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Challenging the Current Curricula: A Look into Individualizing Teaching

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Challenging the Current Curricula: A Look Into Individualizing Teaching

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Definition Of Mandated Curriculum

- Researchers Kauffman, Johnson, Kardos, Liu, & Peske (2002) state that a “complete curriculum specifies content, skills, or topics for teachers to cover; suggests a timeline; and incorporates a particular approach or offers institutional materials”
- Curriculum can either be the guide that publishers and those of higher authority give the teachers to teach their students, or can be developed by a teacher who designs a plan of how to teach specific subject matter to his or her students
- In this paper I use the term “curriculum” to refer to the method and the content students are taught under school guidance

Research Question

What affect does mandated curricula have on teachers?

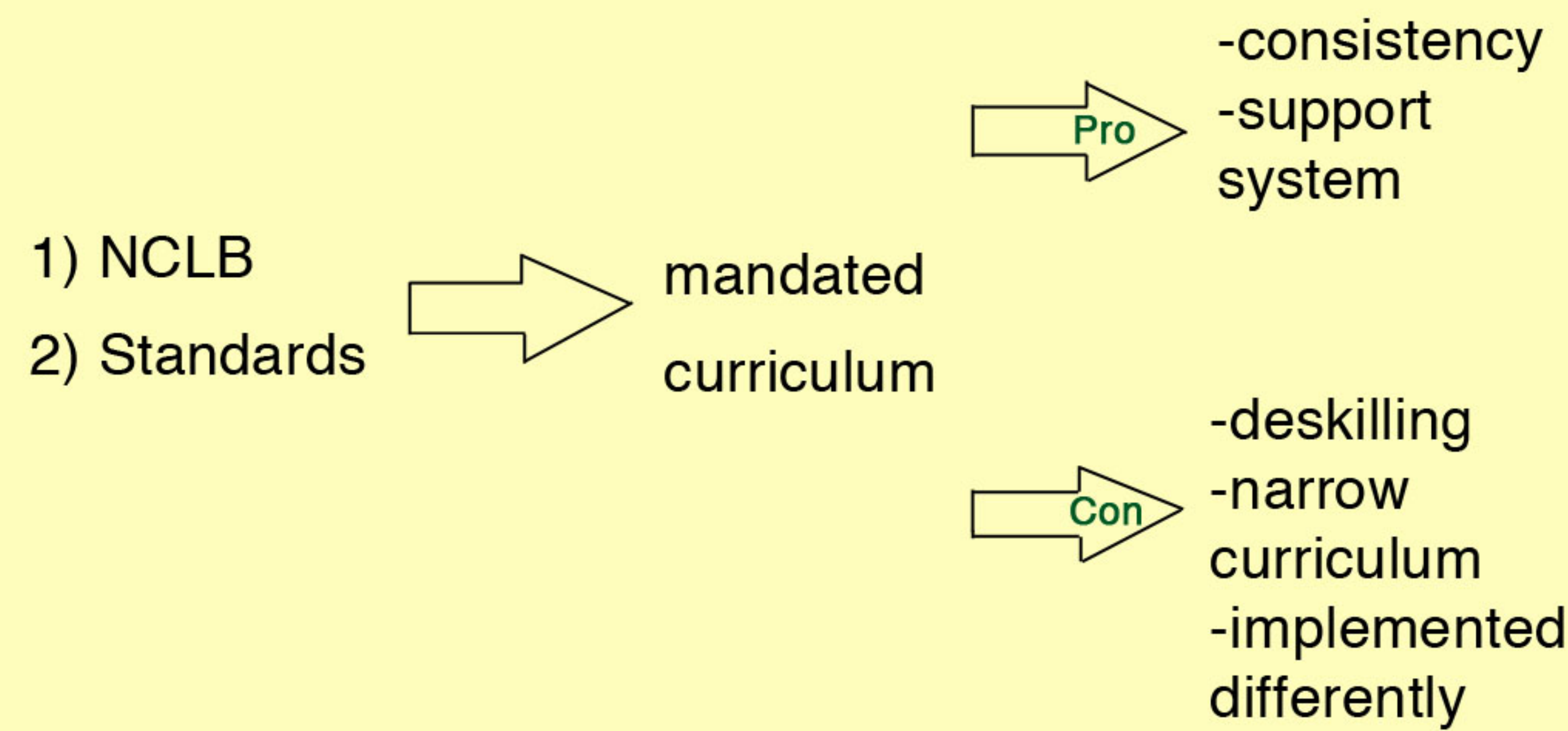
Background

Historically:

- Teachers had autonomy in the classroom (Ingersoll 2003)
- Though teachers had to follow certain education policies, traditionally the method of forming a curriculum was an interactive process

Now:

- Since the passing of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2002, many new demands have emerged
- To ensure teachers are meeting every standard, many schools are now enforcing mandated curricula whether it be through the state, district, or individual school



Methodology

- The research I found to support my topic was primarily from online search engines
- I started with Google Scholar as well as through the Ames Library catalog
- I used a variety of key terms in my search to find relevant articles, specifically literature review of ten peer reviewed articles from the last decade

WHO CONTROLS TEACHERS' WORK?

