Het schoolwerkplan in het basisonderwijs. Ontwikkeling, implementatie en opbrengst
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SUMMARY

Since the first of August 1985 every primary school in the Netherlands is obliged to possess a school curriculum. On that date the Law of Primary Education was brought into effect. The law was meant to realize the innovation of primary schools, so that these became more beneficial for a continuous development of children and for the development of creativity, cognitive, social and cultural abilities and necessary knowledge. In order to prepare the implementation of this law a purposive innovation strategy was pursued. This strategy can be described as a 'problem-solving strategy', in which schools themselves had to give the innovation a specific form and content.

Since 1980 RION, the Institute for Educational Research of the University of Groningen, has conducted research into School-Based Curriculum Development. This dissertation is based on two research projects, of which the research questions directly proceeded from the innovation policy which was directed at school-based curriculum development. Chapter one gives an overview of the contents of the dissertation. The goal of the dissertation is to test the tenability of the theoretical, and frequently normative and prescriptive, ideas about the usefulness of school-based curriculum development for educational innovations which existed at different moments, by means of research. The dissertation is divided into three parts.

Part one describes the direction in which the ideas about school-based curriculum development have developed since about 1970 until about 1985. In chapter two the background of the origin of the concept 'schoolcurriculum', the original ideas about the concept at the moment of introduction and the ideas in the seventies and eighties are described.

The moment the concept was introduced, was the first time a difference was discerned between a curriculum and a schoolcurriculum. A curriculum, it was thought, should be a global plan for a total school system. The curriculum should be specified at the level of individual schools in a schoolcurriculum. This schoolcurriculum should contain detailed and concrete prescriptions about aims, conditions under which these aims were to be realized, learning experiences, activities and means to evoke them and evaluation of the results that were to be reached. The development of the schoolcurriculum was considered to be a task for the school itself.

After the introduction of these ideas the schoolcurriculum very quickly became related to the innovation of primary education. During the seventies it was thought that the development of a schoolcurriculum would in itself lead to the realization of educational innovations at the school-level to which teachers themselves had to give concrete form. These ideas are stated explicitly in the Law of Primary Education.

In the beginning of the eighties the ideas changed. It was argued very strongly that a realistic approach was necessary and that school-based educational innovations have to describe the actual state of educational content in the schoolcurriculum as it existed, and that the expectations educators had to the schoolcurriculum would increase.

The conclusion and expectations about schools in the seventies were that schools would realize educational innovations in primary education.

In chapter three the ideas in primary education are worked out. It is realized that school-based curriculum development is closely related to the innovation of primary education. During the seventies it was thought that the development of a schoolcurriculum would in itself lead to the realization of educational innovations at the school-level which teachers themselves had to give concrete form to the schoolcurriculum.

In chapter four the schoolcurriculum is worked out in detail. We see that the expectations of teachers in primary education in the eighties are aimed at the schoolcurriculum as a document in which the working relations between teachers and school are precisely and concretely described. The innovation is the development of educational innovations into school characteristics of learning outcomes at school-level as well as school-level as schoolcurriculum is a document in which the organization of the school are precisely described. The expectations led to the development of three of the dissertation.

As has been said before, the dissertation leads to educational innovations in primary education.
that school-based curriculum development should be discerned from educational innovation processes. School curricula were only to describe the actual situation in schools in order to function better as documents for legitimation, support and evaluation of the actual educational content of the schools. It was expected that by using the school curriculum in an adequate way the quality of education would increase.

The conclusion after considering these developments is that the expectations about the school curriculum and educational innovations in the seventies were directed mainly at the development of the school curriculum as a means for innovations, while in the eighties the expectations emphasized the use of school curricula for that aim. This conclusion led to the two main questions of this dissertation, which are answered by means of research:

1. Does the development of school curricula lead to educational innovations in primary education?
2. Does the use of school curricula lead to educational innovations in primary education?

In chapter three the expectations concerning the first question are worked out. It is concluded that staffs of schools have to realize a primary school by means of developing a school curriculum. The school curriculum should describe aims, learning contents, means and the mode of evaluation in a coherent way. These expectations ask a lot of the curriculum developmental capacities of teachers and of the working relationships and deliberating and decision-making procedures in schools. These expectations led to four research questions which are answered in part two of the dissertation.

In chapter four the second question of the dissertation is worked out in detail. We conclude that the innovations desired in the eighties are aimed at increasing students' learning outcomes. The school curriculum and its use should serve this educational improvement. The innovations that are pursued are mainly based on research into school characteristics that are beneficial for the improvement of learning outcomes. By these characteristics features at the school-level as well as at the level of teachers are meant. The school curriculum is considered to be the intermediary between improvement of teachers' behavior in the classroom and improvement of the organization of the school. The school curriculum is expected to be a document in which the educational and organizational agreements in the school are precisely worked out and that is used for giving concrete form to the characteristics of effective education. These expectations led to five research questions which are answered in part three of the dissertation.

As has been said before, the goal of part two of the dissertation is to answer the question whether the development of a school curriculum leads to educational innovations in primary education. In chapter five the research questions, concepts and conceptual model are presented. The main hypothesis is the following: "the more schools develop their school curriculum in a rational and systematical way and
in co-operation between teachers, the more innovations are elaborated in the school curriculum, the more innovations are implemented by teachers and the better are the learning outcomes of students".

