

Chapter 9

Curriculum and School Leadership – Adjusting School Leadership to Curriculum

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Abstract This chapter looks at the role of school leadership vis a vis the curriculum. First, it offers a brief overview of school leadership in Germany, acknowledging the multitude of systems within the system as each German federal state has autonomy over educational matters. Next, curriculum development and research in Germany is briefly recapped, including historical aspects, and the curriculum work of school leaders on the school level is discussed. Then the discussion is linked to the international discourse on instructional leadership. Next, we conclude with the concept of organizational education (“Organisationspädagogik”) as a perspective for viewing school leadership in conjunction with the curriculum. Finally, based on the material presented before, we take a reflective look ahead and ponder possibilities and desiderata of school leadership in the context of curriculum. The chapter shows that school leaders in Germany regard themselves as education professionals deriving from the teaching profession. Instruction and pedagogical tasks and developing a collaborative school improvement culture is what they prefer. Administrative tasks and certain controlling aspects of management are perceived as strain. It is argued that the concept of “educational leadership” is strongly – even if even implicitly – aligned with the knowledge base of instructional leadership as well as of the curriculum discussion in Germany.

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Introduction

The relationship between school leadership and curriculum in Germany is a complex one. The curriculum was long thought of as being tied to the individual state (“Land”, plural “Länder”) in the form of the “Lehrplan” (plan of learning). The school principal was and maybe still is often seen as of very limited authority when it comes to curriculum matters due to little decision making-power and due to the pedagogical freedom on the instructional methods level that teachers in Germany enjoy. And yet, the school principal being a former teacher, has a certain affiliation with curriculum matters as many school principals see themselves more as pedagogues and educational leaders than just as managers or administrators.

Curriculum, in turn, is related to the complex idea of *Bildung*. This concept is typically a normative concept with respect to the purpose and process of education, i.e. reflecting educational ideals as they occur in the curriculum thus guide teaching. According to a more or less common agreement on what *Bildung* is, the construct refers to a process of *Selbstbildung*, the individual’s reflective acquisition of cultural knowledge, and personal growth and self-development. Especially in the tradition of *Humanistische Bildung*, i.e. *humanistic Bildung*, self-cultivation is essential in terms of being the path to cultural knowledge and to become a mature personality that can engage productively and critically in society. The task of education is to support this self-developmental process (Sorkin 1983). The connection between leadership and *Bildung* is thus established through the purpose of education.

It might be surprising to an international audience/readership that school leadership research is relatively young in Germany (it just started in the 1980s) and all the other German-speaking countries; Switzerland, e.g. even has established school leaders just the last 20 years (Huber 2016a, b, c). In other words, there are many facets and grey areas to this complex and not well elaborated and discussed is the relationship of school leadership and curriculum.

This chapter looks at the role of school leadership vis á vis the curriculum. First, it offers a brief overview of school leadership in Germany, acknowledging the multitude of systems within the system as each German federal state has autonomy over educational matters. Next, curriculum development and research in Germany is briefly recapped, including historical aspects, and the curriculum work of school leaders on the school level is discussed. We then link the discussion to the international discourse on instructional leadership. Next, we present the concept of organizational education (“Organisationspädagogik”, see Rosenbusch 1997, 2005) as a perspective for viewing school leadership in conjunction with the curriculum. Finally, based on the material presented before, we take a reflective look ahead and ponder possibilities and desiderata of school leadership in the context of curriculum.

The Federal Republic of Germany is comprised of 16 federal states, known in German as “Länder”. As a federal principle, matters of education and culture lie with each state. This means that each of the 16 states has its own school system framed by individual jurisdictional and administrative laws, encompassing its own

educational-policy goals, school structures, school types, curricula, etc. Therefore, the 16 school systems in Germany feature different educational and governing traditions. Despite these differences, the governing of each state is organized according to a rather traditional bureaucratic governing model.

The Minister of a state usually represents the top of the governing structure (macro-level) with a succession of subordinate institutions (meso-level), with the schools themselves functioning as the lowest units (micro-level). In larger states like Bavaria, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Baden-Württemberg, there is a four-level administrative organization, which includes the ministry, a state office for education and/or school quality and the regional school supervisory administration, the school supervisory offices at the level of counties or county-independent cities, and finally school leadership at the school level (for further information see also Huber et al. 2016).

School Leadership in Germany

In comparison with their peers in many other countries, school leaders in Germany have limited authority, in part due to Germany's bureaucratic traditions. They have restricted authority over staff employment and dismissal, and they have limited control over financial resources. Nevertheless, school leaders are responsible for enforcing national and school's regulations and for the daily management of school life and lessons. Furthermore, they are responsible for representing the school, which includes maintaining contact with neighboring schools and institutions as well as the community. Historically speaking, they were in charge of the administrative tasks on organizational school level. Only over the last two decades further school-based responsibilities have emerged as a result of the decentralization of decision-making processes, usually shifting some of them from federal state system level or regional authority level towards the organizational school level. School-based management has been implemented in nearly all federal states over the last 10 years, known as "self-responsible school or autonomous school". However, the degree of decision making power as well as the resources allocated to the school varies from state to state. Generally speaking, and in particular when comparing Germany with other OECD countries, new public management is not implemented to the same extent. Hence, the influence of school leaders is still restricted while teachers are relatively free to make didactical and methodical decisions on the basis of their 'pedagogical freedom' as it comes to teaching and education. Furthermore, on organizational school level the school conference (or the school community conference), which consists of teachers and parents is the highest decision-making body and the school leader is obliged to implement and follow decisions made in this conference.

