The SAGE Guide to Curriculum in Education

Edited by Ming Fang He, Brian D. Schultz and William H. H. Schubert
The SAGE Guide to
Curriculum
in Education
EDIToRIAL BoARD

Editors
Ming Fang He
Georgia Southern University
Brian D. Schultz
Northeastern Illinois University
William H. Schubert
University of Illinois at Chicago

Editorial Board

Susan Huddleston Edgerton
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
Bernardo P. Gallegos
National University
Jesse Goodman
Indiana University
Annette Henry
University of British Columbia
Tiffany S. Lee
University of New Mexico

Lance T. McCready
University of Toronto
Madhu Suri Prakash
Pennsylvania State University
Patrick A. Roberts
Northern Illinois University
David Stovall
University of Illinois at Chicago
P. Bruce Uhrmacher
University of Denver
The SAGE Guide to Curriculum in Education

Editors

Ming Fang He
Georgia Southern University

Brian D. Schultz
Northeastern Illinois University

William H. Schubert
University of Illinois at Chicago
# Brief Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About the Editors</td>
<td>xvii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments and In Memoriam</td>
<td>xxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prelude</td>
<td>xxiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART I. SUBJECT MATTER AS CURRICULUM</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interlude</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART II. TEACHERS AS CURRICULUM</strong></td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interlude</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART III. STUDENTS AS CURRICULUM</strong></td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interlude</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART IV. MILIEU AS CURRICULUM</strong></td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interlude</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postlude</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Guide</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>487</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONTENTS

About the Editors xvii
Acknowledgments and In Memoriam xxi
Prelude xxiii

PART I. SUBJECT MATTER AS CURRICULUM

Interlude 2

1. Deciding Aims and Purposes of Subject Matter 3
   Wesley Null
   Subject Matter as a Means or as an End 4
   Views on the Purposes of Subject Matter 6
   Subject Matter and Contemporary Trends in Curriculum Making 8

2. Subject Matter as Experience 11
   Thomas P. Thomas and Peter B. Hilton
   Orientations to Subject Matter as Experience 12
   Contemporary Concerns 16
   Forms of Inquiry 17

3. Subject Matters of Literacy 19
   Aria Razfar
   Literacy as Technology: Historical Context 19
   Defining Literacy 20

4. Subject Matters of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics 27
   Russell Tytler, Dalene Swanson, and Peter Appelbaum
   Contemporary Concerns 29
   Context 31
   Theoretical Perspectives 32
   Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression 33
5. **Subject Matters of Social Studies**  
*Yoonjung Choi and Kathryn Wegner*

- Contemporary Concerns About the Social Studies Curriculum 37
- Context 39
- Theory 40
- Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression 41
- Conclusion 42

6. **Subject Matters of the Arts**  
*Rachel L. S. Harper and Jorge R. Lucero*

- Contemporary Concerns 46
- Context of the Subject Matters of the Arts 48
- Theory of Subject Matters of the Arts 49
- Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression 50
- Conclusion 51

7. **Subject Matters of Humanities**  
*Edward Podsiadlik III*

- Contemporary Concerns About the Subject Matters of Humanities 54
- Context of the Subject Matters of the Humanities 56
- Theory of Subject Matters of Humanities 57
- Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression 59
- Conclusion: Need for Continuous Reflections 59

8. **Subject Matters of Language, Culture, Identity, and Power**  
*Guofang Li*

- Subject Matters of Language, Culture, Identity, and Power as Sites of Struggle 62
- Welcoming and Unwelcoming Contexts 64
- Theoretical Perspectives 65
- Key Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression 67
- Conclusion 67

9. **Subject Matters of Physical Education**  
*Paul M. Wright and David S. Walsh*

- A Brief History of PE in the United States 71
- Contemporary Concerns 72
- Contextual Forces 74
- Theory in PE 75
- Forms of Inquiry in PE 75

10. **Organization and Sequencing of Subject Matters**  
*Zongyi Deng*

- Understanding Curriculum Making in Contexts 79
- Orientations, Approaches, and Curriculum Ideologies 79
- Social and Political Issues 82
17. Popular Culture as Subject Matter 134
   Greg Dimitriadis
   Contemporary Concerns 135
   Context 136
   Theory 138
   Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression 140

18. Critical Media Literacy in the Digital Age 142
   Julie Maudlin and Daniel Chapman
   Critical Media Literacy in Context 143
   From Network to Networked: Critical Media Literacy in Theory 144
   Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Representation 144
   Toward a Critical Media Literacy Curriculum and Pedagogy 148

PART II. TEACHERS AS CURRICULUM

Interlude 152

19. Teacher as Curriculum 153
   Candace Schlein and Gretchen Schwarz
   Contemporary Concerns About Teacher as Curriculum 153
   Context of Teacher as Curriculum 154
   Theory of Teacher as Curriculum 155
   Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression 156
   Modes of Expression About Teachers as Curriculum 157
   Conclusion: The Curriculum Is a Living Experience 158

20. Teachers as Activists 160
   Crystal T. Laura and Aisha El-Amin
   Contemporary Concerns and Contexts of Teachers as Activists 160
   Theory of Teachers as Activists 161
   Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression 162

21. Teachers and Pedagogy for Communal Well-Being 165
   Nathalia E. Jaramillo
   Pedagogy in the Age of Standardization, Fear, and Profit 166
   The Global Context of Pedagogy Coloniality: The Enduring Logic of Social Differentiation 168
   Progressive, Critical, and Decolonial Pedagogies 170
   Forms of Inquiry 171

22. Teacher Bashing and Teacher Deskilling 174
   Isabel Nuñez
   Contemporary Teacher Deskilling 175
   Teacher Bashing in Context 177
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theorizing Teacher Bashing and Deskilling</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. High-Stakes Testing and the Evaluation of Teachers</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne Au</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Concerns</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contexts</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Teachers as Cultural Workers</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Knoester and Min Yu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Concerns</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Challenges</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research on Teachers as Cultural Workers</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms of Inquiry on Inspiring Teachers</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Teacher Education Curriculum</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer L. Milam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Concerns</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory to Practice and Practice to Theory</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Education Inquiry and Modes of Expression and Representation</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keffrelyn D. Brown, Anthony L. Brown, and Racheal Rothrock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theorizing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Movements That Engender Culturally Relevant Pedagogy</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Concerns: Origins, Reflections, and Innovations</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modes of Inquiry and Forms of Expression</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Black Teachers as Curriculum Texts in Urban Schools</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Richard Milner IV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Concerns</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context: “Urban” Black Teachers as Curriculum</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory: Black Teachers as Curriculum</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion: Need for More Research</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Teachers as Improvisational Artists</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lasana Kazembe and Avi Lessing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Is Improvisation?</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvisation as Uninhibited Exploration</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Is Improvisation Manifested?</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges and Complexities</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Closing Thoughts</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART III. STUDENTS AS CURRICULUM

Interlude 232

29. Students as Curriculum 233
   William H. Schubert and Brian D. Schultz
   Contemporary Concerns About Students as Curriculum 234
   Context of Students as Curriculum 235
   Theory of Students as Curriculum 235
   Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression 238
   Conclusion: Need for Continuous Questioning 239

30. Students’ Experiences as Curriculum 241
   Kristien Zenkov and Christine DeGregory
   Theory and History of Students’ Experiences as Curriculum 242
   Why “Students’ Experiences as Curriculum” Now? 243
   Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression: Examples 244
   Conclusion 246

31. Immigrant Students’ Experience as Curriculum 249
   Elaine Chan, JoAnn Phillion, and Ming Fang He
   Contexts 249
   Contemporary Concerns 250
   Understanding Immigrant Students’ Experience as Curriculum Through Theory and Practice in Language, Culture, Identity, and Power 251
   Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression 253

32. Learning From and With Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students 259
   Valerie Kinloch
   Contemporary Concerns 260
   Context of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students 261
   Theory of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students 262
   Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression 264
   Conclusion 265

33. Learning From/With Multicultural Children’s Literature 268
   Maria José Botelho
   Historical and Sociopolitical Contexts of Multicultural Children’s Literature 269
   Multiple Theories, Definitions, and Discourses of Multicultural Children’s Literature 270
   Practices of Inquiry 272
   Modes of Representation 273

34. Students and (Dis)Ability 276
   Mara Sapon-Shevin
   Contemporary Concerns 277
   Challenges to Inclusive Education for Students With Disabilities 281
Theory 281
Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression 281

35. Students as Critical Citizens/Educated Subjects but Not as Commodities/Tested Objects 284
   Kenneth J. Saltman and Alexander J. Means
   Curriculum as a Humanizing and Dehumanizing Force 284
   Cultural Politics of Curriculum 285
   Curriculum and the Culture of Positivism 286
   Neoliberalism and the Broader Context of Curriculum 288

36. Learning for Creative, Associated, Joyful, and Worthwhile Living 292
   Jason Goulah and Ming Fang He
   Contemporary Concerns and Contexts 294
   Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression 295

PART IV. MILIEU AS CURRICULUM

Interlude 302

37. The Neglected Historical Milieu 303
   William H. Watkins
   Before the Greeks: A Glimpse of Education and Curriculum in Kemet 303
   Foundations of Western Classical Education: The Greeks and the Romans 304
   Black Education: Early Days to “Freedom” 305
   The Black Giants: Irony of the Nadir 306
   First-Time Tragedy, Second-Time Farce 309

38. The Biographical and Documentary Milieu 311
   Craig Kridel
   Context of Biographical Inquiry and Modes of Expression 311
   Theoretical Perspectives of Biographical Research 311
   Contemporary Concerns and Issues in Biographical Inquiry 313
   Context of Documentary Inquiry and Modes of Expression 314
   Theoretical Perspectives of Documentary Research 315
   Contemporary Concerns and Issues in Documentary Inquiry 316
   Conclusion 317

39. Curriculum and the Policy Milieu 319
   Pamela J. Konkol and Jinting Wu
   Contemporary Concerns About Curriculum and the Policy Milieu 319
   Context of Curriculum and the Policy Milieu 321
   Theory of the Policy Milieu 321
   Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression 323
   Curriculum as Cause and Effect 324
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>The Parental, Familial, and Communal Milieu</td>
<td>Morgan E. Halstead and Kathleen H. McInerney</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contemporary Concerns About Parents and Community as Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Context of Parents and Community as Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theory of Parents and Community as Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forms of Inquiry About Parents and Community as Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modes of Expression About Parents and Communities as Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>The Technological Milieu</td>
<td>Chun Lai and Jing Lei</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Interaction Between Technology and Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interaction Between Technology and the Key Components of Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Interaction of Technology and Other Subject Matters</td>
<td></td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contextual Factors Around the Interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Inquiries Into Interaction Between Curriculum and Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>The Moral and Spiritual Milieu: Humanistic Alternatives to the Competitive Milieu</td>
<td>H. Svi Shapiro</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Market Power: Educating for Competition</td>
<td></td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educating Identity for Competition</td>
<td></td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From Competition to Violence</td>
<td></td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Dissatisfied Self</td>
<td></td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curriculum as Transformation</td>
<td></td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working to Overcome Invisibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>The Gender, Sexuality, and Queer Milieu</td>
<td>Susan W. Woolley, Therese Quinn, and Erica R. Meiners</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contemporary Concerns</td>
<td></td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Context</td>
<td></td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theory</td>
<td></td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression</td>
<td></td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>The Womanist/Black Feminist Milieu</td>
<td>Sabrina Ross</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curriculum Topic</td>
<td></td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contemporary Concerns</td>
<td></td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Context</td>
<td></td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theories of the Womanist/Black Feminist Milieu</td>
<td></td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression</td>
<td></td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Future Work</td>
<td></td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>The Socioeconomic Class Milieu</td>
<td>Adam Howard and Katy Swalwell</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contemporary Concerns: The Shifting Social and Economic Landscapes “Outside Class”</td>
<td></td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Context: Keeping Things Steady on Shifting Ground “Within Class”</td>
<td></td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
52. Ecological Milieu
   Jason Michael Lukasik
   Contemporary Concerns About Ecological Milieu
   Contexts of Ecological Milieu
   Theory of Ecological Milieu
   Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression
   Modes of Expression of Ecological Milieu
   Toward a Curricular Expression of Ecological Inquiry

53. Global, Transnational, and Local Curriculum
   Nina Asher and Christopher L. Kolb
   Contemporary Concerns
   Theoretical Frames
   Forms of Inquiry Into Global, Transnational, and Local Curriculum
   Modes of Expression About Global, Transnational, and Local Curriculum
   Implications for Policy and Practice in Relation to Contexts

54. Indigenous Land and Decolonizing Curriculum
   Eve Tuck
   Aims and Structures of Settler Colonialism
   Curriculum as Indigenous Erasure and Assimilation
   The Persistence of Indigenous Land as Curriculum
   Project(s) of Decolonization and How They Differ From Other Social Justice Efforts

55. The Multicultural, Multilingual, and Multiracial Milieu
   Sonia Janis
   Contemporary Concerns
   Context
   Theory
   Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression

Postlude

Resource Guide

Index
ABOUT THE EDITORS

Ming Fang He is professor of curriculum studies at Georgia Southern University and an elected member of Professors of Curriculum. She taught English as a foreign language at Wuhan University in the People’s Republic of China, English as a second language to immigrant adults and children for the Toronto District School Board in Canada, and graduate courses in curriculum studies and qualitative research methods and undergraduate courses in ethnic minority education and social foundations in Hong Kong. She advises doctoral students, directs doctoral dissertations, and teaches graduate courses in curriculum studies, multicultural education, and qualitative research methods, and pre-service teacher education courses in social foundations at Georgia Southern University. She explores education, inquiry, and life in between the Eastern, Western, and exile philosophy and curriculum with a particular focus on Confucius, John Dewey, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, Daisaku Ikeda, Weiming Tu, Martha Nussbaum, and Edward Said. She has written about cross-cultural narrative inquiry of language, culture, and identity in multicultural contexts, cross-cultural teacher education, curriculum studies, activist practitioner inquiry, social justice research, exile curriculum, narrative of curriculum in the U.S. South, and transnational and diasporic studies. She published her study of the identity development and cultural transformation of immigrant Chinese women teachers in a book titled A River Forever Flowing: Cross-Cultural Lives and Identities in the Multicultural Landscape (2003). She co-edited a book titled Narrative and Experience in Multicultural Education (2005). She was an editor of Curriculum Inquiry, is a leading associate editor of Multicultural Perspectives, a co-editor of Handbook of Asian Education (2011), and a member of the International Editorial Board of Curriculum Inquiry. She is an associate editor of the Handbook of Curriculum and Instruction (2008), a follow-up to the American Educational Research Association (AERA)’s Handbook of Research on Curriculum (Jackson, 1992), which features the work of diverse leading scholars in the field. Two books she edited, The SAGE Handbook of Curriculum and Instruction (2008) and Personal~Passionate~Participatory Inquiry Into Social Justice in Education (2008), won the 2009 AERA Division B (Curriculum Studies) Outstanding Book Recognition Awards. Personal~Passionate~Participatory Inquiry Into Social Justice in Education won the 2010 American Educational Studies Association Critics Choice Award. She co-edits two book series with Information Age Publishing: Research for Social Justice: Personal~Passionate~Participatory Inquiry (with JoAnn Phillion) and Landscapes of Education (with William Schubert). She guest-edited an issue of the Journal of Critical Inquiry Into Curriculum and Instruction on “Experiential Approaches in Curriculum Studies: Personal, Passionate, and Participatory Inquiries” (with Phillion, 2001) featuring studies in Canada, the United States, and Hong Kong. She guest-edited a special issue of Journal of Curriculum Theorizing on “Narrative of Curriculum in the South: Lives In-Between Contested Race, Gender, Class, and Power” (with Sabrina Ross, 2013). She was program chair for the AERA International Studies Special Interest Group and a program co-chair, section program chair, chair of the Nomination Committee, and member of the Outstanding Book Award Committee for the AERA Division B (Curriculum Studies). She has been elected as the vice president of the AERA Division B (2014–2017). She is a founding member
of the Georgia Chapter of the National Association for Multicultural Education and member-at-large for the Georgia Educational Research Association. Her current research is expanded to the education of ethnic minority and disenfranchised individuals, groups, tribes, and societies and immigrant education in the United States, Canada, Hong Kong, Mainland China, and other international contexts.


