ED 129 668   SO 009 440

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TITLE	On the Project "Party Democracy." German Studies Notes.
INSTITUTION	Indiana Univ., Bloomington. Inst. of German Studies.
SPONS AGENCY	Volkswagen Foundation, Hanover (West Germany).
PUB DATE	76
NOTE	35p.; Paper presented at a Conference on Political Education in the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States (Indiana University, Bloomington, September 15-19, 1975); Translated by J. L. Bates
AVAILABLE FROM	Institute of German Studies, Ballantine Hall 665, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47401 ·($1.00)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Citizen Participation; Civics; *Comparative Education; Course Descriptions; *Curriculum Design; Curriculum Development; Educational Objectives; Elections; Foreign Countries; Instructional Materials; Multimedia Instruction; Participant Involvement; Political Affiliation; *Political Issues; *Political Science; *Program Descriptions; Secondary Education; Social Sciences; Social Studies
IDENTIFIERS	*West Germany

ABSTRACT

A curriculum project on political party democracy in West Germany is described. Intended mainly for use in grades 9-10, the curriculum was developed by German social scientists, educators, and students from 1971 to 1973. The curriculum report is presented in two sections. Section I describes the learning package, tells who it is designed for, relates how the problems of party democracy were structured as learning material, and gives examples of how learning objectives and multimedia methods are interrelated. Section II specifies the four motives for the curriculum: party democracy as learning material, the curriculum as a multimedia-based course, the development of an objective-oriented teaching approach, and the party democracy teaching unit as an open curriculum. The first five chapters deal with the topic of election campaigns, and the last seven chapters focus on the political influence of the citizen over that of political parties in various situations including activities between elections, party platform establishment, and inner party functioning. Specific learning sequences are described. For example, the chapter titled "Election Campaign: A Publicity Spree?" provokes the student into looking more closely at the publicity stunts of an election campaign by testing seven campaign-related statements. (Author/DB)

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Ballantine Hall 666   Bloomington, Indiana 47401

2

ON THE PROJECT "PARTY DEMOCRACY"

Caesar Hagener

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papers produced as part of this Comparative Project. Other
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questions, problems of fiscal policy, education and educa-
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and other social and broadly cultural themes. The focus

of these papers is on the sixties and seventies, and their
purpose is to facilitate the discussion and possible solution
of similar problems in the two countries.

Inquiries should be addressed to the Institute of German
Studies or to the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung.

Foreword

This paper is to present a teaching project on the subject "Party Democracy". T o be more exact it deals with "Party Democracy - parliamentary democracy in a party state as exemplified by the Federal Republic of Germany". The curriculum in question was developed by social scientists, particularly educators, teachers and students from Hamburg between 1971 and 1973. Our work was inspired and supported by the Federal Office for Political Education in Bonn (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung).

I do not intend to begin in typical German fashion by giving a theoretical justification of the project, although in this particular case it would have been preferable, perhaps, given that the topic smacks suspiciously of civics teaching gone sour, to clear such points of suspicion out of the way in advance. But at the moment we will refrain from presenting a teaching theory or even from showing how the design of a curriculum is derived from such a theory. The reasons are numerous! One of them is a very personal one. Having gone through the complex process of derivation from basic academic positions and having carefully explained the complex pattern of reasons and motivations, it seemed to me that I would end up still producing, as if by magic, the old topic "Party Democracy" like the veritable rabbit out of the hat.

This is no general statement of scepticism as regards theory. I should even like to concede that even today by means of a theoretical approach to the teaching of politics one can demonstrate the absolute necessity of Party Democracy as a teaching topic. But to show this is not my problem. Let it merely be noted that my way into working on this project was not "via" any particular "theory" - neither curriculum theory nor any political education theory. My interest in the project, i.e. in developing an objective-based curriculum in Party Democracy was at first purely pragmatic. It was the fascinating

6

opportunity to take part in the step-by-step development and testing of a multi-purpose curriculum in political learning. The attraction of practical work outweighed the scepticism I felt as regards the particular topic "Party Democracy", which seemed to me to have been taken from traditional school curriculum guidelines.

So much for personal notes which indicate why I have begun this paper with the concrete, the demonstrable. The first part of my report deals therefore with the constituent parts of the learning package on Party Democracy. It gives details of addressees, structural details and by means of concrete examples how in each case learning objectives, media and methods were inter-related.

In the second part I intend to clarify, with the help of some categories and hypotheses from our work, the elements of theory that we actually used in our curriculum development. These elements of theory could perhaps, if taken as a whole, be interpreted as a complex of motives for the curriculum.

1.   Introduction to the project "Party Democracy"

1.1.   First question : What does the project consist of? What
                         are the constituent parts of the package?

   The project, developed as a pilot curriculum for 'media-
   mix learning', consists of the following parts:

   1. The Reader (for the learner - pupil or student)
      This collection of texts is not a bound book but a
      loose-leaf collection presented in a ring-binder to per-
      mit the renewal and addition of pages. The original
      version of the Reader was published by Hoffmann and
      Campe, Hamburg and is approximately 300 pages long.

   2. The Filmstrip consisting of individual film sequences
      which refer to learning tasks presented in the Reader.
      (Particularly important text extracts from the film
      can be found in the Reader.)