The school leader's teaching obligation depends on the kind of school, the number of classes and the number of pupils in her or his school. In a grammar school with more than 1000 students, the teaching obligation of a school leader is at least

two lessons per week (the maximum is at 11 h a week in certain states); teachers at primary schools teach – depending on the state – 23 to 27 h a week. Hence, school leaders in elementary schools have considerably more lessons to teach. School leaders are supported by vice-school leaders and by other staff who take over specific tasks, such as devising lesson plans, school career counseling and extra-curricular tutorship. In recent years all principals became real superior to the staff and took human resource management duties over from the local or regional authority like conducting the official assessments of teachers.

Vacant school leadership positions are announced publicly. Applicants' backgrounds are checked including an assessment of their past achievements and their teaching skills. A basic prerequisite for being appointed as a school leader is teacher training for, and teaching experience in the respective school type; additional qualifications are an advantage. These could be things like previous experience as a deputy school leader, experience on senior management teams or experience as an instructor in charge of the induction phase of teacher training. Mostly, however, the state examinations and in particular the official assessments of teaching competences by superiors as the deciding factors are taken into account. The candidates who are evaluated as most suitable are appointed school leader for life in a tenure track civil servant position.

Curriculum in Germany

Transforming the school curriculum and pedagogical leadership in Germany is not so much the result of a nationally orchestrated activity as it is an inside-the-state effort with partly growing local choices but also new systems of control by accountability measures, national education standards (*Bildungsstandards*), national standard testing, evaluation as well as *systems monitoring agencies* (*Qualitätsagenturen*) which are run by each of the majority of the 16 states. The degree of diversity between the schools have depended since decades, on how power and trust, theory and practical wisdom converge in common goals (Hameyer 2010; cp. Hameyer et al. 1983).

A Brief Historical Look at Recent Curriculum History

Curriculum development in Germany is embedded into an extended history of theorizing the syllabus (Dolch 1971; Meyer 1972; Paulsen 1892, 1896a, b; see also, Roth 1968; Weniger 1971, 1975) from the perspective of what “Bildung” is. The state does not always agree with what theorists proposed but German history provides examples of a powerful impact of theory on the syllabus (see the works of Humboldt, Dörpfeld, among other influential scholars of the nineteenth century).

When curriculum research emerged in Germany particularly in the beginning of the seventies, the scientists studied approaches from abroad. Some of them combine German historical roots with what happens in the curriculum field in the US, in Switzerland, and Sweden (Elbers 1973; among many others cp. Frey 1971; Flechsig and Haller 1973 who investigate conditions for participative decision-making; Hameyer 1978; Hörner and Waterkamp 1981; comparative studies issued by the International Institute for Educational Research in Frankfurt).

In addition, syllabi and schoolbooks are analyzed and theoretically compared according to their impact on curriculum and instructional practice. Research projects are started, implementation issues more carefully integrated and curriculum process models developed. Curriculum research strives for scientific exchange and continuity both in terms of cross-national studies and with respect to what we learn from the “theory of the curriculum as syllabus” and various theories of *Bildung* (Oelkers 1983).

Within this scope of recent trends, there are attempts to redefine “*Bildung*”. Redefining *Bildung* is a lasting process which is simultaneously given momentum particularly by the influential works of von Hentig (1985, 1993, 1996), who conceives *Bildung* as a reflective effort of students (“*sich bilden*”) to make up their own understanding of meaningfulness when they explore the world by reflective, experiential activities in schools seen as a place of democratic community and deliberate thought. A couple of years later, Tenorth (1986, 2001, 2004) and other theorists redefine *Bildung* in association with modern views on the public curriculum.

Recently, schools are encouraged to develop local educational programs congruent with the syllabus. They do so by school-based curriculum renewal (often in intuitive ways). The respective state-run organization, the “Landesinstitute”, that exist in each of the 16 states, is expected to help the schools in their own curriculum development by means of consulting the schools, providing materials, creating joint projects, qualifying teachers for this new demand, and networking schools within and beyond communities.

School development and syllabus work are considered major places to put conceptual ideas about *Bildung* into practice. This provides for an opportunity to combine and reground the domain of curriculum theory and the theory of *Bildung* in a more coherent, stimulating way. So far, the scientific communities of curriculum theory and school development, the theory of education, and the empirical stakeholders of instructional research are still separate worlds. There are still only a few attempts in Germany to unfreeze the separateness and establish a continued scientific dialogue between these worlds (Hameyer 2010).

Emergent Ways to Conceive the Curriculum Taba (1962) proposed the most simple definition of curriculum we are aware of: curriculum is a plan to learn. This is more than a headline, yet too vague to specify particular features of a curriculum so that the construct can be used in more precise ways. Defining curriculum is a task that has been the subjects of debates and shifts for several decades (Hameyer et al. 1983; Kelly 2009; Portelli 1987; Toombs and Tierney 1993; Wiles 2008). We therefore refer to Kerr’s classic definition of curriculum being “all the learning which is

planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside of school” (1968, p. 16) as a humble point of departure although it does not include the hidden, tacit curriculum which got some attention in Germany. This simple definition implies what is taught to whom and by whom – questions that concern teachers, school leaders, but also policy makers. They are likewise influenced by the political as well as the socio-cultural sphere, but also the school culture *and* what happens on the informal stage in the school. The awareness towards the informal and hidden agenda in the instructional learning and teaching process is growing as to what has been published since two decades.

