about beliefs about ESLRs and the curriculum**

provided by the other school levels. For instance, of the five neutral responses to question five, four were provided by secondary teachers, and two of the three negative responses were also made by secondary teachers (see figure 6.2). Of the other school levels the single negative and only neutral response came from the elementary school. All kindergarten teachers indicated responses in the important range. Similar response patterns were provided for questions regarding the intended use of standards (see figure 6.3). While most teachers from all campus levels indicated their intention to use the standards for instructional planning, four of six the neutral responses came from the secondary teachers. Similarly, while most teachers at ICS view collaboration as essential to creating a coherent curriculum, the teachers who viewed collaboration as "helpful but not essential" were mostly secondary teachers (see figure 6.4). Interesting in that regard, when asked about the "impact teachers should have in determining
ICS’s curriculum”, all secondary teachers, indicated that “teachers need freedom to design curriculum but within clear guidelines.”

Do you use, or intend to use, subject-area standards / benchmarks in your instructional planning in any way?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Always</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.3: Intentions to use standards in instructional planning

Although there is some variation between campuses, it tends not to be extreme. More teachers from all campuses registered responses favorable to applying ESLRs, standards and collaboration to curriculum development than indicated negative dispositions. Perhaps the neutral reactions by secondary teachers reflect a greater sense of autonomy as secondary teachers tend to be subject area specialists. As one secondary opponent to using standards reflected,

In your opinion, how important is teacher collaboration to creating a coherent curriculum (K – 12, or within a grade level).

Not important. EE SSSSS
Helpful but not essential. KKKKK EE EEEEEEE SSSSSS
Essential. KKKKKK EEE EEEEE SSSSSS

Figure 6.4: Beliefs about teacher collaboration
“It seems that I am losing my freedom to decide what is important for students to learn. I realize it is important to have some guidelines, but I took many years of pedagogy to figure out some things that are important” (Q21S). To another, ESLRs seem superfluous:

I have had the opportunity to develop curriculum as I wished and these plans have been done according to standards that I believe all quality institutions follow whether they publish them into ESLRs or not. In other words, I think ESLRs exist automatically. Labeling them and addressing specific units to specific ESLRs serves some value in terms of clarifying and providing unity and documentation. But, I believe my units, at least, contained ESLRs before they were labeled as such. (Q21S)

In interviews, variation among teachers, curriculum chairs and administrators’ opinions about the utility of ESLRs and their relationship to the curriculum were not grouped in accordance to roll. The only area of clear divergence were opinions regarding revisiting the curriculum tasks. This variation is discussed later in the chapter.

6.3: Understanding Emerging from Intuitive Planning to Instruction by Design

As teachers began to interact with ESLRs and standards in their unit planning, new questions developed about their utility. As one teacher reflected, “It seemed simple at the start, and then you start working at it. It becomes more and more complicated” (T08). “Sometimes you choose them [ESLRs and standards] and they seem clear when you choose them, but they don’t seem so clear when you try to use them. You may think you’re clear until you’re actually using it” (A01).

For some teachers, the fact that certain ESLRs are more readily applied to specific disciplines than to others, a concern recognized previously by the departments (ICS-Curriculum activity, 2003) and focus group (ICS-Focus Group, 2003), remains problematic.
When I'm working on curriculum, I'm not working on an ESLR. Communicating effectively is subject related for me. But something like becoming a responsible member of the global community, that is something I find hard to fit into my subject. So, it looks more like this is an intellectual exercise of fitting it in. Or, am I really teaching towards an ESLR? (T08)

Despite a strong conceptual support for ESLRs, concerns such as these reveal an ongoing tension that occurs with implementation: should ESLRs be treated as inherent in the curriculum, and thus intuitively taught, or should they be deliberately targeted?

For the most part, teachers continue to view ESLRs as something implemented intuitively and not by design.

I think people are planning what they are doing in their classes and then looking back to see what ESLRs are represented. I don’t think that people are starting with the ESLRs and writing the plan from it. It is retrospective. I haven’t heard of people starting from the ELSRs. …People agree that [ESLRs] are legitimate things that we are trying to do. But, people aren’t planning the units around ESLRs.” Rather, because of “the content of the course…certain ESLRs are being covered and others are not. (T09)

Likewise, with standards, teachers tend to conceptualize them as offering guidance. Whether or not this is commonly understood to mean a post hoc association or implementation of standards through deliberate instructional design is also unclear. For most teachers, standards and benchmarks are conceived as providing “a lot of leeway” (T05), and permitting them “to feel creative about…implement[ing] them the way that they want to” (C02) because “standards and ESLRs are extremely broad and really subject to interpretation” (C01). But creativity, of course, is not incongruous with design.
As teachers began implementation of standards and benchmarks, though, more complexity unfolded regarding how standards should be implemented. It is one thing for ESLRs and standards to serve to guide an intuitive approach and another for the curriculum to aim for a close alignment of assessment and instruction to the standards and ESLRs by deliberate design. However, administration’s goal that the alignment of instruction and assessment to standards and ESLRs would serve to ensure delivery of the curriculum in a consistent fashion reflects the main rationales offered by teachers for having standards (see above).

Beginning in September 2003, teachers were provided with an in-service on backward design, the alignment of instruction to the assessment of standards. Teachers were then to create two backwards-designed units. Such an approach requires a shift in planning practices:

If you’re designing your units from standards and benchmarks and then deciding what material is well used, how will I actually get to the standard, or benchmark, or ESLR, that takes a lot of skill....Some people may feel that they lack the ability to do this or, the practice and experience to do this. Certainly this is not the way they’ve done things. (A01)

Indeed, for some teachers, movement away to an ESLR and standards-based curriculum represents a significant change. In one discipline, backwards planning was to be instituted simultaneously to the purchase of new textbooks. Teachers argued that creating a standards-based unit prior to using the new textbooks would require unit plans to be done again the following year. This, as two participants observed (A01, C04), indicates a lack of clarity about standards-based units, in which the standard rather than the textbook should determine how a unit is planned. Nevertheless, as teachers lacked the clarity required to create such units, the plan for the department was modified.
That teachers continued to conceive of ESLRs and standards as something taught “inherent in good curriculum and in good instruction” (Q10S) possibly reflects the curriculum project processes in which teachers’ intuition and the instructed curriculum had been foundational. “We really haven’t changed how we teach and what we teach much, because it’s almost like we took what we’re doing and said, ‘this is what we’re doing pretty well. Let’s describe what we’re doing’ versus writing these [i.e., standards] and then molding what we do” (C01). These sentiments reflect the value held by all interviewed teachers that the curriculum should be flexible and only generally prescriptive, and that ESLRs and standard provide suitable guidelines within which teachers may frame their curriculum (Q17). To fully implement backwards design would require change for teachers and intensive professional development (C02).

However, processes do seem to impact teacher understanding. As all of the processes preceding the backwards planning initiative were intuitively based, it is congruent that new initiatives would be understood by teachers as being intuitively based. Teacher’s implicit understandings permitted the creation of ESLRs, selection of standards and their comparison to curriculum documents. There was no conception in any of these tasks of involving teachers in a process in which one curriculum element would be derived from or designed to fit another.

Indeed, it seems as if, for many teachers, their understanding of implementing ESLRs and standards remains in an intuitive rather than design construct. For teachers to understand a design approach to implementing standards and ESLRs, they must engage in a process that engages in such work.
6.4: Emergent Relationship of ESLRs and Standards to the Curriculum

Although there is a strong coherence among teachers about the purpose and need for ESLRs and standards and around the belief that they should be closely connected, at the time of the interviews, teachers and administrators conceded that the relationship was in an ongoing process of clarification. How ESLRs and standards should impact the curriculum was uncertain. ICS was very much in the "process of [defining] what ELSRs look like" (C02) in the classroom and was not certain of "how we are targeting" them (A01). For some ESLRs are conceived as existing "organic[ally] in the curriculum" (C03) being "automatically" (A01) or "inherently" (C10S, A04) covered to some extent through teachers' intuitive shaping of instruction. "There are some ELSRs that are inherently covered very well and there are some that are not. We don't know exactly what the case is yet. I think the relationship is emerging" (A04).

One reason why the relationship between the ESLRs, curriculum components, and instruction is conceived as emergent is that each aspect of curriculum and instruction had originally developed in independence of the other. When asked how they conceived of the relationship between ESLRs and the curriculum, most teachers and administrators acknowledged that the independent development of each component had led to a lack of alignment. As one member of the curriculum committee commented, "In the ICS case, I don't think there is much of a relationship because we didn't write standards-based on ESLRs" (C04). Such an opinion was corroborated by the administration who noted "they were developed separately" (A02) ...at least in people's minds. ...When we began with the ESLRs, I don't think a lot of people tied it in with curriculum. And I think people are now wondering how ESLRs and standards [are] tied into curriculum. Some think they are divergent, some almost synonymous (A03).
The distinction reflects the process in which connections between ESLRs and standards were “made after the fact. It wasn’t that the standards and benchmarks were necessarily chosen to implement the ESLRs” (A01).

Particularly, the relationship of ESLRs to standards have met with some initial confusion despite a consensus about their general purpose.