**William H. Schubert** is professor emeritus of curriculum and instruction, university scholar, former coordinator of the PhD program in curriculum studies, and director of graduate studies in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he worked from 1975 to 2012. His scholarship, teaching, and service focus on curriculum theory, history, and development in the lived experience of teachers, learners, and nonschool educators. He has published over 200 articles and book chapters, several poems, and 17 books, and has made over 250 presentations at scholarly conferences. Schubert was the consulting editor for the *Encyclopedia of Curriculum Studies* (edited by Craig Kridel, 2010) and editor of one of three parts of *The SAGE Handbook of Curriculum and Instruction* (F. Michael Connelly, Ming Fang He, & JoAnn Phillion, 2008), which received the Outstanding Book Award from the Curriculum Studies Division of American Educational Research Association (AERA) in 2009. Schubert’s key books include *Curriculum Books* (1980/2002 with Ann Lynn Lopez Schubert, Thomas P. Thomas, & Wayne. M. Carroll); *Curriculum: Perspective, Paradigm, and Possibility* (1986/1997); *Reflections From the Heart of Educational Inquiry* (1991/2000, with George Willis); *Teacher Lore* (1992/1999, with William Ayers); *The American Curriculum* (1993, with Willis, Robert V. Bullough, John T. Holton, and Kridel); *Turning Points in Curriculum* (2000/2007, with J. Dan Marshall, James T. Sears, Louise Anderson Allen, and Patrick A. Roberts); and *Love, Justice, and Education* (2009). An elected member of both Professors of Curriculum and the International
Academy of Education, Schubert has served as president of the Society for the Study of Curriculum History, the John Dewey Society for Education and Culture, the Society of Professors of Education, factotum of Professors of Curriculum, and vice president of AERA. He has served on numerous editorial boards, is associate editor of *Educational Theory*, and currently co-edits a book series called Landscapes of Education for Information Age Publishing with Ming Fang He. He has chaired over 60 PhD dissertations and has served as a member of over 150 dissertation committees. His students hold positions at many universities throughout the United States and in other countries, as well as leadership positions in schools and other educational organizations. Over the years, his teaching and advising have been amply recognized by receipt of numerous awards from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and in the field he received the AERA Lifetime Achievement Award for Curriculum Studies in 2004 and the 2007 Mary Anne Raywid Award from the Society of Professors of Education. Currently, one of Schubert’s projects involves a search for progressive interpretations of educational theory and practice in diverse cultures, and he is preparing books on practical ideas for teaching, embodied curriculum theory for self-education, essays on curriculum theory and history, and a volume of stories derived from his educational experience. His publications, collected works, and files were designated as the William H. Schubert Curriculum Studies Collection at the Zach S. Henderson Library of Georgia Southern University, where he has been organizing these archival materials and a website and working with doctoral students and faculty.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We offer special thoughts of appreciation to the whole SAGE Publications team who worked with us on this volume, some of whom we do not know. Among those we have come to know and appreciate, we thank Jim Brace-Thompson, executive editor of SAGE Reference, for initially inviting us to do *The SAGE Guide to Curriculum in Education*. We acknowledge Craig Kridel, editor of SAGE’s *Encyclopedia of Curriculum Studies*, for recommending us to Jim and for encouraging us to pursue this project. Now, we can say to Craig that we empathize with the arduousness of such a project and we simultaneously feel a positive sense of accomplishment in putting it together. We thank Tracy Buyan, senior project editor, for her careful work to produce the final product. We deeply appreciate her thoughtful comments, tremendous patience, and timely assistance.

We thank Shirin Parsavand, developmental editor, for her persistent, tactful, and necessary goading of us to conform to due dates and especially for her thoughtful and intelligent editorial comments, questions, and suggestions. Shirin, we thank you for the time you took to inquire into the content and meaning of this work, as well as to the usual matters of editorial consideration in order to provide excellent developmental work. Authors often commented on the helpfulness of your editing. We are grateful, as well, to our advisory board members for being there in case we needed a note of advice or encouragement or a word of perspective.

Finally, we thank each of the authors of this volume for taking valuable time from busy schedules to write, rewrite, and edit with understanding and empathy for teachers and students, that is, those most influenced by curriculum. We hope that educators at all levels and realms of curricular work, especially as they work too often with curricular policy in dismal or oppressive situations, will gain from reading, reflecting, and acting on *The SAGE Guide to Curriculum in Education*. We are committed to the idea and possibility that educators should be enabled to engage their capacities (intellectual, ethical, emotional, physical, political, aesthetic, and more) as they help the next generations cultivate relationships with the world they are entering and reconstructing.

*Ming Fang He, Brian D. Schultz, and William H. Schubert*
In Memoriam
With Deepest Appreciation

Gregory Dimitriadis
1969–2014
Author of Chapter 17

William H. Watkins
1946–2014
Author of Chapter 37
Prelude

Curriculum matters! Those seen as educational reformers too often do not realize this and attempt to reform or merely reshape the curriculum without regard for the effects on the quality of lived experiences of students, teachers, other school personnel, parents, families, and communities. While the study of curriculum often focuses on schooling, it also raises such critical questions about life as: What kinds of experience, study, and reflection contribute to lives of worth and meaning for self, others, and the world? How should we cultivate the next generations? How can we live and thrive together in ways that enable humans to reimagine, reinvent, and reconstruct ourselves and our contexts so as to live in greater peace, harmony, and goodwill?

Since the beginning of the 20th century, curriculum scholars have argued that these salient life questions should be central to curriculum in schools. Too often educational policy leaders push for certain skills, knowledge, and dispositions in ways that disregard such key questions. In The SAGE Guide to Curriculum in Education, we ask readers to consider: How can such questions animate curriculum in and out of schools? Do current mandates from sources in government and business enhance or impede the likelihood that curriculum is guided by such questions? What can and should be done if policies and practices of schooling impede such questioning more than they inspire it?

A curriculum guide is like a Sherpa (an indigenous Nepalese guide who leads outside explorers to surmount the Himalayan Mountains). A curriculum guide facilitates students' journeys through the circuitous mountain paths of life. So, as curriculum designers, teacher educators, teachers, or policy makers, we are Sherpas who guide navigation of the complex, convoluted, contested terrains of knowledge, skills, and dispositions (curricula) that shape lives.

Situating the Guide Within Curriculum Studies

The complexities of curriculum landscapes invariably trace back to a basic question: What, how, where, when, and why is any given curriculum worthwhile? This central question of education redounds throughout curriculum considerations and through the substance of education and its meanings, purposes, wonders, and edifications. Thus, those who wish to seriously consider what is worthwhile for the next generations must not be content with simplistic mandates of political pundits who act as if the decision is obvious—that is, that educational reform should produce curricula primarily to make nations powerful and corporations wealthy.

Throughout history, humans have been deeply concerned with what their children become. Parents, community leaders, kings and rajas, presidents and popes, preachers and theologians, advertisers, artists, literary figures, scientists, doctors, and philosophers, scholars of every ilk, and teachers have been deeply concerned about curriculum matters, whether or not they labeled them curriculum matters. Today, all such individuals and groups want to influence the next generations of human beings. Thus, those who engage in curriculum studies must deal with what makes such influence good and why—and how that influence can be accomplished.

At the beginning of the 20th century, with the onset of specialization in every field, curriculum became
a subfield of educational inquiry. Taking a cue from those who came before, such as social Darwinist Herbert Spencer (1861), curriculum workers who followed focused on the basic question (What is worthwhile?) by drawing upon myriad perspectives (Kridel, 2010, p. 950; Pinar, 2007, p. xviii; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995; Schubert, 1986, p. 1, 2009; Schubert, Lopez Schubert, Thomas, & Carroll, 2002). Elaborated, this question of worth includes: What is worth knowing, needing, experiencing, doing, being, becoming, overcoming, contributing, sharing, and just plain wondering? (Schubert, 2009). In asking what is worth overcoming, we bring into bold relief such critical questions as: Whose ideas of worth are advocated for teaching and learning? Whose ideas should be advocated? Who benefits from and who is harmed by that which is taught and learned? (Apple, 2004; Freire, 1970; Watkins, 2001). Who should be listened to as we ask hard curriculum questions? Shall we listen to children and youths, dropouts or push-outs, and silenced, invisible, or oppressed peoples (Brown & Au, 2014; Cameron, 2012; He & Phillion, 2008; Schultz, 2011; Tuck, 2012)? How does knowledge of such sources transcend the borders of nations, cultures, ethnicities, races, and socioeconomic groups (Anyon, 2004; He, 2003; He & Phillion, 2008; Watkins, 2010)? While curriculum scholars and developers surely disagree on many matters, questions of what is worthwhile and for whom it is worthwhile continue to be the mainstay of their work, which is the central thread of this volume.

What Should a Curriculum Guide Be?

Given this orientation to curriculum and curriculum studies, what should a curriculum guide be? Clearly, the image of curriculum guide offered here is not to be confused with booklets produced by school districts or by publishers of instructional materials, which traditionally have been labeled curriculum guides. These are usually mere descriptions and brief rationales for courses, units of study, and lesson plans. In contrast, the guides published by SAGE Publications in diverse fields are resource books that lie intermediately between its handbooks and encyclopedias. Handbooks are typically designed for scholars in a field or adjacent fields and provide novel conceptualizations of in-depth portrayals of a field of inquiry. Encyclopedias provide briefer perspectives on many different topics, persons, controversies, and events within a field for a more general audience. Guides are created for use at a mid-range level between handbooks and encyclopedias by students who are beginning in an area of inquiry (e.g., curriculum studies), practitioners (teachers, curriculum developers, curriculum leaders), teacher educators, mass media writers who create stories on issues of concern in the field, other members of the public who wish to enhance their knowledge of topics treated in the field, and particularly policy makers who want policy to be informed by relevant theory and research.

There are a wide array of synoptic texts, “encyclopedia portrayals of the ever-increasing stockpile of curricular knowledge” (Schubert & Lopez Schubert, 1980, p. 77) in the field of curriculum studies (e.g., Caswell & Campbell, 1935; Eisner, 1979; Marsh & Willis, 2003; Marshall, Sears, & Schubert, 2000; Null, 2011; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995; Schubert, 1986; Smith, Stanley, and Shores, 1950; Taba, 1962; Tanner & Tanner, 1975; Walker, 1989). The SAGE Guide to Curriculum in Education gleans its orientations from two volumes produced by SAGE Publications: The SAGE Handbook of Curriculum and Instruction (Connelly, He, & Phillion, 2008) and Encyclopedia of Curriculum Studies (Kridel, 2010). Many of the chapter topics in the guide have counterparts in the encyclopedia, where readers can locate clarifications of a number of terms, ideas, events, and persons discussed in the guide. The Encyclopedia of Curriculum Studies also has served as an example for this Guide to Curriculum in Education through its portrayal of diverse positions on important topics that have not reached a point of consensus. For example, its editor, Craig Kridel, invited several authors to write for the encyclopedia on controversial topics such as the nature of curriculum studies or the future of curriculum studies. The conceptual design of The SAGE Handbook of Curriculum and Instruction has also been exemplary by informing the guide. The handbook was organized into three major parts, beginning with curriculum in practice, moving to curriculum in context, and concluding with curriculum in theory. Each of these parts of the handbook was comprised of several chapters that were extensive reviews of key topics. The rationale for proceeding in this sequence
was that concerns of educators often begin with their immersion in practice, and in order to make sense of the practice, they must understand complications of overlapping and interacting contexts in which the practice is embedded. Finally, theory and research are provided in an attempt to clarify matters of context and practice and to inform work to resolve extant problems. Based on this sequence, we have built each chapter of the Guide to Curriculum in Education on that conceptualization. We begin each chapter topic with practical questions and concerns, then characterize them relative to their contexts, and finally show that theory and research or scholarship can broaden and deepen understanding of concerns and contexts, as can diverse forms of inquiry and modes of representation that illuminate the phenomena under inquiry in different ways. Each chapter is followed with a list of resources referenced in the chapter that are valuable for exploring the topic more extensively.

To study curriculum matters seriously necessitates perceiving a broader and deeper picture of curriculum. The general image of curriculum as simply the text (the school books and instructional materials) is no longer adequate. In fact, it never was. It is not merely that which is intended for students to learn, nor is it just the experiences they have under the auspices of schools. Scholars of curriculum studies have long realized that students learn from hidden curriculum (Giroux & Purpel, 1983; Jackson, 1968) or the ways schooling institutions are organized and by the ways in which structures of value and prejudice of society are mediated and passed along by schools, especially when policy makers and practitioners remain uncritical. Students also learn from the null curriculum (Eisner, 1979) or that which is not taught (e.g., philosophy, health, arts, critical perspectives) or that which is given less emphasis and excised first if budgets are decreased. They learn from choices made by teachers and by their teachings, personalities, and mannerisms—the taught curriculum. Students also develop a repertoire of perspectives and understandings from the plethora of nonschool forces in the milieu of their lives: homes, families, mass media, social media, movies and television, video and videogames, sports, scouts, clubs, relationships, gangs, advertising, and much more. This outside curriculum (Schubert, 1981, 2008) or curriculum of public pedagogy (Sandlin, Schultz, & Burdick, 2010) greatly influences what they learn in schools. All of these curricula translate the intended curriculum into the learned, received, or embodied curriculum (Schubert, 2013), that which students take with them on their journey of life.