Like many other scholars, Pinar points to the intricate relationships between society, politics and education when laying out the educational aspect of the curriculum:

The educational point of the public school curriculum is understanding, understanding the relations among academic knowledge, the state of society, the processes of self-formation, and the character of the historical moment in which we live, in which others have lived, and in which our descendants will someday live. (Pinar 2004, p. 187)

Looking at the curriculum itself, even when it is framed by external parameters, it arguably has different faces. It can be codified or enacted (Hameyer 2007). Sometimes it is blended by a tacit set of personal or public norms. It can be specified in tests or standards, in approved textbooks or self-made teaching materials, in a guideline or it can grow out of local school programs and regional development plans.

Goodlad (1960) reflected the phenomenology of a curriculum, later referred to as the representative levels or modes of a curriculum as we mention later in this section (e.g. the hidden, the tested, the codified curriculum). The approach of Goodlad was later taken up by Jan van den Akker (2004) and Uwe Hameyer (2007). In this section, the idea is briefly discussed from a more systemic view, which reflects the representational levels in their interplay in various ways. This is needed if we want to understand the transformation of domain knowledge by curriculum reasoning, policy-making and its enactment in practice. The perspective of representation includes the invisible. An invisible curriculum is tacit or hidden. It is rooted in the minds of every teacher, policy-maker, parent, or student when they think about what should be learned at school. Tacit images shape not only what people think but also what they do and – at the same time – what they dislike (e.g. Morgan 2006). According to this view of the representational curriculum, we can discern the following ‘faces’ or levels:

- the codified curriculum
- the perceived curriculum
- the intended curriculum
- the enacted curriculum
- the experienced curriculum
- the tested curriculum
- the hidden curriculum

The interplay of these levels helps us to understand what happens during the transformation process of domain knowledge on its way from outside into the school and its local enactment. A teacher who likes knowledge-based sequential learning within his subject perceives and interprets the curriculum probably differently from one who favors a daily-life-focused, exemplary design of instruction. Both will enact the compulsory curriculum in other ways according to their own aims which may be underpinned by tacit purposes.

A tested curriculum selects by nature something that is considered to be *pars pro toto*. Tests are norm-referenced; students are compared to others inside or outside the school. Test results are given institutional power which can be used for accountability goals and are individual placement decisions (see also Easley and Tulowitzki 2016).

In Germany, transforming the school curriculum is not the result of a *national* effort but rather that of efforts within *individual states* with a growing range of choices due to the federal autonomy described in the beginning of the chapter. A big impact stems from new systems of control by external evaluation, accountability demands, and changing patterns of leadership (Rolff et al. 2009).

Monitoring and evaluation systems, standards and national benchmarks have been put into place in many European countries (mostly initiated by central and regional authorities). For example, some cantons in Switzerland use quality and qualification plans (Q2E, for a brief presentation see Heidegger and Petersen 2005). This means that curriculum development is very much a matter of professional learning and continued development of competencies within and across schools, putting teachers in an expectation of constant learning but also putting school principals in a position where they need to have curriculum competencies. In Germany this can be seen in various ways where curriculum change is much more driven by the syllabus and by what the market offers than by developments from schools themselves.

At the same time, an argument can be made that teachers have not been sufficiently trained for systematic quality-based efforts and that school principals have not been sufficiently prepared for dealing with curriculum matters in depth. Many from inside and outside schools express concerns that teacher education, pre-service and in-service training only enables teachers to practice curriculum design and renewal on a limited scale (Handelzalts 2009). In addition, there is a lack of knowledge in schools when it comes to medium- and longer-term planning. In spite of this gap between the quality demands *across* schools and the given knowledge to implement goals *inside* schools in professional ways, schools have to master the challenges and choices that come with expanded freedom on a local level. We can specify some of the current challenges in terms of four major demands:

- The *quality demand*, i.e. to compare and compete with other schools, also to look at the quality of teaching and its impact on what the students learn; in addition, to improve the school curriculum quality according to internal and external standards.

- The *equality demand*, i.e. to improve educational possibilities for all students, including the gifted, talented and the disadvantaged.
- The *diversity demand*, i.e. to take into account heterogeneous, sometimes diametrically opposed groups (e.g. poor vs. rich, employed vs. unemployed, social security vs. economic poverty, integration vs. segregation, minorities and migration background issues).
- The *competency demand*, i.e. a shift from the academic knowledge towards abilities (competencies) to use knowledge reflectively. This also includes mastering knowledge-based methods to solve key tasks in life and work. In addition, this demand entails a redefinition of how to learn and how to apply knowledge in practical situations. Thus, competency development comes into the forefront of syllabus work and curriculum renewal (Hameyer and Tulowitzki 2013).

For several years, one instrument above all has been increasingly affecting the curriculum practice in the schools: national education standards. These standards focus mostly on competencies to be achieved according to different levels of quality. This entails a shift away from the traditional German notion of *Bildung* towards the notion of literacy or competency, which is more prevalent in the US and the UK (Neumann et al. 2010). The standards are expected to stimulate schools to bring a certain level of cohesion across schools – even across the *Länder* boundaries. This marks an important development. Never after World War II has it occurred that all *Länder* agreed upon a common standard system for the school curriculum.

Another development is that schools in Germany must nowadays develop 1- or 2-year *objective agreements* (“Ziel- und Leistungsvereinbarungen”) with governance authorities. These contracts focus on profile areas of the individual school. The curriculum is part of this contracting system. Additionally, individual schools are given various degrees of autonomy depending on the Land where they are located. Within this framework of relative autonomy, a school can attune its own curriculum to local demands and profile choices. Last but not least, schools have to work on getting and using data-driven feedback. This means that the curriculum work is framed by a mix of external parameters.