There is some back and forth [regarding] the relationship between ESLRs and benchmarks. I know that some of the ESLRs are through every standard and benchmark. These are more conceptual, global and holistic. But the standards and benchmarks become more specific.” (A02)

However, the nature of this connection was inconsistently conceived. For some teachers, “Each standard should meet an ESLR” (T06) because “ESLRs are the goals, the overall guiding attitudes of everything that’s taught, where as the standards and benchmarks are the specifics”(A01); but for others, “it is not necessary for all standards to be linked directly with an ESLR” (Q7S). While some interviewees viewed the standards as subservient to and emerging from the ESLRs (A02), others viewed standards as “consistent but not derivable from ESLRs” (A01) and noted that “some of the standards don’t work well with the ESLRs and some ESLRs don’t have standards” (T06). Therefore, it is possible to meet an ESLR without actually teaching to a standard (T05, C03). Still, most interviewees noted that understanding of the relationship of the ESLRs to the curriculum was a developmental process (C01, C02, A01, A02, A03) in which relationships would increasingly become defined through teacher interaction with them.
What we are trying to do...is to get our curriculum to be based on the philosophy of our school so that when we teach, our outcomes, even though we are teaching, say, basketball, we are teaching it to a purpose to, say, instill a sense of community (T05).

While teachers expressed a general agreement and need for ESLRs and standards and a consensus of their general purpose, how they would actually become connected to the curriculum proved less clear as teachers began to engage with the concepts. This reveals three interrelated trends. Firstly, that idealized conceptions achieve clarity earlier than do their practical applications. In the ICS case, agreement around the need and purpose of ESLRs and standards is very cohesive in the school, but clarity regarding how they are to be manifest in the curriculum is not so clear. Secondly, the complexity of the actual articulation of curriculum to instruction (ideal to practice) emerges with involvement. And, thirdly, that the process in which teachers were engaged shapes such understanding and contributes to a rearticulating of tasks and processes.

6.5: Emerging Tasks, Roles and Processes

Unlike rational-linear approaches to curriculum development, curriculum at ICS has emerged in a sequence reflecting need at the time, and the emerging understanding of administrators and teachers. Throughout the process of defining, selecting and implementing ESLR and standards, tasks and processes were frequently redefined as understanding and clarity emerged. Sometimes this understanding was an increased awareness of the projects’ complexity. The most obvious example was that of creating ESLR descriptors. Through the process, teachers became aware that they did not understand the ESLRs which they had created. The complexity of relating ESLRs to instruction and assessment was revealed when departments and the focus group observed varied interpretations among teachers of the meaning and application of ESLRs.
Therefore the focus group developed a new task of involving teachers in further defining the ESLRs. This task was not anticipated from the beginning, but developed because a need was perceived. (See “Tasks” chapter above.)

Similar developments have occurred at other stages of the curriculum project. Initially, teachers were engaged in recording the instructed curriculum using overviews and unit plans to create documents that would fulfill the practical concern of providing new teachers with some guidance and to enable evaluation of the curriculum alignment and its consistency with ESLRs and standards. However, as implementation of standards and ESLRs became an imminent concern, the unit planning document became increasingly conceived as the means through which teachers’ instructional planning could be directed towards addressing standards.

Originally, standards were selected on a best fit basis. Subsequently, as teachers reported that several ESLRs and standards were not actually taught, the school leadership became attuned to the need to direct instructional planning accordingly. Hence the provision of training in “backwards planning” through three day in-service result from emergent awareness of the complexities of standards-based instruction. Similarly, the curriculum committee approved of a slightly modified unit planning document to facilitate “backward planning” as opposed to the original template which anticipated an association of standards to the taught curriculum. Unit plans would henceforth facilitate

the ideals of standards-based backward planning, because their format encourages teachers to: select learning objectives that correspond to standards and benchmarks and ESLRs; Select assessments that will target those learning objectives; Design instruction that will enable students to meet those objectives. In my mind, the previous headmaster of ICS had great foresight and insight to choose this format of unit plans, and I think the
addition of the [standards and benchmarks] and ESLRs table this year makes them even better. (Academic Dean, personal communication, November 7, 2003)

This change, however, requires a shift in teacher understanding.

Conforming previously written units, or drafting new ones, to ensure that instruction and assessment are aligned to standards requires teachers to tinker and shift their understanding. Unit plans would no longer merely record teachers’ instructed curriculum. The unit plans would serve to encourage teachers to think about how to change their instruction to ensure that standards are met. Therefore, even unit planning is understood as developmental, with teachers gradually, over time, beginning to understand how to design “backward” units. Therefore, as a document circulated in the curriculum committee indicated,

Unit plans were originally required primarily for documentation; we just wrote down what we were doing; there was no attention to backward design or standards-based assessment or best instructional strategies, because we didn’t have standards, most of us hadn’t been trained in backward design, and we still don’t have schoolwide definition of instructional best practices. Therefore we would expect unit plans to be of various quality, with strengths and weaknesses. This year we have been indicating standards and benchmarks onto our existing unit plans. This is one way of strengthening our unit plans and making them more useful as tools for analyzing our curriculum. This year we have also set the target of designing two “backward-designed units” as a way of experimenting with the principles of backward design and as a way to think even more intentionally about our standards and benchmarks. For many of us, this will be our first attempt to create a backward designed standards-based unit, so we should expect it to be a learning experience, and we should not expect ourselves to achieve “perfection”!! As we become
more experienced with backward design and our standards, and as we continue to learn about standards-based assessment, we will expect our units to gradually improve. (ICS-

Unit plan perspectives, 2003)

Reflecting the developmental approach articulated in the unit plan perspective paper, the curriculum committee also considered a rubric illustrating the developmental nature of implementing standards-based instructional planning. Thus both understanding task processes and completing the required documentation were conceived as developmental. The modification of tasks and their corresponding processes therefore reflect an emergent understanding and modification of goals such as the shift towards “backward” planning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type I. Unit Plans that have had Standards, Benchmarks, and ESLRs indicated (the majority of unit plans in 2003-2004)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• All parts of the unit plan template are filled out, including the “post-it notes”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Standards &amp; Benchmarks and ESLRs are keyed in as appropriate. (Because these units were not “backward designed” there may very well be content &amp; skill objectives that do not align with a Standard &amp; Benchmark or ESLR. That’s fine.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Content &amp; skill objectives are phrased properly as things students will know or be able to do. Listing topics is not sufficient.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type II. Backward Designed Units in 2003-2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• All of the criteria from type I are met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Each content &amp; skill objective aligns with a standard &amp; benchmark or ESLR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assessments align with the content &amp; skill objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If appropriate, rubrics are designed to go with the assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instruction aligns with the content &amp; skill objectives and assessments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type III. “Ideal” Backward Designed Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• All of the criteria from type II are met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assessments are varied and the appropriate type of assessment is aligned to the appropriate type of content &amp; skill objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rubrics (used when appropriate) give students and teachers specific information about what learning is expected, how to teach, and (after assessment) what improvement is needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instructional strategies draw on “best practices”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.5: Unit plan developmental rubric, November, 2003.

6.6: The Emergent Jig-Saw Curriculum

Just as tasks and processes are continually redefined in light of emerging understanding, the documented curriculum may also be conceived as emergent, developing as clarity regarding
the articulation between curriculum elements is defined. Therefore, an aspect of this curriculum project is that articulation develops intuitively and not through a linear process.

As has been explained in great detail in the context chapter, the instructed, but undocumented, curriculum was, in fact, the first manifestation of the curriculum rather than a prescribed document or clearly articulated learning outcomes. In fact, the instructed program had developed over a decade prior to the drafting of ESLRs and selection of standards. Sometimes teachers developed courses uniquely, at other times they were textbook driven. In 1999-2000, subject area philosophy statements were written. Subsequently, in 2001-2002 the ESLRs were created. This was followed by the documentation of unit plans and curriculum overviews, the selection of standards, and the writing of ESLR descriptors. While each curricular component was initiated to meet a perceived need at the time, clearly the sequence is irrational. The curriculum was instructed before learning goals had been defined. Philosophies were drafted long before the school’s goals had been determined. And standards were selected prior to teachers actually understanding the function of ESLRs and their relationship to standards. This process differs radically from technical, linear approaches, such as that of Tyler (1949).

Despite superficial irrationality, some coherence obtains throughout the varied curriculum documents, which may be attributed to a fairly constant conception of school purpose held intuitively by teachers and administrators. As discussed in the context chapter, the school had a history of professional collegiality among teachers and camaraderie between teachers and students. With all teachers self-selecting into the school and with a commonality of Christian faith, common purpose was facilitated. Furthermore, with the involvement of all teachers in constructing each of these curriculum components based on their own understanding and
intuition, where the same teachers were involved, coherence appeared. While the process implies some inherently understood articulation amongst these elements, the end of this initial stage reveals a curriculum project that has established in ESLRs and standards a basis for a coherent curriculum in that teachers and administrators concur in their application for that purpose. The ESLRs provide a common school language for discussion purposes and program rationale. The standards provide clear targets for academic programs.

Evaluating subject-area to philosophies indicates that many of the teachers who created the philosophies held an implicit understanding of school purpose that matches the ESLRs. Of the ten subject area philosophies, at least six drew clear connections to three or more ESLRs. (None indicated strive for excellence in the philosophy, however this ESLR is very much implicit in the general educational aim of achievement.) For instance, the art philosophy extols the purpose of ESLR T through the “practical application” of “art production, art history, aesthetics, and art criticism/review (ICS-Course, p. 9). The mathematics program philosophy promotes ESLR K by developing in students an understanding “of the order and design of the universe as created by God” (p. 35). And, literature in “hold[ing] up a mirror to the self and to society” correlates ESLR A (p. 18). Hence, in cases where teachers had created both ESLRs and philosophies, some coherence was observed even though the philosophies were not derived from the ESLRs. Although some coherence may be due to the general nature of the ESLRs, the point of emphasis is that teacher involvement brought an understood coherence which was lacking in the board created SWLOs of 1998-1999.

While some degrees of coherence is observed in curriculum documents compiled over time, the clear articulation between each of the curriculum elements is seen to emerge gradually as teachers and administrators interact with them. The focus group process of defining the
ESLRs illustrates the point. The process created greater clarity (C01) and it was emergent and non-linear. Although teachers had created the ESLRs, it was through attempts at observing alignment (or lack thereof) and creating documentation that the lack of clarity emerged.

