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The process of redesigning the geometry curriculum: The case of the mathematical association in England in the early twentieth century.

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Summary: This paper examines a key period of change in geometry teaching in England. Our focus is the character and nature of the recommendations of the 1902 geometry report of the UK Mathematical Association. We analyse historical documents of the Mathematical Association using a theoretical framework informed by work in the sociology of education. Our analysis shows that the character and recommendations of the Mathematical Association report were influenced by various factors including: that Mathematical Association members at the time still respected the traditional Euclidean approach to geometry as a basis for school geometry; that the academic and “power” resources available to the Mathematical Association at the time were not sufficient to enable a complete change from the traditional approach; that a lack of consensus between the various members of the Mathematical Association prevented a more radical proposal; and that the general climate in schools at that time was not prepared for far-reaching changes to the teaching of geometry. These findings accord with other research on educational reform which indicates that curriculum change processes are invariably complex and often subject to much politicking.

Classification: A30 D30 G10

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