CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP: A CREATIVE APPROACH TO THEORY AND PRACTICE
Course Name: Curriculum Leadership: A Creative Approach to Theory and Practice

Course Authors:
Sandy Hirtz 
Patricio Muñoz

Commonwealth of Learning
Edition 1

Commonwealth of Learning©2013
Any part of this document may be reproduced without permission but with attribution to the Commonwealth of Learning using the CC-BY-SA (share alike with attribution).

http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This course forms part of the Master of Education in Educational Leadership developed through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth. Many thanks to Sandy Hirtz and Patricio Muñoz who worked on this programme.
# Table of Contents

COURSE OVERVIEW ........................................................................................................... 1
   Introduction .................................................................................................................... 1
   Course Goals .................................................................................................................. 1
   Course Structure .......................................................................................................... 1
   Course Assessment ....................................................................................................... 2
   Assessment Projects ..................................................................................................... 2
   Course Schedule .......................................................................................................... 3
   Required Readings ........................................................................................................ 3

STUDENT SUPPORT .......................................................................................................... 3
   Academic Support ........................................................................................................ 3
   How to Submit Assignments ........................................................................................ 3
   Technical Support ........................................................................................................ 3

UNIT ONE – EQUITY FOR ALL: SCHOOL REFORM AND THE CURRICULUM. .................... 3
   Unit Introduction .......................................................................................................... 3
   Unit Objectives ............................................................................................................. 13
   Unit Readings ............................................................................................................... 13
   Topic 1.1 – The Everyday World: School Reform and the Curriculum. ......................... 14
   Topic 1.2 – Forging a New Path: The No Child Left Behind Era. .................................. 17
   Topic 1.3 – An Emerging Language: School Reform and Leadership. ......................... 24

UNIT TWO – DETERMINING THE GREATER GOOD: EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP AND THE CURRICULUM... 34
   Unit Introduction .......................................................................................................... 34
   Unit Objectives ............................................................................................................. 39
   Unit Readings ............................................................................................................... 39
   Topic 2.1 – Tables and Chairs: Values and the Curriculum............................................. 40
   Topic 2.2 – Showing the Way: Leadership and Values. .................................................. 44
   Topic 2.3 – A Cause for Revolt: Nationalism and the Curriculum. ............................... 48

UNIT THREE – CURRICULUM IN CONTEXT: THEORY AND PRACTICE. .......................... 67
   Unit Introduction .......................................................................................................... 67
   Unit Objectives ............................................................................................................. 72
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit Readings</td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic 3.1</td>
<td>A Complicated Conversation: Examining Curriculum Theory and Practice</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic 3.2</td>
<td>Major Assignment: Reflective Essay.</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COURSE SUMMARY</td>
<td>ENDING WITH LEADERSHIP.</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COURSE OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum Leadership: A Creative Approach to Theory and Practice examines the diverse and often contentious field of curriculum studies. This course places curriculum theory and practice within the broader sociopolitical context, drawing upon real case studies from across the world. This course also examines the work of educators and curriculum theorists, both past and present, who have contributed and/or continue to contribute to knowledge within the field.

This course takes a creative approach to curriculum studies. Learners are encouraged to adopt a creative viewpoint, examining key issues and past reform efforts through new and alternative vantage points. On completion of this course, educators and learners will be equipped with the fundamental skills and knowledge to contribute towards curriculum theory and practice within their professional environment.

COURSE GOALS

Upon completion of this course current and future educational leaders will be able to:

1. Understand the diverse nature of curriculum theory, including the relationship between the curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

2. Identify key concepts and theorists – both historical and present – and understand their role and significance in furthering curriculum practice.

3. Understand the varying nature of curricula across the world and critically evaluate both past and present initiatives as demonstrated in case studies.

4. Critically reflect on key and/or contentious issues within the curriculum field, including subject matter selection, curriculum delivery, and leadership roles.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course is divided into three units:

- Unit One – Equity for All: School Reform and the Curriculum.
  - Topic 1.1 – The Everyday World: School Reform and the Curriculum.
  - Topic 1.2 – Forging a New Path: The No Child Left Behind Era.
  - Topic 1.3 – An Emerging Language: School Reform and Leadership.
• Unit Two – Determining the Greater Good: Education, Leadership and the Curriculum.
  o Topic 2.1 – Tables and Chairs: Values and the Curriculum.
  o Topic 2.2 – Showing the Way: Leadership and Values.
  o Topic 2.3 – A Cause for Revolt: Nationalism and the Curriculum.

• Unit Three – Curriculum in Context: Theory and Practice.
  o Topic 3.1 – A Complicated Conversation: Examining Curriculum Theory and Practice.
  o Topic 3.2 – Major Assignment – Reflective Essay.

**Course Assessment**

The weighting given to each of the course assignments is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action Spaces (exercises)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio (reflective)</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Exercise</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assignments and Project**

This course consists of a series of reflective activities and assignments, which serve to encourage continuous learning and test your understanding of key concepts. The major assignment in this course is found at the conclusion of this course (Unit Three, Topic 3.2), where you will be asked to complete one (1) substantial exercise.

**Portfolio Requirements**

To capture the output from the reflective questions and activities, you are asked to keep a personal portfolio. At the end of the course the personal portfolio will be submitted to your instructor for feedback and grading.

**Assessment Projects**

Assessment takes the form of responding to activities, as well as written assignments as determined from time to time by the institution. In cases where coursework assignments,
fieldwork projects, and examinations are used in combination, a percentage rating for each component will be communicated to you at that appropriate time.

COURSE SCHEDULE
A course schedule with due dates and additional readings will be supplied to you by your institution.

REQUIRED READINGS
This course does not include any required texts. All readings detailed in the ‘Unit Readings’ sections of this course are readily available online.

STUDENT SUPPORT

ACADEMIC SUPPORT
<Insert the following information if relevant>

• How to contract a tutor/facilitator (Phone number, email, office hours, etc.).
• Background information about the tutor/facilitator if he/she does not change regularly. Alternatively provide a separate letter with the package describing your tutor/facilitator’s background.
• Description of any resources that they may need to procure to complete the course (e.g. lab kits, etc.).
• How to access the library (either in person, by email or online).

HOW TO SUBMIT ASSIGNMENTS
<If the course requires that assignments be regularly graded, then insert a description of how and where to submit assignments. Also explain how the learners will receive feedback.>

TECHNICAL SUPPORT
<If the students must access content online or use email to submit assignments, then a technical support section is required. You need to include how to complete basic tasks and a phone number that they can call if they are having difficulty getting online.>

UNIT ONE – EQUITY FOR ALL: SCHOOL REFORM AND THE CURRICULUM.

UNIT INTRODUCTION
“There was a child went forth every day,
And the first object he look’d upon, that object he became,
And that object became part of him for the day or a certain
part of the day, or for many years or stretching cycles of
years”.

Walt Whitman, ‘There was a Child went Forth’ (as cited in
Donaghy, 2005, p. 78).

Let us use a common point of departure: the sky. Imagine a child – be they an acquaintance
or student – approaches you and, with an index finger raised to the sky, asks, “What is that
big blue thing above me? It follows me wherever I go!” Somewhat amazed, you think to
yourself, ‘Has no one ever explained to this child what the sky is?’ Your incredulity quickly
turns to anxiety; you ask yourself: ‘Do I even know what the sky is? When was the last time
I gave anything more than a cursory glance at the sky, truly recognised its presence?
Further, what exactly is the sky? What is space? And, how on earth do I explain such an
abstract concept to this young and curious child?’

You glance at the child. Her eyes are fixed skyward. She is encountering the sky for the first
time, acknowledging its existence, welcoming it somewhat curiously into her presence of
knowledge. You can see the sky reflected in her eyes; for a moment, as Whitman poetically
states, the child has become the object she looks upon.

“It’s called the sky,” you bravely reply. “Don’t worry too much about it. It won’t fall down”.

Don’t be disappointed with yourself. No one will fault your answer. Sometimes, the things
we take for granted, those we deem commonplace and simple, are the hardest to
adequately explain.

But, had you more time and perhaps been better equipped with age-appropriate resources,
you might have said, “The sky is what you see above you when you are outdoors. There is a
moon in the sky at night. The sun shines in the sky in the day time” (Halsey, 1987, p. 205).
Or you might have said, “(The sky is) the space high above the earth, appearing as a great
arch or dome covering the world; the region of the clouds or the upper air; the heavens; a
blue sky, a cloudy sky” (Avis, Gregg, & Scargill, 1985, p. 587). No doubt such a well-crafted
response would have elicited further questions: the moon? The sun? An arch or dome
(figurative or literal)? The heavens? Space? Planets? Our place (alone or otherwise) in this
universe?

While such responses might be sufficient in an informal context, they would prove largely
ineffectual within an educational environment. The learning process is not static; it extends
far beyond a simple question-answer format; it involves a complex and ongoing interaction between a teacher and a student, embodying the purposeful delivery of information, the recognition of a student’s abilities, and the subsequent pursuance of knowledge by a self-motivated student. As the noted educator and curriculum theorist William F. Pinar (2003) writes:

“As curriculum theorists have long appreciated, the exchange and acquisition of information is not education. Being informed is not equivalent to erudition. Information must (be) tempered with intellectual judgement, critical thinking, ethics and self-reflexivity. The complicated conversation that is the curriculum requires interdisciplinary intellectuality, erudition and self-reflexivity. This is not a recipe for high test scores, but a common faith in the possibility of self-realization and democratization, twin projects of social and subjective reconstruction”.

(emphasis added. p. 14)

As Pinar states, the curriculum may be seen as a ‘complicated conversation’. We can examine this idea in further detail by returning to our opening scenario; however, on this occasion we shall adopt the viewpoint of educators. We begin by stating an opening assumption: students of a given age should be taught about their surrounding environment. This assumption is largely uncontestable: we do not live isolated lives; we are constantly interacting with people within our society and with the broader natural environment.

Let us pose a subsequent step in this conversation: this educational aim will be interdisciplinary. For instance, depending on the student’s age, a science teacher might discuss the solar system and the position of the Earth; a geography teacher might discuss the Earth’s atmosphere or the varying nature of clouds; a maths teacher might encourage capable students to explore the differing effects of gravity on one’s weight in varying planets.

As we can see from these two initial steps, our exploration of a basic concept, such as the sky, has quickly moved away from a simple question-answer format into an intricate learning process, guided by assumptions and objectives.

Our next steps in this exercise involve instruction and evaluation. In this instance, as educators we decide to take a learner-centered approach, fine-tuning our classroom exercises to the particular capabilities and interests of our students. As part of art instruction, primary school students can be seen in the school yard, lying on their backs, drawing clouds. High school students have been tasked with the responsibility of organising a community wide science fair.
Evaluation takes on varying forms, as appropriate to age and broader governing requirements. This might include: formal examinations, presentations and group projects. Finally, by evaluating the subsequent academic results (both individually and across the school), and situating these findings in the context of the broader community, state or country school populace, we can reassess the effectiveness of our objectives and pedagogical styles.

As exemplified, the educational process is indeed a ‘complicated conversation’. Educators are continually required to inquire into the fundamental principles of education. In turn, these principles govern the field of curriculum making – educators must repeatedly ask “what do we want to do, and why?” and “How can we do it?” (Westbury, as cited in Connelly, 2008, p. 1).

However, while a ‘conversation’ implies a level of reciprocity, it may not necessarily connote an equal sharing of power or authority. Thus, we may rightly ask: who initiates the ‘complicated conversations’ in which educators’ are purportedly involved? Who raises the initial question, asserts the first assumption, or suggests the primary objectives? Importantly, who concludes the conversation, and acts upon the findings of such an engagement? Is it the student (like the child in our opening paragraph)? Is it the school principal, senior administrator, school teacher or parent? Or is it an official charged with the responsibility of designing, evaluating or implementing education public policy?

On this issue, Levin (as cited in Connelly, 2008) states:

*Policies govern just about every aspect of education – what schooling is provided, how, to whom, in what form, by whom, with what resources, and so on. The application of these terms to curriculum is evident. Curriculum concerns what is taught – a fundamental aspect of schooling and thus of public policy...*

*The role of politics in policy is troubling and misunderstood by many educators, who feel that education is a matter of expertise and should be beyond politics. The apolitical or even the antipolitical view of many educators is not helpful because it takes attention away from the reality that politics is the primary process through which public policy decisions are made...*

*Politics is about power. Since not all can have what they want, the question is who does get what they want and who does not...In every setting. From classroom to country, political influence is usually highly unequal, and those who have the least status tend also to have the least influence on political decision making.*

(p. 8)
Let us turn to our opening scenario a final time. On this occasion, we will adopt a multi-dimensional perspective: that of policy maker, educator and citizen. We will also place this fictional scenario within a real historical period. Now, imagine yourself on a park bench in Anywhere, U.S.A. You are enjoying a brief vacation from your role as school principal at Noworries High School. A child – whom you recognise as a school student at Noworries Primary School – approaches you and asks, “What is that big blue thing above me?”

At that moment, you pick up the morning edition of *The New York Times*. The date is October 5, 1957. The front page reads: “Soviet fires Earth satellite into space; It is circling the globe at 18,000 M.P.H.; Sphere tracked in 4 crossings over U.S.” (Jorden, 1957, p.1). You glance at the sky; and although you cannot see any sign of the Soviet Sputnik satellite, you feel as if something has encroached on your life, somehow altered your perception. Turning to the child, you realise that generic definitions no longer suffice; the sky is no longer just a place for the sun and the moon, it is a contested space. As a school principal, you understand that the fundamental questions you ask - what do we want to do, and why? How can we do it? – will now be influenced by emerging, sociopolitical influences largely beyond your control.

The launch of the Soviet satellite Sputnik on October 5, 1957, had a pivotal impact on society and schooling within the United States. As Steeves, Bernhardt, Burns, and Lombard (2009) note:

> Initial reactions to Sputnik unearthed strong feelings of fear, astonishment, and insecurity. In an effort to confront the psychological panic taking hold, President Eisenhower and Congress swiftly put together a strategic response to appease public demand. In the years after Sputnik, education policy can be identified by two distinct elements. First, the federal government took an unprecedented role in the development of national education priorities. This involvement was supported by substantial increases in funding and the unveiling of a legislative framework emphasising technical rationality, federal oversight, competitiveness, and widespread school reform. Secondly, there was a growing fear the United States was losing its political and technological standing in the world. As a result, failures in education became closely associated with weaknesses in national security. If the United States was to defeat its communist rivals, the ills of American schools, teachers, and students must be cured.

(p. 73)

These growing sentiments of unease and dysfunction were best exemplified in an article titled, ‘Crisis in Education’, published by LIFE Magazine on March 24, 1958. The article denounced the “terrible shape” of American schools, and through a series of photographs,
juxtaposed American and Soviet schooling. The picture essay sought to examine the “battle for future brain power” and highlighted the perceived stark differences in education philosophies between the two ‘opposing’ countries:

Stephen (the U.S. student) hopes to go to college after he finishes at Austin High but knows future success does not depend entirely on this. Alexei (the Soviet student) is filled with a fierce determination to get to college and become a physicist. In Russia, which desperately needs trained manpower, few can rise above a humble level without a good education. The entire school system has been geared towards this. With a curriculum standardized across the country and with no elective subjects, the Soviet 10-year schools are like a mammoth obstacle course for the nation’s youth. The laggards are forced out by tough periodic examinations and shunted to less demanding trade schools and apprenticeships. Only a third – 1.4 million in 1957 – survive all 10 years and finish the course.

(Sochurek, H., & Wayman, S., 1958, p. 28)

The article depicts the Soviet schooling system as rigid, heavily focused on scientific and language study, academically advanced, and governed by a sense of civic duty, albeit to an “undemocratic” state. In contrast the United States schooling system is characterised as being more flexible, encouraging qualities of leadership, less academically intensive, and largely focused on extra-curricular activities, such as sports and theatrical events. In light of the prevailing Cold War sentiments, the article was intended to shake the United States population and relevant policy makers out of their perceived passivity. That is, what was needed from the United States was increased academic rigour, determination and commitment to a broader civic cause.

On September 2, 1958, the United States enacted the National Defense Education Act (NDEA). The NDEA provided an explicit link between education (its aims, objectives and outcomes) and national defense. Title 1, Section 101, of the NDEA (1958) states:

The Congress hereby finds and declares that the security of the Nation requires the fullest development of the mental resources and technical skills of its young men and women. The present emergency demands that additional and more adequate educational opportunities be made available. The defense of this Nation depends upon the mastery of modern techniques developed from complex scientific principles...

(The NDEA) will correct as rapidly as possible the existing imbalances in our educational programs which have led to an insufficient proportion of our population educated in science, mathematics, and modern foreign languages and trained in technology.
The Congress reaffirms the principle and declares that the States and local communities have and must retain control over and primary responsibility for public education. The national interest requires, however, that the Federal Government give assistance to education for programs which are important to our defense.

The response by the United States to Sputnik raises important questions about the purpose of education and the development of school curriculum. As Steeves et al (2009) pointedly state, Sputnik makes us ask: “What kind of student/citizen do we really want and why? Perhaps most important, who decides? What is the role of the school and the teacher?” (p. 83).

Reflection Space:


Take some time to read and reflect on the article (pp. 25-35). Pay close attention to the tone of the article and the juxtaposition of images. What do you believe was the author’s intention? Does it take a particular political viewpoint?

Turning to your personal portfolio, respond to the following questions:

1. In your opinion, what role do you think politics plays in the development of curriculum in your professional environment? Should governments have a larger role in deciding what teachers should teach? Write a brief explorative essay (800 words) detailing your beliefs and arguments.

2. Even the most basic concepts can be seen, upon investigation, to hold political significance. Take for instance the topic of water; a discussion on the topic of water might include such things as rivers and oceans, rainfall, or drinking water.

   However, if we place the topic in a broader context, we can see the political underpinnings. The United Nations (UN) reminds us that “783 million people, or 11 per cent of the global population, remain without access to an improved source of drinking water” (https://www.un.org/en/globalissues/water/). The UN also notes that on July 2010 the UN General Assembly “explicitly recognized the human right to water and sanitation and acknowledged that clean drinking
water and sanitation are essential to the realisation of all human rights” (Resolution 64/292).