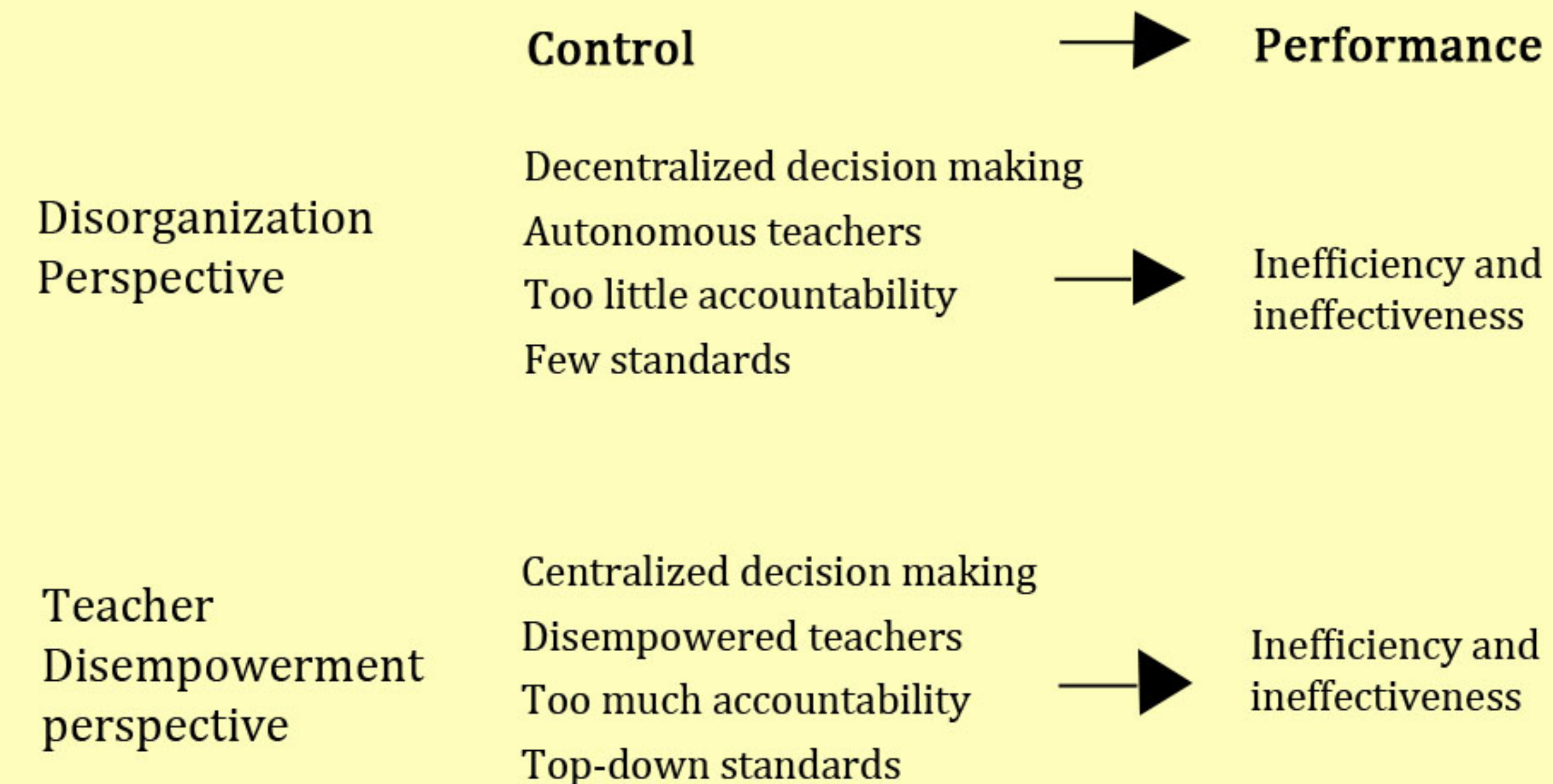


Figure 1: Two perspectives on control and performance in schools¹

Findings

Positive:

- *Consistency*
- *Support system*

One in five new teachers in the U.S. leave within their first three years of teaching (Olson, 2002, as cited in Kauffman, Johnson, Kardos, Liu, & Peske, 2002, p. 292)

Negative:

- *Deskilling*

Researcher Crawford (2004) describes this as teachers losing “the desire, inclination, and in some case, the aptitude to exercise the professional rights and responsibilities that have historically been associated with educational work” (p.206)

- *Limited curriculum*

- *Implemented differently*

Many teachers stated that they supplemented and modified their district’s mandated materials (Goldstein, 2008, p. 462). Teachers have also been known to “cherry-pick” the curriculum- “plucking out the activities and materials they liked and disregarding the rest” (Goldstein, 2008, p. 463)

Conclusion

- Teachers can be more effective teachers if given more discretion in the curriculum design and delivery
- This will require changes in teacher education programs and possibly even in acceptance criteria into those programs
- Short term, teacher collaboration and continuing education will help close the gap

1. Ingersoll. 2003. *Two perspectives on control and performance in schools*. Retrieved April 8, 2012, from <http://books.google.com/books?id=CO5C7krv9VUC&pg=PA42&lpg=PA42&dq=who+controls+teachers'+work+richard+ingersoll+disorganization+perspective+vs+teacher+disempowerment&source=bl&ots=N2ASqWiHkj&sig=-eYoOt7G6u9RdRAJf2ubUg0plAU&hl=en&sa=X&ei=fjCCT4i3lIq09QTC0uHEBw&ved=0CCEQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false>