Curriculum development at ICS reflects, very much, the contextual and task features and the context of beginning with an undocumented and instructionally based curriculum. Each curriculum piece had been created in relative isolation from each other, with the exception that teachers held an intuitive understanding that they brought to bear to each task. For instance, the documentation of curriculum overviews and units was intended to provide a record of the teacher designed and instructed curriculum. Documents were written by teachers to indicate what they actually taught not what should be taught. The locus of curriculum development was placed firmly in the teachers, evaluation in departments, with a curriculum committee coordinating the process. Standards were selected by teachers based on best fit to the instructed curriculum. Association between ESLR and standards occurred post hoc. “The standards and benchmarks were [not] necessarily chosen to implement the ESLRs” (BVT). However, the act of creating this association and of teachers noting that many ESLRs were not represented in subject area standards created discussion about the nature of the fit of ESLRs to standards. And as teachers have increasingly been asked to plan units designed to meet ESLRs and standards, a need for clarity on the articulation between each other and with unit plans has developed and has become an item of discussion at the curriculum committee during September to December 2003 meetings. While standards are not derived from ESLRs, the potential exists for them to emerge in complimentary fashion, or for modification of both components to clarify the articulation between them. Consistent with the opinion of several of his peers, one curriculum committee member noted, “We didn’t write standards-based on ESLRs. [But] I think it is workable. We can
mesh the two” (C04). And another indicated that “It don’t think the ESLRs need to be tampered with a whole lot as much as just to see that the language is consistent with what we end up with in our standards” (A03).

Teachers, however, in affirming that the curriculum should become coherent through deliberate and strategic application of ESLRs and standards show a general openness to engaging in a process of creating curriculum coherence. In this case, coherence emerges through teacher involvement in conforming instruction, assessment and documentation to match the ESLRs and standards. Articulation of the curriculum, therefore, emerges organically over time through teacher participation in adjusting the elements of the curriculum to fit together rather than by curriculum specialists defining a curriculum through a rational-linear process.

Indeed, several of the teachers and administrators interviewed held to an understanding that clarifying the articulation of ESLRs and standards into the curriculum is an ongoing and inductive process. Participants noted that the school is engaged in a “process” of “adjusting the curriculum” to the ESLRs (A04) and of “defining what each [ESLR] looks like” in the classroom (C02), that the link between ESLRs and curriculum is “developing” (C01), that “we are trying ... to get our curriculum to be based on the philosophy of our school” (T05). Thus teachers, curriculum committee members and administrators are highly cognizant that they are engaged in an ongoing process and that “the future job would be ... to draw all those strands of thinking together” (A03).

While the actual process of fitting of each of the curricular pieces together into a coherent whole has yet fully to emerge, at least some ICS members are beginning to conceive of curriculum creation as an ongoing inductive process in which curriculum components are
gradually articulated. The shape of the curriculum is seen as something that is developmental and yet to clearly emerge.

6.7: Planning as Emergent

As an independent school, ICS has lacked the capital and infrastructure of districts and ministries of education which permit the hiring of curriculum and subject area specialists tasked specifically with directing curriculum development. In lieu, ICS has attempted to apply the curriculum criterion advised by WASC, that school programs aim to develop student mastery of clearly stated ESLRs and academic standards. Also, the school has attempted to document its curriculum in the fashion advocated by the Principals' Training Center (PTC), which provides training to international school leaders. In pursuing the WASC and PTC framework, ICS attempted to preserve the strengths of its organic curriculum rather than imposing one developed externally. The result has been a process of articulating the various curriculum practices and aligning the relevant documentation: ESLRs, standards, and instructional planning. Developing such an alignment, however, is not a linear process. The project began with an instructed curriculum rather than learning outcomes. ESLRs, standards, their function, and the relationship between them have been more clearly defined as teachers interact with them. Documents have been modified to correspond to this clarification. As one teacher noted, even though curriculum development might ideally be a "linear process, you have to be willing to accept the fact that it is not always going to work here. Your dealing with [personnel changes] and you're dealing with textbook suppliers and all kinds of things that come into play that will not allow everybody to follow that linear process, even if it is well planned" (C02). Such an approach to curriculum development has also lead to ambiguity. The process of drawing all of the curriculum elements
together was not fully conceived of from the beginning, but this reflects the contextual realities of the school. There is a bit of confusion because we as leaders are learning ourselves. We don’t have experts. We in administration knew that we wanted to write curriculum, but haven’t been real clear in defining what the end product could look like. Had we done, we might have helped some of those teachers who think that some of our exercises have not been worthwhile. (A03)

Teachers’ objections to involvement fell around the following concerns: 1. teachers already created unit plans the previous year, creating new unit plans suggests that the previous years’ work was a waste of time. 2. Even the slightest modification to documents betrays a lack of careful planning. As new purposes for ESLRs, standards and unit planning developed, teachers were asked to revise work accordingly. For some teachers, revision smacked of poor decision-making habits. That such concerns may be indicative of the nature of an emergent project in which all participants gradually lean the skills required and in which the documents themselves are developmental goes largely unacknowledged.

While the process of adjusting documentation to conform to emerging understanding seems logical to teachers (T09), for some adjusting documents is viewed as “redoing” work, which betrays a lack of planning. “We didn’t have a clear plan and we were patching holes rather than starting with a clear purpose” (C01). Such a sentiment was echoed by several teachers: “If there were a clear vision in the beginning, I think that might have helped. You know, clear processes then you only have to do it one time instead of four times” (T05).
I think there is some frustration on the part of the faculty because they feel like they have
to do things repetitively. It wasn’t completely thought out in advance. …There are some
people who feel there has been a lot of repetition. (T09)

Yet, teachers, often the same who believe that the work has been repetitious, recognize the need
and logic behind the changes. “It isn’t really starting over, it is revising. I think there is some
feeling that it will never end. But, in a way curriculum revision never does end” (T09). One
teacher indicated that teachers needed to fully understand the ESLRs and standards and that they
would help to drive the curriculum

if we really keep going over them at the beginning of the year and [if] teachers are given
them and go over them in their meetings. It is a constant review of them. ‘This is what
we are teaching; this is what we should be going over at this grade level.’ But I think it
has got to be a constant review. (T06)

Other teachers noted the importance of discussion to the process. “If we are not discussing it, I
think that we are not progressing as a school [and that] we’re not looking for improvement”
(C01). “The frustration is that you’ve got to do it. But as people do it, they start talking about
important things. But it is only when you talk out these frustrations that you have good results”
(C03).

Teacher sentiments reveal that review and revision is important, yet also perceived as
indicative of poor planning. This sentiment evidences the dilemma of clarity: planners cannot
know and anticipate exactly how processes will develop because new learning and
understandings require modification to plans. Thus there is a limit to what can be known from
the outset. As one administrator noted it is difficult to provide strategies that reveal absolute
clarity from the outset,
I think there is a question of what [the curriculum] will really look like. We’ve been batting around these ideas, standards, benchmarks, ESLRs, and the affect on what people are doing has been minimal [but] has been gradually increasing. For example, we’ve had an in service on rubrics… Rubrics allowed teachers to actually design an assessment task that was standards-based. I thought it was a very concrete way to see what it might look like. Another thing that we’ll do is to provide more training in how to design standards-based units. A lack of real clarity of how a standards-based system would end up looking is again understandable and almost inevitable and yet causes some confusion and sense of, “we’re not really sure of where we might and up,” which, again is probably realistic. (A01)

Another administrator notes that revisiting work is required to meet the emerging institutional goals:

The biggest concern is that ‘we do the same thing every year.’ I think that concern is changing some now because they see that the school is not doing the same thing. It is going in a direction and there are goals for doing this. It’s not that it is the beginning of the year and time to do your unit plans again. I think there was some negative reaction to that. That is most frustrating for me, to convince them that we are not changing for changes sake, but we’re changing because it helps us reach our goals and identity as an educational institution. (A03)

For those who do not understand the change in focus, adding standards and ESLRs to the template may seem like an imposition of extra work and hence the charge of “redoing” and taking away from classroom related work.
I think it is important that the focus is on teaching. The focus shouldn’t be on this stuff, even though it is important. And, the fact is that we can’t do everything over night... But make sure that it is a worthwhile activity, that it is I helpful and meaningful. And, make a decision and stick to it instead of changing. It can be to the simplest level, like the template for which you want something done. It may only take five minutes, but that adds up. If we had the forethought of doing that the first time... (C01)

In essence it seems that, while teachers appreciate the purpose and need for ESLRs and standards and value reminders and suggestions of how to fulfill them, the actual work of documentation is perceived as onerous and, perhaps, irrelevant. Yet for some teachers involvement has yielded greater understanding of purpose.

I think it is important and I’m starting to see the value of that and even of unit plans. ... Because [ICS] is an international school in particular and because people, teachers and staff are changing a lot, if you don’t have ESLRs, standards, benchmarks and best instructional practices in place, if teachers aren’t making unit plans which are a record of what they’ve taught, I don’t know how you can provide a consistent education to students in the school. So, I think it is important, particularly in this setting (C02).

We need the ESLRs, standards and benchmarks. We need plans of what we are going to do. We need to have a good picture of what we’re doing and not just go from one topic to the next without thinking is this really valid. So we need to plan. ...[But] people want to be finished with the basic structure of things and just make minor changes. I have no answer for this. ...You have to have a structure, but most teachers feel it is a burden. What can we do about it? I don’t know (T09).
I believe that your teaching should be at the forefront. ...I sometimes feel that we don’t have enough time devoted to preparing and planning our classes and that there is a ton devoted to developing ESLRs and standards and curriculum. (T05)

And, as another articulated, while ESLRs and standards are “vital” and that “it is important to remind teachers that we have to teach to the standards and benchmarks” to prevent teachers from teaching strictly “their own thing,” and while teachers should “have a real voice in what should happen,” teachers “shouldn’t be as involved as they are because the focus isn’t really on teaching” (C01). The apparent challenges, therefore, are 1. establishing in teachers’ minds the link between teacher involvement curriculum planning and achieving a coherent instructional program, and 2. finding the ideal extent with which to involve teachers in achieving a documented curriculum.