Devise a preliminary lesson plan on the topic of water. Choose a class level that best reflects your current professional experience or interests. Be sure to capture the multifaceted nature of water, and how it encompasses social and political realities. Do not be afraid to be creative in your approach!

The approach taken by this course differs to those of preceding courses. The field of curriculum studies can be both complex and driven by disagreement. Most curriculum theorists would agree that the curriculum encompasses what one believes ought to be studied. However, from this very first principle, theorists then shoot in a dizzying amount of varying directions – some fruitful; others largely disappointing. The path forward for any eager novice-student can, at times, seem onerous. Some students (perhaps themselves practicing teachers) might object to the apparent gulf between theory and practice; other students might find solace in the people-centered (and indeed inspirational) narratives of educators such as John Dewey. The paths are many, and certainly any independent study in order to foster or strengthen your own beliefs is strongly encouraged (where relevant, we have provided links to supplementary academic material).

Our challenge is twofold: firstly, how to adequately cover a large territory within a limited space. Secondly, how to convey a largely nation-specific concept to a global audience without reducing the content to a bland and generic format. Our response, so to speak, is to ‘throw you right into the action’, providing you with real examples from across the globe in creative ways. The resulting longer dialogues (such as this introduction) reflect not only a deeper engagement, but the fact that curriculum is a ‘complicated conversation’; one we certainly hope you will enjoy sharing with us.

And what about leadership? As we have shown, curriculum is intrinsically linked to instruction and evaluation. In turn, these concepts cannot be separated from school effectiveness, and broader school reform. As such, effective leadership plays an integral role in successful curriculum design and implementation. As Duignan (2012) notes, authentic leaders help create innovating, deep, rich learning environments. He adds, “It is widely recognised in relevant literature that effective educational leaders such as principals and leadership teams, influence student achievement in positive ways… (Leaders) generate fields of influence, and it is through these that they create the conditions for learning that positively influence teaching, learning and student outcomes” (p. 165).

In his text, The Principal as Curriculum Leader, Allan A. Glatthorn (citing Hord and Hall) also adds:
Hord and Hall (1983) concluded that strong leadership on the part of the principal played a key role in determining the extent of curriculum leadership. They also discovered that principals who used an active initiating style were most effective in ensuring effective implementation. The following attitudes and behaviors characterize this style: (a) have clear long-range policies and goals, (b) have strong expectations for students as well as convey and monitor those expectations, (c) seek changes in district programs and policies, and (d) solicit input from staff but act decisively.

(Glatthorn, 2000, p. 25)

This course places curriculum studies in the context of theory and current practices. Our approach is holistic, broad and encompassing. It is our belief that without a solid understanding of the present ‘professional field’, leadership can often be misguided and inadvertently negate the importance and diversity of curriculum practice.

Reading Space:

One cannot with justification single-out the launch of the Soviet satellite Sputnik as the sole impetus for major mid-twentieth century school reform in the United States. Mention must also be made to the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision in Oliver L. Brown et al. v. the Board of Education of Topeka (KS) et al.

The decision, commonly referred to as Brown v. Board of Education (1954), ruled that the racial segregation of children in public schools violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. In the decision, Mr. Chief Justice Warren (as cited in Gouwens, 2009) stated:

The plaintiffs contend that segregated public schools are not “equal” and cannot be made “equal”, and that hence they are deprived of the equal protection of the laws...

Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. Compulsory school attendance and the great expectations for education both demonstrate our recognition of the importance of education to our democratic society...It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today it is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to
provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.

We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other “tangible” factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does...

We conclude that, in the field of public education, the doctrine of “separate but equal” has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by the reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. This disposition makes unnecessary any discussion whether such segregation also violates the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

(p. 162)

Take some time to read the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Oliver L. Brown et al. v. the Board of Education of Topeka (KS) et al. A full transcript of the decision can be freely accessed at: http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=87&page=transcript. In your opinion, do you agree with the statement that education is the ‘very foundation of good citizenship’?

As one can imagine, this landmark case not only resulted in educational change, but also became part of school curricula. Take some time to view and read the following curriculum materials and respond to the specific questions:

   a. To what audience do you think this curriculum material is targeted?
   b. In your opinion, does the video effectively convey the ruling of Brown v. Board of Education (1954)? In what ways does modern media technology help convey differing voices, perspectives, mediums, and emotions?
   c. Create a brief PowerPoint presentation aimed at a younger audience detailing the court ruling and the importance of education and diversity. Prior to developing the presentation, decide on two or
three key objectives (i.e. what do you want the students to learn?).


   a. What are your first impressions of the proposed curriculum? To whom is the curriculum directed? Can you clearly identify its ‘frame of reference’? Does it adequately encompass the relevant details of *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)*?

   b. The curriculum utilises a broad range of activities. These include: work sheets, group work, conversation time, and role-playing exercises in the form of a moot court. What importance do you place on providing a wide range of teaching exercises in your professional environment? What is a moot court? Do you think the introduction of role-playing exercises would help students better understand the landmark case, or do you feel it might trivialise and/or perpetuate its content and findings?

   c. The curriculum encourages self-reflection (see p. 29). Do you consider self-reflection to be an important component of the learning process?

**UNIT OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of this unit current and future educational leaders will be able to:

1. Understand the relationship between curriculum studies and broader sociopolitical policies.
2. Identify historical and recent developments within the curriculum and school reform field, as well as understand the complexities of broad based reform.
3. Discern the importance of leadership throughout the curriculum and school reform field.
4. Critically reflect on key and/or contentious issues within the curriculum field, including assessment and evaluation practices.

**UNIT READINGS**


Gallagher, C. W. (2006). Nebraska STARS: Achieving Results. *Phi Delta Kappan,* February, 433-437. (An online copy of this article can be retrieved from: [http://216.78.200.159/RandD/Phi%20Delta%20Kappan/Nebraska%20STARS.pdf](http://216.78.200.159/RandD/Phi%20Delta%20Kappan/Nebraska%20STARS.pdf)).


**TOPIC 1.1 – THE EVERYDAY WORLD: SCHOOL REFORM AND THE CURRICULUM.**

In an article published in *Education Week,* on May 19, 1999, the educator David F. Labaree criticised the ‘chronic failure of curriculum reform’ within the United States. Labaree noted that despite efforts to implement local and national reform, teaching and learning at a classroom level had remained unchanged. He states:
The curriculum continues to revolve around traditional academic subjects – which we cut off from practical everyday knowledge, teach in relative isolation from one another, differentiate by ability, sequence by age, ground in textbooks, and deliver in a teacher-centered classrooms.

(Labaree, 1999)

At face value, Labaree’s insight appears pointed, but far from revelatory. Teachers might argue that they have long asserted the need for ‘real world’ relevancy within the classroom, and as time permits, attempted to shift towards a learner-centered pedagogical style. Further, would we blame an educator for asserting that the notion of rearranging classrooms and discarding textbooks might best be left for the ‘theoretical classroom’, or perhaps for someone other, more senior, to sincerely consider?

However, Labaree does much more than simply offer well-worn insights. He deftly examines the varying nature of curriculum, and the impact ‘top-down’ school reform has upon classroom practices. Labaree (1999) notes four different forms of curriculum:

1. The rhetorical curriculum – which refers to “the ideas put forward by educational leaders, policymakers, and professors about what curriculum should be, as embodied in reports, speeches, and college texts”;

2. The formal curriculum – which refers to “the written curriculum policies put in place by school districts and embodied in curriculum guides and textbooks”;

3. The curriculum-in-use – which refers to “the content that teachers actually teach in individual classrooms”; and

4. The received curriculum – which refers to “the content that students actually learn in these classrooms”.

Labaree argues that curriculum reform largely impacts upon the ‘rhetorical curriculum’. Rarely, Labaree states, does meaningful reform significantly impact the ‘curriculum-in-use’. Think: a Minister’s commitment to ‘new educational practices’ – each baring a new slogan or coined word – will resonate with a public desperately seeking change, but have lesser impact on front-line teachers who are used to change and immune to the barrage of political commitments. Labaree (1999) states:

More often than not, teachers respond to reform rhetoric and local curriculum mandates by making only marginal changes in the way they teach subjects. They may come to talk about their practice using the new reform language, but only rarely do they make dramatic changes in their own curriculum practice. And even the rare cases when teachers bring their
teaching in line with curriculum reform (they) do not necessarily produce a substantial change in the received curriculum. What students learn is frequently quite different from what the reformers intended. For as curriculum-reform initiatives trickle down from the top to the bottom of the educational system, their power and coherence dissipate, with the result that student learning is likely to show few signs of the outcomes promoted by the original reform rhetoric.

Labaree provides nine reasons as to why curriculum reform has been so persistently unsuccessful within the United States. In this instance, we shall briefly focus on two:

1. **Conflicting Goals**: As we mentioned in our introduction, curriculum (and broader educational goals) are influenced by political ends. Levin (as cited in Connelly, 2008) states, “Everything in government occurs in the shadow of elections. Although stakeholder views do matter...government understanding of the views of voters in general matter much more” (p. 9). Coupling this agenda, is the influence of external political pressures and unexpected events on the delivery and (re)assessment of public policy.

To this end, Labaree states that different reforms will embody different sociopolitical intentions. Consequently, the swing from one reform to another – as often seen in the changing of governments – can have jarring consequences. Labaree (1990) notes:

> Different curriculum reforms embody different goals. Some promote democratic equality, by seeking to provide all children with the skills and knowledge they will need to function as competent citizens. Others promote social efficiency, by seeking to provide different groups of children with the specific skills they need in order to be productive in the different kinds of jobs required in a complex economy. Still others promote social mobility, by providing individual students with educational advantages in the competition for the best social positions. One result is that reform efforts over time produce a pendulum swing between alternative conceptions of what children need to learn, leading to a sense that reform is both chronic...and cyclical. Another result is the compromise structure of the curriculum itself, which embodies contradictory purposes and therefore is unable to accomplish any one of these purposes with any degree of effectiveness.

2. **Credentialing Over Learning**: Labaree notes a trend in the move from education for learning, towards education as a process of accruing grades to better position oneself in society. Labaree (1999) adds,
When this goal begins to play an increasingly dominant role in shaping education...curriculum reforms come to focus more on sorting and selecting students and less on enhancing learning, more on form than substance. This turns curriculum into a set of labels for differentiating students rather than a body of knowledge that all children should be expected to master, and it erects a significant barrier to any curriculum reforms that take learning seriously.

Labaree’s assessment and outlook is critical and sobering. At times, the sheer number of competing voices within the educational environment – policymakers, educators, students, and parents – can make any attempts at meaningful cohesive reform seem impossible. However, as we will later see, this is not always the case. With the right leadership – spurring a common vision and holding an enduring sense of commitment – education reform can live up to exemplary ideals, forging from students, globally conscious and engaged citizens.

Reflection Space:

Take a moment to reflect upon a time in your professional career when you, or someone you know, implemented a process of change which did not result as planned. What do you believe was the central reason for the failure? What lessons would you impart to others seeking to make similar changes within their professional environment? How would you respond to someone who stated that effective change requires one to sacrifice their ideals?

**TOPIC 1.2 – FORGING A NEW PATH: THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ERA.**

On the morning of January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush found himself in Hamilton, Ohio – an industrious city of some 60,000 residents. It was to be an important and hopeful occasion. The country was still reeling from the tragic events of the year prior. The presidential elections were nearing and Ohio was noted as a battleground state.

On the agenda was school reform. However, this was not simply an opportunity to announce small, localised projects. President Bush planned to enact an audacious bill (with an equally as audacious name), which would bring significant reform across the nation and impact the daily lives of school administrators, educators, students and parents alike.

President Bush’s remarks offer an interesting perspective into this historical period. As a historical document, the transcript of President Bush’s speech is noteworthy; on one level, one can appreciate the enormous task posed by the new law, and place such admirable
aims in the context of recent tragedy; on another level, it can be seen as a deft performance piece, equipped with intertwining political and educational rhetoric and transcribed moments of applause.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) became law in 2002. In his remarks, which we quote from at length, President Bush (2002) stated:

> We’ve got a lot of challenges here in America. There’s no greater challenge than to make sure that every child, not just a few children – (applause) – every single child, regardless of where they live, how they’re raised, the income level of their family, every child receive a first-class education in America. (Applause).

> And as you know, we’ve got another challenge, and that’s to protect America from evil ones. And I want to assure the seniors and junior and sophomores here at Hamilton High School that the effort that this great country is engaged in, the effort to defend freedom and defend our people, the effort to rout out terror wherever it exists, is noble and just and right, and your country will prevail in this effort. (Applause)...

> And today begins a new era, a new time in public education, in our country. As of this hour, America’s schools will be on a new path of reform, and a new path of results...

> First principle is accountability. Every school has a job to do...So in return for federal dollars, we are asking states to design accountability systems...

> And so, therefore, this bill’s second principle is, is that we trust parents to make the right decisions for their children. Any school that doesn’t perform, any school that cannot catch up and do its job, a parent will have these options – a better public school, a tutor, or a charter school. We do not want children trapped in schools that will not change and will not teach. (Applause)...

> The third principle of this bill is that we have got to trust the local folks on how to achieve standards...the people who care most about the children of Hamilton are the citizens of Hamilton. The people who care most about the children in this school are the teachers and parents and school board members. (Applause)...

> And a fourth principle is that we’re going to spend more money, more resources, but they’ll be directed at methods that work. Not feel-good methods, not sound-good methods, but methods that actually work...
And now it’s up to you, the local citizens of our great land, the compassionate, decent citizens of America, to stand up and demand high standards, and to demand that no child – not one single child in America – is left behind.

Reflection Space:

Take a moment to reflect on President Bush’s address. A full copy of the speech can be retrieved at: http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020108-1.html.

How would you describe the tone of Bush’s remarks? In your opinion, should educational and political rhetoric be separated?

Finally, reflect on the concluding paragraph of the address. In your opinion, what role should educators, students and the public play in demanding and sustaining educational reform?

The NCLB Act passed the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate with large majorities; 384-45 and 91-8 respectively. The fundamental tenets of the bill were commendable: who could argue with the implementation of major reform to better school outcomes and improve the academic achievement of the disadvantaged? As Debray, McDermott and Wohlstetter (2005) state, “(President George W. Bush believed) that standards testing, and accountability were critical elements to improving public schools. Bush believed that public reporting of test scores – disaggregated by race, socioeconomic status, English language learner status, and disability status – was the key to ending what he called the ‘soft bigotry of low expectations’” (p. 6).

Central to NCLB was the concept of proficiency. Section 1111 of the act states:

Each State shall establish a timeline for adequate yearly progress. The timeline shall ensure that not later than 12 years after the end of the 2001-2002 school year, all students in each group described in subparagraph (C)(v) {i.e. all public elementary school and secondary school students, including economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency} will meet or exceed the State’s proficient level of academic achievement on the State assessments under paragraph (3).

(bold text added. Section 1111(2)(f))
The path towards proficiency was governed by assessments and self-appointed ‘Adequate Yearly Progress’ (AYP) checkpoints. The NCLB Act required that 95% of students in grade 3 through to 8 be assessed through standardised tests in math, reading and science. States were given the flexibility to devise a plan demonstrating consistent AYP, with the aim of reaching proficiency by 2014.

This new focus on accountability came with strict and enforceable consequences. Public schools receiving Title 1 funding – financial assistance given to schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families – who did not meet their AYP were liable to suffer severe consequences. As David Hursh (2007) explains:

*If schools do not make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years, they must be identified as schools ‘in need of improvement’. Students in those schools must be given the option of transferring to another public school...Additional requirements are imposed for each successive year that a school fails to meet adequate yearly progress goals. These include providing students with: ‘supplemental services in the community such as tutoring, after school programs, remedial classes or summer school’, replacing the school staff, implementing a new curriculum, ‘decreasing management authority, appointing an outside expert to advise the school, extending the school day or year, or reorganizing the school internally’. Schools failing for five consecutive years must either reopen as a charter school, replace all or most of the school staff who are relevant to the failure to make adequate yearly progress, or turn over the operations either to the state or to ‘a private company with a demonstrated record of effectiveness’”*  
(p. 297)

The NCLB Act represented a major, whole of system, educational reform effort. Consequently, it ignited a slew of commentary from varying stakeholders, either in favour of the changes or in stark opposition to the government’s policy. The Act has generated a great deal of academic discussion and literature – certainly there are enough sociopolitical issues raised by NCLB to sustain a (very) prolonged (and lively) discussion.

In this instance, we will focus on the impact NCLB has had on curriculum practice within the United States. Specifically, we will look at the consequences brought on by increased accountability (including mandates and reporting) and the implementation of standards testing (or ‘high-stakes’ testing as it is often termed). One of the central issue raised by critics of NCLB, is that the necessity to meet their AYP, coupled by the fear of repercussions, has led to a narrowing of the curriculum-in-use – with greater emphasis being placed on the assessed subjects: math, reading and science. A 2007 report conducted by the Center on Education Policy (CEP), in part sought to examine this issue. The report encompassed the responses of 349 school districts across the United States and delivered four key findings:
1. **Increased time for tested subjects since 2002.** About 62% of districts reported that they have increased time for English language arts (ELA) and/or math in elementary schools since school year 2001-02 (the year NCLB was enacted), and more than 20% reported increasing time for these subjects in middle school since then. Among districts that reported increasing time for ELA and math, the average increase in minutes per week since 2001-02 was substantial, amounting to a 47% increase in ELA, a 37% increase in math, and a 43% increase across the two subjects combined.

2. **Reduced time for other subjects.** To accommodate this increased time in ELA and math, 44% of districts reported cutting time from one or more other subjects or activities (social studies, science, art and music, physical education, lunch and/or recess) at the elementary level. Again, the decreases reported by these districts were relatively large, adding up to a total of 145 minutes per week across all of these subjects, or average, or nearly 30 minutes per day. These decreases represent an average reduction of 32% in the total instructional time devoted to these subjects since 2001-02.