A Conceptual Framework for The SAGE Guide to Curriculum in Education

To perceive the complexity of curriculum, which is fluid and dynamic due to changing contexts, growing theory and research, and situational exigencies, we employ four interacting commonplaces identified by Joseph J. Schwab (1969, 1970) by using them as foci for the four parts of this book: subject matter, teachers, learners (students), and milieu. While the term subject matter usually pertains to what is conventionally deemed all that curriculum entails, that is, subjects or content studied, Schwab and many curriculum writers since his work in the 1970s have emphasized multiple interpretations of any subject matter.

Thus, Part I of this guide, “Subject Matter as Curriculum,” includes chapters on aims and purposes, experience, literacy, science and mathematics, social studies, the arts, humanities, and physical education. The foregoing could be considered spin-offs of traditional subjects; however, authors of each of these chapters discuss cutting-edge as well as traditional interpretations of such subject matters. Moreover, additional authors convey less well-known subject matters of language, culture, identity, and power; varieties of sequence and organization; technology; integrated, holistic, and core realms; currere (the verb form of the noun curriculum) that focuses on experiencing education in multicultural, racial, and feminist spheres; curricular imagination; popular culture; and media literacy.

Part II, “Teachers as Curriculum,” is based on the idea that teachers, not subject matter alone, contribute much to the configurations of experience that make curricula a dimension of student lives. Teachers contribute to students lives to such an extent that some consider teachers to actually be curriculum, the topic of the first chapter in Part II. Other chapters deal with teachers in diverse dimensions that shape curriculum: teachers as activists, teachers and pedagogy, deskilling and bashing of teachers, teacher
testing and evaluation, teacher education, culturally relevant pedagogy, and teachers as improvisational artists.

Students themselves influence what is taught and learned; thus, they are configured within an enlarged image of curriculum in Part III. This is elaborated in chapters on students’ experiences as curriculum; immigrant and minority students’ experience as curriculum; learning from and with culturally and linguistically diverse students; learning from multicultural children’s literature; students amid labels of (dis)ability and inclusion; students as lifelong learners; and learning for creative living.

Finally, in Part IV we set forth curriculum as milieu or environment, and chapters elaborate the diverse array of milieus that constitute curriculum: history, policy, parents and families, technology, religion or spirituality, gender, feminism-womanism, socioeconomic class, corporate-military-governmental, and youth culture. Additionally, milieu is expanded into deschooling and alternative schooling, geographical forces, popular culture, browning, ecological, international or global realms, indigenous cultures, multicultural, and multiracial situations.

The mere naming and brief characterization of chapters are only a beginning of explorations of complexities of curriculum and its multiple meanings. It is important to realize that all of the commonplaces (subject matter, teacher, student, and milieu) are fluid and exist in dynamic interrelationship. Thus, in any practical or policy setting, one could ask: How do teachers affect other teachers? How do teachers affect learners? How do teachers affect subject matter? How do teachers affect milieu? Such relevant interactions will be reviewed in the Interludes before each part of this book: Subject Matter, Teachers, Students, and Milieu. Seeing curriculum as a continuous ebb and flow of these interactions reveals the need to continuously ask the basic questions about what is worthwhile and for whom it is worthwhile in adjusting relationships among subject matters, teachers, students, and milieus in every situation. Such readjusting, rebalancing, reconceptualizing, and reconstructing must be a function of those who work in the actual situations as well as by those from milieus far away, such as the domains of external policy makers. This, presumably, is a key reason for Schwab (1969) noting a fifth commonplace in his first rendering of practical inquiry, referring to it as considering an administrative or policy realm, a point that Wesley Null recently brought to our attention via correspondence. In his later revision Schwab (1970) presumably decided to cease referring to the latter as a commonplace, but rather as an overarching focus of deliberation by all involved who can offer insight into the fluidity and changing character of, within, and among the four commonplaces.

Such a visual and conceptual image shows the complexity of curriculum as you read this Guide to Curriculum in Education. All of this emphasis on commonplaces illustrates the impossibility of settling on a fixed common curriculum for all. Thus, the only connection between commonplaces as used by Schwab and common core as used by today’s governmental policy pundits at the behest of corporations who want to control the public is the word common. What truly serves the common good must be continually reconstructed to fit ever-emerging needs, concerns, and interests. Curriculum work in such a situation defies top-down recipes and necessitates continuous deconstruction and reconstruction by those who are most closely involved in the educational milieu. Moreover, and most importantly, it requires a common faith as John Dewey (1929) articulated so assiduously in educators closest to students as well as in parents and students themselves to improvise what is indeed worth doing, being, becoming, and contributing. The difference between this common faith and today’s practices of surveillance by authoritative mandate is immense.

Another important clarification about the conceptual framework we have selected pertains to Schwab’s (1969, 1970) idea of practical inquiry or enquiry as he chose to write the term—a notion that embodies a critique of the one-size-fits-all orientation, which we see as a recipe curse. Educators at the grassroots level cannot be mere implementers; rather, they must be enabled to imagine, invent, and practice ideas that respond to situations as they arise. Derived from a complex combination of sources, especially from Aristotle and from Dewey, as interpreted by philosopher Richard McKeon, who studied with Dewey, Schwab’s notion of practical inquiry opposed the domination of inquiry that he (from Aristotle) called theoretic. Schwab argued that educational inquiry should be practical in that it should start with actual problems experienced. This differed markedly from theoretic problems that were created
based on similarities of many problems. Schwab’s point was that combining problems based on similarities omits the nuances and unique aspects of such problems. Thus, the problems researched are fictitious. The idea that there is a best way to teach science to all sixth graders, for instance, is fraught with fallacies.

Further, Schwab advocated inquiry that seeks specific, tentative, and fluid solutions that evolve with particular practical situations, which is opposed to solutions for generic or theoretical problems. The latter is what is emphasized in much of today’s policy based on political interests or research that is generalized (e.g., all impoverished urban students need such-and-such) solutions. Further, practical inquiry is not investigation by detached induction and deduction; it is a dynamic interaction between individuals and situations. Practical inquiry is contrary to stable “theoretic pursuits (such as the pursuit of global principles and comprehensive patterns, the search for stable sequences and invariant elements, the construction of taxonomies of supposedly fixed or recurrent kinds)” (Westbury & Wilkof, 1978, p. 288) that seek static and generalized solutions that really fit nowhere. Instead, practical inquiry seeks solutions for situations that are dynamic and require continuous adaptation. The arts of eclectic (Schwab, 1971), drawn from Aristotle’s practical and productive arts, are derived from emergent theories and inquiries where an inquirer pursues the first art of eclectic, that of matching existing theories to curriculum situations. The inquirer, who becomes adept at matching, soon recognizes the need for engaging in the second art of eclectic, that of adapting, tailoring, modifying, and combining extant knowledge to respond to the needs of specific problems at hand. As an inquirer becomes more experienced, she or he develops a repertoire that serves as precedent for acting in new situations, learns to match previous experience with new problems encountered, and tailors and adapts her or his repertoire of experience to situations. Thus both previously existing knowledge and experientially derived personal knowledge become bases for practical inquiry. We hope that this depiction enables you as readers to realize that the rejection of theoretic inquiry is not a rejection of theory as a basis for practical inquiry, for the more theory one knows, the better is his or her position to appropriately match theory with practical needs in situations and to tailor, adapt, modify, and combine theories with experience to resolve situational dilemmas.

The dominant model for curriculum development, since it was synthesized by Ralph Tyler (1949), has been one based on a checklist of four topics: purposes, learning experiences, organizational patterns, and evaluation. Essentially, Tyler was trying to remind those in practical and policy settings to consider each of these dimensions when making decisions and carrying out actions based on the decisions. However, Tyler (1949) also realized that his four topics could not be treated in the abstract; instead, they had to be visited through focus on a concrete educational situation. Schwab (1970) connected with Tyler, saying, “It will be clear from these remarks that the conception of curricular methods proposed here is immanent in the Tyler rationale. This rationale calls for a diversity of talents and insists on the practical and eclectic treatment of a variety of factors” (Westbury & Wilkof, 1978, p. 320, footnote 6). Just as one must be vigilant in awareness of the interactive influences of Schwab’s commonplaces on one another, one must realize that any modification of Tyler’s topics or questions via curriculum development or revision reverberates throughout the others. It follows, then, that Schwab’s commonplaces and Tyler’s topics intertwine in the complex shifts, interactions, transactions, and transformations of any practical educational situation.

In the guide, we highlight and explicate how Schwab’s four curriculum commonplaces are interdependent and interconnected in the decision-making processes that involve local and state school boards and government agencies, educational institutions, and curriculum stakeholders at all levels as they address the central curriculum question: What is worthwhile? More specifically, as Schubert (1986, 2009, 2010) has elaborated: What is worth knowing, needing, experiencing, doing, being, becoming, overcoming, sharing, contributing, wondering, and imagining? We believe that the four commonplaces are equally significant and dynamically interconnected so that we name the four parts of the guide as follows: Subject Matter as Curriculum; Teachers as Curriculum; Students as Curriculum; and Milieu as Curriculum. We begin with Subject Matter as Curriculum, Part I, because potential users of the guide are more likely to envision curriculum relative to dimensions of subject matter. However, readers will
soon see that subject matter that needs to be inquired about includes not only content areas but also aspects of the Tyler Rationale (Tyler 1949) as they have evolved over time, as well as critiques of these aspects. The central place of teachers in curriculum—noting that some consider teachers to be the curriculum—is Part II: Teachers as Curriculum. This has many dimensions, as does Part III, Students as Curriculum. Finally, the vast array of contextual forces and influences constitute Part IV, Milieu as Curriculum.

Authors in this guide, with highly respected expertise, are the Sherpas who lead us on eclectic curricular explorations of convoluted and contested educational terrains. When you peruse each chapter, we sincerely hope that you will be inspired to understand why each topic is a cutting-edge curriculum topic; what are the pressing issues and contemporary concerns about the topic; how historical, social, political, economic, geographical, cultural, linguistic, ecological contexts influence the topic area; how the topic, relevant practical and policy ramifications, and contextual embodiment can be understood by theoretical perspectives; and how forms of inquiry and modes of representation or expression in the topic area are crucial to developing understanding for and making impact on practice, policy, context, and theory. We also hope that you will bring your own experience and curricular knowledge into your reading as you make connections among the chapters within each part and across parts (i.e., across commonplaces). We will revisit our connections with you through interludes before each part and through a postlude at the end. We encourage you to explore ideas that give increased meanings to your continuous pursuits in education and life.

Ming Fang He, Brian D. Schultz, and William H. Schubert

References


SAGE was founded in 1965 by Sara Miller McCune to support the dissemination of usable knowledge by publishing innovative and high-quality research and teaching content. Today, we publish more than 750 journals, including those of more than 300 learned societies, more than 800 new books per year, and a growing range of library products including archives, data, case studies, reports, conference highlights, and video. SAGE remains majority-owned by our founder, and after Sara’s lifetime will become owned by a charitable trust that secures our continued independence.

Los Angeles | London | New Delhi | Singapore | Washington DC | Boston
PART I

SUBJECT MATTER AS CURRICULUM
Introducing Part I: Subject Matter as Curriculum

Subject matter is one important dimension or commonplace of curriculum; however, it cannot be comprehended in any full sense without perceiving its interrelationship and interdependence with the other three commons-places (teachers, learners or students, and milieu). The interdependence among commonspaces, which is in constant flux, necessitates that educators continuously rebalance the relationship among the commonspaces through ongoing deliberation. Thus, those involved in any educational situation must ask: How do the subject matter and the teachers influence one another? How do the subject matter and the students affect one another? How does the milieu or environment (broadly conceived) have mutual influence with the subject matter? Additionally, how does any given subject matter influence any other? It is necessary, too, to realize that answers to these questions and others that flow from them are never final but always in the making.

Thus, it is important to consider how several subject matters at play affect one another. Some of the subject matters discussed in the chapters in Part I would usually be categorized as content areas such as mathematics, science, literacy or reading or language arts, social studies, physical education, and the arts. Others would be categorized as more process-oriented such as media, currere, multiculturalism, and popular culture. The apparent juxtaposition of these is reminiscent of Louise Berman’s (1968) insightful work titled New Priorities in Curriculum, which in an earlier era dealt with a similar issue. She suggested that curriculum should have new process-oriented subject matters of eight: perceiving, communicating, loving, knowing, decision making, patterning, creating, and valuing. After presenting a chapter on each, Berman suggested for those who needed a means for transitioning from the traditional to the progressive (process-oriented) subjects that a chart be used (p. 181) in which these processes were set in an $8 \times 5$ matrix crisscrossed with five traditional subjects: mathematics, social studies, English, art, and science. Thus, teachers could see how each of the processes could be taught in each of the traditional subjects. Similarly, you might ask how the less familiar subject matters treated in chapters in Part I could facilitate the subjects you teach.

Reference

DECIDING AIMS AND PURPOSES OF SUBJECT MATTER

Wesley Null
Baylor University

When non-education specialists are asked what comes to mind when they think of the term curriculum, they almost always state subject matter first. Subject matter is one of the most important commonplaces in curriculum making identified by Joseph Schwab (1970): teachers, learners, subject matter, and milieu. To many non-specialists, in fact, curriculum is often nothing other than subject matter logically arranged. Discussing curriculum without attention to subject matter seems nonsensical to most people.

At times during the past century, however, subject matter was devalued to such an extent that discussions about curriculum often ignored subject matter altogether. Without a proper sense of curricular balance, subject matter can be (and has been) overtaken by one or more of the other commonplaces. This chapter is dedicated to the aims and purposes of subject matter not just because the achievement of curricular balance is important but also because subject matter always plays a crucial role in curriculum making.

Although subject matter has received equal importance as other curricular commonplaces in the United States and the rest of the world, the late 20th century saw a rise in attention to subject matter above the other commonplaces. These developments necessitated a broader discussion about how key curriculum scholars in the past answered questions about the aims and purposes of subject matter.