7

3. The Teacher's Handbook that provides a shortened
   version of the didactic ideas underlying the curriculum.
   In conjunction with this it provides :
   o a synopsis giving objectives and excercises for each
     learning sequence (closely linked to the media),
   o hints on methods of carrying out the lesson (esp.
     with regard to the practical use of the various
     media) and also aspects of the open curriculum
     which should be modified according to the conditions
     of the particular group of students in question,
   o possibilities and limits of evaluating the various
     learning sequences.

4. The Paper-back: "Party Democracy as a topic for learn-
   ing" - The sub-title gives a clearer idea of its con-
   tent: A study of the "didactic basis for a media-mix
   course oriented towards criterion-based objectives".
   This book (at present only available in manuscript
   form) attempts to present this project to a wider
   public, especially in the context of the following
   current problems :
   o in the context of the discussion on practice-oriented
     curriculum development in the Federal Republic of
     Germany.
   o with connection to present problems of multi-media
     teaching.
   o and with reference to some present problems in
     political education theory.

2. Second question : Who is the project aimed at? Who was
                       it designed for?

When we began work in Hamburg developing the curriculum,
we had in minds pupils in the 9th and 10th grade. Based
on this, the first version was tested in the last two
classes in Hamburg modern secondary and technical high
schools. The tests were carried out in Spring 1973 to
investigate "the efficacy of multi-media teaching". During
further development work, however, it proved necessary
not to restrict the curriculum to one particular learning

group or age-group and more particularly not to restrict
it to one type of school.

In fact the more our team moved away from its initial
aim (the restrictive task of providing a curriculum
on the subject Parties that was to be as teacher in-
dependent as possible - an auto-didactic learning pack-
age), the less emphasis was placed on the related pro-
grammation of individual learning sequences and thus the
connection between specific age or school groups and
particular learning preconditions was abandoned. For
many reasons it was decided to construct an open curr-
iculum.

The present curriculum could therefore be implemented
not only in the 9th and 10th grades but also in an adult
education context.

1.3.   Third question : How were the problems of Party Democracy
                         structured as learning material?

To answer this question I will first present the twelve
learning steps into which we sub-divided the learning
process on the basis of detailed questions. The Reader
- the "steering medium" in our media-mix divides the
learning material into twelve sections whose headings
formulate either open or disguised hypotheses and quest-
ions for the learning group. The headings thus formed are
as follows :

1. Election campaign - a publicity spree?
2. Parties (but not only parties) compete for every
   vote.
3. Election campaigns cost a lot of money.
4. Which voters are being aimed at, which change their
   minds?
5. Election results and the formation of government.
6. Additional information on voting.
7. The parties are different - yet alike.

9

8. The power and powerlessness of the voter between elections.
9. The influence of party members within the party.
10. Dependance and independance of MP's within the parliamentary party.
11. Those who indulge in "politics" apart from the parties.
12. The party ban and two-party concentration.

At first glance this structuralization may well seem arbitrary and unsystematic. A political scientist would no doubt ask why certain structures and categories are not accounted for whose content, in its relation to the subject complex Party Democracy can be analysed today by a "science of politics".
Without wishing to go into a detailed discussion of the question, I will try to answer the objection, if only preliminarily, and sketch out my approach by means of a global statement.
Our team approached the problem "Parties, Party State" as educators, as teaching experts, as political educators and not as political scientists. Our problem therefore was not one of giving a scientifically well-based analysis of the subject. Our question was rather how the things which we and our fellow-citizens experience day-by-day on our front doorstep in the way of influences, results, actions and reactions in the Federal Republic's party democracy? - How can all this be organized rationally as learning material? The twelve topics of our curriculum do not form a basic structure defining a research or investigation field in Party Democracy. They are, instead, a model according to which learning procedures can be organized. These learning procedures should activate the student, encouraging him to want to investigate and explain the problems relating to the presnt-day party-state, where this becomes evident directly or indirectly in the socialization area of his life.

10

This is why the learning unit begins - to give an example - with the provocative topic "Election campaign - a publicity spree?" It goes withour saving that this first learning sequence is aimed more at motivating the whole learning process than at giving factual information. It is more a stimulus for the learner (or individual learning groups)to encourage him to come to some agreement on the special investigation techniques needed to 'get to the bottom of' opinions and to make organizational preparations, than a means of teaching something about the questionability of election campaigns.

The development of our twelve learning sequences was defined on this principle. The principle, in other words, of investigating rhe subject complex party state/party democracy etc. in a learning process made up of situations which stimulate curiosity, inquiry, discovery, discussion of theses, argumentation and so on. Using this approach we tried to make the whole field of "Party Democracy", which is difficult for the learner to get an overview of, more accessible from two points of reference. Valid for the a-political adult as well as for young people, these two points are first of all the "common-place opinions" on elections and secondly the frequently discussed opinions on the "Influence" or "Lack of influence", as the case may be, of a ccitizen on policies made in fact by people completely divorced from him. We have taken these two points of reference and from them have distinguished two areas of study that are mutually complementary :

o   one study-area has reference to the superficial
    experience the learner has of the election campaign
    run by the parties,

o   the other revolves around the question of political
    influence, which a citizen can gain without party aid;
    secondly the influence of a party member on the
    formation of public life; then the influence of the
    MP inside and outside the parties.