In chapter six the research design is described. The research consisted of retrospective case-studies of seven innovation projects, longitudinal case-studies of ten innovation projects and a survey. In the case-studies data about curriculum development processes were collected by means of interviews, observations and analysis of weekly reports of undertaken activities. School curricula were analyzed to investigate the elaborateness of the description of the intentions of the innovation in primary education. Data about the implementation of the innovations were collected by means of interviews with teachers. Learning outcomes were measured by standardized tests for arithmetic and reading. In the survey, data about developmental processes of the school curriculum, implementation of innovations and progress in writing the school curriculum were collected by means of written questionnaires. The questionnaires about the two last mentioned concepts were filled in twice by teachers and school directors in order to be able to determine changes. In the survey no school curricula were analyzed and no achievement tests were administered.

In chapter seven the results and in chapter eight the conclusions of the research are presented. It appeared that school curricula are not developed in a rational and systematical way. Also they are not developed in co-operation between teachers. The school curricula in general hardly contain elaborated descriptions of innovations. Most of the time they are summaries of learning methods and materials the schools use. They do not fulfill a role as a planning document for teachers. In general it appeared that teachers do implement the innovations which are described in the school curriculum. About the students' outcomes hardly any conclusions can be drawn, because of practical problems during the research. The conclusions concerning the hypothesis are that school-based curriculum development is indeed favourable for the implementation of innovations, but unfavourable for the quality of school curriculum. The quality of school curriculum is not related to the actually implemented innovations.

The closing conclusion is that the expectations about school-based curriculum development as a means for educational innovation did not come true.

The goal of part three of the thesis is to answer the question whether the use of a school curriculum leads to educational innovations in primary education.

In chapter nine the research questions, concepts and conceptual model are presented. The main hypothesis is the following: "the better school curriculum are elaborated, the more they are used, the better teachers' behavior and the better are students' outcomes. The better certain conditions are fulfilled the more elaborated school-curricula are and the more they are used".

In chapter ten the analyses were conducted by means of wide range of scales for the measurement of items. All scales and hypotheses were tested by means of factor analyses.

In chapter eleven the extent of elaboration of school curriculum and about data analyses were conducted by means of scales for the measurement of items. The results of these analyses were presented in chapter twelve. The hypotheses were tested by means of factor analyses. The degree of elaboration of school curriculum and about data analyses were conducted by means of scales for the measurement of items. The closing conclusion is that the expectations about school-based curriculum development as a means for educational innovation did not come true.

In chapter fourteen a number of the researches described theoretical insights into the results of the researches described. The main insights are the practical implications of the research. It is suggested that teachers themselves as the main goals of primary education. The innovation of learning methods and materials, clear directions should be given. Further, the task to search for knowledge about the other research into the
In chapter ten the method of research is described. Secondary analyses were conducted on data of 304 schools. These data were collected by means of written questionnaires. Firstly, the construction of scales for the measurement of the different concepts was carried out by means of factor analysis. After that, reliabilities were computed. All scales appeared to be satisfyingly reliable. Then the hypotheses were tested by means of (multivariate) multiple regression analyses.

In chapter eleven some descriptive data are presented about the extent of elaboration and the different ways of use of the school-curricula and about differences between schools in these regards.

The results of the testing of the hypotheses are described in chapter twelve. The conclusions, which are presented in chapter thirteen, can be summarized as follows: school-curricula in general are moderately elaborated and are used only in a small measure. They are used most frequently for giving information to others. The degree of elaboration and use of school-curricula is positively related to co-ordination and cooperation between teachers and teachers' willingness to exert themselves for educational innovations. The degree of elaboration of school-curricula is not directly related to teachers' behavior and learning outcomes. But the degree of elaboration of school-curricula is indeed positively related to the degree of use of the curricula, while the degree of use is positively related to teachers' behavior. There is no direct relationship between each of the various ways of use of the school-curricula and learning outcomes. However, it appeared that the more school-curricula are used for support of teachers' behavior combined with the use for evaluation of learning outcomes, the less student outcomes are diverged, after controlling for social background of and proportion of ethnic minorities in the population of students in the school. The closing conclusion is that school-curricula themselves 'do not matter', but that, in principle, the use of well elaborated school-curricula may lead to educational innovations.

In chapter fourteen a closer inspection is presented of the results of the research described in parts two and three. Practical and theoretical insights about the role of school-curricula for educational innovations are considered. These considerations lead to some practical implications and to some implications for further research. It is suggested that it should no longer be expected that teachers themselves are able to give concrete form to the innovative goals of primary education by developing a school-curriculum by themselves. The innovative goals should be given concrete form in learning methods and text books developed by professionals. Therefore, clear directions about the ultimate aims of primary education should be given. Furthermore professional curriculum developers have the task to search for the most optimal instructional strategies in order to reach the defined aims. They should make use of empirical knowledge about the characteristics of effective instruction. Further research into these characteristics is necessary. Firstly, it
is advised that more research be conducted into the effects of different ways of differentiation, instruction and implementing remedial programs and different learning contents. Secondly, more evaluation of the effects of new programs should be undertaken, in order to improve these programs. Finally, it is the task of schools to use the new programs in the way they are meant to be used, and to implement the characteristics of effective schools and instruction in order to reach the ultimate aims of primary education.

It is supposed that school curricula can play an important role in the implementation of new curricula as well as in the implementation of the characteristics of effective schools and effective instruction. Further research is necessary for the legitimation of this supposition. Research should be conducted into the conditions under which school curricula could help provide instructional leadership, increase effective time-on-task, reinforce the cooperation between teachers and promote a safe and orderly climate in the school. Finally it is suggested that research be conducted into the possibilities of using school curricula for the evaluation of learning outcomes in a systematic way. All of these kinds of research should decide whether the relationship between school curricula and educational innovations is a durable one or should end in divorce.

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