A focus on three main philosophies, represented by three key figures who have guided the way most people think about the role of subject matter in curriculum making, illuminates contemporary curriculum trends and their origins. Although there is an overlap among these three philosophies, they can roughly be categorized by the terms essentialist, romantic, and humanist. Other synoptic texts have addressed these thinkers as well, often with slightly different terms or emphases, all of which provide a more lengthy treatment than this one chapter would allow (Eisner, 1985; Null, 2011; Schubert, 1986; Smith, Stanley, & Shores, 1957; Taba, 1962; Tanner & Tanner, 1975). In exploring the views on subject matter presented through the three philosophies included in this chapter, each section addresses two primary questions about the aims and purposes of subject matter within curriculum: When designing a curriculum, is subject matter a means or an end? If subject matter is a means, what is the larger end that it serves?

The three figures discussed in this chapter are William Chandler Bagley, from an essentialist perspective; William Heard Kilpatrick, representing a romantic view; and William Torrey Harris, who upholds a humanist philosophy. Each takes a unique
and historically significant position with regard to the role of subject matter in curriculum making, and each has descendants throughout the 20th century to the present time in the 21st century. Bagley served as a professor of educational psychology and teacher education at Columbia University’s Teachers College from 1917 to 1939; Kilpatrick also taught educational philosophy at Columbia’s Teachers College from 1909 to 1937; and Harris wrote numerous books and articles on educational philosophy and also served as U.S. Commissioner of Education from 1896 to 1906. The views of these three figures provide significant insight into the role of subject matter in curriculum making, not just because their work had great influence but also because their views differed in significant ways.

**Subject Matter as a Means or as an End**

Any discussion of curriculum must attend to the question of purpose. With its etymological roots tracing back to the notion of running a race, the term *curriculum* presupposes an end. At different times in history, each of Schwab’s (1970) aforementioned commonplaces has been elevated as the “one true end” that different people concluded must (or should) serve as the focal point around which all of the others must revolve. The stand of subject matter is no different. Bagley never failed to emphasize subject matter. He was no simple thinker who ignored the complexities involved in curriculum making, but he wrote and taught during a time when he believed that educational philosophy had followed a path that devalued subject matter. He predicted serious consequences for American education as a result of the direction educational philosophy had taken during the early 20th century. He argued that certain followers of John Dewey, primarily Kilpatrick, who was Dewey’s protégé at Columbia, had become so enamored with the new educational psychology of the time that they had replaced an emphasis on subject matter with a wholesale worshipping of the individual interests of children.

Bagley’s emphasis on scientific knowledge led him to disagree with what became known as the progressive education movement. Bagley’s strong scientific background grew from his time as a PhD student in psychology at Cornell University. At the same time that writers such as Dewey, G. Stanley Hall, and Kilpatrick were beginning to think about the implications of child psychology in teaching, learning, and curriculum, Bagley began to emphasize the role of quality teacher education. He argued that the United States’ effort to provide a high-quality curriculum to all young people could not be successful unless higher education institutions made teacher education one of their highest priorities. Much like curriculum for elementary and high schools, Bagley believed that programs for teacher preparation should prioritize subject matter. He wanted to prepare teachers to have a deep knowledge in the subject matter they taught and to have the capacity to connect this subject matter to students who came from a wide variety of backgrounds. Graduates of these teacher preparation programs should take pride in providing curricula that put students in touch with the core bodies of knowledge that held democracy together. In a famous essay, Bagley (1938/2010) made the point this way:

> Democracy demands a community of culture. Educationally this means that each generation be placed in possession of a common core of ideas, meanings, understandings, and ideals representing the most precious elements of the human heritage. (p. 562)

As Bagley witnessed a shift in educational philosophy that prioritized individual interests of children (and simultaneously made subject matter a tool instead of an end), he became increasingly concerned that students would have no access to the cultural power that comes with knowledge of subjects such as mathematics and literature. To Bagley, knowledge and power were synonymous.

To address the problem that had arisen from what Bagley viewed as an artificial separation between “subject matter” and “methods of teaching,” he coined the phrase “professionalized subject matter.” What he meant was something similar to Lee Shulman’s (1987) conception of pedagogical content knowledge, which remains prevalent today. To Bagley (1928), professionalized subject matter was a teacher’s knowledge of how to take a complex field such as history or mathematics and prepare it for comprehension by a particular group of students at a particular place in time. For the United States to thrive, it had to devise a way to prepare a nationwide
community of teachers who had the capacity to connect diverse groups of students with the subject matter knowledge that Bagley believed was the key to students’ future. Subject matter specialists such as historians and mathematicians, for example, may have knowledge of their specialized field, but that does not mean that they know how to connect this subject matter to young people who have little interest in their field. In addition to skills, Bagley heralded the capacity of teachers to connect subject matter to students, which included teachers’ moral commitment to educate students from classes and races that previously had no access to this knowledge. Bagley’s answer to the question of whether or not subject matter was an end in itself was a qualified yes. He never argued that students should parrot encyclopedic information, but he did argue that teachers must teach and students must learn something. Teachers who overemphasized individual interests reinforced students’ individualistic desires, ultimately disconnecting them from centuries of cultural heritage.

Another writer from the early 20th century viewed the role of subject matter in an entirely different way. Kilpatrick began his career as a mathematics teacher in Georgia, but he shifted to other pursuits when he began graduate study at Columbia University’s Teachers College. Described at one point by Dewey as his most gifted student, Kilpatrick was a transplanted Southerner who became one of Teachers College’s most popular professors. For at least 15 years, he taught classes that enrolled well over 500 students semester after semester. His popularity stemmed from his magnetic speaking ability, his location at an institution that was in the heart of New York City, and his teaching of a popular educational philosophy.

The philosophy promoted by Kilpatrick combined democracy, individualism, and developmental psychology in a way that provided an alternative to the more rigid curricular views that dominated the 19th century. This new philosophy emphasized individualized instruction, problem solving, and preparation for democratic citizenship. Kilpatrick and his like-minded colleagues were convinced that older views of curriculum were elitist in their emphasis on subjects such as Latin and Greek. In contrast to Bagley, subject matter was, to Kilpatrick, certainly not an end in itself.

To Kilpatrick, elevating subject matter to the end of education not only inhibited the growth of democracy but also thwarted the growth of individual decision making. In one of his often quoted lines, Kilpatrick (1928) once railed against what he called “subject-matter set out to be learned” (p. 125). Instead of a detailed, subject-matter-driven curriculum, Kilpatrick argued for an approach that gave students “freedom” to choose their own projects and activities. In Kilpatrick’s (1936) words,

The child must for us come before subject matter as such. This is the everlasting and final condemnation of the old curriculum. It put subject matter first and it bent—or if it need be, broke—the child to fit that. . . . Subject matter—if any reader be concerned for it—will be called this way better into play than is usual now. (pp. 31–32)

Especially with phrases such as “if any reader be concerned for it,” Kilpatrick demonstrated the dismissive way in which he often treated subject matter. These types of statements led to heated disagreements with individuals such as Bagley who shared a commitment to democratic education but came to different conclusions about how to achieve that end. Bagley made subject matter the end of education, whereas Kilpatrick identified “the child” or “the learner” as the end toward which educators should work. That both are of equal importance was often ignored in the rhetoric-driven debates of the 1920s and 1930s.

Harris provided yet another answer to the question of whether or not subject matter is an end in itself. Harris, an accomplished philosopher and an effective administrator with the St. Louis Public Schools, understood the need for ideals. He also appreciated the practical realities of how to translate ideals into practice.

Harris’s answer to the question of whether subject matter ought to be viewed as an end was both yes and no. To him, no proper view of curriculum could neglect subject matter. At the same time, however, the type of character a school sought to cultivate was of equal significance. Harris viewed subject matter as crucial to making a high-quality curriculum, yet it also must be viewed as a tool to the larger goal of creating human beings who think and act in ways that are consistent with the ideals of a liberal education. Harris extended a traditional view that different types of subject matter “trained” the mind in different ways. The justification for students studying mathematics or foreign languages was rooted in the
belief that different parts of a student’s mind, or soul, would be shaped by interactions with different subject matters. Mathematics makes students better thinkers, literature helps them become more aware of the emotions of others, and geography trains them to think in terms of multiple cultures and time periods.

Harris argued that studying different forms of subject matter furthered a student’s ability to understand the world while he or she also learns how to act appropriately within multiple contexts. This process of broadening students’ minds through the use of subject matter is what he referred to as opening the “windows of the soul.” He maintained that there were five such windows, each of which should be opened wider as students progressed through schooling. In elementary schools, the five subject matters (and hence five windows) were arithmetic, geography, literature, grammar and logic, and history. By studying these subjects, students were given, as Harris (1893/2010b) put it, “the tools of thought by which to master the wisdom of the race” (p. 267). By “race,” Harris meant the human race, not any individual race.

To Harris, subject matter embodied the traditions of the past, and the purpose of schooling was to hand down this body of knowledge from one generation to the next. Humans differ from animals in their ability to collect knowledge, pass it from one generation to the next, and use it to improve the human condition. The goal was to open students’ minds to the thinking of others and move civilization forward.

This liberal-arts-driven, character-oriented approach was not strongly found in the works of Bagley and Kilpatrick. All three—Bagley, Kilpatrick, and Harris—included subject matter in their view of curriculum, but they did so in strikingly different ways. Bagley placed subject matter knowledge high on his list of curricular priorities, Kilpatrick stressed individual initiative while making subject matter a tool when students desired it, and Harris pointed teachers and curriculum makers toward an idealistic end that emphasized the type of character (or soul) that a school sought to create in their students.

Views on the Purposes of Subject Matter

The work of these three writers matters today not just because each paid careful attention to subject matter in curriculum making but because each embodied a tradition of thinking that remains alive today. Although all three acknowledged that subject matter was part of curriculum, they came to different conclusions about what that role should be. Bagley accepted a deeply evolutionary view that was heavily influenced by natural science and Charles Darwin. In his most well-developed work on educational philosophy and curriculum, Education and Emergent Man, Bagley (1934) argued that connecting students with subject matter was essential to creating the conditions for “emergent evolution” that he saw in each generation. Bagley identified different eras in human civilization when great strides were made. He argued that these steps forward were only possible because a new generation had built upon knowledge from previous generations.

To Bagley, an “emergent” was a unique historical moment when the conditions came together just right for a dramatic, even mystical, event to take place, one that turned out to benefit millions of people. He cited examples such as an explosion of knowledge produced by the Athenians, cultural advances by the Romans, and the revival of learning during the Renaissance. Education, to Bagley, was the process of increasing the likelihood that these uniquely powerful moments in cultural history would take place by putting students in touch with the cultural knowledge humans had amassed throughout history.

If a generation failed to teach this cultural knowledge to its students, tragic—even cataclysmic—results would take place. With human history as his body of evidence, Bagley (1934) argued that each generation had a choice to make: either teach this cultural knowledge to young people and set the stage for great results or fail to do so and risk disaster. The end beyond subject matter that Bagley strove toward was an endless repository of lessons for each generation to draw upon and improve their lives. Generations that succeeded at cultivating this knowledge and desire in young people would be rewarded with great advancements. Those that did not invited wars, widespread ignorance, and disastrous results. Bagley elevated subject matter to a high place in curriculum, but he had ambitious ideals in mind for what this subject matter ought to do for mankind. In Bagley’s view, subject matter was essential, but in the end it was to be used as a tool to advance human civilization in a material way.
Kilpatrick was just as influenced by modern science and Darwin as Bagley, but he came to different conclusions about the end toward which teachers and curriculum makers ought to strive. Kilpatrick was less concerned about passing down a body of cultural knowledge. Instead, he argued that individual students and communities were best served by asking teachers to adapt curriculum to the individual desires of learners. Driven by the new developmental psychology, Kilpatrick placed the creation of individual problem solvers at the end of his view of curriculum and teaching. He wanted to nurture the innate curiosity of all by encouraging them to follow their interests regardless of whether or not those interests led to subject matter. Too often he saw subject matter thwarting students’ desire for learning. Kilpatrick (1934) wanted teachers to create a generation of students who would embrace a project, work collaboratively with others, and strengthen their skills of democratic citizenship.

Kilpatrick’s most famous discussion of this approach can be found in an essay he published in 1918, called “The Project Method.” His use of the phrase “purposeful act” promoted a teaching situation in which students were given the opportunity to throw themselves wholeheartedly into a project that had great personal meaning to them. If students desperately wanted to know about something, they would have true motivation in studying it, they would retain what they had learned for longer periods of time, and they would incorporate these lessons into their daily lives (Beineke, 1998, p. 101). Kilpatrick devalued subject matter to such an extent that it all but disappeared as an end within his views on curriculum. Subject matter likely would be part of the projects students chose to pursue, but Kilpatrick rarely discussed the need for all students to gain a common body of knowledge.

The contrasting views of Kilpatrick and Bagley attracted many followers, leading to titanic philosophical battles that continue to rage almost a century later. At the heart of their disagreements were competing views on the proper role of subject matter in curriculum making. Since Harris lived a generation prior to Bagley and Kilpatrick, he was not directly involved in discussions of what became known as “progressive” and “traditional” education. Nevertheless, Harris espoused views on subject matter and its relation to the end of education that merit attention not just because of their philosophical power but because we frequently hear echoes of Harris’s perspective in contemporary debates.

Harris’s views mirrored Bagley’s in the sense that he placed a high value on subject matter; however, the ends toward which Harris thought curriculum ought to strive differed markedly from Bagley’s, both philosophically and in the language Harris used to describe them. For example, Harris insisted that students should study subjects such as literature and geography not just so that they could pass down this knowledge to future generations but, more importantly, so that they could shape their souls in a way that led to the attainment of wisdom and character. Bagley’s argument for emphasizing subject matter was rooted in his background in natural science and evolution, whereas Harris’s views were humanistic in a classical sense. Harris used terms such as soul and virtue, which Bagley jettisoned from his writing early in his career.

Harris also proposed ends and practices that, although rooted in subject matter, were nonexistent in the works of Bagley and Kilpatrick. One example is a concept that Harris called “self-alienation.” Through this process of immersing oneself in a subject such as geography, a student could get disentangled from the contemporary world and become engrossed in lessons from previous generations (Ravitch, 2000). A proper liberal education should transport students to different worlds that offer them lessons they can adapt, when possible, to the problems they may encounter. Good education placed students in unfamiliar situations. It alienated them from practical realities, if even for a short time, to open them up to new possibilities. In time, students could learn to engage in this process without the guidance of a teacher, leading ultimately to self-alienation. If students never learned to engage in this process, they would remain trapped in their specific historical, cultural, and political context. In addition to remaining uneducated, they would fail to learn from the lessons of others while at the same time neglecting their responsibility to improve the human condition. Ultimately, self-alienation results in a person distancing himself from his animal desires and tapping into the spiritual nature of his being. In Harris’s (1893/2010a) words,

Education is, in short, essentially the shaping of man by habit into an ideal or spiritual type of being—a
realization of what we call human nature in contradistinction to mere animal nature. . . . Man as an animal is a savage: as civilized, he is an ethical being, who has set up within himself a system of duties and obligations which he observes at the expense of neglecting the impulses of his merely animal nature. (p. 257)

To achieve these ideal, indeed spiritual ends that Harris considered the ultimate goal of a liberal education, subject matter is crucially necessary, but far from a sufficient end.