The diagram (see p.8) uses the model of an ellipse to clarify the structure of our learning material by means

11

of two focal points. The individual learning sequences
1-12 can be considered as organized in numerical order
on an elliptical path, as they (the 12 chapters) orbit
around two focal points.

The first five chapters are directly related to the
topic "Election campaign" (focal point 1). From this
starting point, the role of the parties in our state
can best be explained to the student. The parties'
"Transmission function" (i.e. articulation of the inter-
ests of the people) can be analysed into its constituent
problems directly from this complex.

Chapters 7-12 are thus centered around the second set
of topics (focal point 2). The question here is that
of the political influence the citizen has over the
parties in each of a number of various roles :

o   When and where can the parties be called upon be-
    tween elections to assert the political opinion of
    the ordinary citizen or of a group of people?
    (citizens' initiative)

o   What influence does the individual member have on
    his party's program, on election of delegates etc.?

o   How does inner-party democracy function?

o   When does parliamentary party discipline become
    parliamentary party coercion?

o   Do the parties really rule? - Or to what extent to
    associations and/or Ministerial bureaucracy rule?

The sixth chapter can be dealt with in relation to the
focal point "Election campaign". To what extent the
content of this part of the course (Election law,
process, systems etc.) can be dealt with in detail, in
shortened form, not at all or even elsewhere in the
course must be decided on the basis of the relevant
group of students.

9 The influence of party members within the party and: How 'democratic' are our parties?

8 The power and powerlessness of the voter between elections.

10 Dependence and independence of MP's within the parliamentary party.

Political influence in the state - with and without the help of the parties and on the different levels of political decision-making

7 The parties are different - yet alike.

11 Those who indulge in "politics" apart from the parties.

6 Additional information on voting.

The party ban and two-party concentration.

5 Election result and formation of government.

1 Election campaign - a publicity spree?

The election campaign highlights the problems of the party state

4 Which voters are being aimed at, which change their mind?

2 Parties (but not only parties) compete for every vote.

3 Election campaigns cost a lot of money.

The same is true of chapter twelve : this chapter deals with
the question of the 'Sperrklausel' - a provision whereby
a party has to gain at least 5% of the vote to be rep-
resented in parliament -   new parties have any chance
whatsoever of winning a place in parliament?) and also
that of the "Party ban". These are without doubt questions
of essential importance to the course. However, as these
parts of the course can only be successfully discussed
when the motives for such a discussion are unmistakeable,
this complex of topics will be covered on the basis of the
relevant group's situation rather than developing the
problem on the basis of the texts. One possible motive for
discussion is, for example, topical questions from the
group on banning parties. From this point of view the
subject matter of chapter 12 can also be covered elsewhere
in the course.

A certain order of consideration for the chapters as well
as a similar order for the objectives to be attained in
each section has been recommended by means of the structur-
alization of the learning package. It must nevertheless be
emphasized that this is not to be understood as a sort of
learning program in which, for example, the section object-
ives of the first two chapters have to be attained before
the student can go on to the next learning sequence.

. Fourth question : What does the actual didactic structure
                    of the mult-media program look like in
                    the individual learning sequences?

This question can be answered using the example of "Learning
Sequence 1". If the student opens the Reader, he will find
beneath the graphically eye-catching title (see next page)
a short text telling the reader what questions, allegations,
inquiry procedures, undertakings etc. the documents (to be

Title of learning

sequence :   E L E C T I O N

             C A M P A I G N

                  =

      A P U B L I C I T Y

        S P R E E ?

found on the pages of the Reader that follow) could or
should stimulate. In this specific case the documents include
party publicity handouts, election posters, caricatures,
reports of election preparations etc. It is all up-to-date
material taken from the German press, which seems at first
glance to confirm the thesis expounded in the title. The
newspaper and news-magazine documents are put together
without further commentary - the source of the publication
and where it appeared are of course clearly marked.

The teacher can read up in his handbook on what should be
learned and how from this "black-on-white" documentation
about the topic "Election campaign - a publicity spree",
There he will find the objectives of this sequence and in
conjunction a detailed commentary on the methodical construct-
ion of this part of the course, particularly as regards
the possible alternatives of method.

It was especially important to me, when putting the Reader
together, to tell the student himself what the people
responsible for this learning package had in mind each
time they put the most varied texts under a given heading
and added photos, film sequences and statistics to them.
What particular learning task we were thinking of when pre-
paring the various media had to be clearly formulated for
the student in question (and as far as possible in his own
language - so as to take him out of his role as "object
of the course"). Thus under the title described above
"Election campaign - a publicity spree?" the following
text is to be found in exactly these words :

  "You already know that:

o Every four years the German parliament (Bundestag)
  is elected.
o Every four years the parties compete for the citizens'
  votes.
o Every four years the citizens decide what relative
  strength the parties will have in parliament.