In a general sense, however, teachers recognize that their participation in curriculum documentation is important. As mentioned above, only three teachers viewed it as unimportant “to be deliberate and strategic about ensuring that the curriculum helps students to achieve the ESLRs” (Q6), and most viewed teacher involvement in defining ESLRs as important and supportive of school cohesion. Furthermore, when asked “how important is teacher collaboration to creating a coherent curriculum” (Q14) all teachers argued that it is essential (20 responses) or helpful (7). None viewed collaboration as unimportant. When asked directly about their involvement in creating curriculum documents (15), 20 teachers indicated the response that “it takes lots of time, but such documentation is needed for planning, accountability and/or curriculum development.” Three felt that the time commitment was reasonable and one teacher commented that “lesson plans suffice while overviews and units waste time” (Q15E). Other
teachers who made comments indicated that the school should create more time for teachers to engage in such work.

Taken together, the questionnaire and interview results indicate that teachers generally do not object to curriculum planning, view collaborative planning as important, but find the time demand undesirable. Probably the time issue underlies conception that revisiting and revising work is equivalent to “redoing” tasks. Teachers would prefer to focus their time differently. Ironically, while teachers express a desire to come to the end of the curriculum development process, at the same time they believe that tasks are developmental and should be undertaken over longer periods of time to facilitate understanding. “We’ve got to slow down. It is a gradual thing. We have got to understand standards and benchmarks, because I really don’t think a lot of people do” (T06). Curriculum development “is a long and tedious process… Progress requires change, so it will never end. So be patient” (T10).

Resistance to revising the curriculum documents may also reflect how teachers have been engaged in the process. While ESLRs were crafted through highly collaborative processes, and teachers were involved with their peers in selecting and / or approving of standards, teachers, in contrast, worked on the curriculum documents individually. While teachers self-assessed their curricula for consistency with ESLRs and the selected standards, curriculum committee members and the administration did not devise a schoolwide strategy for assessing and providing feedback to teachers about the quality of their planning. For some teachers, this has led to a sense that their efforts are in vain because they are not confident that their own work is of sound quality and that no one else truly values the product of their efforts (T01, C02). For teacher involvement to be sustained, the school leadership should consider strategies to provide timely feedback to teacher as they engage in the developmental process.
6.8: The Emerging Climate

The process of involving teachers in establishing ESLRs and standards, in documenting their instructed curriculum and assessing the latter in light of the former has impacted the actual climate of the school. While teachers had always been responsible, and sometimes quite autonomously so, for their instructed curriculum, at the time the process began, teachers had had no authentic input in shaping the overall purpose of the school for student achievement. While, a school level mission and learning objectives had been understood at the board and administrative level, these did not penetrate the classroom nor were they understood by faculty, which lacked involvement in the process, which in turn prohibited faculty from understanding the merits of the product.

However, when asked to reflect about their own involvement in the curriculum project (Q11), most teachers (13) felt that their involvement in determining the ESLRs was important, with only 5 indicating they were too involved and one, not involved enough (the remainder were not present). Interestingly, support for the process was strong even though participation was mandated.

Frequently mandated participation yields contrived collegiality, but this has not been the ICS experience for the typical teacher. For the most part, teachers have valued their participation. The school's head reflects that contrived collegiality has not developed at ICS because of "the size of the school, the process in which they were defined and the attitude of the faculty."

Involvement in the process has moved faculty from isolation towards a participatory culture. As the previous analysis indicated, an increased sense of teacher ownership, understanding and support for the achievement of the schools ESLRs has resulted. The shift in
the culture stems from structures to be built which encourage teacher involvement at multiple levels through multiple processes which impact the curriculum. While in years past, meetings served as means to dispense information, current meetings permit faculty to place items on the agenda and allow for faculty input prior to decision making. Teachers have a voice in the curriculum committee and in their departments. Such a shift is reflected in responses to the question “Do collaborative decisions at ICS (i.e., those made in departmental, divisional, faculty, focus group and schoolwide committee meetings) impact choices about curriculum development?” (Q20) sixteen faculty members indicated a positive response and only three indicated the negative. Similarly, when asked to identify the degree to which teachers have input in decisions, only one teacher indicated that “I have no involvement at all” (Q21).

For many teachers, having their opinions sought and heard has become a normative expectation. Teachers tend to value such input and have high expectations that their opinions will be heard and view their involvement as important in curriculum decision making. Thus a shift has occurred in school climate. Where teachers had had no involvement in significant decisions, worked in isolation, and produced no documentation, teacher now have structures and means to impact decisions, welcome collaboration as an ideal, and are active, albeit to varying degrees, in creating the written curriculum.
CHAPTER VII: Conclusions

This case study was designed to uncover features of teacher involvement which impacted the nature of school-based curriculum development in a small, independent school. The school’s objective was to achieve curriculum coherence by aligning teacher designed instruction to collaboratively determined learning outcomes, rather than imposing “off the shelf” curricula. Therefore, all teachers were participants in the curriculum project and, hence, in this case study. An analysis of questionnaire responses, interviews and observations of the context, tasks and processes of the case revealed features of involvement that impacted coherence through frequent clarification, interaction and reshaping of teacher understanding, articulation of curriculum elements, and the actual project. Findings were verified in consultation with other participants.

7.1: The Case Context

In addition to the obvious traits of being international and Christian, ICS is young, quickly growing and independent. The interplay of these traits has significantly shaped the school’s curriculum context. From its original small size and ongoing independence an informal curricular coherence evolved. Lacking funds, specialists, and a national or regional curriculum, teachers drew on their own expertise, textbooks and classroom resources to develop instructional designs for specific grade levels or subject area programs. As a small, Christian school into which teachers and families self-select, a familiar, collegial ethos developed, but professional collaborative opportunities were not administratively facilitated and occurred informally on teachers’ initiative. Thus collaboration around curriculum and instruction was not a normative aspect of the school’s culture. As an international school, teacher and administrator tenure tended to be brief, rarely more than three years, preventing a sustained and strategic effort at curriculum documentation. Lacking a schoolwide framework, new principals seldom continued
their predecessor's curriculum efforts and new teachers continued to design courses from scratch. A semblance of curriculum coherence developed because teachers worked together at the same campus with a sense of common purpose. However, with rapid growth, the faculty became fractured. Two sections of kindergarten through grade eight met at two campuses with different principals. At the larger campus, the elementary and secondary programs also had different principals. With such divisions, the small school ethos, reliant on informal mechanisms in lieu of documentation and focused, ongoing collaboration, could not sustain curriculum coherence.

7.2: The Case Tasks

Propelled by a lackluster March 2001 accreditation report, a new administrative team aimed to involve teachers in creating a coherent, written curriculum. To achieve this, teachers were engaged in several tasks from August 2001 to December 2003. Initially, all school stakeholders were involved in defining Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs). ESLRs would state learning goals for students towards which all school programs would be directed. Thus ESLRs would provide the basis for schoolwide curriculum coherence. Subsequently, the headmaster directed teachers' energies towards the selection of academic standards, which would provide subject-area learning goals, and the creation of curriculum overviews and unit plans to document the actual instructional program. Curriculum overviews would indicate "a synopsis of what students will be learning, doing, and studying during each course," and unit plans the "whole design, delivery and assessment package used in teaching to learning outcomes / standards that have been determined as critical to student learning" (ICS-Headmaster's Memo). Next, teachers identified the extent to which instruction and learning actually addressed ESLRs and standards and, beginning in autumn 2003, teachers began aligning their instruction with
standards and ESLRs and modified documents accordingly.

7.3: The Tasks' Processes

The ESLRs were determined through a year-long effort in which each stakeholder group, students, parents, and teachers with administrators, worked separately to draft possible ESLRs. Teachers worked in sub-groups to propose ELSRs which were then collapsed in a faculty-wide meeting into proposed ESLRs. All stakeholder groups presented their suggestions to a heterogeneous leadership team of stakeholder representatives which collated and melded together the contributions into a final set of six ESLRs which the board subsequently approved (see appendix 3 for products of each stage of ESLR development).

Over the second year, teachers collaborated in subject area departments to select standards and benchmarks. The main criterion for selection was that of finding the best fit of the standards to the skills and content that teachers believed they already were teaching or should teach. On a standardized unit planning template, they indicated the ESLRs that each standard addressed. Thus the standards emerged independently from the ESLRs and connections were made post hoc. Concurrently, teachers worked independently to draft their curriculum documents.

Over the course of the year, teachers reconsidered the relationship of ESLRs to the taught curriculum by indicating on their unit plans the addressed ESLRs and did the same to collected exemplars of student work. Teachers also compared the standards and ESLRs to their curriculum overviews. Teachers reported to their departments the extent to which they believed that their instructed curriculum was meeting the ESLRs. The exercise was intended to uncover the perceived articulation of ESLRs to curriculum rather than to design an actual articulation. The departments' responses were forwarded to the curriculum and instruction focus group
(comprised of stakeholder representatives) which found a lack of clarity among faculty about the meaning and function of ESLRs and noticed that some ESLRs were not addressed across several departments’ curricula. In response, the focus group initiated a process of clarifying the meaning of each ESLR by creating descriptors which were then presented to the entire faculty at an in-service meeting. The faculty refined the descriptors, which were polished and approved in a later meeting. In September 2003, teachers were asked to begin designing their instruction to meet ESLRS and standards and to submit two such unit plans to their principals.