3. **Increases and decreases more prevalent in districts with schools identified for improvement.** Greater proportions of districts with at least one school identified for NCLB improvement than of districts without schools in improvement reported that they have increased time for ELA and/or math at the elementary and middle school levels since school year 2001-02. Districts with at least one school in improvement also reported in greater proportions than districts without schools in improvement that they have decreased time in social studies, science, and art and music.

4. **Greater emphasis on tested content and skills.** Since 2001-02, most districts have changed their ELA and math curricula to put greater emphasis on the content and skills covered on the state tests used for NCLB. In elementary level reading, 84% of districts reported that they have changed their curriculum ‘somewhat’ or ‘to a great extent’ to put greater emphasis on tested content; in middle school ELA, 79% reported making this change, and in high school ELA, 76%. Similarly, in math, 81% of districts reported that they have changed their curriculum at the elementary and middle school level to emphasize tested content and skills, and 78% reported having done so at the high school level.

(p. 1)
Certainly, the findings provide fodder for intense discussion. For instance, the effectiveness of standards testing is largely contested. Au (as cited in Hare and Portelli, 2013), in accord with the CEP report, states:

_The bulk of education research on the effects of systems of high-stakes testing on the classroom practices of teachers, as well as the classroom experiences of students, finds that these tests are essentially controlling what knowledge is taught, the form in which it is taught, and how it is taught… (This means three things) One, the content of instruction is being determined by relevancy to the tests themselves… Second, in teaching to the tests, teachers are also catering their instruction to the form and presentation of knowledge included on the high-stakes tests… Third, in response to high-stakes testing, teachers are shifting their pedagogy relative to changes in both curricular content and form of knowledge being taught. What this means is that teachers are increasingly moving towards lecture and more rote-based, teacher-centered pedagogies to meet test-based content and knowledge form demands._

(p. 289)

Other controversial aspects of NCLB are largely beyond the scope of this course. Certainly, there is room to debate the shifting nature of schooling: the corporatisation of education, the increased hand of government, and the responding pedagogic adjustments made by burdened educators. One could also examine the move within NCLB towards teaching based on ‘scientific principles’ (as opposed to what Bush called ‘feel-good’ and ‘sound-good methods’). As Hess and Petrilli (as cited in Borko, Liston, and Whitcomb 2012) state:

_The phrase ‘scientifically based research’ appears more than 100 times throughout the No Child Left Behind Act and is applied to policies addressing reading programs, teacher training, drug prevention and school safety, and a range of other topics. Scientifically based research has no title or program of its own, but it is woven into the fabric of virtually every program in the law. As a result, this emphasis has potentially far-reaching consequences for both daily classroom practice and academic research related to education. In addition, by making the federal government a more active partner in determining what specific instructional methods should be approved for classroom use, NCLB also sets a new precedent of federal involvement in curriculum and instruction._

And what of the Act itself? One could question the legitimacy of its idealistic aims – is proficiency for all realistic? Do such idealistic aims demonstrate a certain degree of political arrogance? Are the subsequent accountability pressures placed on educators fair? Is punishment (via state intervention or school closures) an effective spur for learning? And
what happens to the disadvantaged child who is surrounded by ‘failing’ schools, who is labelled as a student of a ‘failing’ school, who is given the freedom to go elsewhere, to gain her rightly deserved education, but has to travel many kilometres, away from her home, her community, her environment, to learn?

Reflection Space:

In their text, No Child Left Behind: The Illusion of Reform, Poetter, Wegwert, and Haerr lament the negative effects NCLB has had on curriculum practice. They state:

> We are in danger, as a teaching profession, of losing any remaining control we have over the curriculum. We are being socialized out of viewing teaching as a form of curriculum leadership and are being trained in technical approaches to teaching and learning that impoverish the classroom and children. Fighting NCLB has a lot to do with fighting for teachers as constituting a professional group with an identity that involves and engages, at the core, curriculum work and liberatory teaching...

> What is happening to teaching as a result of the law and the testing/standards regimes it reifies? How much longer can we go on this path until we don’t have a teaching force that remembers how to teach? How much longer before all we have left are teacher technicians (glorified computers or robots in human skin) who merely facilitate learning, for instance, through computers, through canned curriculum materials aligned with standards, and through rote, de-contextualized curricula?

(2006, p.2)

Take some time to reflect on the above extract. In your opinion, what are the benefits and/or disadvantages of standards testing? The authors make their argument passionately; do you feel that their sentiments are justified, or misplaced? Finally, does standards testing, in your opinion, hinder the flexibility and individuality of classroom instruction?

It is important to note that some U.S. districts and schools have not only voiced their dissatisfaction with NCLB, but also resisted the pressure of strict compliance. Once such example is the state of Nebraska which has implemented a successful, locally-driven assessment process referred to as STARS.

Turn to your readings:


While all the articles cover similar ground, they each serve to provide a thought-provoking rebuttal of ‘high-stakes’ testing and illustrate the possibilities of meaningful policy making, instruction, accountability and evaluation. Take some time to respond to the following questions:

a. What is STARS? What are some of the sociopolitical factors driving this unique form of assessment?

b. Choose one of the ten ‘progressive lessons’ offered by Gallagher, which you deem to be of most importance. Explain your choice and show how this lesson might be applied in your professional environment.

c. Gallagher (2007) states: “At their best, schools make democracy both the *means* of learning (i.e., what teachers and students do) and the *object* of learning (i.e., what teachers and students learn about)” (p. 341). In your opinion, what is the role of democracy in education? Explain what you believe to be the role of education.

d. What does Gallagher suggest characterises a “democratic policy maker”? In light of the competing influence of stakeholders and professional interest, do you believe Gallagher’s concept can ever be fulfilled?

**TOPIC 1.3 – AN EMERGING LANGUAGE: SCHOOL REFORM AND LEADERSHIP.**
On the topic of current trends in school reform and leadership, Patrick Duignan (2012) writes:

*There is an influential emerging language for the leadership of change in education and in schools that reflects a more enlightened, perhaps radical view of learning, pedagogy, teaching and leadership. The language of ‘reform’ with its emphasis on testing and accountability is being supplanted by one that focuses more on students and the quality of their learning, teachers as leaders of curriculum and pedagogy, and principals and leadership teams in schools as leaders of learning.*

(p. 23)

Coming more than a decade after Labaree’s assessment, and following the recent dilution of NCLB mandates (via federally approved waivers), Duignan’s sentiments provide a refreshing and optimistic viewpoint. While the intricacies of school reform are largely beyond the scope of this course, we will benefit by briefly examining modern scholarship on large scale reform (or whole system reform) and leadership, and how it pertains to curriculum studies.

One of the leading educators on school leadership and reform is Michael G. Fullan. In his text, *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (1991), Fullen describes the purpose of schools and the impetus behind reform. He states,

*There are at least two major purposes to schooling: to educate students in various academic or cognitive skills and knowledge, and to educate students in the development of individual and social skills and knowledge necessary to function occupationally and socio-politically in society...Superimposed in these two main purposes in democratic societies is the goal of equality of opportunity and achievement – in John Dewey’s (1916) phrase, ‘the opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group’ in which one is born.*

(1991, p. 14)

Fullen asserts that the fundamental purpose behind school reform is the desire to help schools achieve their goals and outcomes more effectively. Reform might come in the form of structural, program and/or practice-based (pedagogic) changes. Fullen notes that directionless change, or change for change-sake, is largely ineffective. He also notes that not all reform is positive — “new programs either make no difference, help improve the situation, or make it worse” (Fullan, 1991, p. 15). Importantly, Fullan mentions that school reform cannot act as a substitute for broader societal reform.
In later publications, Fullan advocates the concept of whole school reform (2001) and whole system reform (2010). In the former paper titled, ‘Whole school reform: Problems and Promises’, Fullan states: “Let me be very clear about this fundamental point. First, the primary goal of school reform is not to adopt or even internalize a valuable external model. The primary goal is to alter the capacity of the school to engage in improvement. Second, sustainable reform of this kind can only be achieved when working in whole systems. By whole systems I mean an entire school district, state, or country” (2001, p. 4). In the latter article titled, ‘The BIG ideas behind whole system reform’, Fullan writes, “Whole system reform means that every vital part of the system – school, community, district, and government – contributes individually and in concert to forward movement and success” (2010, p. 25).

Labaree’s insistence on the inadequacies of curriculum reform, despite all well intentioned efforts, should stir as with a desire to seek positive change. Fullan’s concept of whole system reform – a more holistic approach, incorporating the collaboration of government, educational and community members – should inspire us with a sense of hope and direction. In his 2010 article, Fullan provides seven essential practices (or BIG ideas) that one must undertake to ensure whole school reform. In this instance, we will focus on two:

1. **Resolute leadership** – Fullen asserts that successful schools are guided by resolute leaders who persist through challenges, and in turn, inspire others to be resolute. He adds:

   It’s so easy to go off message; but if you do, you lose whole-system-reform possibilities. This is hard, persistent work, but it is not overly complex. Resolute leadership is critical at first, when new ideas encounter serious difficulty, but it is also required to sustain and build on success...Successful leaders (also) combine resolute leadership with impressive empathy. Again, good leaders persist, but they try to identify and understand what hesitations or objections people might have... (Successful leaders) pay attention to building relationships – even with those who are not so enthusiastic.

   (2010, p. 25)

2. **Collective Capacity** – Fullan asserts that while this idea is not new, it is central to whole system reform. He writes: “The practice and research on collaborative school cultures and professional learning communities is very convincing. When teachers work together, led by an instructionally focused principal, they are much more successful than when they work alone” (2010, p. 26). Reflecting on the findings of a survey which looked at successful and stagnating or declining schools within Chicago, Fullan noted that the difference between success and failure was, “i) an instructionally focused
The benefits of collaboration and resolute leadership are clear and uncontestable. Adherence to these practices will allow (and empower) educators to confidently contemplate (or reassess) the fundamental principles of schooling, again turning (this time in unison) to the often repeated phrases: What do we want to do and why? And how do we do it?

Reflection Space:

In his text, *The Principal as Curriculum Leader*, Allan A. Glatthorn (2000) provides an example of a school’s curriculum educational goals. Take a moment to reflect on “Washington City’s Schools Vision of Curriculum”:

**Washington City’s Schools Vision of Curriculum**

*We, the educators of the Washington City School System, hold forth this vision of the curriculum of excellence we desire for all our students. We have a dream of a curriculum that is...*

1. **Meaningful**: The curriculum emphasizes the active construction of meaning so that all students find purpose in their studies.

2. **Technological**: The curriculum uses technology as one delivery system, examines the influence of technology on students’ lives, and gives students the skills they need to use the technology to accomplish their own purposes.

3. **Socially responsible**: The curriculum develops in students a sense of social responsibility so that they become aware of their obligations and duties as citizens in a democracy and are especially sensitive to the needs of the poor and the aged.

4. **Multicultural**: The curriculum reflects and is responsive to the cultural diversity of this nation and our community so that students develop a sense of pride in their own heritage and a respect for that of others.

5. **Reflective**: The curriculum fosters in students the skills and attitudes of reflection so that they are able to think critically, creatively and affirmatively.

6. **Holistic**: The curriculum gives appropriate emphasis to all the significant aspects of growth and all the types of human intelligence.
7. Global: The curriculum develops in students an awareness of global interdependence in all aspects of life, including the environment and the economy.

8. Open-ended: The curriculum is open-ended in two ways: it is open to revision and continued refinement, and it provides open access to all students so that students are not tracked into dead-end careers.

9. Outcomes based: The curriculum focuses on outcomes so that students develop the critical skills and acquire the knowledge they need for effective lifelong learning and full functioning as citizens in a changing society.

(p. 50)

Once you have read the curriculum document, respond to the following questions:

a. In Course Two, we emphasised the importance of creating and communicating a shared vision when implementing change. Deal, T E. and Peterson, K D. (1999) note:

Through a careful probe of past and present, they (school leaders) need to identify a clear sense of what the school can become, a picture of a positive future. Visionary leaders continually identify and communicate the hopes and dreams of the school, thus reinforcing and refining the school’s purpose and mission...

Developing a shared vision for the school can motivate students, staff and community alike. It is not simply for the leader; it is for the common good. By seeking the more profound hopes of all stakeholders, school leaders can weave independent ideas into a collective vision.

(p. 89)

In your opinion, has the Washington City School System effectively conveyed a sense of common purpose? Why have the authors chosen the opening words, “We, the educators”? Would the document have been more successful if it had been addressed directly by the school principal?

b. Should curricula be “open-ended”? In your opinion, what does this lack of finality say about the City’s view on the learning process?

c. How would you respond to someone who states: “Curriculum statements should explicitly outline objectives. Words such as
‘meaningful’ and ‘socially responsible’ are abstract terms, denoting equally vague ideals. Besides, schools should be reserved for the acquisition of knowledge, not the indoctrination of morals!”?

d. What importance do you place on developing reflective practices? Do you think creative endeavours, or capacities, have a place in a curriculum statement?


The Statement provides an interesting contrast to “Washington City's Schools Vision of Curriculum”. Immediately, you will notice marked differences in approach, detail and objectives. The ‘National Curriculum Statement for Papua New Guinea’ is an important educational document; a founding stone upon which the PNG Department of Education intends to further develop educational standards, national identity and cultural pride. In his introductory message, the Secretary for Education, Peter Baki notes:

*The purpose of the curriculum reform is to provide a relevant basic education for Papua New Guineans while at the same time providing specialist further education and training for those able to make use of it...*

*This statement written by Papua New Guineans for Papua New Guinea, is the first of its kind, and represents a major step forward for our country’s education system. It demonstrates that we own the curriculum that will truly foster Papua New Guinea’s cultures and our national identity.*

(2003, p. ii)

The Statement also demonstrates the complex challenges faced in designing a national curriculum. When approached with sensitivity and flexibility, these challenges prove to be greatly rewarding. For instance, in Section 5.2.2, ‘Bilingual Education’, the Statement reads:

*Papua New Guinea is one of the most culturally and ethnically diverse countries in the world with over 800 different spoken languages. Students learn best when they use their own language in ways that are meaningful, practical, and relevant to them. This means that students in Elementary will learn first in their own language, languages they already speak. This language may be one of the 800 plus vernacular languages or a lingua franca...*

*The community will decide, in consultation with the teachers, which
Take some time to read the ‘National Curriculum Statement for Papua New Guinea’. Once you have completed reading the Statement provide a brief report (800 words), detailing the key objectives within the text. In drafting your report, pretend that you are a consultant charged with the responsibility of evaluating and commenting on this momentous educational reform within PNG (be both critical and creative!).

**SUMMARY**

The field of curriculum studies is a complex and contentious field. On initial investigation, curriculum studies appears to be focused on what students should learn at school. However, a deeper investigation reveals that there are inextricable links between curriculum studies, school reform and broader sociopolitical concerns. For instance, while the educational aims raised in the No Child Left Behind Act are indeed noble, this should not spare them from critical attention; as we have seen, whole system reforms – whether admirable or not – affect a large and diverse population in varying ways, and require sound and informed leadership by all involved. Without effective leadership, the consequences wrought can be significant and long-lasting, impacting negatively upon both educators and students.

**REFERENCES**


UNIT TWO – DETERMINING THE GREATER GOOD: EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP AND THE CURRICULUM.

UNIT INTRODUCTION

Jacqueline liked to say that she grew up in a bubble. Although, she meant it quite literally. She still remembered the time, many years ago, when she sat with her father and the prize-winning Japanese architect, Mr. Ito, at the kitchen table looking over blueprints of what was to be their new family home.

“It’s a sphere Jacqueline”, said Mr. Ito, motioning the shape with his hand. “Did you know that Greek antiquity praised the sphere?” Jacqueline didn’t quite understand.

“Think of it as a bubble. Your own bubble,” he added. “People love bubbles. Even grown-ups. We love chasing them, watching them go up in the air, and popping them. Keep the complex simple and make the simple wondrous”.

It was an enchanting childhood. Her father worked for an international aid organisation. She went to school in eight different countries. One day, her father showed her a few paragraphs from a publication. “Read it Jacqueline. Listen to it. Remember it:

Article 28: (Right to education): All children have the right to a primary education, which should be free...For children to benefit from education, schools must be run in an orderly way – without the use of violence...Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education of which they are capable.

Article 29 (Goals of education): Children’s education should develop each child’s personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage children to respect others, human rights and their own and other cultures. It should also help them learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people...education should aim to develop respect for the values and culture of their parents.

(UNICEF, 2013)

Simple. Very simple. Wondrous even”.

It was no surprise that Jacqueline later become a high school teacher. Her peers praised her sense of youthful enthusiasm, her dedication to lifelong learning and her commitment to her students. They would often approach her and say, “I wish I had your energy, creativity and resilience!”
But, the truth was that Jacqueline was not happy. She found teaching incredibly difficult. Although she had great ideals and aspirations for her students, they did not seem to translate in her instruction, nor in the student’s results. Was she simply not suited to her occupation? Was she too idealistic? Perhaps, it was the “strict” curriculum, governed by inflexible objectives, standardised tests, and firm outcomes, which hindered her “free spirit”?

Fairgo High School was no easy place to teach. It was severely under resourced. Teachers were stretched to their limits. The children largely came from poor backgrounds; they often attended school having had no breakfast, and with no packed lunch. The students had to share textbooks; often one book among three kids; there was certainly no chance of students taking books home for fear of theft or loss.

Jacqueline tried hard to make her lessons engaging, placing the required learning in the context of the broader world. She was imaginative and critical in her approach. For instance, during history and geography classes, she drew on her own experiences both living and studying across the globe. The children wavered between unbridled enthusiasm and deep disinterest. None of them had ever been on a plane. Most had never travelled beyond downtown.

“We love your enthusiasm”, said the school principal. “However, we don’t like the results you are achieving.

“The problem is your insistence on making learning wondrous. Sometimes learning isn’t spectacular; often it is arduous; at times, it is mundane. The children do not come here to be charmed. They come to learn the basics: reading, arithmetic and writing.

“Unfortunately, our kids live in a bubble – one filled with the repressive air of poverty. We are not in the business of social reform; it is beyond our capabilities to pop that bubble. We make sure they learn what they need to know and then we let them go, let them float on, and we wish them well.