This chapter would like to provoke you into looking more
closely at the so-called publicity stunt of the election
campaign. Here are some more opinions on the election
campaign :

o The election campaign is a publicity campaign for the
  parties.
o The party with the best publicity agent is the most
  successful.
o Politicians consider voters as their clients.
o In party head offices the question is asked: 'How
  best can we sell our candidate?'.
o In election campaigns the factual confrontation over
  political questions only plays a minor role.
o "Policies" are usually brought onto the "election
  campaign" market like washing powders.
o Political slogans are often sold in a "show".

These and similar claims are made in the first film.
Is everything asserted in the film actually true?
In the following chapters you will find material which
will permit you to check such claims."

So much for instructions to the student in the Reader.

Let us now take another look at the film sequence quoted
in the Reader. This filmstrip shows a pot-pourri of campaign
scenes from the year 1965. The film caricatures the election
campaign, then, and questions its political function as
part of a process of forming public opinion on political
issues. In many of the commentary's sentences, in the
cutting together of the pictures it presents a provocation.

Like every other filmstrip in the course, this one too
has a "leader". For just as the printed documents in the
Reader were prefaced with the above-quoted lines on possible
impressions to be aimed at, the film too is prefaced by
a leader in which we have carefully formulated some of the
aspects under which the film can be considered and questioned.

The intentions of the curriculum-makers should therefore
also be made known to the learners. The learners should not
simply "consume" a given sequence according to pre-defined
objectives. They should also be able to participate in the
construction and further development of the curriculum.
What does that mean? This can best be shown by means of
the concrete example of the first learning sequence already
described. The questions prefaced on to the film constitute
the general question :

"To what extent would you agree with the opinions pre-
sented by the film, and to what extent would you disagree?"

This means that each group of students is invited to answer
not only the pre-formulated question but also completely
different questions, and to consider the medium under
completely new aspects.

In a "Synopsis" (see Fig.2) we have shown how the same ob-
jectives are formulated in different words, first for the
teacher, secondly for the student. In this way we hope to
demonstrate our intention to the teacher and to explain to
him the aim of arousing the students' interest in each
planned or potential learning task.

17

- Fig. 2 -

Synopsis

Objectives and functions of the learning sequence

Title of Learning Sequence	Section objectives - formulated for the teacher	Questions/Functions/Objectives - formulated for the student
1 Election campaign - a publicity spree?	The teacher should be in a position to: make notes on opinions about election campaigns (expressed in the 1st film sequence) classify them for an initial open discussion and question their validity, formulate further questions on election campaigns, taking into account his/her own experience in campaign situations and at the same time conceptualize, when the occasion arises concepts such as "election promise","behavior of the electorate", "opinion polls", "publicity", "slogans", "the image of the party leader", "election campaign methods" both in the written and spoken mode, express him/herself on the fact that (and why) political programs and rational argument often do not play a major role in election campaigns.	- in the leader to the Filmspot Unfavourable opinions about what parties do are widespread in our country. o You too might well agree with some of what is said in this film o We would like to know: Which you agree with? Which you don't? - in the preface to the Reader chapter "Opinions on election campaigns" for example: "Politicians consider voters as their clients" or: "Political slogans are often sold in a "show". o Are opinions like this correct, that amongst other things are also expressed in the film? o Which of these claims can be checked?

18

2.   On theorems used in developing the curriculum "Party Democracy"

During the. "presentation"of our curriculum I have as far as possible up to now avoided any theoretical explanations -i.e. the criteria governing decisions made in the process of the practical development and testing of this course. But in retrospect one can't ignore the fact that in presenting this curriculum in this way, explicitly articulating what can be shown as a concrete product, a certain amount of theory has already been transmitted. Similarly in the following description of some principle questions of theory the practical side of our curriculum work canno' simply be eliminated. On the contrary - it **has** to be included because we are concerned with the principle questions underlying a practice-oriented curriculum development.

In consequence (so as to stay close to the basis of our practical work) the second part of my paper will deal with those concepts which have been used as "self-evident" categories when working with the individual parts of the learning package. These categories are used as sub-titles in the project, and as sub-headings in the paper-back and in the teacher's handbook, without the theorems implied by them ever being noted and without the theorems them-selves serving to explain what "actually happens" when such curricula are constructed. The technical terms are as follows :

    1. Party Democracy as <u>learning material</u>
    2. The curriculum as a <u>multi-media based course</u>
    3. The development of an <u>objective-oriented teaching approach</u>
    4. The "Party Democracy" teaching unit as an <u>open curriculum</u>

2.1. <u>First thesis</u> : <u>Party Democracy as learning material</u>

What I mean by learning material has already been briefly
described, when justifying the thematic structure of the
projected learning process. In particular I made it clear
that the structuring of a discipline, that is to say the
scientific structuring of a complex of facts cannot pro-
vide the framework onto which the guidelines of a
<u>learning process</u> can be woven and maintained. This claim
will now be justified in greater detail.

By making this statement I explicitly contradict those
education scientists who, among other things, by referring
to one of Jerome S. Bruner's theories, defend the position
that the <u>Structure of a Science</u> (or the basic principles
of scientific cognition in a discipline) provide the
structure in which and with which each student can tackle
each subject optimally. I deny this because,firstly it is
to be doubted that so-called "structures" in disciplines
can have the same weight and the same function for each
example of subject specific scientific cognition (if one
can in fact actually use such a general concept as
"structure" as a key-word in every discipline!) - Compare
for example Physics and History.