The scope of local or school-based curriculum development (Skilbeck 1998) has, to some extent, increased, i.e. schools have gained more autonomy *and* more duties, especially to create their own curriculum or adapt existing curricula in contextually-sensitive ways. These demands have to be (made) compatible both to the local and regional needs as well as to national standards and the syllabus. At least in Germany, there is still on-going irritation regarding how to handle this double-bind situation. Schools and teachers who are committed to these functions value this “tested curriculum approach” positively in contrast to those who think that tests are counter-productive with respect to local efforts to create own school-internal standards for student achievement and practice. With this in mind, these latter schools rely on the concept of autonomy as promised and granted by parliaments.

The current state of autonomy means that schools are facing a widening array of choices. This is also reflected in the growing number of documents relevant to the development and implementation of a curriculum. ‘Public accountability and con-

trol patterns’ enter the school system through various measures: *comparative achievement tests* across all schools and all 16 ‘Länder, even though each ‘Land’ is, by law, independently responsible for its public schools. *External evaluation schemes* have taken root and *new syllabi* have been introduced. *Monitoring systems* have been designed and installed by state-level authorities. *Internal quality management* efforts are expected from each school. Such state-level measures are blended with *external patterns to ‘help’ schools improve* and aid them in using support systems.

Consequently, schools have to show themselves accountable of the results of their work, yet – at the same time – there is a need to individualize learning opportunities and instruction. The various, mostly state-driven forces behind the school curriculum give rise to a growing suspicion of many teachers and to a loss of confidence in the system (Hameyer 2006) because the politics of school autonomy, which started nearly two decades ago, are substantially contaminated by a growth of external forces bearing down on the school. This is also true for the domain knowledge as transformed in the curriculum.

Many professional schools cope with these developments akin to how they cope with external measures: in a more or less sovereign way. They master external requirements in strategic and creative ways, though some suffer for various reasons, such as bad working conditions. They are the losers and there are already programmes to work with these ‘failing’ schools. It is evident that the growth of the external pressure on schools increases the probability that the schools will differ much stronger in terms of quality than they did before; in other words: the ‘accountability management pattern’ can, paradoxically, lead to increasing the differences between schools. In Germany we call this divide a ‘Schereneffekt’ which does not only apply to the quality of schools but also to the discrepancies between the levels of curriculum representation shown above.

Leadership, especially shared leadership oriented towards improving student learning opportunities, can be seen as the lever activating productive work in the domain of the curriculum. However, as van den Akker has acutely pointed out, despite big investments in research, development and professionalization, “the target group of teachers often appears poorly informed about an intended innovation, while its practical application remains limited, and its impact on student learning is unclear. Simple explanations for innovation failures are inadequate, but a few gaps are often visible:

- weak connections between the various system levels (national, local, school and classroom)
- lack of internal consistency within the curriculum design
- insufficient cooperation between various actors in educational development” (van den Akker 2010, p. 178).

It can be argued that school principals are in a key position to strengthen the afore-mentioned weak connections and to ensure an internal consistency within the curriculum design as well as support cooperation between the various actors. This

hinges on them being knowledgeable in the curriculum domain as well as them giving curriculum matters the attention and priority necessary.

As laid out before it is our contention that teachers are not professionally educated for curriculum design and development roles and that school principals in Germany are equally ill-equipped in this regard. In domains such as project management, curriculum knowledge or teamwork, schools are more likely to improvise than to proceed systematically. Some competency requirements which would make the work at school more professional and effective are curriculum competencies, project competencies, team competencies, communication competencies, evaluation competencies and retrieval competencies. Table 9.1 shows detailed breakdowns of these competence groups (for further information about leadership development, see Huber 2013c).

To improve the odds of schools with curriculum-competent staff, it is important to not only instill these competencies in the teaching staff but also to ensure the school principals are proficient in them.

Empirical Insights: Preferences and Strains in School Leadership Practices and the Importance of Curriculum

In the following section, a study is presented which was conducted in the German speaking countries (Huber 2013a, b, 2016a; Huber and Schwander 2013; Huber and Wolfgramm 2013a, b; Huber et al. 2013a, b). It aimed to gain empirical insights into the work setting of school leaders. Its goal was to demonstrate which of their professional activities school leaders like to do (preferences) and which are a strain on them (strains). Moreover individual factors (e.g. aspects of one's professional biography) as well as institutional factors (e.g. conditions of the work setting) were tested as predictors of job strain. For operationalization purposes, Huber's (2012, 2013c, 2016b), Huber et al. (2012) model of school leadership practices was used and Böhm-Kasper's (2004) model of school-related strain was adapted to the contextual specifics of school leadership.

Altogether 5.394 school leaders participated in the general inquiry (representing a response rate of 49%). The sample consisted of 3764 school leaders from Germany, 741 from Austria and 889 from Switzerland and Liechtenstein. The school leaders were between 25 and 66 years old ($M = 52.45$; $SD = 7.75$) at the time of the study. For the analysis of quantitative data, structure equation modeling and path analysis were used.