“Teach the principles. Show them the methods. One plus one equals two. Not, one Eiffel tower plus another Eiffel tower equals two Eiffel towers. Our children – and especially their parents – are not interested in the context. They just want to know that Johnny has passed. It does no one any good if a child knows where the Eiffel tower is, but can’t manage simple addition.

“I don’t mean to be harsh Jacqueline. But if we are to respect our children, we must understand their capabilities, their limitations, the obstacles they face. Some will rise, while others will certainly fail. But at least we will know that we have done what was required, what the district mandates us to do.
“Teach the principles. Teach the facts. Teach the curriculum. Ensure they pass the test. This is the education they deserve. And who knows, maybe one day you will bump into Johnny in Paris, in front of the Eiffel tower. At least you will know then that he can count the steps to the peak”.

Exercise Space:

Let us pursue the above fictive scenario a step further. Let us imagine that Jacqueline and the school principal – whom we will call David – were not able to agree upon how best to resolve their teaching differences. Though both educators hold a mutual respect for their respective capabilities and dedication, they remain staunch in upholding their individual ideals.

With no clear way forward, David suggests they consult an independent facilitator. This is where you step in. Cognizant of their differing roles, and subsequently their varying degrees of responsibility and authority, you suggest meeting at a neutral location: a nearby café. Your plan is to open a ‘safe and frank’ dialogue, allow each educator to elaborate on their viewpoints, encourage active listening by both parties, and, hopefully, arrive at an agreeable conclusion.

Facilitation is an important skill and is often a necessary (and effective) component of workplaces. This is especially so in situations where the governing purpose – in this instance, the role and delivery of education – is naturally subjective and influenced by learned ethics and values. Through dialogue, a facilitator attempts to bring things ‘back on track’.

On the nature of this skill, Axner (2013) states:

One of the most important sets of skills for leaders and members are facilitation skills. These are the “process” skills we use to guide and direct key parts of our organizing work with groups of people such as meetings, planning sessions, and training of our members and leaders...someone has to shape and guide the process of working together so that you meet your goals and accomplish what you’ve set out to do...This is the person we call the ‘facilitator’.

Axner (2013) notes three guiding principles for effective facilitation:

A facilitator is a guide to help people move through a process together, not the seat of wisdom and knowledge. That means a facilitator isn’t there to give opinions, but to draw out opinions and ideas of the group members.
Facilitation focuses on how people participate in the process of learning or planning, not just on what gets achieved.

A facilitator is neutral and never takes sides.

Of course, our example and exercise cannot be a true facilitation process. However, in this instance, we are both examining the nature of this particular skill, and the possible viewpoints held by the respective educators.

Draw up two lists: one for Jacqueline and another for David. In each list, write down answers to the following questions:

a. How did you first get involved with Fairgo High School?

b. What are some of the things you have enjoyed about the school?

c. What are some of things you have found challenging?

d. What are some of things you would like to know about Jacqueline’s/David’s position?

e. What do you view to be the central role and responsibilities of your position?

Now, you will have to use your imagination! Our fictive story has provided you with the ‘backbone’ for each character; their viewpoints are deliberately opposing. Use the story as a scaffolding and try and imagine (and empathise) with Jacqueline and David’s position. Try not to have Jacqueline and David bitterly disagree and walk out of the meeting!

As a final exercise, write down three concluding points detailing areas of successful resolution (for instance, is there a ‘half-way’ or harmonious point between both opposing arguments?) Good luck!

Writing of the connection between the curriculum and society at large, Kincheloe (as cited in Hilty, 2011) notes:

What is the basis for the curriculum? When we speak of curriculum we are not only referring to the knowledge or subject matter that is taught in schools. In addition, we are referencing the goals and purposes of teaching and learning, methods of classroom teaching and organization, and the way we assess the quality of the teaching and learning taking place. We also move outside the classroom in our definition of curriculum, asserting that classroom
teaching has to do with a myriad of things that happen in the world surrounding the school. In our expanded and critical understanding of curriculum, we are also interested in the ways knowledge is produced and human consciousness is constructed and the role that power plays in these processes.

When curriculum is defined in this expansive way, we realize that the curriculum and the present status of democratic life are inseparable dynamics that are mutually constituted. The curriculum to some degree reflects the prevailing definition of democracy existing in a particular society. The school curriculum and the social order are intimately connected in that they are constantly constructing one another – they are coconstructed.

(p. 230)

At the core of the introductory fictive scenario is the role of ideals, values and ethics within schooling. While the link between these belief systems and a given curriculum may not always be explicit, they are nevertheless always implicitly present and subsequently, inextricably linked. In turn, the relationship between belief systems and the documents mandating what should be learned is always highly contentious. It would serve us well to once again reiterate the inherent political nature of curriculum development and the fundamental questions we have so often repeated (our curricula mantra): What do we want to do and why? And how do we do it?

One may assert that our democratic ideals – of human rights, tolerance and freedom of speech – ensures both Jaqueline and David are afforded the opportunity to speak freely. This freedom of conjecture will eventually result in reliance on another democratic ideal – compromise. Which is to say, that if one were in favour of Jaqueline’s position one would vouch for the progressive, forward-thinking nature of ideals; while if one were a supporter of David’s viewpoint they would assert the importance of each student learning the fundamentals, devoid of abstract – and at times, vitriolic – ideals. In the end, comprise is always forced on the subject with the lesser hand; that is, he or she furthest from the hand of power.

---

Reading Space:


(A default destination is also available, although it does not include the opening
introduction in the SAGE address. This omission, however, is of no great importance: http://faculty.washington.edu/rikiki/tcxg464sp08/Silenced%20Dialogue%20by%20L%20Delpit.pdf.

Lisa Delpit is a noted educator and author. Her article, ‘The Silenced Dialogue’ examines the topic of instructional methodology, and then moves on to discuss the broader – and far deeper – issues of inequality and the cultures of power. In the introduction to her text, *Other People’s Children*, Delpit (2006) writes:

> I have come to understand that power plays a critical role in our society and in our educational system. The worldviews of those with privileged positions are taken as the only reality, while the worldviews of those less powerful are dismissed as inconsequential. Indeed, in the educational institutions of this country, the possibilities for poor people and for people of color to define themselves, to determine the self each should be, involve a power that lies outside of the self. It is others who determine how they should act, how they are to be judged.

(p. xxv)

After reading the article, write a brief summary (800 words) detailing the main arguments raised by Delpit. What do you think is the significance of the title, ‘The Silence Dialogue’? What exactly is the ‘culture of power’? Can well-meaning ideals serve to foster detrimental ends? What does Delpit suggest is needed to bring about greater equality among all students irrespective of their gender, age, race or ethnicity?

**UNIT OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of this unit current and future educational leaders will be able to:

1. Understand the varying, and often competing aims of education, schooling and learning.
2. Critically reflect on the notion of values within the curriculum and school environment.
3. Discern the importance of values and ethics within leadership practice.
4. Understand the role and importance of creative thinking within curriculum practice and classroom instruction.

**UNIT READINGS**


**TOPIC 2.1 – TABLES AND CHAIRS: VALUES AND THE CURRICULUM.**

The role and purpose of education, and what encapsulates an ‘educated person’, is a widely debated topic. Definitions of schooling and the subsequent approaches to education are varied and dependent on a broad range of sociopolitical and cultural factors. One need only consider the different – and at times, competing – political systems, cultural and religious beliefs, and economic factors (first world and developing) found across the globe to quickly understand that diversity stubbornly evades the clutches of any grand-narrative. However, in an article titled, ‘The Educated Person’, Elizabeth Campbell does a good job discerning the broad questions that compel debate on this topic. Campbell (2009) states:

*Should education be about the transmission of specifically defined knowledge, skills, and values to students that reflect dominant societal interpretations of what it means to be educated? Should education seek to stimulate, by way of a more transactional curricula and pedagogy, independent problem-solving skills that enable students’ personal growth according to their individual experiences and interests? Should education and the definition of ‘being educated’ be radically redefined and reconstructed as a remedy for larger social inequalities and maintain as its focused purpose the transformation of a wider society? Or should (and indeed could) education combine these and other varying purposes?*

(p. 379)

Central to the debate on the purpose of schooling is the argument that education should be aligned with the notions of citizenship. The relationship between education and the
development of citizens encompasses a broad spectrum of competing viewpoints – nationalist, imperialistic, neoliberal, conservative, religious fundamentalism, and progressive to name a few. A detailed discussion of each perspective is largely beyond the scope of this course. In this instance, we will highlight the socially progressive viewpoint of the American critical theorist, Henry A Giroux. Giroux argues that education should do (much) more than simply produce students capable of reciting and pledging allegiance to prevailing nationalistic ideals. He asserts that education should seek to develop active and critically conscious students; the future makers of a constantly evolving democracy. Giroux (as cited in Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1995) states:

If educators are to take the relationship between schooling and democracy seriously, this means organizing school life around a version of citizenship that educates students to make choices, think critically, and believe they can make a difference. It also means that educators need to affirm and critically interrogate the knowledge and experiences that students bring with them to the classroom...Progressives all across the country must reclaim the importance of educating all students with the knowledge, skills, and values they will need in a democracy for the responsibilities of learning how to govern. This means organizing curricula in ways that enable students to make judgments about how society is historically and socially structured, how existing social relations are implicated in relations of equality and justice as well as how they structure inequalities around racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression.

(p. 298)

One of the important aspects of Giroux’s work is his assertion that teachers should redefine their roles as transformative intellectuals. Giroux argues that the prevailing view of education as a ‘production process’ – what he terms, the technocratic approach to teacher preparation and classroom instruction – has greatly devalued (and deskilled) the profession. Giroux (as cited in Hilty, 2011) states:

Technocratic and instrumental rationalities are also at work within the teaching field itself, and they play an increasing role in reducing teacher autonomy with respect to the development and planning of curricula and the judging and implementation of instruction. This is most evident in the proliferation of what has been called ‘teacher-proof’ curriculum packages. The underlying rationale in many of these packages reserves for teachers the role of simply carrying out predetermined content and instructional procedures...Curricula approaches of this sort are management pedagogies because the central questions regarding learning are reduced to the problem of management, i.e., ‘how to allocate resources (teachers, students and
Giroux notes that such standardised curricula, instruction processes and assessment tools fail to adequately meet the varying needs of a diverse classroom. Teachers as transformative intellectuals take on a far more opposing, engaged and critical approach. Giroux (as cited in Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1995) states that this new approach (or mind-frame) involves “providing teachers with the conditions they need to produce curricula, work productively with outside social agencies and community people, and exercise a notion of leadership that combines a discourse of hope with forms of self and social criticism” (p. 302).
Reading Space:

Take a moment to read the publication, ‘Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools’ (2011), edited by Jonathan, K., Hall, J., Levine, P., McConnell, T., & Smith, D. B. The publication can be retrieved from:

The aim of the publication is to improve the level of civic learning within schools. The publication asserts that “improved civic learning can address many of our democratic shortfalls. It increases the democratic accountability of elected officials...It improves public discourse... (and) fulfils our ideal of civic equality” (p. 6).

Once you have read the report, respond to the following questions:

1. What is your opinion on the importance of civic learning? What characterises a civic education? Should civic learning be included within school curricula?

2. One of the key aspects of civic learning is the fostering of constructive public dialogues. Do you think open discourses have a place in schools and classrooms?

3. One cannot take a positive step forward, without first examining the missteps they have made along the way. Reflect on your own professional and broader sociopolitical environment and highlight what you perceive as possible civic shortfalls?

4. The publication asserts that one of the six proven practices of effective civic learning is ‘service learning’:
   a) What is service learning? What characteristics do effective service learning programs share? Have you encountered the practice in your professional environment before?
   b) Take a moment to read the publication, ‘K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice’ (2008), produced by the National Youth Leadership Council. The publication can be retrieved from:
As the title suggests, the publication provides clear, measurable and actionable standards for the implementation of service-learning practices within schools (K-12).

With reference to the standards and indicators on p. 10-11, especially “Link to Curriculum”, produce a preliminary service-learning exercise for K-12 students in your professional environment.

The exercise must seek to fulfil the principles of service-learning, and meet the stipulated standards. Remember, service-learning is a good opportunity for education to extend beyond the classroom. Think of an organisation in your community, which you think would help students better understand and interact with their broader environment.

**TOPIC 2.2 – SHOWING THE WAY: LEADERSHIP AND VALUES.**

Schools are dynamic institutions housing a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, each competing to satisfy their own aims. In this regard, the need for clear leadership remains a largely uncontestable fact. There is no doubt that a unified sense of purpose is required, but should this leadership be driven by pragmatic principles, rather than transformational ideals? Can we not empathise with the over-worked, under-resourced school principal who in the face of administrative and educational challenges asserts: ‘Please, the practical over the ideal! Teachers need to be happy. The children need to learn. The washrooms need to function’. Or the time-strapped teacher who states: ‘I love world peace as much as anyone, but I live in a world governed by disciplines, time-blocks and expectations. Besides, I am not the boss here. Why would they listen to me?”

In an article titled, ‘Teacher Leader’, Roland S. Barth highlights the importance of effective leadership and its positive effects on all stakeholders. Barth (as cited in Hilty, 2011) notes ten areas in which school leadership is essential:

1. Choosing textbooks and instructional materials;
2. Shaping the curriculum;
3. Setting standards for student behavior;
4. Deciding whether students are tracked into special classes;
5. Designing staff development and inservice programs;
6. Setting promotion and retention policies;
7. Deciding school budgets;
8. Evaluating teacher performance;
9. Selecting new teachers; and
10. Selecting new administrators.

(p. 23)

Barth notes the ‘across-the-board’ positive effects of well distributed leadership among principals, teachers and students. Success requires the core purpose of the school – that is, learning – be praised and demonstrated. Barth gives particular attention to the role of the school principal in encouraging, supporting and monitoring leadership among their education peers. Barth (as cited in Hilty, 2011) notes several important actions which every principal should take:

a. **Expect**: “Principals who support teacher leadership believe in it as a central purpose of the school”. A principal who is vocal (loud and often) about leadership expectations and ideals will ensure the active support of their peers.

b. **Relinquish**: By understanding the power of distributed leadership, principals will be able to unleash the creative powers and, often suppressed (by workload at least), ideals of their peers.

c. **Trust**: A principal must develop and sustain trust in the efforts of their peers. This, as Barth notes, is particularly important when leadership practices go astray, or encounter difficulties.

d. **Empower**: Principals elicit more leaders and more leadership when they invite teachers to address a problem before it occurs, rather than after they have devised a solution. The key, as Barth suggests, is collective brainstorming and an appreciation of everyone’s worth.

e. **Include**: Different teachers will have different passions. By working together, principals will be able to realise these held feelings and distribute leadership roles or tasks accordingly.

f. **Recognize**: “Teachers will not for long go through the heroic efforts of leading schools in addition to teaching classes if the consequences of their work go unnoticed, unrecognized, or unvalued by others”.

g. **Share responsibility of failure**: “Teacher and principal can share responsibility for failure as well as for success. Usually a school community deals more
kindly with mistakes made jointly by teacher and principal than by either alone. The important question, of course, is not ‘Whose fault is it?’ but rather ‘What happened and what can we learn from it so we do better next time’.

h. **Give credit for success:** “It is important that the principal share with teacher leaders responsibility for success...Good principals are more hero-makers than heroes”.

(p. 30-32)

So what role do values play in leadership? Values are the fundamental convictions or ideals that inform one’s decision-making process. Without a clear and well-defined set of values, management (as opposed to true leadership) progresses in a haphazard manner, either stagnated by indecision or constantly seeking and testing the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable, functional and dysfunctional. Duignan (2012) notes:

*There is a special need for leaders to call on their core values when leading in complex and dynamic situations. Duignan and Cannon (2011) suggest that ‘when all seems to be in constant crisis and when strategic direction seems to be swamped by short-term emergencies, leaders need to focus on core values and moral purpose’. It is important, however, that the espoused values of a school are agreed on, shared and form the basis for all decision-making. Core values are usually enduring values and, according to Degenhardt and Duignan (2010), ‘constitute the one permanent foundation for the school when everything else within and outside...seem to be changing’.*

(p. 92)

Barth’s principles on distributed leadership (teacher leaders) and Duignan’s emphasis on a clear and shared value system serves to demonstrate that Giroux’s notion of ‘transformative intellectuals’ – active and critical educators – need not be a farfetched ideal. With purposeful deliberation, school-wide consultation and effective leadership, a school may indeed demonstrate progressive ideals, and move confidently and proudly towards fostering transformative citizens.

**Open Dialogue:**

One may argue that we have skirted around the central issue. That is, we began by asking what the purpose of schooling was, asserted that it was widely debated, and then progressed to demonstrate a progressive viewpoint. And that, so to speak, was it – case closed.

One may also argue that while values are unquestionably important, they needn’t be
radical (as one may perceive Giroux's views to be). What of the simple value, 'all children are entitled to a good education?' Or, 'We will treat our teachers and students with care and love'? Or perhaps, as Stanley Fish (2003) argues, we are simply confusing moral imperatives with academic imperatives, praising the former at the expense of the latter?

All of these arguments are valid. As we mentioned, debate on the purpose of schooling is contentious, ongoing and inconclusive.

It might serve us well then to further explore the role of values. In her article, 'The Development of Values Through the School Curriculum', Monica J. Taylor (as cited in Cheng, R., Lee, J., & Lo, L., 2006, p. 127) provides a thorough and very useful checklist of questions that can aid in the whole school evaluation of values development.

Take some time to review the questions and then provide answers in the context of your own professional environment. After conducting the evaluation, what are your views on the role of values within education? What values do you consider important?

### Evaluating a Whole-School Approach to Values

1. (i) What is your understanding of the school’s approach to values education?

   (ii) What are the main ways in which you consider it is taking it forward?

   (iii) Who do you see as taking a leading role in values education in school? How?

2. (i) Is there a clear/shared understanding by teachers and other staff of the schools approach(es) to values?

   (ii) How is this reached, articulated? Are all staff, governors, parents involved?

   (iii) Can you give an example from practice of how would you support your answer to 2(i)?