7.4: Findings

Features of Involvement

Examination of the context, tasks and processes at the early stage of school-based curriculum development at ICS revealed that teacher involvement was highly intuitive, focused on multiple interrelated tasks, engaged at multiple organizational levels, and mandated. These features of involvement shaped an emerging curriculum coherence by concurrently impacting teachers’ understanding, curriculum articulation and by reshaping the context, tasks and processes themselves.

Experience and Intuition.

Throughout the case, teacher involvement rested on the premise that teachers’ intuitive understanding of the curriculum provided the most relevant source of insight. With no curriculum specialists, teachers had become the de facto curriculum makers and their instructional decisions, documented or not, had become the curriculum. Teachers who had remained at the school over several years had full ownership of their curriculum as they had, in fact, individually developed and resourced several courses. Given this factor, teachers held within their minds an understanding of school purpose and curriculum coherence, although
neither had been consistently documented nor collaboratively discussed. No officially articulated integrating statement of purpose directed the curriculum from the outset. Therefore, whether through collaborative or individual effort, each curriculum task relied heavily on teachers’ experience and intuitive understanding of the school’s purpose and subject specific learning goals, rather than adhering to clear statements of purpose made prior to the design process.

The process of defining ESLRs revealed significant cohesion amongst teachers’ proposals. And the process of selecting standards validated teachers’ intuition by engaging them in selecting standards that they considered most appropriate for the curriculum. By asking teachers to document the taught, rather than ideal curriculum, teachers transferred aspects of their own curricular decisions and understandings to paper. The evaluation process also called upon teacher’s intuition to identify connections between the curriculum, ESLRs and standards through post hoc reflection rather than by predetermined design. Thus, throughout each task teachers’ opinions were respected as accurate representation of the actual curricular reality.

**Revisiting through multiple, interrelated tasks.**

Teacher involvement in the curriculum initiative was sustained over multiple, interrelated tasks. Each of the tasks caused teachers to contemplate the relationship of curriculum to ESLRs. Frequent revisiting of the ESLRs through multiple strategies permitted teachers to become increasingly familiar with the ESLRs and to reflect upon their actual representation in the curriculum. The process engaged teachers in multiple types of work: creating, selecting, recording and evaluating. Through involvement in varied interrelated tasks, teacher engagement was sustained and focused on learning outcomes (ESLRs and standards).
Engagement at multiple organizational levels.

The entire two year process engaged teachers at multiple organizational levels. Teachers were involved (a) as an entire faculty in creating the ESLRs and, later on, their descriptors; (b) in discipline-based department which selected standards and analyzed the extent to which ESLRs and standards were actually represented in the taught curriculum; (c) at the curriculum committee level to determine and guide the process through which the curriculum would be documented and analyzed; (d) in heterogeneous stakeholder-based focus groups that provided further evaluation and suggested areas of improvement; and, (e) individually to create curriculum overviews, unit plans and assessments which teachers self-evaluated for application of ESLRs and standards. ESLRs, therefore, became the focus of discussion and action from the broadest to most specific organizational levels: schoolwide, focus group, committee, departmental, and individual levels.

Mandated participation.

Although an often ill-advised feature of involvement, the administration mandated participation in both individual work of documenting curriculum and collecting evidence of student learning as well as the collaborative tasks of defining ESLRs, selecting standards and evaluating the curriculum.

Thus four features of teacher involvement emerged from the context, tasks and process. Involvement was (a) intuitive, (b) directed towards multiple interrelated tasks, (c) engaged in multiple organizational levels, and (d) mandated. There are not, however, clear correlations of specific features to specific impacts. Some features work in combination with others to impact the shape of the curriculum project, while others individually have impact. Some features, therefore, may have greater impact than others, a reality that administrators should consider
when designing curriculum change processes.

The features also tend to be rooted in one or more aspects (i.e., context, tasks and process) of the case. Some are organic to the context while others are administratively imposed during the task design or process. Thus the feature of intuition is strongly rooted in the pre-existing context and had influence throughout the tasks and processes. The features of involvement in multiple tasks at multiple organizational levels emerged from task designs. Mandated involvement was a process-oriented administrative decision. The study observed that contextually-based features (e.g., the application of teachers’ intuition) may have greater potential impact throughout the tasks and processes, yet they may also erect barriers to change.

Impact on the Emergent Curriculum

The highly intuitive, mandated involvement of teachers in multiple tasks at various organizational levels shaped curriculum development in that coherence of teacher understanding and curriculum articulation as well as that of the context, tasks and processes emerged in tandem. Coherence thus emerged in dynamic concert and interaction amongst all aspects of the project. Emerging clarity in one aspect informed the other. When understanding developed, the context changed as did the nature of tasks and processes. When teachers participated in curriculum articulation tasks, their understanding was further shaped. The complexity of this interaction indicates that although the coherent curriculum should appear rational, the process of arriving at coherence may be convoluted and not the step-by-step process that many have perceived (Marsh & Willis, 2003) in the works of Ralph Tyler (1949) or Hilda Taba (1962). Rather, as suggested by Schwab (1969/1997) and Walker (1971, 1975; Walker & Soltis, 1986), a linear approach is inadequate to deal with complex sets of beliefs and understandings, and in reality curriculum decisions seldom occur in such a manner.
Emerging coherence.

Having been involved in defining the ESLRs and revisiting them in multiple curriculum tasks, teachers became highly invested in the ESLRs as general statements of purpose, believing that the curriculum should be deliberately and strategically directed to advance student achievement of the ESLRs and standards. When asked, teachers typically believed that ESLRs and standards were needed to improve instructional expertise and program quality. Moreover, they viewed their participation in defining ESLRs as essential to school cohesion. Thus teachers perceived ESLRs and standards, and their involvement in creating them, as offering potential at the broad level of program direction. This understanding was evidenced by the reportedly frequent use of the language of standards and ESLRs in teacher discussions regarding school programs. The high degree of coherence around ESLRs' purpose and the need for them mirrors teacher satisfaction with their involvement in the process of ESLR creation, which most felt was of appropriate depth and essential to curriculum coherence. Collaborative involvement around issues of a general program nature was thus well received, even though mandated.

Although there was overall agreement about the involvement of teachers in creating ESLRs and standards for the purpose of providing general program direction, as work shifted towards the implementation of ESLRs and standards into instruction, new challenges to coherence emerged, requiring a change of process. When post hoc intuition served as a satisfactory means to assess application of ESLRs and standards to the curriculum, acceptance of the task obtained. But as teachers were called to shift actual instructional planning towards targeting ESLRS and standards by design, intuition proved lacking, new skills needed to be developed, and challenges to understanding and coherence emerged at both the general level of ESLR function and the specific level of instructional design practice. Sometimes such outcomes
yield resistance to change, for teachers are required to invest their energies into learning and changing practices (Dwyer, Ringstaff & Sandholtz, 1991; Fullan, 2003; Fullan & Miles, 1992).

The immediacy of implementation to instructional practice also led to reevaluation of the ESLRs. While some teachers understood ESLRs to be broad based, to encapsulate all elements of the classroom such as instructional methods or student behavior, others equated them with content standards and considered them redundant. While some teachers viewed ESLRs as organic and almost omnipresent in the classroom (“we’re always doing these things”), others struggled to see the relevance of every ESLR to their instruction. For instance, while all courses will likely promote independent, creative or analytical thinking (ESLR T), how should courses such as art or mathematics encourage students to act as members of the global community (ESLR A)? Is it sufficient to assume that the cumulative school program promotes ESLRs, or must each program design methods by which to assess student achievement of them? Should standards be created for underrepresented ESLRs? Thus, as teachers grappled with designing their instruction, an “implementation dip” (Evans, 1996, p. 92) regarding the function of ESLRs emerged. And, when teachers were encouraged to design units to address standards, mild resistance emerged.

Frequently, several teachers commented that during implementation they typically continued to look for a best fit of the ESLRs to units as a reflexive act rather than deriving units from the ESLRs and standards. This parallels the process through which documentation and evaluation of the curriculum was engaged. Teachers have continued planning in an intuitive, post-hoc way, in part because that is how they had experienced, and therefore understood, the early process of documenting the curriculum and the intuitive approach to planning has become institutionalized. Had the curriculum recording task occurred subsequently to defining ESLRs
and standards instead of concurrently, and had design rather than intuition been emphasized, might teachers have earlier understood the process as one of design rather than intuition? While the intuitive approach was satisfactory initially (and essential given the context), it appears inadequate to conform the curriculum to the ESLRs and standards. Teacher understanding mimics the familiar process and task. Moving on to the new phase of design requires a shift in the process.

When the articulation process hit closer to the classroom and required individual effort, challenges to understanding developed and questions regarding function and articulation emerged. Although coherence around general principles was strong, coherence around the specific implementation proved weaker. While there was a very coherent understanding of the need and purpose of ESLRs and their ideal relationship to the curriculum, there was less clarity around the impact on instructional planning. This finding is in keeping with Liebermann and Miller's (1992) assertion that changes are accepted when they fit what is already done with "little additional work" (p. 46) but are viewed as impractical otherwise. Understanding emerged and was challenged in interaction with tasks, processes, and teachers' sense of practical reality.

Emerging alignment of understanding, curriculum, tasks, processes and roles.