By conducting exploratory and confirmative factor analysis, we can group activities to nine different fields of activities. Figure 9.1 illustrates the stress of and preferences for the nine different fields of activities on scale level differentiating for the three German speaking countries: Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The analysis of the specific strain experiences, which is the strain by specific activities, types of

Table 9.1 NAME x

Curriculum competencies
Defining a rationale
Designing a curriculum
Developing a coherent curriculum system
Setting up a process model for implementation and feedback
Structuring curriculum units and moduls
Using key concepts and fundamental ideas
Testing beyond one’s own practice what works
Evaluating a curriculum and its use
Project competencies
Planning curriculum work over longer time spans
Linking different stages of projekt work
Using project models for cross-case management
Defining indicators of success
Presenting results
Team competencies
Understanding the secrets of group dynamics
Sharing work effectively
Clarifying the starter aims
Contracting team work
Identifying and managing team conflict
Using methods of brainstorming and idea production
Sustaining team work over difficult times
Setting up different roles and commitments within the team
Communication competencies
Presenting clearly, also using advanced organizers
Giving and receiving feedback
Sharing rules of communication and feedback
Coaching others and being coached
Focusing complex stories down to a few major insights
Summarizing the easy and difficult points
Reflecting one’s own patterns of communicating
Deliberating rather than stating
Using concepts from research (such as TZI or other)
Listening and paraphrasing
Clarifying a problem before valuing it
Evaluation competencies
Formulating indicators of success
Applying formative evaluation methods
Interpreting complex survey data (data-driven analysis)
Combining process and outcome data

(continued)

Table 9.1 (continued)

Writing a clearly structured report for non-participants
Exploring the impact of curriculum use
Retrieval competencies
Knowledge management
Briefing and debriefing
Knowing where to find important information
Using expertise
Retrieving knowledge from data baselines
Simplifying complex information for practical use
Supporting information work inside the school
Reporting interim findings on demand in clear ways
Storing knowledge effectively over longer time spans

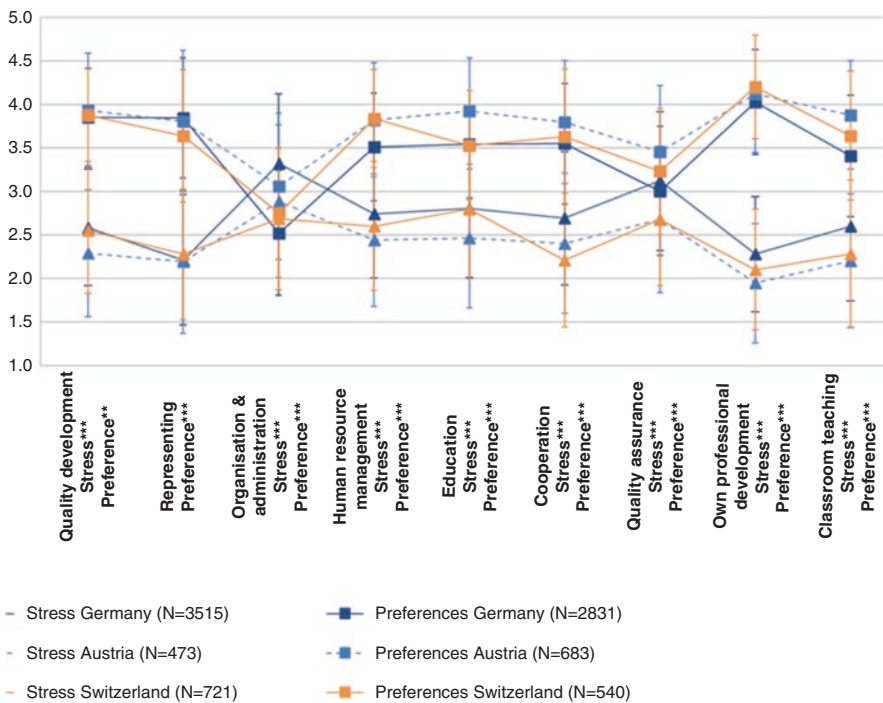


Fig. 9.1 Strain by and preferences for the different activity fields by German school leaders (compared to Austrian and Swiss school leaders)

activities and areas of practices clearly gives evidence that organizational and administrative activities are perceived as particularly stressful and most disliked. Activities closely connected with teaching and education (such as teaching in a class, talking with students, exchanging ideas with colleagues, and pursuing one’s own professional development), proved to be very popular and were perceived as

only slightly stressful. The same pattern can be found in the analysis of the types of activities: all school leaders experience activities that are close to education, close to classroom teaching and involving professional exchange with colleagues as less stressful than other types of activities.

In general it can be stated that school leaders who experience an activity as stressful do not like to perform this activity as much as activities perceived as not (or less) stressful, which, in turn, are more popular.

Moreover, the following tendency has become obvious: tasks that belong to the traditional range of tasks of teachers are more popular among school leaders and are experienced as less stressful than tasks that have been recently added to school leadership responsibilities through changes in the school system as a consequence of decentralization (new public management).

The fields of quality development, human resource management, education contain important singular activities associated with curriculum work. Quality development comprises activities such as contributing to the school's development plan, defining strategic aims for school development, initiating teamwork, stimulating interdisciplinary projects with teachers. Human resource management comprises activities such as evaluation of teacher lessons, encouraging teachers to try out new teaching methods, critically reflecting on teaching practice together with teachers, advising teachers in their work, assessing teachers' performance. Education comprises activities such as developing teaching concepts with staff. All of these activities are associated with improving teaching and learning and hence are not seen as highly stressful compared to the other activity fields.

It could be argued and with further research easily demonstrated, that their original motives to choose the teaching and education profession and the professional socialization as well as the system of promotion contributes largely to this orientation of job preferences and the experience of strain.

Besides preferences, another question is, what school leaders actually do. The findings of the analysis of 4330 end-of-day logs of school leaders in Germany show that organizational and administrative activities take up most of a school leader's work day. Figure 9.2 shows that school leaders invest on average one-third of their time in these activities. About one-quarter of their time is used for activities concerning one's own classroom teaching, with huge variations seen according to the size and type of school (elementary/secondary, explanation see above). Education and guidance and personnel matters are in the mid-range. We can conclude, even if the preferences lay differently, the role as school leaders by just the analysis of daily practices is a more administrative one.