Harris’s perspective on how the goal of democratic education fit into his views on curriculum also deserves attention. He was not an elitist who thought this type of liberal education should be reserved for students who had a natural interest in it or whose parents had the financial means to pay for it. Rather, Harris argued that a proper democratic approach was to offer this kind of high-quality curriculum to all students regardless of class or academic background. He was a critic of manual training during an age when vocational preparation was growing increasingly popular. He argued that the only appropriate way to democratize education was to open up avenues for all students to learn the wisdom of the ages. In the words of educational historian Diane Ravitch (2000),

Harris was a reformer, an advocate of modern subjects, and a tireless crusader for universal public education. . . . The goal of education, as Harris saw it, is freedom, self-dependence, self-activity, and directive power. The educated person with a trained mind and a disciplined will would be prepared to solve the practical problems of daily life. (pp. 33–35)

Harris was a broad thinker who viewed the role of subject matter in curriculum making in both ideal and instrumental ways. High-quality curriculum could not exist without serious attention to subject matter. At the same time, subject matter served broader humane purposes that ultimately culminated in philosophical and spiritual ends.

Subject Matter and Contemporary Trends in Curriculum Making

In light of these three historically significant views on the role of subject matter in curriculum, some attention to contemporary debates is appropriate. Although the perspectives of Bagley, Kilpatrick, and Harris continue to hold considerable sway in the minds of some educators and curriculum makers, other perspectives seem to have captured the attention of policy makers during the past few decades. Beginning primarily with the A Nation at Risk report of 1983, policy makers have elevated subject matter to a position that it did not hold during the 1960s and 1970s, when views similar to those of Kilpatrick had a considerable following. Throughout the 1980s and extending through the No Child Left Behind Act and the Race to the Top initiative of the first decade of the 21st century, the dominance of subject matter has continued.

At first glance, readers might conclude that Bagley and Harris would be pleased with this resurgence of subject matter. More careful understanding, however, reveals that the broader ends that writers such as Bagley and Harris had in mind seem to have been sacrificed at the altar of testing and an extremely narrow view of subject matter in curriculum. At the same time that movements such as the Common Core State Standards initiative and endless testing efforts have spread throughout the country, the only end that seems to matter at this point is the raising of test scores.

Although Bagley, Harris, and others who held similar views certainly appreciated the significance of subject matter, they never espoused or accepted the view that raising test scores should be an end in itself. American education appears to have gone from a situation in the 1960s and 1970s when subject matter was devalued and no clear purpose for American schooling had been identified to a reality in the early 21st century where an end exists, but one that is woefully short-sighted. Passing tests for the sake of it has captured the attention of those who dominate educational policy. An educated person seems to have been defined as someone who can pass a test. If an end beyond passing tests does exist, it is one of economic efficiency through job training, which is equally short-sighted.

The attempt to standardize subject matter through a common set of national standards is a noteworthy and ambitious goal, but whether or not such a goal can (or even should) be attained is debatable (Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang, 2011; Tienken, 2010). Some commentators contend that the merits of common standards are no longer debated and that the Common Core is a natural outgrowth of the focus on
students to be able to pass tests and enter America’s workforce successfully. They also, however, appreciated the same kind of curricular balance that is inherent in Schwab’s (1970) four commonplaces. In addition, Bagley, Harris, and indeed Schwab understood that the future of the United States rested on its ability to cultivate truly well-educated citizens who can draw upon wisdom from previous generations and make decisions that can help the country flourish. Facts are part of what citizens must know to achieve these ends, but they are not everything. The sooner we remember this truth and once again draw upon the wisdom of those who came before us, the better we can teach our young people a truly high-quality curriculum that offers the best hope for a bright future.

References and Further Readings


The orientation of *subject matter as experience* is a central feature of the progressive education movement as well as other alternative approaches to conventional schooling. By positioning life experience as the organizing principle of the curriculum, traditional academic subjects (e.g., mathematics, history, biology) are subordinated to selected practical experiences. The curriculum is revised to focus on “education of, by, and for experience” (Dewey, 1938, p. 28), derived from intelligent human living, well suited to the particular setting of an assembled group of young people under the guidance of an informed adult. It is contended that by focusing on problematic experiences, education is *intrinsically motivating, interactive, relevant, and empowering*.

An experience-based curriculum is *intrinsically motivating* because, it is argued, it centers on problems that children find significant, challenging, and meaningful. With a focus on active problem solving in social groups, *interaction* with intellectual content, technology, and other learners is more likely. The projects and problems are selected for *relevance* to the immediate needs and interests of learners with transparent connections to larger personal, social, and environmental purposes. The experience-based curriculum invites direct engagement in the process of active problem solving through shared deliberation and *empowers* participants to be agents of progress, creating solutions for practical dilemmas.

A project undertaken by students at South Adams High School in Berne, Indiana, responding to the scarcity of potable water in Haiti provides one example of subject matter as experience. A veteran science teacher, Michael Baer, was explaining to his class why vegetation clearing and soil erosion has had long-term environmental and social impact on the people of Haiti, including creating scarcity in drinking water. A student challenged the class to assist the people of Haiti rather than just study factors that led to this crisis. This redirection of the curriculum led to a new course structure with eventual impact on the entire K–12 district and community. Students formed teams to work on various aspects of the problem, and a group of students was escorted to Haiti to implement the teams’ solution. Subsequently, additional trips were taken to scientifically investigate the use of different filtration systems. In the process of confronting this social and environmental issue, students engaged in historical inquiry, conducted research in varied content areas, investigated alternative technologies for their effectiveness.
promoted by Johann Herbart, were instrumental in placing practical activities in a rational sequence through the promotion of the cultural epoch theory. This notion of human growth, influenced by German Romanticism, contended that a child’s nature replicates the stages of human history. At the end of the 19th century, notable writers on education, including Wilhelm Rein, Charles and Frank McMurry, Charles De Garmo, Francis Parker, and G. Stanley Hall, promoted this historically sequenced curriculum, responsive to the “natural” growth of the learner, and they taught through activities that represented each historical era (i.e., tool making, crafts, literature, music, and other cultural artifacts of an historical period). The importance of cultural epoch theory on curriculum was that it replaced didactic disciplinary academic learning with a theory of development that connected students’ experiences to the world.

Dewey (1900, 1902) described children learning about past human problem solving at the University of Chicago Laboratory School by reenacting activities such as tool making, carpentry, and spinning fibers. Dewey argued that it is the responsibility of the schools to provide refined experiences for young people that would not otherwise be readily accessible to them. Although it is personally and socially desirable for people to obtain the knowledge and skills organized in the academic disciplines, Dewey argued that didactic transmittal of information and generalizations organized by and for adults was learning in reverse. Problem resolution using academic knowledge can frequently be best obtained by group collaboration, or what Dewey called democratic living.

Education as the reconstruction of lived social experience was formally conceptualized in Dewey’s milestone contribution, Democracy and Education (1916). He clarified that an educative experience must integrate bodily activity, sensory engagement, and cognitive reflection by the student toward a relevant purpose. “Thinking, in other words, is the intentional endeavor to discover specific connections between something we do and the consequences which result, so that the two become continuous” (Dewey, 1916, p. 140). Continuity in action and deliberation implies that learners invest in the problem and intellectually confront the concern, that the solution is not predetermined but evokes suspense and risk of failure through uncertainty in outcome.
and that the experience elicits an effective meaningful response to the problem or issue (pp. 141–142). This orientation accepts the needs and interests of the learners as the starting point for curriculum development, locating problems that prompt deliberation to a meaningful solution. Thus, the determination of relevant experiences is primarily the responsibility of the group of learners with the teacher acting as guide and facilitator. This reconstructed experience makes use of academic disciplines as they facilitate understanding and resolution of a shared problem or project.

Dewey (1931) restated and amplified this approach, variously labeling the approach as project, problem, or situational learning. He contended that social problems selected as relevant for learning experiences serve as a magnet, drawing together and vitalizing academic disciplines as they relate to a shared issue of student interest. In his last major statement on educational practice, Dewey (1938) again corrected the misperception that all experience was educative by calling some experiences mis-educative (those that distort or arrest further productive experiences, do not foster intelligent deliberation, or are unconnected to experiences that advance progressive human development). Educative experiences, he contended, have the essential elements of continuity and interaction. Continuity meant that the experience has strong connections to varied expansions in knowledge and skill; interaction referred to learners’ engagement in work with their environment, not subordinated to external control that stultifies free intellect (Dewey, 1938, pp. 25–27). Such experiences are generated from the socio-environmental circumstances of the students; it is the responsibility of the teacher to recognize potential experiences that relate to the lives of learners and guide them to see the importance of disciplinary knowledge and skills as resources for resolution. Dewey did not require that the experiences be selected overtly by the learners in advance; they make the selection of experiences based on their sustained engagement in a learning community that includes the teacher.

A contemporary of John Dewey, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944) developed an educational philosophy consistent with the religious movement of Soka Gakkai from his career as a school teacher and principal in Japan. Soka education was further refined through Makiguchi’s embrace of Buddhist thought and practices. Makiguchi fell victim to imperialist opponents to Soka in the Japanese government, and thus his vision of an alternative school model could not be realized. Following World War II, his ideas were developed by Josei Toda (1900–1958) and then expanded in the life work of Daisaku Ikeda (1928–). Soka can be translated from Japanese as “value creating,” and the Soka educational model emphasizes having students engage in significant life experiences, fostering relationships with each other, their teachers, and the larger community (e.g., Makiguchi, 1981–1988, Vols. 5 & 6).

Thus, life experiences are the central subjects for analysis, reflection, and action. Dialogue is promoted as the primary mode of instruction, and the curriculum must be fluid to respond to significant events in the lives of learners and their world as they engage in a continuous process of value creation (e.g., Ikeda & Tu, 2007).

Progressive educators in the United States prescribed different, often conflicting, paths than those suggested by Dewey in applying the dictum that life experience is the subject matter of schooling. Among those whose ideas were consistent with the reform Dewey espoused was Boyd Bode (1873–1953), critic of the full spectrum of educational theories in his generation, but aligned with Dewey’s notion that meaningful schooling should be based on life experiences that invite novel discovery and resolution of problems in a way that often counteracted extant habitual solutions. “In the democratic social order,” Bode (1938) wrote, “the schools have a distinctive obligation to provide for the continuous examination of traditional beliefs and practices, on the ground that ‘time makes ancient good uncouth’” (Boyd in Alberty & Bode, 1938, p. 5). Bode argued that an educative experience cannot prescribe an outcome since the experience is undertaken specifically to think through and act on a resolution. Bode (1927) highlighted this difference, contrasting the work of the chemist and the plumber. Whereas a chemist tests hypotheses to determine whether the outcome assists in further understanding a phenomenon, the plumber is taught determined technical skills to resolve a range of conventional problems. For Bode, the character of the educational experience demands openness to imagination and sympathy guided by intelligence to determine conclusions in the best interests of the participants. Bode’s student and
collaborator, Harold Alberty, developed a curriculum based on this insistence on open-ended problem solving. Alberty (1947) proposed a “resource unit,” a detailed curriculum for the secondary school that critically examined contemporary social problems, also called “core curriculum.” Diametrically opposed to today’s Common Core State Standards, Alberty’s core was derived from student experience, not from the interests of policy makers who reside far from the students’ lives.

Bruce Raup, George Axtelle, Kenneth Benne, and B. O. Smith (1950) argued for an education in practical judgment and the exercise of intelligence for the formation of practical generalizations. What is promoted is “an education which centers in situations where policies are made—policies which guide decision in the vital relations of the learner’s life” (Raup et al., 1950, p. 282). L. Thomas Hopkins (1954) contended that the function of education is to assist the individual learner in organizing life experiences into a value/knowledge construct. Education focuses on two ends: (1) to provide experiences that will be rich in positive growth for the learner and (2) to help the learner find meaning in these experiences and learn to draw from these reservoirs of value and knowledge as new experiences are confronted. Hilda Taba’s (1962) conceptualization of inductive curriculum development began with the teacher and the learners rather than an imposed external plan wherein the objectives focus on student learning but the purposes and ends are ratified locally. Classroom practice is constructed by teachers who know the particulars of their students and engage them in development.

First-person chronicles by neo-progressive teachers in the 1950s and 1960s (Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Herbert Kohl, Jonathan Kozol, James Herndon) offered a popular revival of interest in finding curricular “moments” where life experiences, such as constructing a “slam book” or interpreting baseball statistics, provided respite from the drudgery of imposed studies. This genre of experience-based learning has been maintained in the recollections of more recent teacher-authors such as Greg Michie and Brian Schultz. Paulo Freire’s (1970) translation of learning through reflection and action on lived experience began in literacy education and has been extended to all ages and forms of education (Lake & Kress, 2013). Freire’s work revived curriculum based on experience.

He insisted that education be a dialogue among equals, beginning with careful analysis of the immediate social and political realities that confront the learners, expanding in the process to reimage, confront, and act collectively to dismantle oppression and promote liberation. Freire’s work to overcome a banking system of education with problem-posing pedagogy has had a revolutionary impact on curriculum in many parts of the world.

In the past 3 decades, the proposal to center life experiences as an organizing principle of the curriculum has been maintained in the writings of William Schubert (e.g., 1986) with the admonition to begin with curricular questions that consider the interests of learners (Schubert & Lopez Schubert, 1981). Schubert expanded on his invitation to give priority to student interests and voice in curriculum design as a moral imperative in a midrash on John Dewey’s (1933) writing about schooling in a utopian society (Schubert, 2009). Dewey’s admonition that the social and personal particulars of learners direct curriculum suggests faith in students to know about what they should learn. In this vein, James Beane directly confronted proponents of national and state content standards in the late 20th century. Beane (1997) encouraged “coherence” in curriculum by focusing on life experiences that enliven academic disciplines and saw democratic practice as the integrating focus with academic disciplines as resources. With Michael Apple, Beane identified schools and teachers who practiced democracy through shared inquiry on relevant personal and social experiences (Apple & Beane, 2007).

In interpreting curriculum as directed experience, some specialists, consultants, and curriculum developers base generalizations about needs and interests of learners to develop sequences of experiences for learners. This approach shares the reconstructed experience’s notion that learning begins with relevant and engaging lived experiences but makes the additional unwarranted assumption that adult authorities determine what constitutes the relevant and engaging experiences for students of a given developmental stage or age group, either individually or collectively. In many cases, learner-based experiential curricula morphed into externally prescribed curricula that wore the label of experience.