3. (i) What priority would you say is given to values education in this school?

   (ii) Is this recent, ongoing or ad hoc? What evidence do you have for your judgment?

   (iii) How are you involved with values in school? If you are involved in teaching values in a subject, does this differ from what you do as a form
tutor/teacher?

4. (i) What particular values (substantive values, such as honesty, or process values, such as participation) do you think the school tries to promote?

(ii) What has influenced these values?

(iii) How does practice relate to policy on this? How do staff interpret these values?

(iv) Can you think of a time when you experienced a dilemma or conflict on a values issue in school? How was this resolved?

5. (i) Is the school seriously evaluating its own progress in values education?

(ii) If so, how? Is evaluation done in a structured way? Is it done through review of the curriculum? Has any progress been made on developing coherence and progression across the curricular experience of pupils? Is it done through school ethos and behaviour?

(iii) Can you give examples of pupils’ values learning/development from your own teaching, pastoral activities or observation of the life of the school?

6. (i) Did you have any initial training related to values education? If so, how useful was it?

(ii) Do you feel adequately prepared to deal with pupils’ values development? If it were possible, would you like more...clearer aims, definitions, specified outcomes, curriculum resources?

(iii) What specific support do teachers need to be enabled to do values education as role models, in their (subject) teaching, and to promote values in the life of the school?

7. (i) What do you see as constraints on the school’s values work?

(ii) What do you see as particularly promising developments in the school’s values work?

**TOPIC 2.3 – A CAUSE FOR REVOLT: NATIONALISM AND THE CURRICULUM.**

In early September 2012, following sustained protests by students and citizens alike, Hong Kong’s chief executive, Leung Chun-ying, announced a major political reversal of the
country’s educational curriculum reform plans. With the backing of China, Hong Kong had been seeking to implement a ‘Moral and National Education’ (MNE) curriculum within schools.

Objections to the new curriculum came swiftly. The responses reflected the unique political and national history of Hong Kong. In 1997, the former British colony was returned to Chinese rule and subsequently operated as a Special Administrative Region – within a ‘one country two systems’ political structure. The outpour of disapproval from its citizens also reflected a prevailing sentiment of cultural independence from mainland China; this was coupled by a political structure which encouraged freedom of speech. As Lee and Gopinathan (2012) note:

"Some contend that the proposed MNE curriculum does not offer a fair representation of events and views of different stakeholders on socio-political developments in Hong Kong and the mainland. For Hong Kong citizens used to open and robust political debate with considerable space for political activism, the fear is that the curriculum would not lead to the development of an informed citizenry, capable of looking at the evidence and making up their minds; rather, there will be an exorable trend towards ‘mainlandism’, or mainland style patriotic education, eventually leading to a diminution of rights in Hong Kong."

(p. 62)

Following the recommendations of the Committee on the Initiation of Moral and National Education Subject (CIMNES), the curriculum was officially (somewhat) shelved. While the MNE was no longer a mandatory component of education, schools could, if they so wished, independently choose to implement the curriculum within their environment; schools choosing this educational route were entitled to a HK$530,000 Moral and National Education Support Grant. In their recommendations, the Committee noted the importance of moral education, but lamented on the negative effects the debate had incited:

"It is the unanimous view of the Committee on the Initiation of Moral and National Education Subject that moral, national and civic education is an important facet of school education, and that whole-person development should include knowledge about one’s country, understanding of one’s national identity and awareness of such core values as inclusiveness and diversity in the wider society. Therefore, it is only natural that students be taught moral, national and civic education…"

"The Committee is of the view that the debate over national education is not only divisive and confrontational but has also impacted negatively on school operation as well as learning and teaching…The Committee hopes that,
through rational discussions, consensus can be built and the controversy can come to an end. It also hopes that with the conclusion of the controversy, mutual trust in the community can be rebuilt so that SSBs (School Sponsoring Bodies) and schools will be able to take autonomous professional pedagogical decisions in a calm environment with a view to nurturing student’s whole-person development.

(CIMNES, 2012)

Reading Space:


What are your opinions of the document (its tone, clarity and objectives)? You will note that the ‘learning objectives’ are supplemented by ‘examples of learning contents’, which places the knowledge in a cultural context. What is your view on this practice? What effect do you think this may have on the curriculum-in-use?

The Hong Kong MNE case study reflects an opposing, or alternative view on the role of values within the curriculum. In this instance, the seeming imposition of nationalism upon a student body and broader populace was strongly rebutted. The citizens of Hong Kong attempted to delineate a line between academic necessities and moralistic ideals; it was a line which they were willing to staunchly hold.

In a series of articles within The New York Times and The Chronicle of Higher Education during 2003 and 2004, the literary critic and public intellectual, Stanley Fish, put forward his case for the removal of moral advocacy within the university class and curriculum. In these articles, Fish vigorously argues for an understanding and separation of democratic and academic endeavours. In an article titled, ‘Save the World on Your Own Time’, Fish (2003) states:

Teachers should teach their subjects. They should not teach peace or war or freedom or obedience or diversity or uniformity or nationalism or antinationalism or any agenda that might be properly be taught by a political leader or a talk-show host. Of course they can and should teach about such topics – something very different from urging them as commitments – when
they are part of the history or philosophy or literature or sociology that is being studied.

The only advocacy that should go on in the classroom is the advocacy of what James Murphy has identified as the intellectual virtues – ‘thoroughness, perseverance, intellectual honesty’ – all components of the cardinal academic virtue of being ‘conscientious in the pursuit of truth’.

Fish asserts that the main role of a university is to provide teaching and to undertake research. Any issue that is aside from these twin roles, or impedes on the achievement of these practices, is to be promptly excluded. In an article titled, ‘Aim Low’, Fish also objects to the possibility that teachers can have any meaningful influence in developing morally conscious citizens. Fish (2003) states,

We are responsible only for its (instruction) appropriate performance. That is, we are responsible for the selection of texts, the preparation of a syllabus, the sequence of assignments and exams, the framing and grading of a term paper, and so on.

If by the end of a semester you have given your students an overview of the subject...and introduced them to the latest developments in the field and pointed them in the directions they might follow should they wish to inquire further, then you have done your job. What they subsequently do with what you have done is their business and not anything you should be either held to account for or praised for...

There are just too many intervening variables, too many uncontrolled factors that mediate the relationship between what goes on in a classroom or even in a succession of classrooms and the shape of what is finally a life.

Open Dialogue:

Stanley Fish’s articles make for interesting and provocative reading. He writes with a wealth of experience, which he couples with a frank and often humorous approach.

Nevertheless, his views have elicited a great deal of criticism. In the text, Debating Moral Education, Kiss and Euben (Eds) reserve four chapters to debating Fish’s thought.

Fish’s commentary often takes the form of blogs or advice columns. As such, they are easily accessible online. We have listed three below:

Learning in Action:

So far, we have covered a good deal of territory. We have begun to understand what curriculum is and how it is practiced within the broader society. In our ‘Learning in Action’ section, we will attempt to incorporate some of the guiding themes and issues we have encountered, as well as explore the notion and importance of creative thinking.

The ‘defamiliarization of the ordinary’: Creativity in context.

Creative thinking is often thought of as the lesser-sibling of critical thinking. While the latter skill or practice has received significant scholarly attention, the former has suffered from the perception of waywardness.

This perception is understandable, though largely misplaced. Critical thinking is characterised by a plethora of active verbs (for instance: conceptualise, analyse, synthesise and evaluate), and is associated with seriousness and rigor. While creative thinking is more difficult to define, less prone to the defining lasso of active verbs; in a visual sense, it is associated with contemplative states, a figurative ‘freeing of the mind’. But is this entirely true, or itself a creative misstep?

The language of creative thought is metaphor and similes. It is what allows us to perceive creative and critical thought as siblings! In a recent article in the New York Times (February 5, 2014), titled ‘Learning to Think Outside the Box’, Laura Pappano notes:

"Critical thinking has long been regarded as the essential skill for success, but it is not enough, says Dr. Puccio. Creativity moves beyond mere synthesis and evaluation and is, he says, ‘the higher order skill’. This has not been a sudden development. Nearly 20 years ago ‘creating’ replaced..."
‘evaluation’ at the top of Bloom’s Taxonomy of learning objectives. In 2010 ‘creativity’ was the factor most crucial for success found in an I.B.M. survey of 1,500 chief executives in 33 industries. These days ‘creative’ is the most used buzzword in LinkedIn profiles two years running.

Traditional academic disciplines still matter, but as content knowledge evolves at lightning speed, educators are talking more and more about ‘process skills’, strategies to reframe challenges and extrapolate and transform information, and to accept and deal with ambiguity.

Creativity is what allows us to perceive the extraordinary in the everyday; it defamiliarizes the normal, creating a dissonant space of ingenuity. As a practice, creativity is vital to leadership, curriculum and learning.

Wide Awakeness – Maxine Greene and curriculum practice.

The work of philosopher and educator Maxine Greene is both insightful and original. Greene is a staunch (and perhaps rare) advocate for creativity within the classroom. Greene views the creative act as a way in which one can see things anew, and importantly, learn to empathise with others. She notes:

To tap into imagination is to become able to break with what is supposedly fixed and finished, objectively and independently real. It is to see beyond what the imaginer has called normal or ‘common-sensible’ and to carve out new orders in experience. Doing so, a person may become freed to glimpse what might be, to form notions of what should be and what is not.

(Greene, 1995, p. 19)

Greene insists that the incorporation of art (literature, music, performance and painting) within the classroom can help students perceive alternate learning paths, or truths – “to become conscious of what daily routines have obscured, what habit and convention have suppressed” (1995, p.123). Art is liberating, sense-making, and helps students understand what it is to “exist in the world”, to be fully conscious, to be morally aware, to be truly wide-awake (1977, p. 124). She asserts:

Imagination, for me, cannot be counted on to summon up visions of the romantic, the celestial, the harmonious. It is because I believe that encounters with the arts can awaken us to alternative possibilities of existing, of being human, of relating to others, of being other, that I argue for their centrality in curriculum. I believe they can open new perspectives on what has become so familiar it has stopped us from asking questions.
Take a moment to reflect on your education practices. Does creativity play a significant or insignificant part in your instruction methods?


Take some time to carefully read the poem, ‘Among Children’, by Philip Levine. We have chosen to transcribe the complete poem for your convenience. It is also freely available at: http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/among-children/.

Among Children

I walk among the rows of bowed heads – the children are sleeping through fourth grade so as to be ready for what is ahead, the monumental boredom of junior high and the rush forward tearing their wings loose and turning their eyes forever inward. These are the children of Flint, their fathers work at the spark plug factory or truck bottled water in 5 gallon sea-blue jugs to the widows of the suburbs. You can see already how their backs have thickened, how their small hands, soiled by pig iron, leap and stutter even in dreams. I would like to sit down among them and read slowly from The Book of Job until the windows pale and the teacher rises out of a milky sea of industrial scum, her gowns streaming with light, her foolish words transformed into song, I would like to arm each one with a quiver of arrows so that they might rush like wind there where no battle rages shouting among the trumpets, Hal Ha! How dear the gift of laughter in the face of the 8 hour day, the cold winter mornings without coffee and oranges, the long lines of mothers in old coats waiting silently where the gates have closed. Ten years ago I went among these same children, just born,
in the bright ward of the Sacred Heart and leaned
down to hear their breaths delivered that day,
burning with joy. There was such wonder
in their sleep, such purpose in their eyes
dosed against autumn, in their damp heads
blurred with the hair of ponds, and not one
turned against me or the light, not one
said, I am sick, I am tired, I will go home,
not one complained or drifted alone,
unloved, on the hardest day of their lives.
Eleven years from now they will become
the men and women of Flint or Paradise,
the majors of a minor town, and I
will be gone into smoke or memory,
so I bow to them here and whisper
all I know, all I will never know.

Philip Levine is a Pulitzer prize-winning poet and former Poet Laureate of the United
States (2011-2012). Levine was born in Detroit, Michigan. His remarkable poetry is
characterised by clear language and powerful imagery. His poems focus on the
hardships of the men and women of Michigan who worked in that once industrious
state.

Take a moment to write your first impressions of the poem. What are your feelings
after reading it on a second occasion? What does Levine seem to say about the state
and purpose of schooling in Flint, Michigan? How would you describe Levine’s tone?
What is the importance of the intertextual reference made, noting the Book of Job?

While we will leave the poem to your interpretation, it is worthwhile to provide some
background on Flint, Michigan. Like most of the areas within Michigan, Flint suffered
greatly from the process of deindustrialization. In 2013, the unemployment rate sat at
16.9%. According to the 2008-2012 US Census (2014), 39.7% of the population in Flint
lived below the poverty line. The Census figures also reveal that 82% of the population
have a high school graduate certificate or higher, while only 11.4% of the population
have a Bachelor’s degree or higher.

In June 2008, prior to being elected president, Barack Obama gave a wide-ranging
campaign speech in Flint. One of his central focus points was the need to improve
education:

But, of course, grim economic news is nothing new to Flint, and it’s
nothing new to Michigan. George Bush and Washington may not have
noticed, but manufacturing jobs have been leaving here for decades. (Applause).

Incomes have been declining for decades now. The jobs that have replaced those lost jobs pay less and offer fewer, if any, benefits...

Now, this agenda starts with education. Whether you are conservative or liberal, Republican or Democrat, practically every economist agrees that, in this digital age, a highly skilled, highly educated workforce will be the key not only to individual opportunity, but to the overall success of our economy, as well...

It means reaching high standards, but not by relying on a single, high-stakes standardized test that distorts how teachers teach. (Applause)...

I don't want our children to be learning to a test. I want them learning art and music and science and literature and all the things that make an education well-rounded...

(Teachers need to be given) ownership over the design of better assessment tools and a creative curricula, if we shape reforms with teachers rather than imposing changes on teachers, then it’s fair to expect better results.

(Obama, 2008)

How does reading Obama’s speech affect your view of Levine’s poem? How do you imagine Levine would react to such political rhetoric? Can you note any similarities between Obama’s speech and Bush’s NCLB speech in Ohio?

A New National Curriculum – Poetry in Context.

It is not difficult to imagine Levine’s poem forming part of a high school English curriculum. The poem offers an engaging voice, challenging imagery, intertextual references, and an opportunity for broader societal debate.

We will now place Levine’s poem within an educational context, namely the new Australian National Curriculum.

The Commonwealth of Australia is comprised of six federated states (New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia, and Queensland), two self-governing territories (Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory), one external self-governing territory (Norfolk Island) and two external territories (Christmas Island and Cocos Island). Since 2012-2013, implementation of a national curriculum (the Australian Curriculum) has progressively, if somewhat contentiously, occurred across
the various states and territories. This marks a major educational effort dating back to the 1980’s. Prior to this recent change, Australian state and territory governments had control over primary and secondary education, with the federal government providing significant funding and policy guidance.

Development of the Australian Curriculum was led by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). The Curriculum has ignited significant debate within the Australian community. Those in favour of the development state the benefits of educational uniformity across the nation, assuring equality for all and fostering nation-wide improvements. Those opposed to the process speak in favour of state and territory diversity, and the lack of evidence to support across-the-nation improvements (Drabsch, 2013, p. 215).

The Australian Curriculum focuses on several curriculum-wide capabilities. Drabsch (2013) notes:

*The Australian Curriculum is based around seven capabilities that are to be developed and applied across the curriculum: literacy; numeracy; information and communication technology competence; critical and creative thinking; ethical behaviour; and intercultural understanding. Three cross-curriculum priorities will also have an important role: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures; Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia; and sustainability.*

(Summary)

The Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority provides a useful chart, which demonstrates the key components of the Australian Curriculum:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Areas/Subject Disciplines</th>
<th>General Capabilities</th>
<th>Cross-Curriculum Priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Critical and Creative Thinking</td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Personal and Social Capability</td>
<td>Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Intercultural Understanding</td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this instance, we will examine the ‘Senior Secondary Curriculum’, specifically the sections covering the ‘Rationale/Aims’, ‘Curriculum Content’ and ‘Achievement Standards’ of the Senior English curriculum. Our aim is to give you an understanding (albeit a selected overview) of the nature of a modern curriculum document. A full copy of the Curriculum can be retrieved from: [http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/).

The Curriculum (ACARA, 2013) states:

**RATIONALE**

*English* focuses on developing students’ analytical, creative and critical thinking and communication skills in all language modes. It encourages students to engage with texts from their contemporary world, with texts from the past and with texts from Australian and other cultures. Such engagement helps students develop a sense of themselves, their world and their place in it...

**AIMS**

All senior secondary English subjects aim to develop students’:

- skills in listening, speaking, reading, viewing and writing
- capacity to create texts for a range of purposes, audiences and contexts
- understanding and appreciation of different uses of language...

**CURRICULUM CONTENT – UNIT 4**

**UNIT DESCRIPTION**

| Humanities and Social Sciences (History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, Business and Economics) | Ethical Behaviour
| The Arts | Literacy
| Technologies (Design and Digital Technologies) | Numeracy
| | ICT |
In Unit 4, students examine different interpretations and perspectives to develop further their knowledge and analysis of purpose and style. They challenge perspectives, values and attitudes in literary and non-literary texts, developing and testing their own interpretations though debate and argument. Through close study of individual texts, students explore relationships between content and structure, voice and perspective and the text and its context. This provides the opportunity for students to extend their experience of language and of texts and explore their ideas through their own reading and viewing. Students demonstrate understanding of the texts studied through creation of imaginative, interpretive and analytical responses.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of this unit, students:

- understand how content, structure, voice and perspective in texts shape responses and interpretations
- examine different interpretations of texts and how these resonate with, or challenge, their own responses
- create cohesive oral, written and multimodal texts in a range of forms, mediums and styles.

**CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS**

Investigate and evaluate the relationships between texts and contexts by:

- undertaking close analysis of texts (ACEEN060)
- examining how each text relates to a particular context or contexts (ACEEN061)
- comparing the contexts in which texts are created and received. (ACEEN062)

Evaluate different perspectives, attitudes and values represented in texts by:

- analysing content, purpose and choice of language (ACEEN063)
- analysing the use of voice and point of view such as in feature articles, reporting of current events or narration (ACEEN064)
• exploring other interpretations and aspects of context to develop a considered response. (ACEEN065)

Achievement Standards:

Achievement Standards Units 3 and 4 (selection from ‘A’ – signifying high achievement standard)

• critically analyses how relationships between context and point of view shape meaning in texts and achieve particular effects
• critically analyses different language conventions and stylistic devices and evaluates how they combine in different modes and mediums to influence audiences
• undertakes a comparative analysis of texts and evaluates how they represent ideas, attitudes and concepts.
• justifies their own considered and coherent interpretations of texts.

Take a moment to reflect on the ‘Rationale/Aims’, ‘Curriculum Content’ and ‘Achievement Standards’ of the Senior English curriculum. How would you describe the language utilised in the document? Are the ‘Aims’ posed in the Curriculum sufficiently broad and clear? As an educator, how would you rate the document (clarity, ease of use, flexibility, compatibility with multiple instruction styles)? In your opinion, are the achievement standards fair and comprehensive?

Poetry in Motion – Creativity in the Classroom.

At the conclusion of this section (‘Learning in Action’) you will be asked to construct a detailed lesson plan for High School English students. The proposed aim of the lesson will be to critically examine Philip Levine’s poem, ‘Among Children’. Central to this task, will be the need to observe the aims, outcomes and standards noted in the Australian Curriculum while consciously implementing a creative approach.

As mentioned, without a clear purpose or structure, creativity will prove largely unsuccessful. Indeed, one may argue that such forms of unstructured ‘free thinking’ (or ‘loose construing’ as it is sometimes called) may obfuscate the learning process, muddling clear objectives with disparate thoughts and resulting in confusion.

In their article, ‘Imagination in a World of Assessment’, Judson and Egan (2009) argue that creativity deserves a prominent place within the school curriculum. They state:
It is clear that engaging students’ imaginations in curriculum materials is one of the keys to successful learning. It is also clear that, in an educational world dominated by frequent high-stakes testing of students’ learning, the imagination usually takes a back seat in the classroom, if it can squeeze in the door at all...The seeming conflict between recognizing the imagination’s key role in learning and its marginalization under the pressures of current assessment practices is due largely to our not knowing how we can routinely engage students’ imaginations while also enduring students can perform appropriately on the next set of tests.

(p. 13)

To this end, Judson and Egan provide an invaluable framework, which attempts to show educators how they can implement successful and engaging creative practices within their planning and instruction. Judson and Egan (2009, p. 14) offer a five-step process from which we quote at length:

**Engaging the Imagination of Young Children: A Guide to the Mythic Planning Framework**

- **Step 1 – Locating importance:**

  *What is emotionally engaging about this topic? How can it evoke wonder? Why should it matter to us?*

  ...Everything that we teach can evoke some kind of wonder and produce some emotional response in us. Both a sense of wonder and an emotional response to material are important in engaging students’ imaginations. So this first question asks the teacher to feel for what is wonderful about the topic...

  The trick, though, is to try to re-see the topic through the eyes of the child.

- **Step 2 – Shaping the lesson or unit:**

  Teaching shares some features with news reporting. Just as the reporter’s aim is to select and shape events to bring out clearly their meaning and emotional importance for readers or listeners, so your aim as a teacher is to present your topic in a way that engages the emotions and imaginations of your students...

- **Step 2.1 – Finding the story:**
What’s ‘the story’ on the topic? How can you shape the content to reveal its emotional significance?

- **Step 2.2 – Finding binary opposites:**

  *What abstract and affective binary concepts best capture the wonder and emotion of the topic? What are the opposing forces in your ‘story’?*

  Abstract Binary Oppositions are the most basic and powerful tools we have for organizing and categorizing knowledge. It is as though we first have to divide things into opposites in order to get an initial grasp on them; so we easily divide the world up into good/bad, high/low, security/fear…

  The binary opposites provide the cognitive and emotional framework of your story. Remember, all good fictional stories are built on a conflict or puzzle; the only difference here is that the ‘story’ is the curriculum content.

- **Step 2.3 – Finding images:**

  *What parts of the topic most dramatically embody the binary concepts? What image best captures that dramatic contrast?*

  Here the goal is to identify the drama inherent in the topic…This task can be quite difficult at first…We are so accustomed to thinking about content, and about concepts, that we often forget that every topic also has a wide range of images attached to it. And the image, remember, can carry the emotional meaning of the topic and can also make the topic much more memorable...

  ![Open Dialogue:

  We might benefit from exploring this step in further detail. Turn briefly to Levine’s poem, ‘Among Children’.

  The first three lines of the poem embody powerful and evocative imagery: ‘I walk among the row of bowed heads –/ the children are sleeping through fourth grade/ so as to ready for what is ahead”.

  The words ‘bowed heads’ can be seen in two ways. Firstly, it holds religious significance as a posture upheld in Christian masses. Secondly, it gives us a clear picture of the children sleeping at their desks (all the children?).]
As readers, we know that the ‘road ahead’ is hardship; hours and years spent doing back-breaking work. The image evoked is therefore a powerful one: eight year-olds getting their rest for the relentless labour ahead.

We offer these examples as one of the ways in which to approach Judson and Egan’s Step 2.3. Certainly, there are many more approaches available.

- **Step 2.4 – Employing additional cognitive tools of mythic undertaking:**

  *What kinds of activities might employ other tools in your students’ cognitive toolkits?* (Judson and Egan suggest various different techniques including: puzzles and mystery, metaphor, jokes and humor, games, drama and play).

- **Step 2.5 – Drawing on tools of previous kinds of understanding:**

  *How might students use some of their earliest sense-making tools in learning the topic? How might their senses, emotions, humour, musicality, and so on, be deployed?*

- **Step 3 – Resources:**

  *What resources can you use to learn more about the topic and to shape your story? What resources are useful in creating activities?*

- **Step 4 – Conclusion:**

  *How does the story end? How can the conflict set up between the binary opposites be resolved in a satisfying way? Alternatively, what new questions emerge as students make sense of the opposing forces? What aspects of the topic might draw students forward in wonder?*

- **Step 5 – Evaluation:**

  *How can one know whether the topic has been understood, its importance grasped, and the content learned?*

Any of the traditional forms of evaluation can be used, but in addition, teachers might want to get some measure of how far students’ imaginations have been engaged by the topic. Remember, various kinds of information evaluations, including discussion, debate, journal writing, experiment analysis etc. can be done as the unit is being taught.
‘Learning in Action’ - Exercise.

We have aimed to provide a detailed description of the creative process and how it can be effectively included within curriculum practice and classroom instruction.

As a culminating task, take some time to construct a detailed lesson plan for High School English students. The precise details regarding the intended audience is left to your discretion; however, you should choose a grade that reflects your interests, background and/or future practice intentions.

The aim of the lesson will be to critically examine Philip Levine’s poem, ‘Among Children’.

When constructing the lesson plan, make specific reference to the aims, objectives and assessment measurements detailed in the Australian Curriculum.

As you undertake this exercise, try to keep in mind all that you have covered so far in this section. The most important part of this task is to employ your critical and creative skills.

Did we mention that you should try to be creative? Feel free to adopt any means of instruction you see fit; perhaps you might want to re-enact the poem with your imaginary class, or create a documentary video, or engage in a lively debate about neo-liberal principles (!). The possibilities are endless and up to you.

SUMMARY

The role and purpose of education, and what encapsulates an ‘educated person’, is a widely debated topic. Definitions of schooling and the subsequent approaches to education are varied and dependent on a broad range of sociopolitical and cultural factors. As we have seen, education can be perceived as a way of preparing students for civic engagement; alternatively, the inclusion of moral or nationalistic principles within the curriculum can also be seen as a hindrance to personal freedom and academic achievement.

In essence, schools are dynamic institutions housing a wide range of internal and external stakeholders. In this regard, the need for clear leadership remains a largely uncontestable fact. Central to effective leadership is the need for strong and clear values. In turn, positive and knowledgeable leadership will allow for considered and responsive deliberation on educational goals, and also encourage the incorporation of alternative and creative approaches to schooling, instruction and learning.

REFERENCES


UNIT THREE – CURRICULUM IN CONTEXT: THEORY AND PRACTICE.

Unit Introduction

The delivery of the new social studies textbooks arrived at Sunnyhope High School on a Friday afternoon. The two social studies teachers – John and Barbara – opened the boxes with some trepidation. Over the last year, both teachers had found it hard to get their students to engage with the old textbook – among their peers, social studies became known as the ‘great battle against sleep’. The publisher had promised that the new textbooks were far more modern, replete with pictures, revamped with current language, and would be far more appealing to students.

“How are they?” asked the school principal. John and Barbara shook their heads. “That bad?” he added.

“Who writes these books?” asked John. “This textbook is no better than the last edition. Sure, it has more pictures, but they just look like stock photos!”

“Unfortunately,” said the principal, “It was the best that we could do. The texts have been written to align with the national curriculum and prepare students for the end-of-year standard test. You are both great teachers. You will just have to do your best. I believe in you both – my anti-sleep crusaders”.

As expected, the students were largely disinterested with the new texts. It wasn’t long before each happy photograph was adorned with a moustache or large spectacles.

However, there was one child – Oliver – who seemed engrossed in the text. Oliver was a good student and sat quietly in class, seemingly devouring the text. But it didn’t take long for John to discern the truth; one day, Oliver’s text fell to the ground and out spilled a graphic novel.

After class, John and Oliver spoke. “What is this you were reading?” asked John.

“It’s called The Justice Squad. They’re a group of superheroes who fight against injustice. Were you alive in the 1990’s sir? Because the book is set in the 1990’s in New York. Did you know that people didn’t have the internet then? It must have been cool”.

“What do you like about this Justice Squad?”

“They fight a different type of crime – prejudices and racism. The evil character is called, Dr. Hate. They’re cool. They call themselves “stereo-heroes”, crushing bad stereotypes, and they carry boom-boxes and cassettes.
“There are seven of them; each of their uniforms represents a colour of the rainbow. It’s a diversity thing. They’re always saying: ‘we reflect positivity, and refract through oppression’”.

John was intrigued, though he didn’t let on. As punishment, he promised to return the graphic novel back to Oliver in the morning. That night, he read the entire book.

Early in the morning, unable to sleep, John got online and researched the artist. It turned out that the artist was a former educator and that the idea behind the graphic novel had come from a curriculum reform effort undertaken in New York City in the early 1990’s.

In 1989, the Board of Education of the City of New York sought to promote tolerance, diversity and respect within public schools. As Stephen Myers (1992) of The New York Times notes: “Three years ago, not long after the killing of a young black man in a white neighborhood in Bensonhurst, a group of teachers and administrators in New York City began writing a curriculum to teach first graders to respect the city’s myriad racial and ethnic groups”.

A curriculum titled, Children of the Rainbow, was subsequently created aimed at Kindergarten children. Following its general approval by educators and the public alike, a subsequent and amended curriculum was designed for Grade One students (1991-1992). The curriculum addressed a broad range of societal concerns, including child abuse, drug use, homelessness and HIV Aids. The purpose of the new curriculum was clearly stated in the introduction:

> The widely differing needs, interests and expectations of first grade children should be addressed through personalized, multicultural, developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Children should be continually encouraged to recognize and respect other groups and individuals while developing their own identity and sense of self-worth.

(as cited in Stern & Kysilka, 2008, p. 228)

The new curriculum incited an enormous amount of controversy, and was rejected by school districts across New York City. In the end, the curriculum was not implemented, and the Chancellor, whose job it was to develop and deliver the course, was made redundant.

The Children of the Rainbow curriculum generated controversy because it explicitly mentioned the need for greater awareness of lesbian/gay families. The information consisted of four paragraphs within the 400-plus pages:

> Fostering Positive Attitudes Towards Sexuality
It is important for teachers of first graders to be aware of the changing concept of family in today’s society. To help teachers work effectively with every child, it is important to know that:

- Children of lesbian/gay parents may have limited experience with male/female parental situations; if there is no representation of their lives in the classroom, they may suddenly be made to feel different.

- Children growing up in heterosexually headed families may be experiencing contact with lesbians/gays for the first time...

Teachers of first graders have an opportunity to give children a healthy sense of identity at an early age. Classes should include reference to lesbian/gay people in all curricular areas and should avoid exclusionary practices by presuming a person’s sexual orientation, reinforcing stereotypes, or speaking of lesbians/gays as ‘they’ or ‘other’”.

(Stern & Kysilka, 2008, p. 229)

The controversy surrounding the curriculum was best summed up by Myers (1992) who noted:

And thus, a curriculum intended to foster tolerance has deeply divided a city and provoked vicious expressions of intolerance... The controversy has become so furious that it has obscured what is actually in the curriculum. Most of the curriculum offers such unexceptional lessons as pinning cut-outs of exotic fruits and vegetables on a world map. While it includes no lessons about homosexuality, the curriculum’s critics have focused on the few short passages that urge teachers to tell their students that some people are gay and should be respected like anyone else.

That morning, John walked into the principal’s office, placed the graphic novel on his table and said, “This! This is what we should be using. Not those generic textbooks. This is what the kids are reading. This is what they want. This graphic novel covers all the topics of the social studies curriculum”.

The principal was bemused. “You mean this comic book?” he said. “Are you suggesting we introduce popular culture into the curriculum? How could we ever keep up? Popular culture is fickle, it changes every two minutes. The kids need to understand the fundamentals, and they are to be found in academic textbooks”.

“But what about relevance, and individualised teaching? Isn’t our job to teach with an understanding of each student’s capabilities and interests?”
“What would the parents say? Would you want your kids reading comic books? What’s next John, Hollywood blockbusters for history, pop songs for English?

“And, besides John, you understand the political nature of curriculums. You mentioned The Children of the Rainbow Curriculum, and I am aware of it. Do you think I can simply include these issues within the curriculum without any broad-based consultation? Please John”.

The above example highlights several key issues inherent within curriculum theory and practice. Firstly, it looks at the role and purpose of textbooks within the curriculum and classroom – should they be mandatory? Should they be designed to prepare students for standard based testing? Should teachers have a greater say in what texts they incorporate within the classroom?

Secondly, the example highlights the influence of popular culture within the curriculum – should the curriculum encompass popular trends? While the trends we see today might seem fickle, they may (for better or worse) be what reconstitutes our culture in the future. Therefore, should the curriculum employ greater flexibility, steering away from the restrictions of traditional academic work, and encompass ICT and social media advancements, as well as cultural language and behaviour traits?

Finally, the example brings to note the inherent political nature of curriculum design. This fact has been one of the key issues that we have emphasised throughout this course. Curriculum design will necessarily reflect the governing sociopolitical environment; this fact will not only influence the content of any intended curriculum (i.e. consider religious and political aims and beliefs as one component), but also affect the design process of any such curricula activity (i.e. do the policy makers design and implement the curriculum, or is this largely left to schools and school districts?)

The academic literature on curriculum theory and practice comes in many forms. The lack of cohesion within the field, coupled by what some have argued is an early ahistorical/atheoretical stance (see Kliebard, as cited in Pinar, 2000, p. 184), makes for often challenging reading. How do we define curriculum? How do we approach curriculum (as theorists, as practitioners, as both)? How do we implement curriculum? Is curriculum studies largely Western world focused? Is there such a thing as global curriculum practice, or is there simply a myriad of local curriculum practitioners operating in a global world? What are good and poor examples of curriculum practice? Can we learn from these practices or are they too nation-specific? Indeed, are curriculum documents and curriculum thoughts the best approach to ensuring successful learning?

These are all very important, interesting and challenging questions. In your independent reading of the curriculum field (both texts and journals), you will notice the interplay of these divergent questions and views, as well as a general emphasis on theory and theorists. As mentioned, in this course we have chosen an alternative path. Through a creative
narrative approach, we have attempted to put you at the centre of curriculum practice; the exercises we have formulated have sought to encourage you to view curriculum issues from a broad perspective.

Our approach does not reflect an undervaluing of theory. Theory may be perceived as a lens through which to view practical concerns – in this instance, education and instruction. Without the lens, the practical (or actual) continues to occur. On occasions, the lens – like poorly prescribed eyeglasses – can impede our practice. On other occasions, the lenses can be invaluable, allowing us to see the practical in a new light and with greater clarity. On further occasions, we may choose to don the lenses in different circumstances so as to serve different needs – think, our use of generic reading glasses and prescribed eyeglasses.

In his article, ‘The Relationship between Educational Theory and Practice: A New Look’, Harold Entwistle admirably discusses the reasons behind the entrenched theory/practice divide. Entwistle asserts that the practitioner’s distrust of theory is a result of both poor theory and misplaced expectations. On the notion of inadequate theory, Entwistle (as cited in Hare and Portelli, 2013) states:

*Firstly, I believe that educational theory is often unacceptably utopian. An example of this would be in the conception of the child that dominates liberal education theory. We assume the existence of a perfect learner – essentially innocent, insatiably curious, and intrinsically motivated...We rarely entertain the possible truth...(that the child) goes unwillingly to school...*

*(Secondly) Theory urges us to remember that each child brings a unique personal history to school that peculiarly affects his or her motivation and defines his or her idiosyncratic needs, interests, and preferences...what this really adds up to is an individualized and personalized curriculum for every child. But the reality is that we do not, we cannot, teach children as individuals in schools, except occasionally and marginally...*

*(Thirdly) It is a legitimate criticism by practitioners that educational theory often ignores the bureaucratic context of classrooms and schools...educational theory often also implicitly individualizes the classroom and the school, in the sense that it assumes both to be autonomous associations in which the teacher is able to function independently, without bureaucratic constraints upon one’s professional judgment and competence.*

(p. 7)

On the inappropriate expectations practitioner’s often have of theory, Entwistle (as cited in Hare and Portelli, 2013) states:
(Practitioners fail to realise) that even the best of theories has to be applied with discrimination to the practical situation. It is in the nature of what a theory is that there can never be an exact, neat, one-to-one fit between theory and practice. Theories are generalizations about practice, while practical situations are particular, peculiar and widely varied...

The job of a theory is to evoke judgment rather than rote obedience. The application of theory to practice means bringing critical intelligence to bear on practical tasks rather than merely implementing good advice.

