"Curriculum is in the mind of the curriculum transmitter, and can only be learned (in an interactive sense) from the words and actions of such a mind" (Sharpes, 1988:19)

Introduction
The main assumption of this paper is that the teacher is the most important resource in the curriculum development process. It sets out to discuss some alternatives to the traditional view of the curriculum development process in which teachers can actively participate in curriculum construction and implementation. Although the paper focuses on Fiji, the discussion is intended to have wider relevance.

The traditional view of curriculum implies that the curriculum is developed by one set of people, implemented by another and received by yet another. This way of perceiving curriculum is sometimes described as a naturally occurring "thing" (Grundy, 1987). The other way is to think about curriculum as an activity (Stenhouse, 1975) or as a plan in action (Sharpes, 1988). This paper takes the latter view.

Curriculum as a Plan in Action
For many teachers in Fiji, the term curriculum is often associated with a course of study at school. Furthermore, it is commonly understood to be a document or a plan mailed to schools from the Curriculum Development Unit of the Ministry of Education. This is different from, say, the situation in Australia, the United States of America or the United Kingdom where teachers select from whatever curriculum materials are available and develop them further for use in their classrooms. The context of curriculum development in these countries then is the school. In Fiji, where curriculum development is highly centralised, the School Based Curriculum Development model (SBCD) seems alien and meaningless. It is therefore not surprising that most teachers in Fiji take the syllabus or prescription-view of the curriculum. The basic component of the curriculum, the syllabus, is designed elsewhere and given to those for whom it is intended. Accordingly, it is not a body of knowledge, but someone knowing what to teach and how to teach. Therefore teachers should know and understand what the curriculum is and how best it can be communicated to learners. Sharpes (1988:11) further explains that curriculum is:

"what the teacher does and what the teacher knows, and who the teacher is: the teacher's behaviour, knowledge and personality".

Curriculum perceived in this light requires active teacher participation in its making. In other words, a teacher is the most important person in designing and improving the curriculum. Moreover, teachers need to be well-informed persons so that they are able to include out-of-school experiences that constitute more learning opportunities into the present formal education agenda. Teachers need to be empowered to carry out this responsibility.

Some Suggestions for Active Teacher Participation in Curriculum Development
These suggestions take the view that curriculum should not be understood as a "thing" but as a "dynamic process" which engages all participants (especially teachers and students) in its active construction through their work, just as the players in the game of football actively construct the game as they play it. One of the main proponents of this view, Stenhouse (1975) believes that it is possible to construct curriculum proposals which focus upon teaching-learning experiences. For him, syllabus documents or prescriptions are just curriculum proposals, and they simply inform a teacher's planning of the teaching-learning process. He maintains that educational syllabuses or prescriptions do not determine a teacher's plan or action. The teacher's judgement becomes central in decisions about what to do in the pedagogical situation.
Advocates of SBCD (e.g. Walker, 1972; Skilbeck, 1976 (cited in Brady, 1990); Print, 1987; Brady, 1990; Kimpston and Rogers, 1988; Garrett, 1990) emphasise that teachers are the best persons to develop curriculum, and they should do this in the school with or without the help of outsiders. Print (1987:13) quotes the following as the Australia Curriculum Development Centre's description of SBCD: (a) it implies teacher participation; (b) it does not necessarily apply to the whole school—for example, it may apply to a few classes, some aspect of content of a subject, or some teaching method; (c) it involves a shift of decision-making from the centre to the periphery; (d) it implies a change in teachers' and administrators' roles, involving them in greater decision-making regarding the total curriculum; (e) it requires teachers to be selective, adaptive, and creative; they choose either to use resources others have developed or to create their own; (f) it is a dynamic process that needs support structures such as advisers, finance and materials.

The literature (Print, 1987; Brady, 1990; Garrett, 1990) also provides some of the limitations of SBCD. Those which apply to Fiji are as follows: (a) some teachers may not wish to participate in curriculum development; (b) lack of overall responsibility and accountability for what is developed; (c) some teachers may not have the necessary skills to develop the curriculum; (d) money and other resources may not be adequate; and (e) teachers, parents and administrators do not like to take risks due to competitive examinations.

Despite all these limitations, there is a strong case for teacher participation in curriculum development. Therefore, within the contemporary academic and competitive education system, ways have to be found of accommodating teacher participation in curriculum development. I would like to suggest that teachers be given the autonomy to develop curriculum for non-examination subjects such as music, art and craft, physical education and cultural and multicultural studies. I consider this a good starting point because there will be less opposition from powerful advocates of academic education.