Features of involvement impacted the curriculum articulation, the alignment of ESLRs, standards, overviews, and instructional units to each other. Because teachers responded to each curriculum task based upon their own instructional experience and intuition, the curriculum development process at the school could not follow a linear model. Coherence did not emerge through a deductive process of defining learning objectives (i.e., ESLRs and standards) first, then deriving the curriculum from them, and finally adjusting means to ends. Rather, modest initial curriculum coherence was derived from the concurrent participation of teachers in several
curriculum initiatives throughout the school organization. Considering that most of the curriculum tasks occurred in a single year, the school benefited from the coherence lurking within the minds of a stable group of teachers, something typically lacking in the transient international context. These efforts, however, occurred after development over the previous decade of the instructed curriculum. Despite the sequence, teachers believed that they addressed ESLRs and standards, but often through informal, unstructured and thus undocumented and non-assessed strategies. The understood articulation of the ESLRs through the curriculum proved unverifiable and coherence, if present, continued to lie in the intuition of teachers and not the documentation. The documentation process was, therefore, one of recording teachers' intuition and experience and adjusting the curriculum to fit changes in understanding.

Shaping alignment in which ESLRs and standards are articulated through the curriculum, therefore, emerged over time through teacher participation in transferring understood coherence to paper and adjusting the elements of the curriculum to fit together rather than by defining learning outcomes at the outset, as implied by Tyler (1949) nor at the end of the process as suggested by Walker and Stolis (1986). Rather, the alignment of standards to ESLRs and to instruction and assessment occurred incrementally throughout the project as teacher understanding developed through engagement in the tasks. Such an emergent curriculum project takes shape much like fitting together a newly made jig-saw puzzle. Pieces emerged from a common context, as from a box, but the fit between the pieces is rough. At times pieces have to be forced together, the edges smoothed. Clarity emerges gradually. As more pieces are assembled the relationship to the whole is better understood. Similarly, the curriculum process is one of gradual change, as teachers look for the best fit of curriculum elements and slowly modify, eliminate, or introduce instructional and curriculum design practices. While those
working on a puzzle may refer to the picture on the box’s cover, those developing curriculum cannot have such prescient clarity.

In such a fashion a curriculum that resembles a rational-linear model may result, but the process is rather messy. Indeed, several teachers and administrators held that clarifying the articulation of ESLRs and standards into the curriculum is an ongoing, developmental and inductive process of adjusting the curriculum to fit not only with school purpose and academic outcomes, but also with teacher understanding; a process of “draw[ing] all those strands of thinking together” (A03, Personal Communication, December 11, 2003). And, as teachers' and administrators' understanding emerges, they may introduce new curriculum elements to increase coherence. (Recently at ICS, instructional agreements and essential questions have been suggested as possible gap fillers. And, it has been suggested that the contents of the curriculum documents evolve accordingly.) Thus a documented coherent curriculum in this school context is but a representation of the emerging coherence of the participants’ thinking.

As indicated previously, teacher interaction with curriculum shapes their understanding of ESLRs and standards and thus curriculum coherence. A challenge for the school, therefore, is to facilitate a developmental process in which the articulation is smoothed. This requires the revision of tasks, processes and roles, which themselves are emergent and develop along with teacher understanding of the curriculum articulation.

Curriculum tasks, processes and roles have been modified to account for new understandings because understanding of how curriculum elements articulate with each other emerges gradually. For instance, the decision by the focus group to create ESLR descriptors emerged when inconsistent teacher understanding of ESLRs was observed through the evaluation process. The administration had not planned or anticipated this task but implemented
it when requested by the focus group. Likewise, in September 2003, teachers were asked to modify their unit plans to account for the standards to which they teach. Curriculum templates were slightly adjusted and updated by teachers to indicate their emerging understanding of instructional design. This has brought a reaction from some teachers that they are wasting time in “redoing” past work. Involving teachers in developing an emerging curriculum while achieving a specific sense of accomplishment presents a challenge.

Resistance to revising the curriculum documents may also reflect how teachers have been engaged in the process. ESLRs were crafted through highly collaborative processes. Teachers were involved with their peers in selecting and/or approving of standards. But, in contrast, teachers worked on the curriculum documents individually. Teachers self-assessed their curricula for consistency with ESLRs and the selected standards, but when the task shifted towards teaching to standards by design, the curriculum committee members and administration had not devised a new schoolwide strategy for assessing and providing feedback to teachers about their progress and the quality of their planning. As a result some teachers believed that their efforts were in vain because they lacked confidence that their own work was of sound quality. With no feedback, teachers commented that no one else truly valued the product of their efforts. This sentiment has led to a reconsideration of the role of departments, administrators and the curriculum committee in providing feedback and in structuring collaborative strategies, and the required time, to engage in unit design rather than allowing documentation to remain an individual effort. Roles and processes that shaped understanding and impacted the articulation of the curriculum, therefore, developed continuously in response to the tasks and not only at the beginning as Fullan (2001) and Evans (1996) perceive as typical.
Climate Change

The process of involving teachers in establishing ESLRs and standards, documenting the instructed curriculum and assessing the latter in light of the former has impacted the actual climate of the school. Teachers had always been responsible for designing their curricula, but originally had no authentic input in shaping overall goals for student achievement. In 1998, a mission statement and learning objectives had been developed by the board and administration. Lack of involvement prohibited faculty understanding and, therefore, implementation into the classroom. The more recent process of defining ESLRs has been perceived differently. Most teachers valued involvement in determining the ESLRs and believe them to be important for subsequent curriculum design. Thus support for the process was strong even though participation was mandated.

Although mandated participation is shown to yield contrived collegiality, this has not been the experience reported by the typical teacher at ICS. For the most part, teachers have valued their participation. The current headmaster reflects that contrived collegiality had not developed during the ESLR creation process because of “the size of the school, the process in which they [ESLRs] were defined and the attitude of the faculty” (personal communication, January 8, 2004). The process was rooted in a small school context, which created an implicit sense of purpose and mutual good will, engendered respect for teachers’ intuitive understanding and, with a new administration, welcomed teacher participation. Collaborative decision making actually impacted the curriculum, indicating that administrators valued teachers’ intuition and mitigating contrived collegiality. That 84% of responding teachers indicated that their involvement in collaborative decision-making had real impact on curriculum decisions carries significance. Real (or, at least, perceived) impact seems to forestall the ill affects of contrived
collegiality.

That the process throughout validated teachers’ professional intuition and experience, respected the context of teachers as the arbiters of the curriculum, and assumed a degree of inherent schoolwide coherence due to the small school size and Christian ethos may also have worked against contrived collegiality. Teachers were enabled to set the goals to which they would strive, albeit with parental, student and administrative input. This self-determination seems, in fact, to have induced the opposite impact of contrived collegiality: teachers acknowledged that the process had brought increased cohesion, validated the need for ESLRs and standards to drive instruction, and viewed collaboration as helpful, if not essential, to achieving curricular goals. Mandated involvement seems to have impacted the school climate in the manner advocated by Rosenholtz (1991) by sensitizing teachers to the benefits of collaboration through the deliberate structuring of opportunity for collaboration into the school’s operations.

Involvement in the process moved teachers from isolated collegiality towards a collaborative, participatory culture. An increased sense of teacher ownership, understanding and support for the achievement of the schools’ ESLRs has resulted in the expectation that teacher opinions should be taken into account and opportunities for collaboration designed into the tasks and processes. The climate, therefore, was shaped by teacher involvement, concurrently influencing the design of curriculum tasks and processes. However, for a few teachers collaborative involvement in curriculum decision-making is now too frequent, supporting the axiom that “you can’t please everyone.”

7.5: Implications, Challenges and Dilemmas

The early stage of curriculum development at ICS has been one in which tasks, processes
and context interact with, shape, and are shaped by emerging understandings engendered by faculty involvement at multiple organizational levels, and in multiple tasks that rely on teacher's intuition and experience. As a young, growing, independent school, ICS could not draw on a pool of experts for its curriculum. Therefore, teachers' existing instructional design practices, rather than learning objectives, became the starting point for the curriculum project. The resulting curriculum process can be described as emergent, nontechnical, inductive, and instructionally focused. This is much different than the curriculum of large school systems which, developed by specialists beginning with objectives, may be described as technical, deductive, specialist-driven, and often prescriptive. In the former context curriculum develops in-step with changing teacher understanding and practice. The articulation between curriculum elements develops over time as teachers interact with tasks, processes, roles and contexts, all of which change in response to each other. Achieving a coherent school-based curriculum in a small, independent school is like hitting a moving target.

Despite potential confusion, engagement in the development process brought increased clarity and coherence. Teacher understanding of the need and purpose for ESLRs and standards and support for their role in curriculum design are high. This results from teacher involvement in multiple tasks at multiple organizational levels, which permits ongoing clarification of tasks, processes and understanding throughout the school. Concerns raised at one level are likely to be addressed throughout the organization to varying degrees. As Harris (2000) notes, improvement oriented change must be addressed at all levels within a school: teacher, committee and whole school, a factor which administers should structure into curriculum tasks that are intended to have schoolwide impact.

Not all tasks involving teachers were received with equal support. Broadly focused,
schoolwide, collaborative tasks are more easily understood and supported than individual tasks targeting teachers’ instructional design practices. Measures indicated by teachers that could facilitate increased understanding and support for the latter type of task include placing strong feedback mechanisms into the process and providing opportunity for collaboration. This could have the added benefit, suggested by Hargreaves (2003), of increasing the perceived relevance to instructional practice. Providing for ongoing collaboration in curriculum decision making is essential to support the new participatory context. For “the failure of many school-based curriculum development initiatives is attributable, at least in part, to the failure to build and sustain the collegial working relationships essential to their success” (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 186). And, the roles of teachers, administrators and committees themselves must be redefined midstream to account for changing understanding of tasks and processes. Because clarity emerges with involvement, designing in advance a perfect fit of role and process to task and context is improbable without risking “false clarity” (Fullan, 2001, p. 77). This dilemma runs the risk of teachers perceiving leaders as poor planners. Yet, a predetermined but rigid structure may prove inadequate to the task and, Fullan (1999) charges, inappropriate for learning organizations, which require “non linear-feedback networks” (p. 5).