For instance, early in the 20th century, Maria Montessori had established herself as a major figure in educational reform in Europe with a remarkable
record of success in educating children who were
designated unteachable. The design of individual
developmental activities for young people, character-
istic of Montessori's (1912) approach, grew from
insights of Froebel, Jean Itard, and Edouard Seguin
and was refined through Montessori's observations
of learners and the theoretic structure she constructed.
She held that human development is based on readi-
ness for new experience, a carefully designed envi-
ronment of physical and intellectual challenges, and
opportunities for learners to succeed. This approach
is distinct from Deweyan reconstructed experience
on two important points: (1) a finite set of experi-
ences is determined to be appropriate to the learner
based on developmental readiness; (2) the activities
require individual, not communal, deliberation and
demonstration of success.

Activity elementary schools of Georg Kerschen-
steiner in the early 19th century in Munich shared
aspirations with Dewey more than with Montessori,
as Kerschensteiner provided practical activities for
students in gardens, kitchens, and workshops that
couraged active student engagement with life but
within choices made by institutional leadership.
Kerschensteiner opposed the domination of much
schooling by book learning and also by the
Arbeitsschule model of industrial training.

William H. Kilpatrick (1918) advanced a popular
interpretation of Dewey's focus on experience called
the "project method," a method that became a mod-
est sensation among educators for over a decade. The
project method consisted of learning activities built
around a hub of shared student interest, called a
sample of life or purposeful act. Kilpatrick's brief
proposal sparked interest in fashioning student pro-
jects to be undertaken in school, home, or both. A key
difference between the project method and Dewey's
reconstruction was the influence of the instructor in
proposing and directing this experience.

A wealth of proposals emerged from laboratory
schools and colleges of education for how best to
implement projects in elementary and high schools
(see, e.g., works of Charles McMurry, Ellsworth
Collings, and John Stevenson) in the 1920s, exempli-
fied by having students grow gardens, preserve food,
or install an electronic school bell. Projects were
immediately popular as a supplement to the standard
curriculum and often were designed with resources
that aided teacher implementation. This had the effect
of precluding the students' responsibility for forming
the purposes of the projects and deliberating on pos-
sible alternatives to attain their purposes. Many
progressive educators throughout the 20th century
advocated the directed experience as an approach that
breaks out of the conventional academic disciplines
and "hooks" student interest, arousing curiosity, and
inviting active production or performance. Other
interpretations of progressive emphasis on experience
as subject matter can be traced to the 20th-century
contributions of Fredrick Bonser, Henry Cope, Ann
Shumaker, Harold Rugg, and Henry Harap. Core cur-
riculum and interdisciplinary thematic units were
widespread in the 1960s. Project approaches were
revived in the late 1980s, used in medical education
through the curriculum of clinical diagnosis de-
veloped by Howard Barrows, and then were extended by
Barrows to high school science. This model, called
problem-based learning (PBL), presents students
with a social problem for which they develop research
questions. The teacher is facilitator and guide as stu-
dents in cooperative groups determine various causes,
consider possible solutions, evaluate alternatives, and
determine a defensible resolution, which is some-
times shared with a larger audience of experts. The
problems must have depth, complexity, importance,
be amenable to student-level research, and be open to
varied original solutions (Barell, 2003). Unlike
Deweyan reconstructed lived experience, the prob-
lem is most often selected externally and the process
is governed by imposed structures.

Curriculum interpreted as designed experience
replaces or retrofits academic subjects with training
in social tasks. Controlled by curriculum specialists,
learning experiences are engineered, focusing on
discrete knowledge and skills tied to a social purpose
(e.g., researching on the Internet), vocational spe-
cialty (e.g., IT support), or task (e.g., baking cookies).
A behavior to be learned is analyzed and redesigned
as a series of experiences for the learner to practice
and master.

This contemporary practice harkens back to John
Franklin Bobbitt's notion of curriculum making. He
assumed the raw material of curricular purposes lay in
tasks performed by successful adults in society. Like
industrial efficiency experts of his time, Bobbitt
(1924) urged for "activity analysis," that is, analysis
of personal and social tasks to be learned that could be
catalogued and arranged to be taught as a basis for
modern living. Bobbitt (1918) restructured learning around the following areas of training: occupational efficiency, citizenship, physical efficiency, leisure, and social intercommunication. Bobbitt (1924) later adapted activities to conventional academic disciplines. In a similar vein, W. W. Charters (1923) contended that schooling can define social ideals and locate activity objectives to realize these ideals. This analysis does not have to be limited to the work that people do; it can serve as a scientific investigation of all aspects of virtuous contemporary living, whether the life being investigated is that of an electrician, citizen, or parent. Similar to Bobbitt, Charters presented this model as compatible with the existing academic divisions as disciplinary knowledge, but recast the subjects as collections that a learner could attain through precise piecemeal integration of key techniques learned through controlled experience. Vocational education provided a comfortable home base for this approach to experience-based learning.

This controlled experience approach evolved or devolved to a new focus on everyday demands of American youth (e.g., Charles Prosser and life adjustment education in the 1940s) with the notion of identifying specified personal, social, and financial techniques that would offer practical training for young people. Florence B. Stratemeyer, Hamden L. Forkner, and Margaret G. McKim (1947) demonstrated that school curriculum can be developed from analysis of “persistent life situations” faced by youth. Their extensive lists and directions are often as specific as a training manual. In the 1960s, Robert Mager (1962) elevated the status of the training manual approach to classic status and found a wide audience through a focus on terminal behaviors of learning. Mager’s instructional objectives persist in teaching lesson plan design to pre-service teachers in colleges of education. Also from this influence, outcome-based education (OBE) enjoyed popularity as an alternative to achievement by accumulation of credits. In this approach, students demonstrate precise mastery of specified behaviors. As an extension of educational objective, OBE ensured students would attain the technical proficiencies prespecified as important. The standards movement of the late 1980s and 1990s also reflected vestiges of this kind of precision at the school level.

In a revival of concern for useful adult skills, the Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) Report of 1991 set forth occupational skills for teachers and students. Today’s Common Core State Standards, supported by extensive model lessons and large-scale testing directed to measure attainment of the various objectives, can be interpreted as learning through directed experiences that foster technical proficiency. Benchmark standards indicate skills that students are to demonstrate. Cumulatively, a given set of experiences is designed to construct model readers, writers, or mathematicians. A related initiative, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, while relying on the Common Core, is compatible with curricula that have specific planned activities for both conventional academic disciplines and global awareness (including finances, economics, business and entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy, health literacy, and environmental literacy). The similarity to Bobbitt’s 1918 structure is striking.

**Contemporary Concerns**

Reflecting on options available for determining the meanings of subject matter as experience, the following questions suggest that the topic continues to have practical relevance for educators at all levels. In accepting Dewey’s (1938) contention that not all experiences are educational, are his criteria of mis-educational experiences still valid? How much of school requirements are dead-ends, transitory entertainments, self-gratification, work without interest, void of meaningful personal growth, and restrictive? How often do educational experiences in the 21st century awaken curiosity, drive inquiry, engage the intellect, and motivate collaborative problem-solving experiences? Do mis-educational demands crowd out subject matter as experience?

Does the claim that PBL is a pedagogical heir to reconstructed life experience hold true if students are not engaged in deciding what problems to consider, purposes to pursue, the methods of inquiry and deliberation, and opportunities to voice and enact problem resolution? Is curricular alignment to interstate-mandated standards and large-scale testing a path to subject matter as experience? Has experience in schools become so directed by external control that neither continuity nor integration is a meaningful criterion for school experience?

How has electronic media reshaped the learner’s range of experiences? How fully is subject matter the
lived experience of students in the following examples: exploring natural flora and fauna in a forest, learning about flora and fauna at a natural history museum, watching a naturalist explore flora and fauna in Borneo in a PBS Nature special, or using an interactive computer program where the student assumes the role of an explorer in the rain forest of the Amazon? How does the advance of technology into the lives of learners reconfigure what constitutes an educational experience? Using the criteria of continuity and interaction, is it likely that some contrived and artificial media may offer a richer experience than does the immediate environment?

Are Common Core State Standards most accurately a continuation of the designed experience tradition rather than reconstructed lived experience wherein students and teachers share inquiry about the subject matter of experience? In the tradition established by A Nation at Risk (1983), which first resulted in a “core knowledge” push for cultural literacy in the 1980s, then shifted to the national standards movement in specific academic disciplines at the century’s close, will the Common Core State Standards further push U.S. schools toward a national curriculum? Since it is backed by large-scale testing across many states, will this heir apparent to the Nation at Risk tradition succeed in eliminating alternative conceptions of subject matter as experience?

**Forms of Inquiry**

Perhaps the most sustaining form of inquiry for scholarship on subject matter as experience has been the speculative essay (Schubert, 1991). Review of the resources used to explicate alternatives to subject matter as experience in the past century reveals that speculative writing of education theorists has been most prominent in developing this curriculum orientation. Even those who promote directed experiences for students, although arguing the value of social analysis in determining the important adult technical skills to rehearse and acquire, relied primarily on argument and reasoning and proposed studies through essays to promote their platform rather than sustained empirical analysis.

The case study has a strong historical attachment to investigating subject matter as experience. Dewey and his daughter, Evelyn, produced a volume that described promising Schools of Tomorrow (Dewey & Dewey, 1915). Apple and Beane (2007) offer case studies for reconstructed lived experience through democratic schools. The project method was promoted by Kilpatrick via essay, but it was through description of practices produced by other scholars and laboratory schools that it became a viable reform proposal. The same is true for Bobbitt’s (1924) examples in his handbook on how to make a curriculum. Subsequently, PBL and the instructional examples tied to the Common Core State Standards, now ubiquitous on the Internet, are case descriptions of varied options within subject matter as experience.

Action research is a third type of inquiry that has been effectively used to uncover the variety of forms of subject matter as experience. The direct experience of practitioners as they experimented to move beyond the structure of academic disciplines to consider problems and projects that relate to the lives of learners is a compelling and personal form of inquiry. Whether it is the work of Ashton-Warner with the Maori learners of New Zealand, the experiences of George Dennison as he confronted students who did not respond to conventional schooling, the lived efforts of Myles Horton to make the Highlander School relevant to the lives of adult social justice activists, or the reflections of George Wood in collaborations at Federal Hocking High School in Ohio, all are examples of this underappreciated form of inquiry.

Phenomenological inquiry, in the tradition of Max van Manen (e.g., 1990, 1992), and his contributions to thoughtful examination of lived personal experience, offers a fourth model of inquiry for consideration of the worth of subject matter as experience. It makes use of the tools of phenomenological writing to attain understanding of the essence of an experience and thus informs the reader of the value of this formative event in human living. Examples of this kind of research can be accessed at the Phenomenology Online website, developed by van Manen.

Conclusions should be new beginnings, reflecting on the saga of past ventures to cultivate subject matter as experience, taking stock of the near future by asking the questions suggested earlier, and using forms of inquiry and modes of expression to explore ever-evolving possible futures encountered in curriculum endeavors for and with students.
References and Further Readings


Websites

Common Core State Standards Initiative: http://www.corestandards.org/
Phenomenology Online: http://www.phenomenologyonline.com

The field of literacy has been defined implicitly or explicitly by a wide range of disciplines, theoretical orientations, and methodological perspectives. Two academic disciplines in particular have played a significant role in shaping the contours of modern literacy discussions and debates: psychology and anthropology (Street & Lefstein, 2007). Thus, the subject matters of “literacy” and its various iterations are borne out of these rather divergent poles of intellectual inquiry with psychological perspectives representing individual cognitive functions and anthropology foregrounding the social, cultural, and political functions of literacy. Literacy, language, discourse, and narrative are at the heart of curriculum inquiry. Razfar (2012) stated, “Many in the field of [curriculum studies] have either explicitly or implicitly recognized the centrality of language, especially narrative inquiry” (p. 127). This chapter provides an overview of the historical context of literacy, defines literacy through the prism of technology, examines traditional autonomous definitions of literacy, and concludes with sociocultural and ideological approaches to literacy.

Literacy as Technology: Historical Context

Definitions of literacy and the subject matters of literacy have been shaped by the various technologies used to carry human words. Perhaps one of the most dramatic technological shifts in human history is the development of writing. Three major technological shifts have profoundly contributed to the purpose and function of literacy in human society: (1) the phonetic alphabet, (2) the printing press, and, in contemporary times, (3) digital text (Razfar & Rumenapp, 2013). The earliest logographic written forms were uncovered in ancient Mesopotamia and Persia, and the earliest hieroglyphic systems were found in Egypt, Greece, and China. Literacy primarily served accounting purposes and management of large masses of territory. The most significant literacy development was the advent of the phonetic alphabet—each symbol stood for a consonant. While there is some debate about the roots of writing, there is consensus that the earliest writing was “invented” or “emerged” in two places: Mesopotamia (ancient Sumeria) circa 3200 BCE and Mesoamerica 600 BCE. Whether writing was independently invented in these places or emergent through cultural diffusion depends on the evolutionary perspective of writing one takes (Daniels & Bright, 1996).

In contrast to other symbolic systems such as mathematics, writing is inextricably linked to oral language. Given the connection of writing to oral language, it is important to consider the functions and purposes of early literacy practices. The ancient Canaanites of Egypt and Israelites were nomadic peoples who lived in fear of having their sacred
knowledge destroyed by dominant empires. As they traversed from one land to another, they were compelled to preserve and transfer their knowledge of ancient scripts to subsequent generations. Hence, the “alphabet” was invented, which comes from the first two letters of the ancient Semitic language “Alef” and “Bet.” The word Hebrew (עברית) literally means “traverse boundaries.” These diaspora communities invented the phonetic alphabet in order to make their sacred knowledge accessible to a wider population.

After the invention of the handwritten alphabetic system, the development of movable type and printing represented another seismic shift in the history of literacy. The printing press fundamentally changed how societies exchanged information and interacted with one another (Briggs & Burke, 2010). The printed word allowed for cultural diffusion across distant places and spaces. The earliest forms of print were found in China during the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127) and ultimately found their way to Europe culminating in Gutenberg’s printing press in 1450 (He, 1994). Gutenberg’s printing press was an effective technology for languages that had a limited number of characters. Given the limited number of characters, alphabetic scripts were efficiently adapted to the functions of the printing press. In the Western world, the Gutenberg press has been credited with radically transforming literacy. The Gutenberg Bible was the first mass-produced and relatively affordable text in Europe and fostered intellectual movements such as the Protestant Reformation and the Renaissance.

