THE INTERNATIONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CURRICULUM

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Preface

Educational processes of any type cannot be fully described without referring to their curricular components. Irrespective of whether education is defined in terms of transmitting the cultural heritage of a particular society, creating favorable conditions for the growth of the individual, guiding the individual's behavior in a desired direction, or preparing the individual adequately to fulfill socially endorsed roles and tasks, the educational process itself implies dealing, both in formal and nonformal education systems, with specific items of information and knowledge, feelings, values, and skills, or in more technical terms with *curricular contents*. Problems related to selecting such content units and organizing them in a way which facilitates their meaningful treatment within the framework of the educational process in general, and in school programs in particular, constitute the subject of curriculum studies.

In this sense curriculum is as age-old as education itself. Nevertheless, curriculum studies as a domain of scholarly inquiry emerged only at the beginning of the twentieth century. As Goodlad (1985 p. 1141) noted: "Curriculum praxis is, then, an old endeavor. Curriculum praxeology—the study of curriculum-building activity—appears to be a relatively new endeavor."

It is true that references to curricular problems can be found in scholarly books about education published long ago. Thus, for example, Schubert (1980) describes Fleury's book, *The History of Choice and Method of Studies*, published in French in 1686 and then translated and published in English in 1695, as the first attempt to approach problems of curriculum in a scholarly manner. However, only from the beginning of the twentieth century has there developed an incessant stream of analytical and empirical studies examining numerous aspects of the school curriculum and attempting to systematize relevant knowledge.

The early curriculum books, such as those authored by Bobbitt (1918) and by Charters (1923), contain only relatively small sections dealing with general principles of producing school curriculum, while a substantial proportion of the space is devoted, in both cases, to demonstrating and describing the applicability of these principles to individual subjects taught in the school. The theoretical core of these early books is meager and the concern of the authors is to suggest procedures for determining the relative weight of individual subjects within the overall framework of the school program, and to select topics to be included in the syllabus of each particular subject. The scope of curriculum theory has gradually expanded to include issues such as using curricula and evaluating their adequacy and worth. Nevertheless, as Goodlad (1985) noted, the field of curriculum studies has remained amorphous and epistemologically ill-defined. There is little agreement about what pertains to its domain. In practice, the content covered in one textbook differs widely from that of another textbook, and most conceptual frameworks, which are labelled as curriculum theory, address only pieces of the whole and are far from being comprehensive.

Notwithstanding the lack of a commonly accepted comprehensive curriculum theory, it is possible to identify a common core of issues, topics, and problems, which recur in

curriculum literature. Approaches to these core components of curriculum research and studies became diversified, but some of them, such as the selection and definition of educational objectives, reappear again and again, and a continually growing variety of arguments are brought up by those who support or oppose one or another way of treating this issue. Other core elements of this field, like curriculum implementation and the measurement and evaluation of implementation, have a shorter history, but over the past two decades quite an extensive literature has been generated around these topics, in which different views and approaches have been expounded, and the bearing of theories from fields like communication, innovation, and social psychology on these views and approaches has been meticulously examined. A third group of core elements of the field, like the concept of *core curriculum*, were completely redefined and gained an entirely different denotation in debates about curriculum reform in England and Wales (see Skilbeck 1984) from that which it had approximately 50 years earlier, when it was used in the context of examining the merits of another curricular innovation in the United States (see Chamberlin et al. 1942) in the context of the Eight Year Study of the Progressive Education Association (1932–1940). An encyclopedic summary of core elements sporadically appearing in the literature of the past 80 years, and of novel ideas and conceptions related to curriculum, which emerged in the wake of, and as a reaction to, the curriculum movement of the 1960s, will serve the information needs both of the practitioner and the theorist. For the practitioner it will serve as an inventory of issues and alternatives which should be taken into consideration in the process of decision making, and for the theorist it may serve as a catalyst for developing comprehensive curriculum theories on the basis of pulling together and integrating the extant part-theories.

Owing to the lack of commonly endorsed comprehensive curriculum theory at the time of creating this *Encyclopedia* it was necessary to use an empirical basis for mapping the entries to be dealt with in this book. This was done using the ERIC information base, a selected set of 14 basic textbooks and encyclopedic summaries of curriculum studies, and several well-read volumes of curriculum journals. As the first step of this mapping procedure, the Thesaurus (1982) of the ERIC system was examined and all entries dealing with issues which pertain to the domain of curriculum were marked and listed. This list was then checked and a few items which appeared in major chapter headings and indices of curriculum textbooks were added, though the survey of the curriculum journals did not generate new entries. While the compilation of the list was based on a systematic survey of relevant sources, it is not claimed that it represents an objective approach to establishing the list of the entries, since in many cases the decision as to whether an entry pertains to the domain of curriculum or not has been made on the basis of the judgment exercized by the person conducting the survey. In the case of the ERIC database, it was cross-checked to see if the Major and Minor Area designation of a particular keyword contained the curriculum category, and thus there was a possibility of obtaining an external validation for the editorial decision. Nevertheless, in numerous cases decisions reflect the views of the Editor.