(p. 9)

The relationship between theory and practice needn’t be fraught with fear or antagonism. You may find yourself in stark opposition to some theorists, while the work of other theorists you may deeply appreciate. Later, you may swear that your instruction practices bear no traces of any theorist’s work you have read or studied. But, just like a good pair of eyeglasses, we often forget that they are on our face and how much they aid our action.

Reflection Space:

Take a moment to reflect on how theory has informed your own professional instruction. Do you believe there is a gap between theory and practice? If so, what reasons do you believe perpetuate this notion?

UNIT OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this unit current and future educational leaders will be able to:

1. Identify key concepts and theorists – both historical and present – and understand their role and significance in furthering curriculum practice.
2. Understand the varying nature of curricula across the world and critically evaluate both past and present initiatives as demonstrated in case studies.
3. Critically reflect on key and/or contentious issues within the curriculum field, including subject matter selection, curriculum delivery, and leadership roles.

UNIT READINGS


**TOPIC 3.1 – A COMPLICATED CONVERSATION: EXAMINING CURRICULUM THEORY AND PRACTICE.**

Let us begin with some introductory words from two noted curriculum theorists – Elliot W. Eisner and Joseph J. Schwab. These short extracts are taken from the introductory paragraphs of two articles, ‘Levels of Curriculum and Curriculum Research’ (1965), and, ‘The Practical: A Language for Curriculum’ (1969), respectively:

*The field of curriculum is one of the most complex, difficult, comprehensive, and rapidly changing fields in education. The reasons for the complexity of the field stem from many sources. For one, many of the decisions that need to be made in building a curriculum depend on knowledge that comes from the behavioral sciences, especially psychology and sociology. But the kind of knowledge that is needed is seldom available. When it is available, it too frequently comes in a form so remote from the classroom as to render it virtually useless for particular schools and teachers.*

(Eisner, 1965, p. 155)

And:

*I shall have three points. The first is this: that the field of curriculum is moribund, unable by its present methods and principles to continue its work and desperately in search of new and more effective principles and methods.*

*The second point: the curriculum field has reached this unhappy state by inveterate and unexamined reliance on theory in an area where theory is partly inappropriate in the first place and where the theories extant, even where appropriate, are inadequate to the tasks which the curriculum field sets them.*

(Schwab, 1969, p. 1)
Out of context, these extracts cannot help but fill one with a sense of unease. As a graduate student, they might even inspire a sense of futility – if these scholars can’t comprehend curriculum theory and practice, what hope is there for me? Besides, Schwab – like a skilful doctor – has pronounced the field at death’s door! This sense of disquiet might be heightened by the fact that schools continue to exist, children continue to be educated, and curriculums continue to be drafted and implemented. One may ask: who is guiding this ship?

Proclamations of death in theory are not new. In 1967, the literary theorist Roland Barthes pronounced the ‘death of the author’. Taken literally, one would have assumed that the production of books would have quickly ceased – the pen put down, the curtains drawn. Of course, this was not the case; Barthes was asserting that the way in which we interpreted texts, specifically the way in which we incorporated the author’s supposed intentions, needed to be radically re-examined. The result, in part, was the formation of radical new paths in literary theory, incorporating the critically interrogative and self-reflective postmodernist movement. Furthermore, Barthes statements were not isolated to literature alone, they reflected the changing currents within sociopolitical thought.

While Curriculum theory may be seen as a fragmented discourse, it is certainly not dead. Assertions, like those made by Eisner and Schwab, should be seen as public battles that wage intellectual might against theoretical and practical dead-ends. In context, Schwab (1969) offers a third point, which forms the crux of his article:

*There will be a renaissance of the field of curriculum, a renewed capacity to contribute to the quality of American education, only if the bulk of curriculum energies are diverted from the theoretic to the practical, to the quasipractical and the ‘eclectic’. By ‘eclectic’ I mean the arts by which unsystematic, uneasy, but usable focus on a body of problems is effected among diverse theories, each relevant to the problems in a different way.*

(Schwab, 1969, p. 1)

Now, this is certainly a more positive contribution; but ‘eclectic’? Where is the clear, all-encompassing, unobstructed, unifying way forward? Surely, as an educator – especially as a leader – pronouncements of eclectics in curriculum design would not inspire confident and knowledgeable leadership (are you telling us that we need to pick shiny bits from this and that, like some bowerbird?).

In an article titled, ‘No Easy Answers: Joseph Schwab’s Contributions to Curriculum’, Eisner (1984) – a former student of Schwab’s – provides a defence of Schwab’s argument:

*Schwab does not make life easier. He tries to make it more intelligent. And intelligence in the full and generous meaning is something we desperately need at present...*
The curriculum is first a process, one that requires above all the exercise of a practical rationality. It is a process that has standard features — the commonplaces of education — but not common activities or ‘uniform solutions’. The aim of the curricularist is not to know, but to do; that is, the curricularist’s task is to get a job done rather than to be a seeker of dispassionate truth (whatever that might mean). Both as an entity — a body of material; - and as a process — curricular activity is an artefact, a construction, the fruit of human and therefore fallible deliberation. To deliberate competently on matters curricular is, in Schwab’s view, to be necessarily eclectic.

Subsequently, as one can imagine, definitions of curriculum vary greatly. Throughout this course we have reiterated our curricula mantra: What do we want to do and why? And how do we do it? It will now serve us well to explore some varying definitions of curriculum. The following perspectives are drawn from Decker F. Walker’s text, Fundamentals of Curriculum (2003). Like many such academic textbooks on curriculum practice, Walker does a good job in providing a broad-based overview of the key concepts. In this instance, he cites several prominent authors and reminds us that such perspectives should not be seen as definitive or used to form the conclusive basis for arguments on much more important curricula concerns:

**Various definitions of curriculum**

- The planned learning activities sponsored by the school (citing Tanner & Tanner).

- The content pupils are expected to learn (citing Smith & Orlovsky).

- The contrived activity and experience – organized. Focused, systematic – that life, unaided, would not provide (citing Musgrave).

- A set of events, either proposed, occurring, or having occurred, which has the potential for reconstructing human experience (citing Duncan & Frymier).

- Situations or activities arranged and brought into play by the teacher to effect student learning (citing Shaver & Berlak).

- Things which children and youth must do and experience by way of developing abilities to do the things well that make up the affairs of adult life (citing Bobbitt).
The total effort of the school to bring about desired outcomes in school and out-of-school situations (citing Saylor & Alexander).

A sequence of potential experiences set up in school for the purpose of disciplining children and youth in group ways of thinking and acting (citing Smith, Stanley, & Shores).

A set of abstractions from actual industries, arts, professions and civic activities...brought into the school-box and taught (citing Goodman).

(Walker, 2003, p. 12)

Reflection Space:

In both your independent reading and within your professional practice, you will certainly have encountered many different theoretical and practical definitions of curriculum. Take some time to reflect upon your understanding of curriculum – how do you and your peers define curriculum?

One of the most influential (and contested) views on curriculum development was provided by Ralph Tyler in his text, Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction (1949). Tyler’s approach – known as the Tyler rationale – is centered on four key questions:

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

(Tyler, 1949, p. 1)

At face value, Tyler’s approach seems refreshingly clear and logical. Educators would certainly relate to Tyler’s stated structure: discern the objectives, select and organise experiences (subject matter and activities that promote active learning) and then evaluate the entire process.

Accordingly, Tyler’s assumptions gained traction within the United States education system. His theory however was criticised for emphasising the fact that objectives should override individual capabilities, interests or freedom. As Zahorik (1976) states:

This planning model that has captured American education at all levels and in all content areas seems neutral, but it is not. It carries with it a
Take some time to reflect on the Tyler rationale. How do you perceive the four principles of curriculum practice and development? Are these, or similar methods, employed within your professional environment?

Eisner (2002) notes: “No concept is more central to curriculum planning than the concept of objectives…Objectives are the specific goals that one hopes to achieve through the educational program that is provided. In order for educational planning to be meaningful, not only must goals be formulated, but they must also be formulated with precision and clarity” (p. 108).

What is your opinion on the importance of objectives within curriculum design? Can you think of different ways of designing objectives? Think of your answer in the context of past curriculum or educational reform efforts, such as NCLB.


Dewey’s thought has had a profound impact on the field of philosophy and education. Of note to the study of curriculum practice are his works: *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902), *Democracy and Education* (1916) and *Experience and Education* (1938). Though, at times, reading Dewey’s writing can be challenging, the effort is more than worthwhile.

Dewey’s article, ‘My Pedagogic Creed’ (1929), is divided into five sections: What education is, What the school is, The subject matter of education, The nature of method, and The school and social progress. The article provides a clear overview of Dewey’s thoughts regarding education and schooling.
Take some time to read the article. Provide a brief summary of each section (800 words), making sure to highlight what you believe to be the key points. In your opinion, how does Dewey’s progressive view on education and schooling, differ to the rationale provided by Tyler? Dewey wrote the article in 1929, are there lessons to be learned from his work today?
In an article titled, ‘Curriculum Theory and Practice: What’s Your Style?’ (2011), Donna L. Miller attempts to explore the different types of philosophical viewpoints – often implicit or entrenched – which inform curriculum development and practice. Miller notes four varying stances: Linear thinkers, Holists, Laissez-Faire advocates and Critical theorists.

To this end, Miller provides a self-examination exercise – a series of broad-ranging educational questions – which helps individuals better understand their educative stance. Miller (2011) states that while delineating a particular viewpoint is not in itself definitive or conclusive, it may aid in critical self-evaluation:

> Self-examination may also produce intellectual satisfaction because it makes one aware of personal curriculum style preferences and illuminates values and beliefs about teaching. Participants can reflect on their findings to consider possible explanations for their actions. Noticing how we form decisions and giving name to how we design curriculum may prompt some change in our teaching practices. Our discoveries may lead to a more productive focus and may take some of the mystery out of teaching.

(p. 36)

Miller’s ‘Curriculum Style Indicator’ is extensive, exceptional and rewarding. Take some time to complete the survey and to tally your results.

**Miller Curriculum Style Indicator**

The following survey can provide insight about individual curriculum styles. **Circle** the letter that corresponds most closely to your thinking or beliefs.

1. **Knowledge originates from or is constructed from:**
   a. Traditional texts, classics, history, official cannons, and prototypes.
   b. Current experiences.
   c. Play.
   d. Many sources, often from outside school.
2. **To enhance learning, a teacher should:**
   
a. State clear, predetermined objectives, organize and secure learning, and then evaluate/assess performance.

b. Invite learning, eliciting questions from students to guide knowledge acquisition.

c. Observe how students interact and encounter experiences.

d. Call attention to power relationships and try to share the power.

3. **Educational experience should:**
   
a. Be controlled and measured against standards.

b. Be negotiated by students and teachers and are not always measurable.

c. Maximize individual freedom.

d. Promote and advocate for social and educational transformation.

4. **In planning curriculum:**
   
a. Oldest knowledge is best. Borrow from repositories of wisdom, and don’t reinvent the wheel.

b. Don’t ignore the past, but connect knowledge to the present life and cultural heritage of the learner.

c. Anything goes. Choice, enjoyment, and natural curiosity play crucial roles.

d. Consider ways to help children work through preconceived societal views.

5. **Standardized tests:**
   
a. Provide a uniform, quantitative standard against which to measure program effectiveness and student performance.

b. Contribute to generic curricula, constructed for computer score-ability rather than for their relationship to learning.

c. Should be optional or self-selected, not mandated.

d. Ignore cultural differences and distance nondominant youth from
the process of schooling.

6. **Schools and curricula should:**
   a. Maximize educational efficiency.
   b. Be a trial-and-error quest for meaning.
   c. Not intervene in the learning process or enforce any academic requirements.
   d. Be sensitive to cultural capital and to issues of social justice.

7. **Standardization:**
   a. Is necessary to ensure quality, to reduce variation, to maximize uniformity, and to give everyone the same target at which to aim.
   b. Limits innovation, undermines imaginative thinking, and minimizes occasions to explore ideas and problems of individual interest.
   c. Inhibits personal signature and individual freedom; it dehumanizes with indoctrination and detracts from the natural and intrinsic desires of the learner.
   d. Reproduces inequalities of social stratification and undermines egalitarian notions; it works against expertise.

8. **The role of the student is:**
   a. To master uniform bodies of content assigned to each grade.
   b. To engage in educational experiences designed by teachers to lead students to personal growth.
   c. To direct his/her own education.
   d. To deal with unfamiliar questions and nonroutine problems, to actively construct knowledge, to develop awareness of and respect for all citizens, and to speak out against injustice.

9. **Which of the following quotations most aligns with your beliefs?**
   a. “Education is a shaping process as much as the manufacture of steel rails, and the product should rise to set a standard” – Franklin
b. “Curriculum is the cultural environment which has been purposely selected as a set of possibilities for facilitating educational transactions” – James MacDonald.

c. “It is always, without exception, better for a child to figure something out on his/her own than to be told;...what he figures out, he remembers better” – John Holt.

d. “Curriculum is the nexus of knowledge and power that is legitimated and mediated through schooling or some other social structures and communicated among participants, usually with one or more teachers facilitating the process with one or more students” – Michael Apple.

10. **Schools should operate like:**

   a. Factories, efficiently producing high-quality workers for the marketplace.

   b. Democratic communities, celebrating diversity and developing habits of mind conducive to cooperation.

   c. Participatory democracies, where all learners pursue individual interests in vigorous, robust ways.

   d. Change agencies, focusing on civil rights, socioeconomic equality, and policies for equitable access.

11. **The primary criterion in education is:**

   a. Efficiency – a program that enables the greatest amount of content to be taught to the greatest number of students in the least amount of time.

   b. Creativity – a program that emphasizes appeal and attraction for learning while honouring a greater variety of preferences.

   c. Self-initiation – no set program exists; learners select enjoyable and enlightening experiences.

   d. Social justice – a program that focuses on making the world a better place.
12. **Students should:**
   a. Receive and obey instructions.
   b. Learn to value their own judgment.
   c. Act on their own initiative.
   d. Interrogate the world around them as they seek social justice.

13. **Behavioral norms should reflect:**
   a. Procedures, routines, organization, accountability.
   b. Individuality, experiences, assertiveness, productive idiosyncrasy.
   c. Freedom, spontaneity, creativity, self-actualization.
   d. Engagement, equality, empathy, human dignity.

14. **Bells that govern learning time:**
   a. Value speed, reinforce time limits, and provide training with routines and schedules.
   b. Remind us to move on to a new experience.
   c. Should not exist, since the clock should neither govern readiness to learn nor determine transitions.
   d. Suggest nothing is worth completing.

15. **Pedagogy:**
   a. Reflects routine, follows procedures, and quantifies achievement.
   b. Encourages creative thought and sense-making.
   c. Fosters free will and pleasure.
   d. Assists in ameliorating the social injustices history has created.

16. **In questions of possible curriculum integration:**
   a. Disciplines are distinct, separate, pure entities.
   b. Interdisciplinary topics are rearranged around overlapping concepts and emergent patterns and designs.
### 17. Schools are:

- **For the transmission of information;** the present knowledge as fixed and certain, something discovered by experts.
- **For the encouragement of creativity;** they provide opportunities to explore ideas, conjecture, hypothesize with others, and revives original ideas.
- **Simply buildings that house subject-matter experts who do what they love and let students hang around or join in unforced.**
- **For the examination of social issues;** their ultimate aim is social action outside the classroom.

### 18. Common descriptors for curriculum, objectives, and learning:

- **Systematic, predetermined, particularized, controlled, efficient.**
- **Organic, emergent, integrated, structured, experiential.**
- **Individualized, playful, free, unfocused, spontaneous.**
- **Equitable, rigorous, authentic, relevant, aiming to ameliorate social injustices.**

### 19. Learning effectively happens with methods like:

- **Memorization, textbook delivery, lecture, scope-and-sequence objectives.**
- **Activity and inquiry that focus on doing and then provide time to reflect on the doing.**
- **Self-direction, individual will, choice.**
- **Engaging with materials and discussion topics that equip students to change the world for the better.**
20. **Learning:**

   a. Provides direct observational evidence of what students know and are able to do.

   b. Is the exploration of meaningful interests and passions.

   c. Only happens when the individual chooses.

   d. Is the product of the activity of a community of learners.

**Scoring**

To determine your preferences, add the number of times you circled each letter and write the totals below:

\[
\text{A} = \_\_\_\_\_ \quad \text{B} = \_\_\_\_\_ \quad \text{C} = \_\_\_\_\_ \quad \text{D} = \_\_\_\_\_
\]

A large **A** total indicates a linear predisposition, while a preponderance of **B**'s suggests a predilection for the holistic style, **C**'s prefer the laissez-faire approach, and **D**'s lean toward the critical theorist's style.

(p. 36)

In her article, Miller (2011) provides an explanation of each educative disposition:

**Linear thinkers:**

*Generally, to be linear means to favour structure, order, and maximum control of a particular environment. The linearist wants education to be as efficient as possible, both fiscally and empirically... Diversity is not the ultimate goal in this model; this is a system that values procedure, routine, and the best way to do the job. Under the influence of such a design, standards control human effort, and predetermined outcomes require mastery, encouraging the worker or student to perform like a well-oiled machine...*

*The prevalence of how-to books, social tendencies to rate performance against ideals, and our competitive spirit prove that linearism has permeated multiple aspects of life beyond school.*

(p. 34)
Holists:

Holists believe that as long as an object of study captures students’ interest, moving on to another subject makes no sense. Interest drives the learning experience, with consideration for whether an experience will open or close a students’ world. Under such an organic design, curriculum emerges from negotiations among the student, teacher, and the environment…

Such a design demands teacher awareness and knowledge in a wide variety of content to meet diverse interests…Holists don’t divorce emotion from intellect…Such a focus assumes that enjoyable and enlightening experiences lead to learning. Fun is not the goal. Instead, they want educational experiences that are expansive and substantive. The Holist wants students who become masters of their environment and citizens who are equipped to live in a democratic society.