Bur I deny it secondly because in relation to the subject
-complex "Parties, Party System, Party Democracy" and
so on I don't receive any <u>clear answer</u> from the social
sciences to the question 'how is our subject-complex
structured as a scientifically explicated object of cog-
nition?' I doubt therefore whether <u>one</u> clearly defined
object for the process of cognition exists in the case of
the topic "parties". I suspect rather that there are also
various patterns of analysis for the various sciences so
as to be able each time to conceptualize the whole complex
of "political parties". Party Democracy as an object of
cognition presents a completely different subject for
research depending on whether one looks at it through the
eyes of A. Hennis or W. Abendroth.

20

This dependance of an object of cognition on scientific
position makes us doubt the assertion that one could
deduce a didactic structure from this topic of cognition,
thereby trusting "objective findings" and "structures
founded in the subject matter itself" - trusting in other
words, everything that academic research presents as "the
subject itself". Object of cognition and learning matter
are not identical in every case of curriculum development
as is sometimes claimed.

Having dissociated myself from the "material" offered by
subject specialists does not mean, however, that I con-
sider their contribution to practice-oriented curriculum
development as small or even superfluous. Of course in a
world turned scientific, when constructing learning matter,
we permanently need to refer to the categories and
instruments with which specialist researchers try to make
the relevant piece of the world understandable.

As practitioners on the spot and as educators we asked
political scientists in the case of our curriculum work,
how in fact they as specialists viewed the field of study
we had in mind for our course. All that we could learn
about the subject-complex in question from the political
scientists and sociologists we tried to draw up in a list, : .
so as to include in the development of our learning material,
where the relevant **objective-based teaching sequence** re-
quired, scientific understanding, but also scientific
methods and categories. Let us first of all look at the
subject-complexes which we listed as "offered" by the
specialists, so as then to be able to clarify the function
of this offer :

1. The Federal Republic of Germany is to be considered as
   a democracy based on political parties since exclusively
   political parties are in competition for political
   power, both in the legislative and executive branches.
   The power restricted to a given period of time accorded
   one or more parties is legitimated by democratic elect-
   ions.

21

2. In contrast to interest groups parties today usually present a wide-reaching program. These programs - unlike earlier - are not usually based on an ideology (Weltanschauung) and are to a lesser extent than earlier linked to a social group (stratum/class). Insofar as party programs are developed with the aim of being or becoming acceptable to every population group, the programs of the different parties have moved closer to one another.

3. The political parties present more or less obviously differing programs and offer alternative personalities for the holding of government office. They are therefore a condition for the formation of the population's political will.

4. The political will of the electorate is structured by the program and personality alternatives offered by the existing parties in the election campaign. This will defines the relative strength of the parties in parliament.

5. Between elections the population has no institution- alized means of articulating and imposing its political will. Direct participation of the electorate in the appointment of state officials and in legislation is not foreseen by our constitution. This renouncement of plebiscites in political life results directly from past experience (during the Weimar Republic).

6. The MP's are not so much representatives of the whole people as party functionaries with specific tasks to fulfil.

7. Because of the reduction of institutionalized political participation of the electorate to one vote for a party every four years, inner-party democracy is a decisive condition of the democratic character of a party state.

8. The conditions for inner-party democracy include :
   a) decisive influence of party members on the party's
      political program (formation of will proceeding from
      the base upwards);
   b) decisive influence of party members on filling
      positions within the party leadership and of
      political offices;
   c) control of party élites by members;
   d) the possibility to form parties within the party
      (inner-party opposition).

   Inner-party democracy is endangered by :
   a) too low a party-membership;
   b) too few active party-members;
   c) the particular position and function of the party
      élite (the knowledge posessed by those in power,
      their access to and opportunity to use the party
      apparatus etc.);
   d) indirect communication of decisions of will from the
      base;
   e) the influence of pressure groups on the decision
      -making process of the party leadership.

10. Political decisions in parliament (made by parties)
    are not made exclusively on the basis of the party
    programs. Neither are they always made according to
    the voters' expectations. They can be decisively
    affected by demands and reactions from the public
    (e.g. via the mass media or extra-parliamentary
    opposition), but also by interest organizations.

I have quoted this in detail for two reasons. Firstly it
shows to what extent and in what detail we kept in mind
the object of cognition as an orienting frame during the
planning of our development work as well as during the
decision processes on content-based objectives. Secondly
a comparison of the subject matter as structured in this
list with the thematic organization of our learning mater-
ial (see p. 8) shows that during development of the curr-
iculum we neither could nor wished in any way to follow
the thematic organization that had resulted from this
political science draft analysis (approximately as shown
in our list).