At a later phase, more than 300 entries listed were clustered on the basis of analytic considerations. As a first step in this phase the entries were divided into two major groups: (a) those dealing with curriculum in general and representing theories, principles, and generalizations which cut across the boundaries of individual subjects and topics taught in schools; and (b) those which examined curricular considerations pertaining to a particular study area. As already indicated, the curriculum textbooks published during the first quarter of the twentieth century followed this pattern of division: the first section

of these books presented general principles of curriculum construction, and the second section dealt with individual subjects and basic skills. With the growth in scope of curriculum theories and the diversification of views and approaches, the curriculum textbooks became devoted totally to general principles and theories and dropped the sections dealing with the application of general curricular ideas to individual subjects.

This does not mean that the field of curriculum research and study was redefined in such a way that its boundaries excluded problems related to individual study areas. In educational practice, curricular generalizations have been intensively used in making decisions concerning dilemmas related to teaching individual subjects and the curriculum literature systematically treated this topic accordingly. Moreover, from the outset of the Curriculum Movement of the 1960s subject-specific curricular theories have emerged and they have gradually constituted the major topic of single-subject related books such as Fenton (1967) in Social Studies, Harlen (1983) in Science Teaching, Freudenthal (1973) in Mathematics, and Stern (1967) in Teaching Foreign Languages. In the wake of such diversification of curriculum studies, universities in many countries established separate departments for the teaching of Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, Language, Arts, and so on in the framework of which the subject-specific curricular topics received great attention and have developed into a systematically structured body of knowledge.

The growth of subject-specific curriculum research and studies, which coincided with the establishment of university departments specifically for dealing with these topics and the launching of scholarly journals devoted mainly to curricular developments in numerous subject fields, justifies the fact that a volume summarizing the knowledge accumulated in the field of curriculum should contain a section which summarizes developments in subject-specific areas too.

The subsequent sections of this Preface describe the structure of the two main parts of the volume: Curriculum as a Domain of Scholarly Inquiry, which deals with research and studies cutting across boundaries of subjects and topics of the school program, and Specific Study Areas, which deals with subject- and topic-specific research and studies.

1. Part 1: Curriculum as a Domain of Scholarly Inquiry

Entries representing scholarly inquiry which cut across the boundaries of school subjects and topics of the school program are divided into four Sections: Conceptual Framework; Approaches and Methods; Curriculum Processes; and Curriculum Evaluation. It should be remembered that these Sections have not been identified a priori, but rather were derived from the results of an empirical attempt to classify topics dealt with in curriculum literature. In other words, the starting point of this scheme is not a theory of curriculum, but rather a survey aiming to find out what are the concerns of scholars writing about curriculum. In this respect, the approach to determining the scheme of this *Encyclopedia* was affected by the view of Schwab (1969) who urged that curriculum specialists should systematically study everyday practice and should derive generalizations of a theoretical nature from findings of empirical studies. Schwab calls attention to the dangers of "tunnel vision" which occurs when scholars view practical phenomena in the light of a single theory, disregarding the parameters of other competing theories. However, Schwab was concerned with generating curriculum knowledge, and accordingly his references to empirical studies meant observing curriculum procedures of various types, while the aim of this volume is to summarize available knowledge and not to generate new knowledge; therefore, the empirical approach of this *Encyclopedia* consists of surveying published curriculum literature.

The Sections of Part 1 also reflect Schwab's views with regard to ways of organizing knowledge. Schwab (1964) argues that domains of scholarly inquiry are characterized by certain relationships between the elements of the domain, and he refers to these relationships as *structures*. A highly structured domain of inquiry constitutes a *discipline* and the nature of a particular discipline is described by responses to three *structural* question types. The first question type is: What are the boundaries of the *domain*? By which criteria can it be decided whether a certain phenomenon, issue, problem, or dilemma belongs to a particular domain of inquiry, or is contained within the boundaries of a specified discipline? In more general terms, these questions may be referred to as definition of boundaries. The second type of question concerns itself with ways of providing evidence and proving the veracity of certain statements or generalizations. What kind of methodology is recognized as legitimate within the specific domain of inquiry? Clearly enough the method of generating knowledge in history and proving the veracity of a thesis is different from that in physics or anthropology. This group consists of questions of syntax. Finally, the third group of questions relates to the identification of basic concepts, constructs, ideas, and so on, which guide the process of inquiry and give rise to generalizations of different types. Schwab refers to them as *substantive structures*.