(p. 34)

Laissez-Faire Advocates:

Hoping to maximize individual freedom without precipitating chaos, laissez-faire principles espouse no official curriculum. Freedom is at the heart of such schools, since the laissez-faire program wants to protect students from being violated by evaluation, coercion, and power paradigms that impede learning or work against individual readiness. This philosophy endorses other fundamental premises: All people possess natural traits, like curiosity, that predispose learning; the most enduring and profound learning occurs when initiated and pursued by the learners; all people are creative if allowed to develop unique talents; and freedom is essential to developing personal responsibility…The key word here is ‘access’. Students have access to books, tools, and other resources that enable them to pursue their interests.

(p. 35)

Critical Theorists:

Critical theorists focus on the pursuit of social justice. Rather than deny the presence of power relationships, the critical theorist believes in talking about the elephants in the room. The teacher’s job is to guide students to see social injustices, to make the chains visible, and to uncover subliminal messages. Once students are aware of these external, constraining forces, knowledge might help them combat the hegemony. Any curriculum, then,
would invoke critical consciousness, advocate for social and educational transformation, and promote the demonstration of respect, understanding, appreciation, and inclusion...

Because the ultimate aim is social action outside the classroom, the curriculum encourages habits of mind and behavior norms that will enable students to both survive in the world and be agents of transformation.

(p. 35)

After tallying your results, what educational philosophy did your beliefs place you within? Do you agree with this finding? Miller emphasises that the categories can also be fluid, overlapping according to individual beliefs and experiences. Did your findings span across several categories? In your opinion, can you detail any possible positive and problematic characteristics of the proposed curriculum viewpoints? (For instance, the laissez-faire approach espouses ‘no official curriculum’. Is this practice – or a slight variant – feasible within your professional environment?)

In his text, The Educational Imagination, Eisner (2002) defines the concept curriculum as:

The curriculum of a school, or a course, or a classroom can be conceived of as a series of planned events that are intended to have educational consequences for one or more students...A curriculum is a series of planned events...A second feature of the conception is that curricula are planned; someone must be doing something that has some aim, some purpose, some goal or objective, even though it might be highly diffusive or general. A third feature is that the intention be educational in character...A fourth feature of this concept deals with the term ‘consequences’. Educational events or activities do much more than what is intended; they influence people in a wide variety of ways...In other words, a curriculum is a program that is intentionally designed to engage students in activities or events that will have educational benefits for them.

(p. 31)

Like Donna L. Miller (2011), Eisner also notes the influence of what he terms ‘educational ideologies’ on the nature of teaching and instruction. Eisner also emphasises that these ideologies are not exhaustive. He notes six different beliefs: Religious Orthodoxy, Rational Humanism, Progressivism, Critical Theory, Reconceptualism and Cognitive Pluralism.
However, of importance within Eisner’s text is his examination of the three varying curriculums that all schools teach: the explicit and implicit curricula, and the null curriculum. The explicit curricula are those goals which schools publically state, such as their educational aims. Eisner (2002) notes:

> Not only do these goals appear in school district curriculum guides and the course planning materials that teachers are asked to prepare; the public also knows that these courses are offered and that students in the district will have the opportunity to achieve these aims, at least to some degree, should they want to do so.

(p. 88)

The implicit curricula refers to those things which are not made public, but are enacted through shared ideals, instruction practices, and behavioural rules. For instance, this might include the organisation of classrooms, the espousal of a school vision, the use of particular textbooks (including their inherent viewpoint), and the disciplinary and reward system a school might employ. Eisner (2002) notes:

> The implicit curriculum of the school is not only carried by the organizational structure of the school and by the pedagogical rules that are established in the school – in some high schools students must carry a pass to show hall guards that they have permission to use the washroom – but it is also manifested in more subtle ways. Consider for a moment school architecture and the design of school furniture...Most of the furniture is designed for easy maintenance, is uncomfortable, and is visually sterile...Rooms seldom have a soft relief: there are few places for enclosure or for privacy...

> Thus, the implicit curriculum is what it teaches because of the kind of place it is. And the school is that kind of a place through the ancillary consequences of various approaches to teaching...These characteristics constitute some of the dominant components of the school’s implicit curriculum. Although these features are seldom publically announced, they are intuitively recognized by parents, students, and teachers. And because they are salient and pervasive features of schooling, what they teach may be among the most important lessons a child learns.

(p. 96)

**Open Dialogue:**

It is not uncommon within curriculum literature to encounter a variety of different ‘coined’ names for similar concepts. For instance, you may find that the ‘implicit
curriculum’ is also referred to as the ‘hidden curriculum’.

In her article, ‘Dominant Discourses in Curriculum’, Elizabeth Miller (2012) defines the ‘hidden curriculum’ as “what is being taught implicitly in schools” (p. 57). Like Eisner, she notes its importance and pervasive presence.

While the explicit curricula focuses on what schools do teach, the null curriculum focuses on what schools choose to omit. While this could include specific content (subject matter – be it deemed controversial or unimportant), the null curriculum also encompasses the learning styles and processes that are neglected in instruction. Eisner (2002) notes:

*When we look at school curricula with an eye toward the full range of intellectual processes that human beings exercise, it quickly becomes apparent that only a slender range of those processes is emphasized...*

*What we teach in schools is not always determined by a set of decisions that have entertained alternatives; rather, the subjects that are now taught are part of a tradition, and traditions create expectations, they create predictability, and they sustain stability...*

*(The null curriculum is) the options students are not afforded, the perspectives they may never know about, much less be able to use, the concepts and skills that are not a part of their intellectual repertoire. Surely, in the deliberations that constitute the course of living, their absence will have important consequences on the kind of life that students can choose to lead.*

(p. 105-107)

**Reflection Space:**

In a UNICEF publication titled, ‘Curriculum Report Card’ (2000), the authors noted the importance of the null curriculum. The report states:

*Some content and skills are intentionally or unintentionally ignored in the curriculum. For example, instruction about HIV/AIDS or women’s contributions to society throughout a nation’s history may not be included in the intended or taught curriculum. Several countries in this study reported that Peace Education is not in their curriculum since their nations have not been involved in cross-border conflicts. Others report that a gender-inclusive curriculum is not a national priority and not part of the*
If students do not and cannot learn about particular concepts from curriculum materials or teachers, these learning areas fall into the category of the null curriculum.

(p. 11)

The role of peace education, and non-violent perspectives, within curriculum studies is an interesting yet seldom examined concept. The topic has a universal quality, spanning across countries and cultures. This universality is based on the fact that one needn’t have experienced war, to understand the (often generational) effects violence causes. In addition, violence is not limited to physical acts of large scale aggression; it can include, verbal or written violence (from profanities posted on the Internet, to inflammatory publications), and localised acts of abuse (from domestic abuse, to government responses to public demonstrations, and even schoolyard or increasingly, cyberspace bullying).

In her article, ‘A Nonviolent Perspective on Internationalizing Curriculum Studies’, Hongyu Wang (as cited in Pinar, 2013) argues that the inclusion of nonviolence practices within education is long overdue. She notes:

While unlearning is an important part of learning to shed the effects of violence both internally and externally, could we also teach our children and youth nonviolent principles? What might happen if the content, purpose, and means of education were united through nonviolence? If we participate in internationalizing curriculum studies, is nonviolence education an inspiring vision for which we can work together? An educational project of nonviolence involves intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual cultivation of personhood situated in history and culture, and the message of nonviolence should be embodied in the heart of curriculum studies.

(p. 69)

Take a moment to reflect on the nature of peace and nonviolence education. Do you think that these concepts have a place within the school curriculum? Are there consequences in omitting such content from school education? What challenges do you think educators might face in introducing such topics within the curriculum?

While Eisner’s examination of the three varying curriculums that are taught within schools is invaluable, it is also worth examining a further concept: how educators interpret and implement the written curriculum. Each educator embodies their own set of flexible or inflexible ethics and values; we would struggle to find a teacher who enters the workplace
as an entity devoid of personal experience – a fresh brick of malleable clay, so to speak, offering themselves both willingly and completely to the moulding hands of a larger, educational system (nor, would this indeed be a positive attribute). That is, we cannot disregard the role and interplay of lived-experiences outside of the classroom (i.e. in the family and/or academic environment), the nature of individual human agency (especially within the classroom), and the objectives stated in the written curriculum.

While curriculum material – be it a syllabus or textbook – may appear as a static object, a construction of words on the printed page, it is not devoid of capacity. Reiterating Eisner’s definition of the term, the curriculum is an active space constructed of potential (and often mandated) actions: planned events, goals and importantly, consequences. The role of the educator is to turn the content on the written page into a positive learning experience. Now, this might seem obvious, but it involves a complex interaction of personal experience (including teacher knowledge, or subject expertise), personal reflection (the ability to consider alternative views and to compromise), classroom knowledge (an understanding of the pupil’s interests and capabilities) and broader school expectations (specific stipulations and shared goals).

In her article, ‘Teacher Agency in Curriculum Contexts’, Elizabeth Campbell discusses the role of moral agency and the nature of teaching. Campbell (2012) sees moral agency as:

A double-pronged state that entails a dual commitment on the part of the teacher. The first relates to the exacting ethical standards the teacher as a moral person and a moral professional holds himself or herself to, and the second concerns the teacher as a moral educator, model, and exemplar... (these are interrelated) as teachers, through their actions, words, and attitudes, may be seen to be living by the same principles that they hope students will embrace.

This dual perspective can be adapted more broadly beyond a focus on the moral to position teacher agency in terms of, firstly, a teacher’s commitment to governing his or her professional practice according to deeply held values, convictions, and beliefs about teaching, learning, and epistemology. The teacher’s capacity to engage students in curricular experiences that are compatible with these values is a powerful measure of his or her agential potential... Buzzelli and Johnston (2002) note that ‘teaching is an activity involving a deep awareness of the significance of one’s choices and how these choices influence the development and well-being of others’ (p, 120). Secondly, as an extension of their own agency, teachers need to respect the agency of their students as autonomous human beings. In asking themselves what they are trying to achieve in their classroom interactions, teachers need also to consider this from the point of view of cultivating and fostering
student agency. And, to return to the core question...they need to reflect on both of these perspectives in terms of the question, ‘Agency for what?’ What do they strive for as a result of their own agency and what do they similarly aim to facilitate in their student’s ongoing development or agency?

(p. 184)

Reading Space:

Let us further explore the interesting and often complex dynamics between teacher’s lives, curriculum and instruction. Turn to the publication, ‘Courage and Hope. Stories from teachers living with HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa’. The publication can be retrieved from: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTEDUCATION/0,,contentMDK:21860525~menuPK:613702~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:282386~isCURL:Y,00.html.

This important and often moving publication documents the lives and experiences of teacher’s living with HIV/AIDS. In the introduction, the authors state:

It is estimated that there are currently approximately 122,000 teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa who are living with HIV, the vast majority of whom have not sought testing and do not know their HIV status. Stigma remains the greatest challenge and the major barrier to accessing and providing assistance to these teachers...

The voices of these teachers suggest that a number of obstacles are commonly faced by teachers living with HIV. Paramount among them are stigma and discrimination, both from their families and communities as well as their workplaces and in society more generally. The difficulties of overcoming stigma and discrimination are further exacerbated by a failure to ensure confidentiality in the workplace.

(2009, p. vii)

Take some time to read this publication. Provide a brief (500 words) summary of the publication – you may choose to focus on a few of the personal stories, and highlight some of the lessons to be learned (for instance, the need to both combat stigma and to provide HIV prevention education within the school curriculum).

Once you have completed this exercise, turn to the publication, ‘Life Planning Skills: A Curriculum for Young People in Africa – Uganda Version’ (2003). This publication can be retrieved from: http://www.path.org/publications/detail.php?i=1592. While this document is long, we would like you to pay particular attention to the first three sections – Introduction for Facilitators, Guidelines for the Facilitators, and Facilitation Techniques. We
would also like you read Unit 10 – HIV and AIDS on page 298.

What is your opinion of ‘Life Planning Skills: A Curriculum for Young People in Africa – Uganda Version’? The curriculum employs a wide range of factual information and classroom activities. Do you think these exercises are successful in conveying the importance of HIV/AIDS education within the curriculum? When looking at both works side-by-side, what can we learn about the complexity of teaching and of life? Indeed, can education and instruction be separated from the realities of life?

Finally, take a moment to reflect on your own life. How have your experiences influenced your perception of education, the curriculum (what should be taught) and instruction?

**TOPIC 3.2 – MAJOR ASSIGNMENT: REFLECTIVE ESSAY.**

_The first step we can take toward changing our reality in the U.S. – waking up from the nightmare that is the present state of public miseducation – is acknowledging that we are indeed living in a nightmare. The nightmare that is the present – in which educators have little control over the curriculum, the very organizational and intellectual center of schooling – has several markers, prominent among them (is) ‘accountability’, an apparently commonsensical idea that makes teachers, rather than students and their parents, responsible for students’ educational accomplishment. Is it not obvious that education is an opportunity offered, not a service rendered?_

(Pinar, 2003, p. 11)

While William F. Pinar’s critical assessment may be confined to the educational system within the United States, his comments do raise several important universal issues. For instance: how do we define education and miseducation? What role should educators have in designing and delivering the curriculum? What are the benefits and/or disadvantages of greater accountability within schools? Should education be seen as a ‘service rendered’ by teachers, or as an ‘opportunity offered’ to children?

Write a reflective essay, which examines these important issues in the context of your own professional environment. As this is a reflective essay, it is important to be explicit about the connection between your experiences and the issues raised by Pinar. For instance, would you characterise education in your professional environment as progressive or in need of reform? What role do you, or your educational peers, play in designing and delivering the curriculum?

Your response should be approximately 1,500 words.
REFERENCES


In the introduction to his text, *Curriculum Leadership*, Leo H. Bradley (2004) states:

*The terms ‘curriculum leader’ is harder to define than other educational leadership positions such as superintendent or principal. In fact, it is not always defined by one’s position. There are times when superintendents, principals, central office administrators, or teachers may be thrust into the role of curriculum leader. Curriculum leadership is often a role within a broader administrative position, as opposed to a position unto itself.*

(p. 1)

While there is a prevailing sense of ambiguity among scholars as to precisely who should lead curriculum design, implementation and evaluation (for instance, see Garner and Bradley, 1991), there is little objection as to its central importance. Curriculum remains at the core of school purpose. Yet, as a practice, it is not easily ensnared or defined, straddling as it does administrative, instructional, sociopolitical and practical territories. As we have seen, curriculum is also often associated with broader school reform, or Whole System Reform, when it is applied on a state or national level.

One therefore rightly hesitates in providing tenets of leadership when situations (administrative, political or otherwise) may vary greatly between localities (local, national or international). The fear is that such notions would prove largely generic (you, who are now reading this course, might ask: who is the superintendent, and where are the central office administrators?). A second realisation is that the tenets of leadership, espoused in Course Two (The Culture of Leadership), would serve invaluable in the process of curriculum leadership – one still needs a strong and clear vision; school’s still need to embody a positive culture. Further, Course Five, which is centred on school reform, necessarily explores the reasons behind major reforms, and subsequently, its impact upon curriculum and leadership.

These issues in themselves form part of the complicated conversation that is curriculum practice. As one of the leading advocates of the internationalisation of curriculum studies, William F. Pinar (2003) notes:

*Given the national character of much curriculum work, what can be the benefit of meeting with others whose work is so focused? I take this question to be an ongoing one. One may decide that it may not be worthwhile at this time, despite the hype about ‘one world’ and ‘globalization’, a complex...*
economic, cultural and political phenomenon which is hardly to be greeted uncritically. It is a question each of us must answer for her or himself. It is a question contextualized in our national cultures, in the political present, in cultural questions institutionalized in academic disciplines and educational institutions. It is a question that calls upon us to critique our own national cultures...

Accompanying frank and ongoing self-criticism must be the reinvigoration of our professional commitment to engage in ‘complicated conversation’ with our academic subjects, our students, and ourselves. Such ‘complicated conversation’ requires the academic – intellectual – freedom to devise the courses we teach, the means by which we teach them, and the means by which we assess students’ study of them. We must fight for that freedom as individuals in classrooms and as a profession.

(p. 3 & p. 15)

By demonstrating the admirable, but yet often fallible nature of school and curriculum reform, we do not intend to dampen your (and Pinar’s) progressive ideals. What we certainly did try to do is involve you within this ‘complicated conversation’, and encourage you to employ greater self-reflection, with the ultimate goal of reinvigorating the profession – whatever, the specific freedoms or limitations may be within your professional environment.

Yet, it would be unfair to cite Bradley without further context. In his text, Bradley (2004) provides 10 unique elements of curriculum leadership. We will briefly highlight three:

1. Curriculum leadership is non-authoritarian in nature.
2. The curriculum leader must be knowledgeable and skilled in data analysis.
3. The curriculum leader must be reflective.

(p. 7)

As we have shown, the curriculum process involves many and varied stakeholders. Ideally – and especially as it relates to principal-teacher relations– the process of curriculum leadership should be one of cooperation and collaboration. In this instance, one would prefer the practice of collaborative leadership, where the ultimate goal, as Kochan and Reed (as cited in English, 2005) state, is “to create democratic learning communities in which power is shared and there is a mutual belief in working together for the common good... The focus is on empowerment rather than control and on the creation of dialogue, cooperation, and the fostering of democratic principles” (p. 72).
Throughout this course, we have emphasised the importance of knowledge and self-reflection. While knowledge, or the act of being knowledgeable, does not have the same allure as many leadership phrases, it is an essential component of leadership. This is especially the case in curriculum studies, which was noted earlier as having an ahistorical/atheoretical early existence. We provided a broad range of real case studies and employed an imaginative (and hopefully engaging) narrative to place you within the sociopolitical context of school and curriculum reform. Our attempt was to turn a complicated and often divisive topic into an engaging learning experience, and – to borrow a concept from Pinar – to help you see and return to the past and imagine the future so that you can act with knowledge and confidence in the present (see Pinar, 2003).

The resulting steps are for you to take – either independently in further research, or with your educational peers within the classroom. The challenges you will face in designing, implementing and evaluating curricula will be unique and varied, but the results will be collective, lasting and empowering.

REFERENCES