Perhaps the most significant challenge to involving teachers in working on an emergent curriculum is encountered when teachers revisit tasks for improvement purposes. Although revisiting and revising is an inevitable response to emerging clarity and understanding, teachers express frustration at having to “redo” work. Teachers point out that they have been called upon repeatedly to modify documents, either to bring about schoolwide consistency of format, or to indicate alignment of instruction to ESLRs and standards. While recognizing the value and logic in developmental processes, teachers also tend to perceive that tasks should be designed and
"done right" the first time, as if clarity of vision, tasks and process could be fully developed prior to beginning work and remain unchanged thereafter. Therefore, teachers tend to associate revisiting with poor planning or lack of competence. Yet such revisiting undoubtedly has permitted a high degree of coherent understanding of need and purpose of ESLRs. As Little (1990) and Werner (2002) point out, improvement-oriented change must be focused and frequent, something that revisiting achieves. Clarifying to teachers the need for revisiting tasks also presents a problem because the needed clarity emerges only through involvement in tasks and shifts throughout implementation (Fullan, 2001; Werner, 2002). Therefore, the dilemma is that frequent revisiting is required to achieve the clarity needed to explain why revisiting is required. The challenge for educational leaders is to balance an appropriate level of teacher involvement, which teachers expect, with an appropriate number (and depth) of improvement-oriented collaborative tasks while not being perceived as redundant or repetitive. This challenge to revisiting seems to occur when tasks are of the same type or when they are repeated at the same organizational level, such as the task of modifying unit plans. By varying the type of task and level of engagement, the charge of repetitiveness may become less likely.

An associated difficulty with teacher involvement in revisiting lies in identifying a project's end point. Is there a place at which teacher involvement in curriculum development may end when the articulation of instruction and curriculum elements is an ongoing process? Often teachers would like there to be a conclusion. Given such sentiment, it is ironic that many teachers view involvement in curriculum matters as a distraction from instruction, by which teachers judge practicality (Evans, 1996), yet simultaneously consider participation as essential to achieving a coherent curriculum. Identifying frequent, distinct and observable points in which accomplishment has been achieved and can be celebrated seems important to encouraging
teacher participation and minimizing frustration. Such attention to process design can impact teachers' sense of accomplishment.

Inducting new teachers into their role in the ESLR and standards-based curriculum poses another challenge. While revisiting could serve to attune new teachers to the school’s curriculum, returning teachers may lack the tolerance. While returning teachers had participated in the collaborative process, new teachers had no part in the decision. Finding ways to institutionalize curriculum decisions and inform new teachers of past developments are essential if ESLRs and standards are to be implemented. However, as ESLRs and standards are new, these structures have yet to develop, creating potential difficulties for new teachers in delivering the curriculum (C02).

The nature of the process can shape teachers' understanding of tasks. The processes studied in this case had invoked teachers' intuitive understanding on which they had based their curriculum practices to identify *post-hoc* associations. As curriculum and instruction moved to be ESLR and standards-based, a corresponding change in understanding about instructional planning is required. This requires a shift in process. Such a change is difficult. Processes, it seems, can institutionalize practices making subsequent change difficult, as indicated by the tendency to continue planning “standards-based” units by intuitive association rather than by design. Hence the dilemma that changing understanding requires a change in process, but involvement in emerging processes risks institutionalizing immature understanding. This institutionalization is exacerbated when the contextually rooted feature of intuition is applied. To this point Fullan's (2001) advice of applying continuous “pressure and support” (p. 91) resonates well, probably being the only strategy available to shift this impact of contextually rooted involvement features.
The issue of contrived collegiality should also be considered. While mandated participation tends to yield the undesirable traits of contrived collegiality, it needn't be so. Context, task and process can shape a positive outcome from mandated involvement. However, as these aspects of a project change over time, curriculum leaders need constantly to reevaluate if mandated involvement remains appropriate. And administrators should be sensitive that the utility of features of involvement are highly dependant on context. For example, basing curriculum development on teacher intuition, regardless of experience and expertise, certainly worked to encourage collaboration and to support coherent understanding. However, this feature emerges organically from context and therefore, placed in another context may yield undesirable impacts. Too, because task and process oriented features interact with context features, the absence of one may alter the combined impact. Mandated involvement may, for instance, have less impact if applied in a context lacking the potential of intuition.

In examining the case of teacher involvement at International Christian School, it has become evident that school-based curriculum development projects may face the challenge of accommodating late-emerging overarching goals and academic standards to pre-existing curriculum and instructional practices. In such a situation, schools may find that the curriculum development projects’ contexts, tasks and processes create features of involvement which, in impacting coherence, reshape themselves. Features of involvement and their impacts shift and develop in tandem, interacting with and shaping each other, challenging assumptions about linear and rational approaches to curriculum development. In such a setting, participants may find that curriculum development is less like target shooting than completing a jigsaw puzzle on a rickety table. It is for school leaders, aware of the dilemmas that involvement creates, to appropriately and in a timely manner apply the relevant features as tools to balance the platform on which the
puzzle can gradually emerge.

Alternatively, as the school’s Headmaster points out, perhaps these challenges are to be expected in a young, growing school:

The lack of a clear and written curriculum was indicative of the immaturity of the school. One of my goals is to get us to grow up. [Our curriculum is] growing from infancy towards maturity... We’re gangly, not quite sure of ourselves. There is a lot of uncertainty of where we’re going to end up. It is an identity crisis. We all feel pretty good about our parenting, our heritage. But, you still think, “When are we going to get rid of our zits?”
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Appendix 1: ICS Administration and Teaching Faculty Questionnaire

1. On staff at ICS for more than one school year (i.e., prior to 2002 – 2003):

2. **TO YOU**, what is the main purpose of having and using Expected Schoolwide Learning Results?

3. Does your teaching reflect some of the ESLRs?
   a. No.
   b. Yes, I deliberately plan at least some of my instruction with the ESLRs in mind.
   c. Yes, but **not** deliberately so. It just so happens that (some of) the ESLRs reflect the skills and attitudes that I try to teach anyway.
   d. Other: ________________________________

4. If possible, can you identify two ways that the school’s ESLRs are formalized at ICS (in either documentation or practice)?

5. To what extent do you believe that it is important to be deliberate and strategic about ensuring that the curriculum helps students to achieve the school’s ESLRs? Please tick the appropriate spot on the continuum.

   ____________________________

   Not important                               Highly important

6. What connection is there between ESLRs and standards?
   a. There is no relationship.
   b. All standards connect to one or more ESLR.
   c. All ESLRs are represented in subject-area standards.
   d. Other: ________________________________

7. Should there be a connection between ESLRs and standards?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Other

8. Do you use, or intend to use, subject-area standards / benchmarks in your instructional planning in any way? Please tick the appropriate spot on the continuum.

   ____________________________

   Never                               Always

9. What is the purpose of standards / benchmarks?
10. Please provide one example of how you use, or intend to use, standards in your planning. If you have no such intention, please explain your position.

11. What statement most closely matches your belief about teacher involvement in defining the school’s ESLRs
   a. Teachers had just the right amount of influence in determining and defining ESLRs.
   b. This sort of activity should be left to the leadership, like administrators and the board.
   c. The school leadership should have found a way to involve teachers more.
   d. Teachers were too involved. Teacher involvement should have been limited to quick consultation.
   e. I do not know.

12. How do you react to the suggestion that ESLRs should drive curriculum and instruction at ICS?
   
   Not important.                        Highly important

13. Does teacher participation in defining ESLRs contribute to school cohesion?
   
   Never.                          Always

14. In your opinion, how important is teacher collaboration to creating a coherent curriculum (K – 12, or within a grade level).
   a. Not important.
   b. Helpful but not essential.
   c. Essential.

15. What do you believe about your involvement in creating curriculum documents such as standards / benchmark documents, course overviews and unit plans?
   a. Such involvement wastes my time.
   b. It takes lots of time, but such documentation is needed for planning, accountability and / or curriculum development.
   c. It is important and the time commitment is reasonable.
   d. Other:__________________________________________________________________________
16. In general, how much impact should teachers have in determining ICS’s curriculum?
   a. Teachers need complete freedom in designing the curriculum that they will teach.
   b. Teachers need freedom to design curriculum, but within clear guidelines.
   c. The curriculum should be designed by others with teachers only designing instruction.
   d. Other:

17. When should your involvement in curriculum development happen in collaboration with other teachers?

18. Have you enjoyed an appropriate degree of curricular freedom at ICS?
   a. Just the right amount.
   b. Too much in that there is not enough accountability.
   c. Too much in that I feel unsupported.
   d. Too little. I feel dictated to.
   e. Other:

19. Do collaborative decisions at ICS (i.e., those made in departmental, divisional, faculty, focus group and schoolwide committee meetings) impact choices about curriculum development?

     ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

     Never.       Always

20. To what degree are you consulted or otherwise involved about decisions that impact curriculum development?
   a. My opinions are sought and heard.
   b. There are structures that I can use to make my opinions known.
   c. I have no involvement at all.
   d. My ideas shape curriculum development at some level.