The twelve learning sequences of our curriculum have a
completely different _frame_of_reference_ to the subject
-complex as listed in the presentation provided by the
subject-specialists. The frame of reference in which the
educator makes a structural analysis of Party Democracy
as learning material is defined by the place of institut-
ionalized learning, i.e. by the school or school-like
institution. They have to be taken into account to permit
the organization of those learning processes in which the
learner will, as far as possible, be capable of discover-
ing Party Democracy as a _subject_of_his_own_, will be
stimulated to reflect upon his behavior, largely un-
conscious, towards parties and the party state and to begin
to modify this behavior. In this context the object of
cognition can indeed not be completely ignored, but it
is in this case rarely more than a means of ensuring
that, for example, one becomes aware of new factual
relationships within the subject or new discoveries and
questions (particularly within restricted learning
situations).

It must be clearly stated that the learning material
itself appears again and again in a completely new
light during the actual formation of such a frame of
reference. It is not a "_product_" therefore that can be
taken home black on white. It is instead something that
only receives the final touches during the actual learning
processes and finds its significance in that, although
aimed at discovering new insights, its quality lies in
the discovery process itself, in the inclusivity of the
subject in the "content" within the context of actions
and interactions.

2.2. _Second_thesis_ : _The_curriculum_as_a_multi-media_based_course_

The initiators of our project, members of the Federal
Office for Political Education were (as already mentioned)
originally interested in examining above all the possib-
ilities of multi-media teaching in the realm of political
education on the basis of a concrete case. These initial

aims, when considered from our present standpoint, were
largely "a result of the times". These preoccupations,
which the "fathers" of this project (to whom I do not
belong) had in 1969, can be reduced to three sub-theses,
each a direct result of the times in which they were
coined.

Sub-thesis No.1 : If (as an empirical investigation on
"The effectiveness of political education in the Federal
Republic of Germany"could already show in 1966) teachers
at the secondary stage (I) on the basis of their
"attitude", their "role-comprehension", their "anti-party
feelings" etc. do not seem qualified (in the year 1969) to
develop a political course aimed at producing "readiness
for political commitment" in young people in conjunction
with a discriminatory political awareness, then the official
and unofficial committees in our society who acknowledge
their responsibility for political education are called
upon to aid the development of such learning and teaching
materials and of such curricula as could permit largely
teacher-independant courses

Sub-thesis No.2 : A "media-mix course", if it actually
produces a multi-media learning program, can replace
traditional teacher-centered courses. In this way those
courses could be avoided, which are still predominant in
political and social institutions teaching in our schools.
That is to say, those courses in which the teacher (as
indicated) as a result of his lack of reflection in role
behavior has a much greater influence on the social and
political learning of his pupil, than in a politics course
in which the content is transmitted word for word
according to the syllabus or according the texts of the
school-books.

Sub-thesis No.3 : As a result in 1969 for every federal
state it was decided to develop an experimental multi-
media course for the relevant political education topic:
"Parties" and "Party State"etc., so as to test by means of

such a pilot curriculum the advantages such a project
could have compared with traditional courses on this
topic.

One must consider in conjunction with this that we also
carried out in the winter of 1973 on the basis of
aspects of these three theses from the period of 1969,
an explorative investigation in Hamburg school classes
(as mentioned above). During this investigation the
following hypotheses as regards the advantages of a media
-based course were to be examined. Whether a media-based
course could :

- enable a more pertinent structural analysis of the
  subject to be learned,
- explain the learning material from many different
  angles,
- motivate the learner in many and lasting ways,
- release the teacher from time-consuming and often
  insufficient preparation,
- make the teacher available for individualized
  learning and speed up the achievement of the
  aimed for objective.

This is not the place to explain why this explorative
investigation could neither confirm nor deny the hypotheses
quoted. More important, it seems to me, is to explain
what the teaching experiments carried out up to the pre-
sent with the learning package on Party Democracy have
shown as regards the multi-media element, at least acc-
ording to the subjective observation of all those in-
volved :

1. As a result of the unusual and rich learning materials
   the pupils were much more strongly motivated than be-
   fore to participate in the course, even though the
   course, without exception, was held in a conventional
   manner.

2. There was no marked change in the working, i.e. teach-
   ing/learning methods in the trial classes. Neither
   increased group work, nor increased work using the

26

discovery method could be noted.

3. The teachers in the experiment, as in traditional
   courses, continued to play the part of course leader
   (without exception in the front-of-class teaching
   mode) and, contrary to expectations, hardly ever
   functioned as a moderator of learning processes.

According to subjective observation then, the Hamburg
experiment - insofar as it was to be understood as a
contribution to research into the efficacy of media-mix
teaching - has only confirmed what criticism is at present
being levelled at educational technology and related
"theories" in the Federal Republic (approx. since 1973/7.).
The criticism is the discouraging conclusion that no
empirically verified statement can be made on the value
of media-mix teaching as regards the demands of present
-day curriculum development, since the preconditions for
a comprehensive investigation of this field have as yet
not been fulfilled. They have not been fulfilled insofar
as a suitable theoretical formation is concerned and
also as regards the creation of suitable investigatory
instruments.

Our experiment in Hamburg, which on its first approach
tried to put together a multi-media learning package
practically free of theoretical grounding, did show
those of us practically involved in the experiment two
things:

o on the one hand, that in curriculum development
  media-teaching can be no more than one means that
  can be used under certain conditions to intensify
  or speed up the learning process or even to reduce
  it in length without reducing it in quality.

o on the other hand, that by opting for a multi-media
  curriculum (if this decision is based on the fact
  of wanting to develop a teacher-independant curr-
  iculum) one inevitably moves towards a curriculum
  model comparable to programmed learning.