In the history of literacy, technology has mediated individual and social transformations primarily through accessibility of knowledge and information. If the printing press helped spawn the Industrial Revolution and modernity, then the Internet has brought about a quantum leap in how we exchange, store, and perceive information. The millennial generation, also known as Generation Y, has proven to be a significant turning point in human history, especially in terms of how it learns and engages in literacy practices (Razfar & Yang, 2010). The speed and alacrity of information flows has brought into question mechanistic, linear, or Newtonian notions of time and space. It has radically changed social relations and unsettled stagnant constructs of race, class, and gender. Social media and hand-held technologies have become tools of governance and accountability. As the Arab Spring demonstrated (Dabashi, 2012), entrenched dictatorships of the last century were suddenly toppled with instantaneous and simultaneous keystrokes transcending traditional boundaries. Digital literacy has become a necessary and sufficient condition for challenging oppressive regimes and engendering social transformation through creative activism (Howard & Hussain, 2013). In this context of writing and literacy development, there is a need to expand our understanding of what counts as literacy as well as its social functions. Literacy is more than school-based reading and writing serving discrete academic purposes.

**Defining Literacy**

**Literacy as Reading and Writing**

Definitions of literacy are inseparable from the technologies used to record and transmit human communication. Walter Ong (1982), one of the pioneers of literacy research, argued that any definition of literacy must inevitably consider the technologies by which oral communities were transformed into literate societies. In relation to human thought, orality was seen as human thought through sound, and literacy was seen as human thought through sight. Literacy was seen as a tool that could directly impact individual cognition, collective thinking, as well as altering social relations. Ong’s stance on the literate versus the nonliterate mind and his characterizations of the oral mind as uncomplicated were an extreme expression of the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis that linked language to thought in a deterministic fashion. In describing “the oral mind,” Ong (1978) stated, “without writing the mind cannot even generate concepts such as ‘history’ . . . just as without print, and the massive accumulation of detailed documented knowledge which print makes possible, the mind cannot generate concepts such as ‘culture’” (p. 2).

In this framework, literacy was a necessary tool for building the capacity of oral people for modernization since new technologies rendered traditional oral practices such as memorization of narratives obsolete. However, this stance reduces the functions of oracy to information retention and transfer. It is grounded in computational metaphors of mind and overlooks basic affinity functions of language and
communication. In this view, knowledge and information are assumed to be discrete and detached from relational functions of literacy. Since large amounts of information can be stored and more efficiently retrieved, there is no need to memorize information through songs and stories. The subtractive and deficit views of oral peoples in relation to more modern “literate peoples” have led to fundamental questions about the nature of mind and how literacy technologies impact it. The bifurcation of oracy and literacy is not productive, and Jack Goody and Ian Watt (1963) cautioned against the subtractive view offered by Ong. Instead of devaluing affective and relational functions of oral peoples, it is important to see how literacy expands our historical memory and engenders metalinguistic and metacognitive cultural practices (Olson, 1991).

The subtractive and deficit representation of oral cultures combined with the correlation of literacy and cognition has led to misrepresentation of oral cultures as more primitive than literate societies. Since literacy was equated with modernization and progress, then illiteracy was a sign of stagnation and backwardness. From a postcolonial perspective, some have argued writing and literacy could be considered a “colonial technology” that helped erase indigenous cultures (Donaldson, 1998, p. 47). The erasure of indigenous cultural practices was inevitable when the definition of literacy was limited to reading and writing. Oral cultures without a formalized writing system would lack legitimacy and recognition from the perspective of dominant literate cultures. Literate culture could claim supremacy and sovereignty over illiterate peoples since they lacked the ability to record and reflect on words. This definition of literacy has been characterized as the autonomous view of literacy, one where literacy is assumed to be neutral and free from the interests of self-styled literate peoples (Street, 1985).

In contrast to Ong and Goody’s depiction of literacy as a set of autonomous skills to be individually acquired, Brian Street argued that literacy was grounded in situations, events, and practices. Street’s ethnographic approach to the study of literacy countered the deficit constructions of indigenous-based literacy practices. Far from the primitive depictions of “nonliterate” peoples, Street’s (1985) early work on maktab literacy in Iranian villages showed the array of complex literacy functions performed by children as they navigated multiple and often conflicting spaces of life. During this time other ethnographic and sociocultural approaches to the study of literacy emerged from multiple disciplines focused on human learning and development. These studies collectively helped challenge the dominant autonomous view of literacy that pervades much of the curriculum in today’s schools.

**Literacy as a Social Practice:**

**From Literacy to Biliteracy**

With the focus on social context and practice, literacy research became open to the idea that literacy is more than just reading and writing in a single language and/or in genres of formal academic schooling. The ethnographic and sociocultural work of Shirley Brice Heath, Silvia Scribner, and Michael Cole in the early 1980s represented a significant turn in the study of literacy. It was a shift in what counted as literacy and an overt movement toward the multiplicity of literacy (literacies). Following the “social turn” in the study of language, the sociocultural and ideological turn in literacy studies helped reposition the literacy practices of nondominant populations as inherently complex and “higher order” functioning. For example, Scribner and Cole (1981) showed how the Vai people used multiple scripts to perform a variety of functions in both formal and nonschool settings. Each of these scripts was learned in culturally organized activities for the purpose of achieving concrete goals that spanned spiritual, economic, and political contexts. The Vai people used Arabic to navigate sacred texts such as the Quran, used English to engage commerce, and used the indigenous Vai script to conduct personal and political functions. Far from being “primitive,” the Vai showed how literacy was multiple, situated, and ideological across multiple spaces and timescales. One of the powerful implications of Scriibner and Cole’s study was that schooling alone was not sufficient to account for the complex literacy and learning demands of Vai children. In fact, learning both in and out of schools needed to be organized to leverage such a rich repertoire of literacy practices.

In the United States, one of the first ethnographic studies that showed literacy as a social practice was Heath’s study (1983) of three diverse communities varying by race and class. It brought widespread
attention to differentiated socialization practices and their relationship to formal schooling and learning opportunities. Heath’s focus on interaction, communicative competence, and language socialization as a lifelong and life-wide process was a significant shift in how literacy learning could be framed. It was an extension of narrow interpretations of nativist assumptions of literacy learning and challenged essentialist understandings of American communities. In the aftermath of Brown v. Board of Education, which formally called for racial integration of U.S. schools, there was growing interest in the academic and literacy outcomes of working-class African American students in predominantly White American schools (Guinier, 2004). Heath’s work highlighted the diverse literacy practices of three communities (Roadville, Trackton, and Maintown) while also showing the comparative advantage of middle-class, White American students (Maintown).

The comparative advantage of Maintown students rested in the fact that their home literacy practices were tightly aligned with how learning and literacy was socially organized in schools. For example, one of the regular literacy practices in Maintown homes was bedtime stories whereby parents engaged their children in content, discursive turn taking, and questioning patterns that were nearly identical to the ways teachers would engage them in school. Thus, Maintown children were literally at home while at school. In contrast, the nonschool literacy practices of African American children, while complex in their own right in terms of performative storytelling, were not leveraged in schools. Thus, literacy was shown to be multiple, but more importantly value-laden, and ideological. It also revealed the limitations of legal integration in the absence of cultural and ideological integration of nondominant literacy practices in schools.

Parallel to the movement toward literacy as ideological and multiple was the emergence of biliteracy studies. Over the last 3 decades a new field of literacy research focusing on the use of two or more scripts has emerged. Biliteracy refers to “any and all instances in which communication occurs in two (or more) languages in or around writing” (Hornberger, 1990, p. 213). The shift toward biliteracy represents a broadening in how second language learning and learners were viewed in the United States. Instead of labeling students with static and differentiating notions of “English-dominant” or “Spanish-dominant,” biliteracy was a way to assign a more symmetrical status to nondominant student populations (De Jong, 2011). In addition, biliteracy emphasizes the academic functions of languages other than English in the learning and development of these students. In the earliest stages of the term in U.S. literacy research, biliteracy was used in reference to academic discourse development in two languages, primarily Spanish-English (Goodman, Goodman, & Flores, 1979). Today this notion is being expanded further to include nonstandard variants and transnational literacy practices or even pluriliteracies (Garcia, Bartlett, & Kleifgin, 2007). The metaphor continues to expand “exponentially” in teacher education and professional development from two or more literacies to biliteracy as “squared” (Escamilla, Hopewell, & Butvilofsky, 2013). Biliteracy is gradually becoming an accepted standard and ideal with eight states having an approved “seal of biliteracy,” given to students who attain proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation, and as of early 2015, several other states were considering the use of the seal. In the coming years, as the notion of literacy continues to expand mediated by developments in informational technology, we can expect a “quantum” leap in our understanding of what it means to be literate.

Literacy as Ideological

From the ethnographic literacy studies of the late 1970s and early 1980s emerged a more critical view known as the New Literacy Studies (NLS). This ideological view of literacy allowed literacy to not only be studied as social practices but also attend to issues of power and social stratification (New London Group, 1996). For Street as well as James Paul Gee (2008), the everyday ideas of what literacy is and how it constitutes social relations are not neutral. NLS represented a paradigm shift in the study of literacy.

The shift from autonomous to ideological models of literacy included a shift in the unit of analysis from the individual to the social, ideological, and critical (Hatano & Wertsch, 2001). The ideological character of literacy is predicated on the idea that what counts as literacy is inextricably connected to how some symbolic resources become dominant and others subordinate. It focuses on literacy as cultural
capital and a purveyor of asymmetrical relationships between “haves” and “have-nots” of dominant literacy practices (Gee, 2008; Luke, 1996). Thus, many scholars who view literacy through an ideological lens would count traditional “content” areas such as mathematics and science as a type of literacy (e.g., Street, Baker, & Tomlin, 2005). This has led to a substantial body of work focusing on numeracy practices in and out of school spaces (e.g., Bevin, Bell, Stevens, & Razfar, 2013).

An ideological stance on literacy moves the locus of meaning from denotative literalism to connotative and metaphorical aspects of texts (Lähteenmäki, 2004; Street, 2003). It further argues that meaning making and semiotic actions are necessarily subjective, authentic, and situated. Texts are inscribed through a variety of semiotic resources available to interlocutors (Kress, 2004). Digital technologies have made it essential to define literacies as multimodal, multiple, and plural. Digital texts and the various mediums used for communication have led teachers to reorganize literacy instruction for the purposes of navigating not only traditional print texts but also social media and games (Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003). Ironically, the remnants of autonomous models of literacy are still front and center in national curriculum and educational policy debates.

Regardless of how policy makers frame the literacy debates, ultimately the seemingly transgressive literacy practices of millennials will shape the kinds of literacy practices that are validated in schools. As millennials move through teacher education programs, their definitions of what counts as literacy will be intuitively consonant with the insights of NLS. Currently, there is still a pronounced gap between educators and their students. Research on the multiliteracies of children and adolescents shows how extensive the literate repertoires of millennials are and how far they surpass those of their teachers (Alim, Ibrahim, & Pennycook, 2009). While there is substantial work on how to leverage “nonacademic” literacies for the purposes of developing “academic literacy,” we may have to reconsider our definitions of what counts as “academic” and what counts as “advanced” cognition. Gee (2003) has aptly shown how gaming as a social practice is far more sophisticated than most traditional literacy curricula. The literacies expected of gaming participants, especially in synchronous environments, require sophisticated levels of reading and the ability to collect and synthesize evidence. Gaming participants typically engage in displaced meaning making that is considered to be at a high level of abstraction, by any academic standard, in order to successfully negotiate problems situated in virtual worlds. Thus, literacy in the digital age encompasses more than just reading and writing found in asynchronous print mediums.

The reading and writing of digital texts has fundamentally shifted how we understand literacy. Literacy is more than decoding phonetic-based characters from right to left, left to right, or up and down. The reading and writing of digital texts involves the synthesizing of intertextual, nonlinear images that transcend three-dimensional notions of time and space. These semiotic practices (the processing of images) must now be considered essential forms of literacies as we prepare students for the realities of the 21st century (Moje, 2000; Stephens, 1998). While recognizing the shifting landscape created by digital literacies, it is simultaneously important to acknowledge the tremendous variation within digital literacies and their purposes and functions across various segments of society. Furthermore, there is a need for teachers to consider issues of access when it comes to technological tools, expertise, and community-based digital practices. For more than 3 decades there has been growing recognition in the field of literacy research for teachers to leverage and access students’ household epistemologies and expertise, or funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). In the digital age, it is critical for teachers to account for their students’ digital funds of knowledge in order to foster culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012). Typical questions associated with funds of knowledge inquiry can be modified to better understand digital funds—What are the digital literacies students do? What digital literacies do they have access to? What do they need to engage in digital semiotic practices? What types of digital literacies are essential to their basic survival?

Another complication spawned by the digital revolution is language choice. Given the dominant language of digital literacies is English, the use of non-English languages as mediational tools of learning continues to be a key component of funds of knowledge inquiry. There continues to be a trend toward devaluing nondominant literacies in the community or used in families in favor of standard forms.
of literacy. Non-English linguistic funds continue to be marginalized in public spaces and formal education. In addition, community-based semiotic practices and literacies, including dark funds such as graffiti or gang symbols, are also contentious issues for educators. Literacies used in society don’t always “fit” into our school curricula and often make us uncomfortable; however, that does not mean that it isn’t a conventional and cultural system of literacies. Literacy as ideological begs these contentious questions that are value-laden, historical, and uncomfortable. Teachers who assume an ideological stance of literacy and consider funds of knowledge to be an essential part of optimizing learning must be prepared to analyze, understand, synthesize, and leverage nontraditional literacy practices. This practice will serve a dual purpose of developing school-based literacy objectives as well as affirming nondominant identities.

**Literacy as Narrative Practice**

Historically, narrative inquiry has been a major point of convergence between literacy and curriculum studies. The narrative turn in social sciences provided a seemingly infinite array of genres from which to tackle the most pressing questions about human struggles for identity (Barthes, 1982). Narrative as a unit of analysis transcended reductive units of analysis such as oral versus written. Some have even argued that learning itself is a narrative process (Goodson & Gill, 2011). Literacy as narrative activity provides an empirical window into ontological questions of identity and how identities are lived through social practice. Since the early 1970s, sociolinguists and anthropologists have focused on narrative activity as a site for understanding how human collectives organize and structure the ethical dilemmas of everyday life (Ochs, 1997). Given that most of our cultural practices are tacit and subconscious, narrative inquiry affords the means to examine how human beings negotiate unexpected events. It allows us to become conscious of implicit cultural norms. Through an examination of participant stance taking and the moral evaluations of interlocutors, it becomes empirically viable to name the lived epistemic and moral struggles apparent in cultural activities (Duranti, 1994; Gee, 2008; Ochs, 2004). John Du Bois (2007) defined stance taking as “the smallest unit of social action” (p. 173) that he conceives of as a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means (language, gesture, and other symbolic forms), through which social actors simultaneously evaluate objects, position subjects (themselves and others), and align with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field (p. 163). A more critical perspective of stance taking includes ideological and explicit considerations of systems of values and hierarchies of power (e.g., Fairclough, 2003; Kress, 1995). The stance taking of people through narrative often creates social status and difference. Narrative inquiry provides a method for making explicit the tacit ways in which social relations are grounded in ideological frames of equivalence and difference.