21. Please feel free to record any comments, observations or frustrations that you wish.
Appendix 2: Interview Scripts

*Teacher Interview Script*

1. Is there a way for you to impact curriculum decisions? Should there be?
2. Do you feel free to implement curriculum as you wish? Will standards and ESLRs change that? How? Why or why not?
3. Have you received enough support to implement ESLRs and Standards to this point in the process? What do you think needs to be addressed? What should such professional development look like?
4. What do you think the relationship between ESLR and curriculum is and should be?
5. Can you anticipate any reasons why ESLRs-based curriculum and standards-based instruction would not work at ICS?
6. What do you see as your role in terms of curriculum development?
7. How should teachers be involved in developing curriculum at ICS?
8. What is your opinion about your involvement in discussing ESLRs, Standards and curriculum in meetings over the past couple of years? Was this helpful? How? Why or why not?
9. What do you think is most frustrating to teachers about curriculum development? Do these frustrations emerge in group discussion of meetings?
10. Is there a way for your instructional experiences to impact the written curriculum? Should this be the case?
11. Does ICS really need ESLRs? What about standards/benchmarks? Do teachers need to be involved in defining them?
12. What would you like curriculum leaders to understand about the curriculum development process as you’ve experienced it so far? ...as you anticipate it developing?

13. To what extent do you think that curriculum should be prescriptive? To what extent does the curriculum at ICS match your expectations?

14. In terms of curriculum, what do you see as ICS’s greatest need?

Administrator Interview Script

1. What do you think the relationship between ESLR and curriculum is and should be?

2. Can you anticipate any reasons why ESLRs-based curriculum and standards-based instruction would not work at ICS?

3. What are your opinions about your involvement in discussing ESLRs, standards and curriculum in meetings over the past couple of years? Was this helpful? How? Why or why not?

4. What do you see as your role in terms of curriculum development? What should your role be? How does this contrast with the role of a teacher?

5. Does ICS really need standards/benchmarks? What about ESLRs? Do teachers need to be involved in defining them?

6. Have teachers expressed concerns about curriculum matters to you? Have there been any commonly held concerns that emerge? Are there structures to allow teacher concerns to impact curriculum development?

7. What do you think is most frustrating to teachers about curriculum development? Can this be resolved? What is most frustrating to you?

8. Do you believe that teachers and administrators area in general agreement in terms of goals and beliefs about curriculum change? What accounts for this?
9. What would you like teachers most to understand about the curriculum development process?

10. To what extent do you think that curriculum should be prescriptive? To what extent does the curriculum at ICS match your expectations?

11. In terms of curriculum, what do you see as ICS's greatest need?

Additional Questions for Curriculum Committee Members

1. Is there consistency about how teachers understand the purpose and function of ESLRs, Standards, benchmarks, other curriculum goals? What has been done to try to bring about greater consistency?

2. Do you see curriculum development as a linear process, or is it more convoluted?

3. What makes curriculum development and change at ICS most challenging?
Appendix 3: Stakeholder Contributions to Expected Schoolwide Learning Outcomes

Results from Board-Faculty Retreat – September 21-22, 2001.

The SWLOs were refined to meet the Accrediting Commission for Schools’ criteria for ESLRs. The results of Board-Faculty group work are listed below. Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs) are what students should be able to do or know upon graduation from ICS.

**Group A**
- Demonstrate effective communication.
- Exercise higher order thinking skills.
- Identify and develop God-given abilities.
- Demonstrate behavior consistent with values and morals of the Christian faith.
- Imitate Christ’s compassion for the world through Service.
- Demonstrate skills for life-long learning.

**Group B**
1. (Academic) Students will demonstrate knowledge and skills for life-long learning.
2. (Spiritual) Students will demonstrate values and behaviors consistent with the Christian faith.
3. (Character) Students will demonstrate self-discipline and accountability for their actions.
4. Students will demonstrate respect for others and themselves.
5. Students will demonstrate knowledge of (and respect) for other cultures.
6. Students will demonstrate creativity in various disciplines.

**Group C**
1. Think logically, creatively and analytically.
2. Communicate effectively.
4. Maintain positive relationships with others.
5. Apply habits for personal wellness.
6. Appreciate and participate in the fine and performing arts.

**Group D**
1. Academic
   a. Demonstrate higher order thinking skills.
   b. Demonstrate effective communication skills.
2. Balanced
3. Christian
   a. Possess the knowledge to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
Group E
1. Academically
   a. Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to think independently, creatively, and analytically.
   b. Demonstrates oral, written and listening skills, utilizing various media where appropriate.
2. Balanced
   a. Exhibit knowledge and understanding of the fine and performing arts.
   b. Show understanding of a healthy lifestyle and the importance of physical fitness.
5. Concern - Participate in and recognize the value of community service.

Group F
1. Demonstrate a full range of cognitive skills.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of Christian faith ad its application to all of life.
3. Communicate effectively and creatively in a variety of ways.
4. Demonstrates an understanding of a variety of cultures particularly Chinese.
5. Demonstrates a balanced approach to life mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Group G
1. Academic
   a. Demonstrate critical thinking skills.
   b. Demonstrate oral, written, and listening skills. (Language Skills)
   c. Utilize various technologies and media.
2. Balanced?? (Fine Arts & Physical Education)
   a. Demonstrate an understanding of the fine arts, physical education and health through performance and participation.
3. Christian Values/Character/Concern
   a. Demonstrate an understanding of Christian principles...through cooperative work and collaboration with others.
4. Culture
   a. Demonstrate an understanding of the relevance and importance of various cultures...
Results from School Improvement Day all faculty meeting, October 26, 2001

The proposed ESLRs drafted at the schoolwide retreat were refined to meet the Accrediting Commission for Schools' criteria for ESLRs. The results listed below are grouped by similar type.

| ONE | Exercise full range of cognitive skills  
Demonstrate a full range of cognitive skills  
Demonstrates higher order thinking skills  
Exercise higher order thinking skills.  
Demonstrates the ability to think independently, creatively, and analytically |
| TWO | Demonstrate values and behaviors consistent with Biblical principles.  
Demonstrate values and behaviors consistent with the Christian faith.  
Exhibit the knowledge to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ  
Articulate the fundamentals of the Christian faith and how they apply to all aspects of life.  
Demonstrates an understanding of Christian faith and its application to life.  
Demonstrate Christian knowledge and behavior.  
Imitate Christ’s compassion for the world through service. |
| THREE | Communicate effectively and creatively.  
Communicate effectively and creatively using various methods  
Communicate effectively and creatively in a variety of ways  
Demonstrate effective communication and research skills, utilizing various media.  
Demonstrate oral, written and listening skills.  
Demonstrate effective communication. |
| FOUR | Exhibit a balanced and healthy lifestyle  
Demonstrate an understanding of the fine arts and personal wellness  
Identify and develop God-given abilities through participation in academics, fine arts and physical education.  
Identify and develop God-given abilities.  
Demonstrate an understanding of the fine arts, physical education, and health through performance and participation.  
Demonstrate a balanced approach to life emotionally, socially, physically, mentally and spiritually. |
| FIVE | Demonstrates a respect for a variety of cultures  
Demonstrate knowledge of and learn from various cultures, particularly Chinese  
Demonstrate the knowledge of and respect for other cultures.  
Demonstrate an understanding AND RESPECT of the relevance and importance of various cultures. |
Faculty Proposed ESLRs

1. All students will think independently, creatively, and analytically
2. All students will demonstrate an understanding of Christian faith and its application to life.
3. All students will apply effective communication and research skills, utilizing various media
4. All students will identify and develop God-given abilities.
5. All students will practice a balanced approach to life emotionally, socially, physically, mentally and spiritually.
6. All students will understand and respect other cultures.

Student Council Proposed ESLRs

1. **Knowledge:**
   All students will apply learnt knowledge and continue to discover and strengthen their skills and talents.

2. **Christian Life/Values:**
   All students will understand and apply Christian principals to their lives.

3. **Society/Community:**
   All students will learn to be a valuable member of society, respecting and contributing to their community.

4. **Character:**
   All students will be open-minded with the determination to strive for excellence and overcome challenges and accept criticism.

5. **Preparation for the future:**
   All students will have the skills for life long learning as well as learn to responsibly handle freedom.

Top Parent Concerns:

1. Proficiency in communication skills
2. Balanced approach to life
3. Think independently
4. Think creatively
5. Ability to overcome challenges
New Expected Schoolwide Learning Results

All Student Will:

... identify and develop God-given abilities

... communicate effectively

... strive for excellence

... act as responsible members of the global community

... think independently, creatively and analytically

... know, understand and apply Biblical principles

International Christian School’s Expected Schoolwide Learning Results

All ICS Students will...

Identify and develop God-given abilities by

- participating in a variety of activities, evaluation and opportunities
- using encouragement and feedback on strengths and weaknesses for improvement
- demonstrating a developing level of competency in a variety of activities
- demonstrating personal excellence and mastery in at least one area

Communicate effectively by

- expressing ideas clearly and concisely to the targeted audience
- employing a variety of media
- accurately receiving and interpreting others’ expression of ideas
- developing skills in the areas of: speaking, writing, behavior (body language), listening, reading, and performing

Strive for excellence by

- identifying goals and employing strategies for their attainment
- developing skills for lifelong learning
- striving for moral and ethical integrity
- consistently displaying the habit of doing one’s best
- improving upon areas of weakness
- willingly receiving constructive criticism
Act as responsible members of the global community by

- developing awareness and knowledge
- showing motivation to make a difference in the (global) community
- displaying appropriate attitude/action (effort) towards others and situations

Know, understand, and apply biblical principles by

- having a factual knowledge of biblical events, values, and worldview
- developing a full understanding of the above so that they become meaningful and applicable to life (i.e., social, interpersonal, spiritual, character development...)
- understanding how to have a growing relationship with Christ

Think independently, creatively, and analytically by

- independently and collaboratively discovering truth—not simply receiving presented information.
- critically using ideas and information to construct an informed viewpoint
- posing questions and formulating hypotheses to extend knowledge
- understanding complex problems by breaking them down into manageable parts and figuring out how those parts work together.
- applying what is learned to novel situations
- observing what is and imagining what could be
- discerning what is “beneficial” from what is merely “acceptable”