Thus one day during its first working phase, the Hamburg
group found itself faced with the question: Should
we really accept the consequence of further development
towards a multi-media learning project, i.e. the "closed
curriculum" (engineering model) towards which we are inev-
itably moving? Our reply was in the negative. After con-
sultation with the "Federal Office", we soon consciously
constructed our course unit as an "open curriculum",
which will be discussed in the last section.

2.3. Third thesis : The development of a curriculum oriented towards learning objectives

The team's intention to develop an objective-based
curriculum means that it cannot simply be a question
of facts and figures about parties, the party state etc.
methodically applied as content to be conveyed. On the
other hand we had no intention of following behaviorist
theories with this objective-related emphasis. In fact
a curriculum theory, according to which the derivation of
behavioral objectives from the highest level of the hier-
archy of objectives/qualifications may only admit
"content-neutral" formulations of learning objectives
(i.e. an objective giving no hint of possible means of
application and thus no suggestions as to content) even
down to the lowest hierachical level of individual course
sequences, would for many reasons have been contrary to
our project's approach.

Thus such deductive ideas had for obvious reasons to
be rejected. For on the basis of the contract accepted,
i.e. the construction of a "media-mix teaching unit"
on a complex of themes, where the content is clearly
identified : parties, party state etc., a content-based
field of study was fixed from the outset and could only
have been incorporated into a "derivational system of
behavioral objectives" by means of tricks. Thus as regards
the concrete task to be carried out, we based our app-
roach on content or task-oriented learning objectives and

28

entitled these "medium-range objectives", because they
lie within the range of the task to be carried out and
are defined according to the interpretation of this task.

The decision on medium-range objectives was not, however,
made purely for pragmatic reasons. As regards basic
pronciples - independant of the task we had been charged
with - we are against laying down objectives using only
content-neutral formulations. For, in contrast to
representatives of a behaviorist theory, we believe that
every kind of learning is already - at least indirectly -
fixed to particular "contents", i.e. socially-transmitted
contents. Thus "Party Democracy" has become for us an
important and even irreplaceable problem complex for the
field of study of politics in contemporary Federal Germany.
This is because it has been shown that particular insights
and attitudes - e.g. motivation of the public towards
political commitment can only be learned in relation to
and via this complex of problems and facts.

Our "medium-range objectives" were sought and discovered
then in those areas where young people in Germany come
into contact with political processes outside their own
front door, as it were, - and where they are always al-
ready armed with prejudices and prescience of "the world
of politics large and small" - and by which they have
already been concerned. The objectives relate then to
the learner's experience opportunities with contemporary
politics, that is to say with those that come within his
range of experience and in which the problem and problems
of present-day party democracy in Germany occur or at
least could occur. That defines the area in which we can
now specify the actual task of our project by means of the
following five objectives.

The learner should be in a position :

1. to learn to discover our contemporary political party system in Germany by means of particular situations and actions that he has access to presented as partial representations or reflections of unsolved political problems,

2. to know (and to want to know) how to investigate the way in which certain party "promises" are kept (or, as the case may be, not kept),

3. to recognize and discuss (as well as to want to make public) the ways and means in which he and other citizens can gain influence on political processes via existing parties, or how to actively participate in or intiate political processes outside of existing parties,

4. to find out where (and why) the present party system in our country is limited in its ability to carry out the tasks formulated in the relevant party program,

5. to answer (without avoiding the problem),as far as possible offering alternative solutions, the question of whether a democratically thinking citizen actually has an opportunity today to articulate his political ideas in relation to the constitution in the context of one of today's parties and to actively further the realization of such ideas.

Having opted for a "medium-range objective" orientation, we of course also considered and discussed goals and aims at the highest level, because we needed them as a check point - a frame of reference, according to which we had to place our particular topic Party Democracy within the global field "Politics" - according to which also we could examine our basic consensus with questions of pedagogical theory and practice. For this reason and this reason alone the following three theses were relevant for the practice-side of the development work :

- The learner should be capable of self-determination

(self-identity and role distance);

- he should be capable of acting in co-operation and in solidarity with others;

- he should be capable of participating in the product- ive construction of social reality.

The fact that such hypothetical goals can be presented as empty formulae was no handicap for our work, as we in no way claimed with these formulations to want to "derive" from them content-related learning sequences. We were concerned only with ensuring again and again the general aim of the total framework both when specifying the medium-range objectives and above all when reducing the objectives at the lowest level into concrete terms.

However, the decision to consider Party Democracy as a central theme within a total curriculum for political learning in Germany, was accompanied with other problems, which must be considered in conclusion :

As already remarked upon, the particular topic dealing principally with the subject "parties" has for many years been considered suspect in the political-didactic discussion. The reasons for this are well-known and do not need to be presented yet again. It is, however, possible that having dissociated ourselves in no uncertain terms from a "warmed-up" civics course, we have still been mis- understood by many teachers who start to study our pro- ject, because in connection with the problem of objectives we have laid great emphasis on the formulation of content-based objectives. The term content-based is and remains unclear. Yet as we have no better suited term we must in our dilemma point out again that we do not wish when using this term to propagate a given "content". In our view, whatever concrete things have to be learned, they may not be considered as "products". It refers instead above all to the learning process itself, to what can be extracted from and by this process as "learning material".