The major Sections of Part 1 of this *Encyclopedia* do not fully represent the three groups of structural questions suggested by Schwab, but they are strongly related to them. Section 1, Conceptual Framework, is related to what Schwab termed the *boundaries*. Section 2, Approaches and Methods, is not fully identical with what Schwab called the *syntax*: the *Methods* in the Section title refer to methods of organizing school curricula and the articles representing *Approaches* describe different attitudes to dealing with problems of curriculum inquiry. Section 3, Curriculum Processes, consists of an inventory of substantive issues to be dealt with in curriculum research and studies. These three Sections describe the unique disciplinary characteristics of curriculum inquiry and the place of curriculum inquiry within the broader context of educational research and studies. Section 4, Curriculum Evaluation, represents a bidisciplinary domain of inquiry located at the interface area of the disciplines of Curriculum and Evaluation. Some practitioners and curriculum-evaluation theorists are inclined to view the field of Curriculum Evaluation as an emerging discipline which has already established its well-defined boundaries, specified the methods of inquiry which can be effectively used for evaluating school curricula, and also defined the substantive structures or major concepts and constructs which guide the process of inquiry within this domain. Indeed, it is easier to respond to the three structural questions of boundaries, syntax, and substantive constructs as referring to Curriculum Evaluation as a field of study than as referring to Curriculum Studies in general.

A more detailed characterization of Curriculum as a Domain of Scholarly Inquiry appears in the Introduction to the first part of the book as well as in the separate introductions to each of the four Sections in Part 1.

2. *Part 2: Specific Study Areas*

Research and studies dealing with curricular issues related to Specific Study Areas such as scientific disciplines and vocation or daily-life oriented skills constitute a substantial proportion of the curriculum literature. Although the majority of research is of an applicative nature, in most sections of this area, as in the field of science teaching and teaching foreign languages, attempts to develop theories and models that are uniquely

applicable to a single subject have been made. Therefore, a summary of curriculum literature which does not contain information about ideas and findings generated in the field of Specific Study Areas would present only a partial picture of the domain of curriculum studies.

Findings and ideas related to Specific Study Areas are of interest not only to those who are directly involved in dealing with curricular issues of the respective study areas, but also to curriculum practitioners and theorists in general. Those who provide professional services in the field of curriculum have to make decisions about allocating time and resources to programs in various study areas. Educational management staff as well as district and school-level curriculum coordinators have to make decisions about course offerings within the school and course requirements for graduation. To be able to deal with such problems effectively, it is necessary to acquire knowledge about the unique characteristics of each study area and become familiar with a broad variety of innovative curricular topics which have gained a legitimate status as study areas in various educational systems. Additionally, practitioners who are specialists in a certain discipline have to acquire basic knowledge about curricula in other subjects in order to be able to participate in decisions which affect the whole school program or cut across the boundaries of several study areas. Finally, curriculum theorists may use findings of subject-specific studies for systematizing knowledge and developing general or subject-specific curricular theories. To respond to these needs, Part 2 of this *Encyclopedia* is devoted to a summary of knowledge generated in special study areas.

The decision was taken to structure Part 2 according to the traditionally accepted division of scholarly disciplines in schools and institutions of higher education. Although attempts have been made in the past to use various innovative models and schemes for classifying school programs, it seemed more appropriate to use the traditional subject classification schemes in this *Encyclopedia*. There are three reasons for this. First, the innovative schemes, in most cases, have not been successful in educational contexts. Thus, for example, the Assessment of Performance Unit in England and Wales tried to use a scheme of six general lines of development for examining students' achievements in schools. They decided to carry out assessment projects in the following areas: language, mathematics, science, personal and social development, aesthetic development, and physical development. Eventually it turned out that it was not possible to develop assessment programs in these areas, and it was decided to assess achievements in areas which are not substantially different from those which characterize the traditional division of the school program (Gipps and Goldstein 1983). Second, the relevant knowledge is generated and organized so that it is easy to prepare summaries according to groups of traditional school subjects. Finally, in a substantial proportion of educational systems, teaching is organized according to the traditional grouping of subjects and therefore users will perceive subject-specific information as more relevant to their needs than information structured in any other form. Part 2 of this *Encyclopedia* comprises the following eight Sections: Language Arts; Foreign Language Studies; Humanities Curricula; Arts Curricula; Social Studies; Mathematics Education; Science Education Programs; and Physical Education. A more detailed introduction to the Specific Study Areas appears at the beginning of Part 2 and a special introduction to each Section spells out the unique structure of the respective Sections. Beyond the traditional subjects contained in each Section there also appears a list of special topics which represent new study areas. The majority of them do not have the status of a scholarly discipline, but nevertheless they do appear in the course offerings of numerous educational systems. Thus, for example, in the Section on Social Studies, aside from coverage of traditional

subjects such as history, geography, and psychology which are well-defined disciplines of scholarly inquiry, study areas such as peace studies, human rights education, daily living skills, and so on which are not considered to be scholarly disciplines are also covered. In the Section covering Science Education Programs study areas such as scientific literacy and energy education which are not scholarly disciplines, but have become popular areas of study, are also covered.

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Part 1

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