Secondly, I would like to suggest that the Curriculum Development Unit become an "extension of the school system". This proposal allows some teachers to be redeployed from schools to the CDU for a period of time (say two years) and then posted back to schools. They could then pass on the experience they gain at the CDU to other members of the staff. If this process continues, it is likely that many teachers will have gained the experience of actively participating in curriculum development. In return, the CDU will benefit from the contextual experiences that teachers bring to it. Hopefully, such an approach will pave the way for SBCD when the country is eventually ready to accept it.

Garrett's (1990) ten percent model of curriculum development is applicable to the Fiji situation. He explains his ten percent model as:

"Giving teachers full responsibility for 10% of their work and enabling them to work at those areas of curriculum development in which they feel most capable or have the most interest, will enable them to display and develop their various talents. Such a system, it is suggested, will also play an important role in providing a more needs-oriented, school-based in-service education provision."

In view of the problems associated with SBCD in Fiji at present, it is proposed that five to ten percent of the curriculum be left flexible for teachers to develop at the school level, either individually or cooperatively with parents, colleagues, students and the school community organisations. This part of the curriculum can be organised at a teacher’s discretion. For external examination classes, this part of the curriculum can be taken after external examinations.

Principal’s Leadership Role

One of the ways of promoting the above suggestions and active teacher-participation in curriculum development, is to prepare principals for this change. In this regard, the principal’s leadership becomes critical. Through regular staff development programmes, principals can prepare teachers for active participation in curriculum development at the school level. Further, a healthy school climate can be created where teachers have the opportunity to realise their potential, interact with each other, make better use of the resources, appreciate individual differences and learn from each other (see 1.7)

It may be difficult to bring about drastic changes in
the existing curriculum straight away. Therefore, the principals can begin by seeking to facilitate knowledgeably the existing curriculum prescriptions. The first step is to study the various prescriptions carefully, understand them well and help heads of department and respective teachers to interpret them correctly. The basic concepts upon which the curriculum is built should be identified and mapped, allowing the emergence of a conceptual framework. This is important because a large number of teachers are not fully qualified.

Garrett (1990) provides a useful schema for relating degrees of curriculum development to levels of curriculum activities. He draws this schema from the work of Skilbeck (cited in Garrett, 1990) who suggests that in the shift towards SBCD, the degree to which this can take place can be categorised at the levels of creation, adaptation, and selection. Garrett adds a further dimension of curriculum aims, content, methods and evaluation (see Figure 1). Principals in Fiji should find this schema increasingly useful in facilitating the implementation of the existing curriculum prescriptions.

![Figure 1: Schema for relating degrees of curriculum development to levels of curriculum activity](source: Garrett(1990):308)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Autonomy of developer</th>
<th>Creation</th>
<th>Adaptation</th>
<th>Selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of activity</strong></td>
<td>AIMS/OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>CONTENT</td>
<td>TEACHING METHODS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Resource and Research Implications**

Empowering teachers in curriculum development has resource implications and it may be difficult to meet these needs locally. Therefore, international aid sources will have to be approached for assistance. In the past, a number of costly educational development projects, such as the establishment of junior secondary schools and the vocational education and training programme in some secondary schools, have been made possible through international aid. However, these projects have not had much impact on teachers, students or the school community. It is suggested therefore that "collaborative research" (Crossley, 1990), involving researchers from Fiji and from developed countries, be commissioned to study the present school curriculum and other related issues (such as teacher-quality, and teacher-workloads) and make appropriate recommendations for preparing teachers for active participation in curriculum development.

**Conclusion**

This paper began by arguing that the teacher is a very important resource in the curriculum development process. Without a doubt he/she is the principal agent in communicating the curriculum. Curriculum is still largely centrally-controlled and the experience and talents of the teachers are untapped and under-utilized. Opposition to the granting of autonomy to teachers in curriculum development can be overcome by (a) allowing...
them to develop curriculum in non-examination sub-
jects; (b) redefining the Curriculum Development
Unit as an extension of the school system, thus
providing more teachers to serve in it for a period of
time; and (c) making provision for five to ten percent
of the curriculum to be developed at the school level.
The principal's leadership role is seen as essential
facilitating the above mentioned suggestions.
Furthermore, those who make policies need to acknowl-
dge the experience and talents of the teachers
more in the curriculum development process.

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