To sum up, the data suggests that school leaders in Germany (as well as in other German speaking countries) can be associated with the concept of *primus inter pares*. They are strongly rooted in the teaching profession. While the school principals' preference to teach classes cannot necessarily be identified with instructional leadership, it does at least indicate that their professional understanding is strongly rooted in teaching practices.

Besides their own teaching duties, leadership practices, which are associated with transformational and instructional leadership are preferred and perceived as

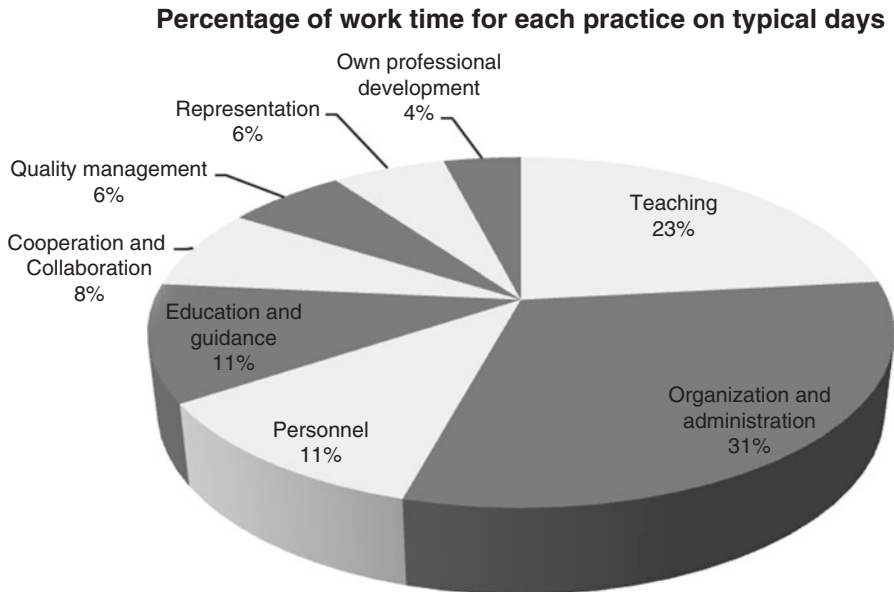


Fig. 9.2 Distribution of work time of school leaders (as percentage) in one German state

less stressful than other practices. Yet, school leaders mostly perform activities they do not prefer and they experience mostly as burden. Hence they do less work around curriculum in schools even if activities associated with curriculum work are experienced as preferred tasks and as tasks they do not experience as burden compared to administrative tasks. We therefore argue that this professional understanding is a positive prerequisite for curriculum work on the school level.

Instructional Leadership

In 1967 Bridges pointed out the fact that instructional leadership was an under-defined concept:

On the one hand, the principal has been exhorted to exert instructional leadership while on the other hand, he has been told flatly that such a role is beyond his or any other human being's capacity. The problem with these disputations is that the exponents of a given position have neither defined sharply what is signified by the concept of instructional leadership nor made their assumptions explicit. (Bridges 1967, p. 136)

In the US, the effective schools movement greatly spurred research in the domain of instructional leadership. Once the notion that schools did not matter (Coleman et al. 1966) had been refuted (Rutter 1979), attention quickly turned towards also looking at the school principals. Evidence suggested that in schools that were improving in challenging circumstances, the school principal was more likely to be

an instructional leader (see for example Edmonds 1979). This led to increased research efforts in this area, characterising effective instructional principals also focused mostly on improving student outcomes (Hallinger and Murphy 1986; Leithwood et al. 1990). This was complemented by research on the work activity as well as the time-use of school principals (Kmetz and Willower 1982; Martin and Willower 1981), indicating that principals typically actually spend quite a scarce amount of time on instructional leadership due to a myriad of other activities and thus dampening the enthusiasm for the principal as omnipresent chief instructor (among many other things). Later studies from various contexts solidified these results, often finding that administrative duties overshadowed curriculum and instruction (Hornig et al. 2010; Spillane and Hunt 2010; Tulowitzki 2013; Wildy and Dimmock 1993; Huber et al. 2013a, b).

The rise of transformational leadership triggered a discussion on the merits and characteristics of transformational leadership vs. instructional leadership. An often-made distinction in this regard is the more direct involvement of instructional school leaders in teaching and learning processes while transformational leaders typically seek to generate second-order effects (Hallinger 2003), trying to improve the capacity of staff who in turn produce first-order effects on learning.

Recapping its history and looking at its current state Hallinger and Wang conclude that “instructional leadership has become increasingly accepted globally as a normative expectation in the principalship” acknowledging that while other models have come and gone, “scholarly interest in instructional leadership has remained surprisingly consistent and strong” (Hallinger and Wang 2015, p. 15).

Despite or perhaps because of the fact that it has rarely been exhaustively defined, instructional leadership has maintained popularity in the leadership discourse (Hallinger 2005). Instructional leadership can be viewed as centered on the quality of teaching in classrooms. It “typically assumes that the critical focus for attention by leaders is the *behaviours of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students*” (Leithwood et al. 1999, p. 8). Emphasis is put – as the name suggests – on the principal having a succinct understanding of instruction in general, but also of the curriculum so as to be able to judge what is taught and how and to provide appropriate feedback. Thus, from an instructional leadership perspective, the principal is responsible for but also influential regarding the quality of teaching of her/his staff. Common areas of activity of instructional leadership include (Krug 1992, pp. 433–434):

- defining mission
- managing curriculum and instruction
- supervising teaching
- monitoring student progress
- promoting instructional climate

These areas are close to areas often associated with the tasks of teachers, highlighting how instructional leadership activities can often cross paths with typical teacher activities.