In this way, we tried to formulate the operationalized
objectives of the project, or at least ('n the commentary
to our Methodical Hints) to explain the learning tasks
of the sequence in question as interactions between
learners or between students and teachers. This aim was
not always easy to fulfil, since in our curriculum
development in practice we could only suggest - without
exact knowledge of the learning conditions and pre-
conditions of future groups of learners - within a
theoretical framework, the complex of conditions for such
processes. Thus when trying to formulate certain detailed
objectives, we had to predict how, under varying conditions,
one brings into play a given topic for a school-class, a
group of young people so that the topic can be seen to
be "contentious", so that curiosity is aroused, and they
are provoked into inquiring into and investigating it
and so that in this way a means of communciation serves
as go-between for the interacting persons. Only this
embodiment of the hypothetical objectives of social learn-
ing within the domain of content-based learning can prevent
us from falling back yet again on the old fashioned
civics course and presenting "The Emperor's New Clothes"
behind a facade of modern formulations of objectives.
This principle of embodiment is also the reason why it was
unneccessary in our curriculum development in practice
to differentiate between cognitive and affective object-
ives, between "social" and "factual" learning.

l. __Fourth thesis__ : __The "Party Democracy" teaching unit as an__
__"open curriculum"__

The commentary on this point need only be short, given
that the previous sections have shown how, with time,
in our development work on the project "Party Democracy",
we moved away from our original task, that of constructing
a media-mix largely teacher-independant curriculum. In
retrospect, it can be said today that in 1969 we began
work on producing a kind of "closed curriculum". At that

time and as a result of the initiators' special interest
in the testing of media-teaching in politics, our aim
was still to develop a "product"-oriented curriculum.
That also meant specifying operationalized objectives
to be able to carry out evaluation on varying aspects.

Two reasons, however, led us to discard the idea of a
"closed curriculum" for the topic "Party Democracy".
The first was the practical experience acquired in classes
in the 9th and 10th grade, the second was newer experience
from the curriculum discussion (supported by theoretical
studies and a number of personal practical experiments)
in the field of social learning in comprehensive schools.
Our reasons were :

1. On the basis of our goals in the field of politics
   and as regarded the "medium-range objectives" we
   had formulated, we saw no way of achieving the
   operationalized objectives formulated (or for example
   of being able to develop tests for 'success controls'
   etc.).

2. Furthermore on the basis of our position with regard
   to a theory of cognition, we could not fix upon a
   "reduced learning concept" of behaviorist origin.

3. We had to arm ourselves against a conception of the
   pupil's role, that reduced him to a mere object, but
   above all that also allowed the teacher in concrete
   cases to function only as a moderator, denying him
   any opportunity to modify the curriculum.

4. What seemed particularly difficult to us, however,
   was the fact that this closed curriculum would have
   to exclude completely the school and teaching
   situation, thus making it into a kind of "hidden
   curriculum" whose effect, very unfortunately, had
   to remain unevaluated.   33

In contrast to this we have tried to present the drafted
curriculum as an "open" one, even though at first sight
the sequencing might appear to be a "concisely presented
plan". The only thing in our project to be pre-defined is
a "steering agent for all the ways and means in which a
cannon of objectives nhould be attained". (Definitions of
the concept 'curriculum' are worded in this or a similar
way); our curriculum would therefore only in a very limited
way be a project in this strict sense of the term curr-
iculum. It is "open". i.e. it is to some extent incomplete,
incomplete because teacher and learner have to take part
in modifications to the curriculum under certain condit-
ions. The development of the curriculum is not, in our
view, complete. It must be continued in the test phase to
come. Thus the presentation of the texts in a (loose-leaf)
ring-binder was and is important to us. The authority of
the school-book is to be consciously banished.

The decisive reason, however, for rejecting a closed
curriculum was and is to be found in the conviction that
has already been dealt with under 2.3. - the problem of
"content-learning". It was decisive for us to construct
a politically relevant curriculum that was not "context-
neutral" but instead "context-related" : We would like
the draft of our project to be understood such that the
relevant concrete interaction processes in the groups of
learners (including their socialization background as a
basis) will be validated within a learning process that
has been only provisionally structured. We have already
recognized this "openness" in the draft of the Reader,
in that we have added an "Appendix" to the 12 chapters.
Here the learner will find among other things texts
from "party platforms", from the Basic Constitution
(Grundgesetz), texts on "election law", "election pro-
cedures" and "election systems", plus characteristics of
"interest groups" which play a role in Germany and finally
a detailed glossary on the subject as a whole. The broad
application of this appendix, which consciously omits
any formulation of working instructions, provides material

34

that can be studied in conjunction with the project. They
were not planned as working tools, but should merely pro-
vide our school experiments with "play-material", that
as a supplement to the media offered can also be used as
a stimulus to innovative working in the sense of an "open
curriculum" with materials "strictly" planned into learning
sequences.

Translated by J.L. Bates
            Tübingen, 1975

35