Instructional leadership and matters of curriculum as well as curriculum research have been linked on several occasions. This even led to the rise of the term “curriculum leadership”, often used similarly to “instructional leadership” (for example in Fidler 1997; Lee and Dimmock 1999) though never gaining the latter’s predominance.

Data from the OECD PISA studies show that instructional leadership is being practiced by German school principals. Principals in the US, the UK and Australia (among other countries) tended to report they practice greater instructional leadership, while principals in Japan, Liechtenstein, France, Tunisia and Switzerland reported to practice this less than principals in other countries and economies with German principals reporting to practice instructional leadership slightly above OECD average (OECD 2013). The 2014 OECD Policy Outlook for Germany saw increasing autonomy and an above-OECD-average use of instructional leadership in Germany by German school leaders (Klumpp et al. 2014).

However, putting instructional leadership into practice is challenging to say the least. Echoing the curriculum competencies presented earlier in this chapter, Southworth (2002) found instructional leadership requiring school leaders to be competent in (among other things) the “knowledge of curricula, pedagogy, student and adult learning and skills in change management, group dynamics and interpersonal relations and communications” (pp. 85–86). Currently, these competencies are not systematically developed through pre-service or in-service training for German school principals (see also Tulowitzki 2015).

Echoing reservations regarding the actual feasibility in the German context Kuper (2008) deemed instructional leadership too complex, expressing skepticism that a principal might at the same time keep a good managerial overview and be deeply involved in the teaching operations, being able to give valuable feedback to teachers.

To conclude, we see that school leaders are grounded in education, we see the importance of school-based curriculum work, we also see the international discussion on instructional leadership and the emphasis given to the core purpose of school and schooling. However, the questions are, do German school systems, school leaders, teachers etc. tick the right way, do they have their perspectives and practices right, do they pick the right activities and do they carry them out rightly?

In our opinion, there is a long tradition in educational practices that allow an alignment of purpose and practices, also of school leaders as far as curriculum is concerned. However, there are bureaucratic system traditions in Germany which interfere in school leadership practices of “doing the right rightly” as well as legal constraints and limitations of school leadership authority when it comes to pedagogical matters, including the curriculum. This can be viewed as a structural challenge. Finally, attempts to work on curriculum matters within a school need to be aligned with local as well as state and (when considering the national educational standards) possibly even national standards, making it challenging to achieve a coherence in curriculum agendas and settings.

Organizational Education

In the German-speaking context, the notion of ‘organisational education’ as a field of research (see Rosenbusch 1997) focuses the mutual influence of the school as an organisation within an education system on the one hand and the educational processes on the other hand. The core question of organisational education raises a two-fold issue: which educational effects do the nature and conditions of school as an organisation have on individuals or groups within the organisation – and vice versa, which effects do the conditions in and the nature of individuals or groups within the school have on the school as an organisation. More to the point: how must a school be designed in order to guarantee favourable prerequisites for education and support educational work? Hence, organisational education would look at the influence of the school leadership on the teaching and learning process and would argue not only that learning should be the focal point of school leadership but also that leadership and the whole organisation should follow the purpose of school and schooling and be designed to best fulfil the core purpose.

Hence, organisational structures and process have to be brought in line with educational goals. This also implies a leadership approach. In the context of organizational education, school leadership practices become educational-organizational activities, and educational goals become super-ordinate premises of this action. This means that school leadership practices themselves must adhere to the four main principles of education in schools – that school leaders themselves assume or encourage maturity when dealing with pupils, teachers and parents, that they practise acceptance of themselves and of others, that they support autonomy, and that they realise collaboration. This adjustment of educational perspectives affects the school culture, the teachers’ behaviour, and the individual pupils. Organizational conditions have to be modified accordingly, and be in compliance with educational principles. Thereby, the unbalanced relationship (which is historically conditioned in many countries) between education on the one hand and organisation and administration on the other hand can be clarified and aligned.

This implies, according to Rosenbusch (1997), that school leadership can be based upon certain constitutive educational principles:

- School leaders should adjust their educational perspective: educational goals dominate over administrative requirements, administration only serves an instrumental function.
- School leaders should take two levels of their educational work into consideration: first school leaders have to work with children and promote their learning, and second, as they also have to work with adults, they should promote their learning as well. Hence, conditions of adult education and adult learning have to be taken into account. This has to have an impact on their leadership and management style, particularly in professional dialogues, when knowledge is shared, expanded, and created. Therefore, school leaders have to integrate the two levels of child education and adult education in their educational perception and behaviour.

- School leaders should be more resource-oriented than deficiency-oriented: a new orientation towards promoting strengths instead of counting weaknesses is needed. So far, in many countries bureaucratically determined school administration has concentrated on avoiding mistakes, on controlling, detecting, and eliminating weaknesses instead of – as would be desirable from an educational point of view – concentrating on the positive aspects, reinforcing strengths, and supporting cooperation; it should be about ‘treasure hunting instead of uncovering deficiencies’.
- School leaders should follow the ‘logic of trusting oneself and others’: it is necessary to have trust in one’s own abilities and as well as in those of the staff and others so that empowerment, true delegation, and independent actions can be facilitated. Then, mistakes can be addressed more openly.
- School leaders should act according to the principle of ‘collegiality in spite of hierarchy’: individual and mutual responsibilities have to be respected and appreciated although special emphasis is placed on a shared collegial obligation regarding the shared goals.

In contrast to classical instructional leadership literature, the leadership concept of ‘organisational-educational management’ assumes a definition of ‘educational’ which not only incorporates teaching and education processes with pupils, but also with adults, as well as organisational learning. Organisational-educational management and leadership are committed to educational values, which are supposed to determine the interaction with pupils and the cooperation with staff as well. Administrative aspects fulfil a clearly defined function as instruments for reaching genuinely educational goals. These goals should determine the school as an organisation and thereby change it so that it becomes a deliberately designed, educationally significant reality for all. Leadership action also needs to be a model for what the school seeks to teach and preach, that is, it should shape a model-like social space for experiences for all the stakeholders by realising educational goals to the benefit of the organisation and the individual.

Consequently, the core principle of leadership action is to promote learning of all the members of the organization and in a democratic society to promote ‘democracy’, both as an aim and a method. Due to the complex hierarchy within the school, democracy represent an adequate rationale for actions concerning the intrinsic willingness and motivation of staff and the pupils for co-designing the individual school. However, democracy is not only valuable as a means for reaching goals, it is a decisive educational goal in itself. The same holds true for aspects of cooperation and collaboration. As far as ‘cooperation’ is concerned, following Wunderer and Grunwald (1980) and Liebel (1992) defines ‘cooperative leadership’ as (1) exerting goal-oriented social influence for performing shared tasks or duties (goal-achievement aspect) (2) in/with a structured working environment (organisational aspect) (3) in the context of mutual, symmetric exertion of influence (participative aspect) and (4) designing the work and social relationships in a way that enables a general consensus (pro-social aspect). Here, an organisational and a cooperative perspective are combined.

Developing these ideas would result in a broad distribution of leadership responsibility, that is in a ‘community of leaders’ within the school. This view is also taken

by Jackson and West (1999), in their depiction of ‘post-transformational leadership’. If the school is supposed to become a learning organisation, this implies the active, co-determining and collaborative participation of all (see also ‘distributed leadership’). The old distinction between the position of the teachers on the one hand and the learners on the other cannot be sustained, nor can the separation between leaders and followers. Therefore, leadership is no longer statically connected to the hierarchical status of an individual person but allows for the participation in different fields by as many persons from staff as possible. This also extends to the active participation of the pupils in leadership tasks.

In the views of organizational education, we can argue that the delegation of decision-making power should not occur, however, in order to ‘bribe’ the stakeholders into showing motivation, but for the sake of a real democratisation of school. Therefore, cooperation or ‘cooperative leadership’ is not just a leadership style (like ‘consultative leadership’, ‘delegative leadership’ or ‘participative leadership’) but reflects a fundamental leadership conception as a general attitude. This can also be named ‘democratic leadership’.

Overall, this has decisive consequences for teachers’ actions and for school leadership actions; it also needs to be reflected in the preparation and qualification of those working in schools. Not only will the training of teachers benefit from this – they also need to be trained for working within an organisation, whereas teacher training most often in many countries only focuses on how to teach the chosen subjects – but this will also affect the selection and development of the educational leadership personnel of the future.

Conclusion

We see that school leadership vis a vis curriculum is still an area that merits further research. School leaders in the German-speaking countries show a preference for activities from the domain of education and guidance. They enjoy teaching themselves. This could hint at school principals in these countries often still being closely tied to their identity as (former) teachers. Arguably, the long tradition of *Bildung* and didactics which has shaped the curriculum discourse in German-speaking countries (Hopmann 2015; Pinar 2011) has left its mark on the inherent professional identity of school leaders.

School leaders play an important role not only how the syllabus is implemented but also how curriculum work is planned, initiated, implemented and institutionalized in the school and how the school is embedded in the school environment (catchment area and community needs). At the same time, while school principals show an appreciation for teaching, education and guidance, they are not necessarily experts by tradition or training when it comes to curriculum matters. School leaders often lack the training necessary to make informed, appreciative assessments on curriculum matters. With national education standards taking root and the concept of pedagogical freedom still going strong, they also appear to have only restricted possibilities to influence curriculum matters. The interplay between leadership and

curriculum is obvious but also still unfortunately underexplored and would well be worth of further analysis which would in turn require a bridging of leadership and curriculum theory as it has been done with the framework for curriculum studies, didactics and educational leadership by Uljens and Ylimaki (2015).

Looking ahead at possible developments in Germany difficulties are due to the state autonomy of the German *Länder*. However, one paradigm shift that was observed and that will likely continue is a shift towards national central standards of education. While these standards are mainly output-focused, they still have an impact on the curricula of the *Länder*. As the process of autonomy and accountability continues to evolve, it also stands to reason that more schools will try to stand out through their structure and curriculum.

The increase of accountability can also be seen in the testing process: more and more high school graduation exams are nowadays being developed and administered centrally by the state instead of the individual schools. Eventually, this might lead to a Germany-wide central procedure. This, in turn, would likely impact curricula in all states, which would then be likely to become more homogenous. Finally, while multiculturalism has long been a part of the German curriculum, it has so far been fairly centered on Europe (Faas 2011). The ongoing globalization process coupled with the continuing push of new media into the classrooms might entail a shift in curricula towards more global issues. In particular, the immigration of nearly one million people over the year of 2015 will also have and already has an impact on schools and schooling.

The concept of organizational education, as outlined above, can effectively support an adjustment of perspectives: To see leadership and management as a means to reach pedagogical goals and focus on education principles and not on bureaucratic ones. This would allow a shift of leadership practices, to what they prefer, away from what they experience as a burden, to what is desired from a curriculum perspective: focus on the core purpose of school and schooling, the learning of pupils, their development as persons within a community and the society, their *Bildung*. Yet, the basis for this change in perception is a higher range of autonomy and a higher degree of cooperative relationships across all hierarchical levels of the school system. It would result in a broad distribution of leadership responsibility and the networking of different systems: Distributed leadership for networked systems.

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