Narrative inquiry is a form of research that is concerned with understanding the reality of the people involved in the narrative act. It is not concerned with whether the narrative is “true-to-life.” In fact, the construction of the narrative events, and not so much the events themselves, is extremely important. Narrative inquiry, then, is not an exact science in the sense of seeking an autonomous truth. As Jerome Bruner (1991) stated:

> Unlike the constructions generated by logical and scientific procedures that can be weeded out by falsification, narrative constructions can only achieve “verisimilitude.” Narratives, then, are a version of reality whose acceptability is governed by convention and “narrative necessity” rather than by empirical verification and logical requirement, although ironically we have no compunction about calling stories true or false. (pp. 4–5)

As Bruner noted, narratives are conventional. They have cultural rules for how they are told. Thus, human beings can easily distinguish between the courtroom testimonies and an elementary student’s story. These cultural conventions provide a way to understand the speakers’ mastery of the narrative form, but also give a way to understand how reality is constructed via narrative. Much narrative inquiry is concerned about stories that are about the self and, therefore, more clearly reflect the self. There are many different products used for narrative inquiry, including autobiography, autoethnography, testimonio, case studies, personal narrative, fiction, documentaries, films, life history, oral history, memoir, art, performance art, spoken word, oral histories, and literary journalism.
In this chapter, a brief history of the field has been presented in relation to the technologies that helped shape it. First, literacy is a social practice that mediates our relationship with the world. Second, these literacies are varied and situated depending on the goals and making needs of the participants. Written symbols are cultural tools that can be phonetic, logographic, or visual images, with each serving different purposes. Orthographies are cultural systems rooted in historical and cultural meaning-making practices. Third, power, privilege, and ideology shape the functions and uses of literacy across contexts. Dominant scripts are highly conventional, standardized, and regulated by nation-state institutions. Nondominant and indigenous forms of literacy are often marginalized and dismissed in schools and other spaces of “official” life. Educators need to understand the complex variation inherent in literacy practices across multiple spaces and timescales. Formalized, school-based literacies serve specific academic functions and are an essential tool for cultural cohesion in large-scale societies. A critical view of literacy and what counts as literacy can have profound impact on the educational trajectories of students, especially those of nondominant communities.

References and Further Readings


Websites

Seal of Biliteracy: http://www.sealofbiliteracy.org
School mathematics and science are key subject areas that school systems and public policy focus on, alongside literacy, as the core planks of a 21st-century education. This dominance often has been advanced under the banner of “numeracy” and “literacy” in school curricula and educational institutions nationally and internationally. The education of students in these core areas of human knowledge has been a primary aspect of schooling for at least a century. The privileged position held by those who have knowledge of these areas comes with many issues of principle concern regarding what should be the focus and purposes of these subjects. Of peripheral concern are values, attitudes, and considerations of “access” to and differential attainment in mathematics and science. Within government policy mandates, this most often is articulated through discourses on socioeconomics and “attainment gaps,” as well as gender issues, such as girls’ and women’s access to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). International mathematics and science studies such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) and TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) also pit one nation-state against the other in terms of competitive economic futures based on their youth citizenries’ access to mathematics and science.

The acronym STEM is often used interchangeably with science and mathematics. Such use can be problematic. STEM as a curricular category has different meanings in different locations and policy documents. It is sometimes used as a catch-all term for scientific and technical disciplinary areas. In the Common Core State Standards in the United States, STEM has taken on the particular meaning of an integrated approach to science, technology, engineering,
and mathematics that grounds educational experiences in the problem-solving and design processes central to engineering disciplines. In general, STEM might be taken as an opportunity to seriously consider the alignment of school experiences with the distinct and/or integrated experiences with scientific and engineering practices in the “real world.” Science, engineering, and mathematics have very different epistemologies and intellectual traditions represented in the history and practice of what has come to be understood as codified school subjects. Each has its own distinct curriculum histories and contestations. For example, one can find arguments that mathematics is most often practiced by mathematicians in ways more similar to the practices of scientists, artists, or philosophers, depending on the literature one consults (Appelbaum, 2008b). Engineering is curiously absent in typical early childhood through secondary education, meaning that many of the relevant contemporary practices and social applications are not addressed in most schools.

Further to the concerns regarding access, socioeconomic factors, and gender issues, a current key issue defining and shaping government and public perceptions of STEM is a growing concern worldwide that student engagement with STEM is dropping and recruitment into these disciplines is slipping below the levels claimed to be needed for the next generation of scientific and technological positions necessary to drive modern postindustrial economies. Meanwhile, there is resistance among researchers, teachers, and much of the public to this instrumental reading of the purposes and nature of a school education that is based on a concern for broader purposes of science and mathematics in schools around development of orientations to learning; interest in their specific subject matter; and broader moral, democratic, and social purposes of schooling. This includes the study of mathematics and science not only for their economic instrumentality but also for students’ right to learn these subjects for their own sake, as socially constructed and historical knowledge forms that contribute to human knowing and endeavors.

Comparative studies of student attitudes and engagement with STEM subjects show that attitudes and aspirations toward science and mathematics are high in developing countries, coinciding with a commitment to education more broadly as the key to economic betterment and social transformation. This contrasts with findings in postindustrial countries where students are exposed to a greater variety of future work and life identities and where the preeminence of science as a dominant form of knowledge is more readily challenged (Schreiner & Sjoberg, 2007). It is an intriguing contradiction that students in countries most successful on the TIMSS, such as emerging Asian countries, have less positive views of science.

Accompanying these contestations is the policy question of how to frame school science and mathematics subjects—whether policies should appropriately focus on the development of an elite of future scientific and technological professionals, or whether to focus on the broader questions of public participation in and confidence with these subjects (Freeman, Marginson, & Tytler, 2015). A critical reading of contemporary curriculum practices shows that common school experiences are highly successful in engendering an appreciation for the importance of science and engineering, perhaps even a reverence, and at the same time an acceptance of others as wielding the knowledge and skills in STEM fields. Education in STEM disciplines does not establish a scientifically literate citizenry. Instead it perpetuates science and scientific rhetoric as an elite endeavor left to experts without being available for public scrutiny (Appelbaum & Clark, 2001). Similar to Valerie Walkerdine’s (1988) analysis, education, especially in mathematics and science, creates an educated and hence manageable, malleable, “rational” public. STEM curriculum can be said to go one step further in establishing an acceptance in most members of society of the simultaneous belief in science as “the” solution to most problems and as something that is not to be questioned. In popular media we do find resistance to this idea in, for example, vocal challenges to what scientists claim about global warming and environmental apocalypse, but school science rarely addresses the ways that ordinary people can evaluate such claims.

From a curriculum perspective, these concerns and contestations translate into important questions with which scholars and curriculum writers have grappled. These questions include the following:

How can science or mathematics curricula be structured to engage students in meaningful learning of ongoing value? This question encompasses decisions
4. Subject Matters of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

about content in areas where knowledge is growing exponentially and areas where there are interactions between scientific advances and personal and public lives. The question also recognizes the need to include attention on the nature of knowledge and practice in these subjects and not simply an introduction to a string of disconnected concepts and processes.

To what extent should science and mathematics deal with content specifics, versus more generalized capabilities? In school mathematics, this question emerges in relation to student ability to perform mathematical operations and concepts, compared to problem-solving capability. In science, it relates to long-standing debates concerning content versus process, or inquiry versus concept acquisition.

What are the fundamental purposes of the subject in terms of the capabilities and orientations of individuals and societal needs? There are two competing agendas associated with this question—school science and mathematics subjects framed according to the need to educate future professionals within STEM areas, or framed around the need to educate a citizenry more broadly around these knowledge forms and practices.

What is the relation between the school subject and the practice of the discipline itself? To what extent should mathematics or science curricula involve practices used within the disciplines themselves, and given the many different professional practices associated with these areas, which should be represented? This also goes to the question of why these selections should be chosen—what purposes are being valued, and in which contexts?

Should STEM curriculum address social justice issues, and what is the relation between STEM school subjects and citizen knowledge? Increasingly, in developed societies, citizens interact with and, arguably, need to make decisions based on knowledge of mathematics, science, and technology. It is often argued that lack of confidence and competence in these areas limits citizens’ agency, personally and professionally, so that enlisting appreciation of and competence in these areas becomes important for all citizens, including those whose socioeconomic circumstances or literacy levels create barriers to such participation.

Within science curriculum, these questions have seen a shift from conceptions of science as an induction into future professional practice or research to conceptions of “scientific literacy,” which emphasize the need to provide a school science for all students that focuses on content relevant to students’ current and future lives as they interact with scientific questions. This includes knowledge of interactions among science, technology, and society; of the nature of science (Lederman & Lederman, 2012); and of practices in science and the way evidence is generated and used to establish new knowledge.

Within mathematics curricula, the arguments for numerical literacy also apply, as the current economic utilitarianism that mathematics enjoys in our postindustrial society provides the case for a critical reading of financial systems and economic development advocacies that, arguably, might prevent devastating global social consequences, such as those that were a result of the global financial crisis of 2008. Thus, the discourses on “relevance” and the nature of the kinds of mathematics taught (abstract versus applied; conceptual versus procedural) have been the subject of heated arguments worldwide, exemplified vividly by the “back to basics” movement and the “math wars” in the United States and elsewhere (Appelbaum, 2008b; Brown, 2001; Swanson, 2005, 2010).

Contemporary Concerns

This chapter frames curriculum in school science and mathematics relative to inquiry teaching and problem solving and engagement of students in STEM pathways, as well as raises a range of related social justice issues concerning gender, social class, race, and culture.

Inquiry in Science

Since post-Sputnik curriculum revisions of the 1960s, there has been persistent advocacy of scientific inquiry as a companion to products of science. This focus has represented itself under various guises since then, such as a focus on process skills in science, namely observation, questioning, hypothesizing, and designing experiments. Despite this long-standing advocacy, there is consistent evidence that
inquiry approaches are difficult to establish across all schools, often because of demands for content coverage, lack of support for inquiry outcomes, and lack of resources. Research has generally demonstrated that inquiry approaches lead to in-depth learning, but these findings are not uniform, partly because the term inquiry has come to be associated with a range of practices (Anderson, 2002). Inquiry approaches divide along two dimensions—the focus of inquiry, either investigative skills or conceptual exploration; and the extent of student support, from guided to open inquiry. A meta-analysis by Erin Marie Furtak and colleagues (2012) concluded that engaging students in generating, developing, and justifying explanations as part of science activities generally resulted in significant learning advantages. This is consistent with a framework developed by Micheline Chi (2009) describing student learning activities at four levels—passive (students simply absorb what is presented), active (students actively respond to the teacher or task), constructive (students generate ideas or models), and interactive (students dialogue, argue or justify, or jointly create ideas or models). There is evidence of learning advantages as activities progress from passive to interactive.

Social justice issues in mathematics and science focus on questions of whom, where, and why there has been differential access to these subjects, and why mathematics has been so socially and educationally divisive. Social dominance of mathematics and science has endowed these subjects with particular power and affect, and the “lure of objectivity” afforded them has masked their less-than-democratic natures. Ole Skovsmose and Paolo Valero (2001) asked whether mathematics itself or mathematics education experiences have intrinsic resonance or dissonance with democracy, suggesting that the only plausible approach would be one of critical perspective and function. Dalene Swanson and Peter Appelbaum (2012), drawing on the notion of “radical equality,” asked whether the position not to engage with mathematics is in itself a democratic position in relation to mathematics education. Others have argued that mathematics needs to be accountable for social injustice and that mathematics can and should be used to address, teach, and achieve social justice ends. Appelbaum (2008a) reminded us of relations of power that reduce mathematics curriculum to simple slogans, and advocates that other alternatives of thinking, pedagogy, and practice are needed to reimagine mathematics education that can respond to the social and ecological conditions of today. Walkerdine (1989) addressed ways in which girls have been “counted out” of mathematics through social constructions that position girls differentially in relation to mathematics, while Alan Bishop (1990) argued that mathematics is the tool of Western imperialism. Likewise, Swanson (2005, 2010) has drawn attention to the ways in which school mathematics is implicated in the intersectional injustices of race, class, poverty, gender, ableism, ageism, and other social difference discourses as an effect of power relations. Swanson also drew attention to how mathematics and science have often acted as colonizing forces in developing indigenous contexts under neoliberal globalization.

**Engagement of Students in STEM**

Government concerns mostly focus on the economic imperative of an ongoing supply of professional scientists and engineers, yet there is a wider concern that all citizens should gain appreciation and knowledge of science and mathematics as integral aspects of contemporary culture, occupations, and life. There is particular concern that students opting for lower level mathematics at secondary school cut off many future productive pathways for study and work, and that their identity formation as scientifically literate citizens also is curtailed. There is considerable evidence that, for the majority of students, life aspirations are formed before the age of 14 and that engaging students in STEM pathways can become increasingly difficult after the early secondary school years if they decide that science and mathematics are not of primary interest. Thus, it is important to engage students’ imagination in early school years.

A considerable body of research has found that student aspirations with regard to STEM are significantly mediated by a range of factors, including interest and self-efficacy. These relate to parental expectations and encouragement, teacher support and inspiration, career expectations and advice, exposure to role models of successful adults, and perceptions of the usefulness of the subject. The construct of **cultural capital** (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) has been used to explain the influence of
parents in transmitting cultural practices and values to their children (Adamuti-Trache & Andres, 2008). This issue of cultural capital also pertains to socioeconomic class in that the likelihood of young people from lower socioeconomic circumstances choosing a career in one of the STEM subjects is considerably lower than it is for their more privileged counterparts. It also has relevance to gender, in that adults often are found to have different expectations for male students compared to female students, even when there are no cultural or empirical reasons available for different expectations.

Work that addresses the intersectional influences of gender, race, class, poverty, and sociocultural and political considerations in their often hidden effects on engagement with mathematics education, and the influence of differential power relations in the construction of disadvantage, also contributes to this debate (Swanson, 2005, 2006, 2010). In this latter respect, the concept of identity is increasingly used to frame students’ responses to STEM. Identity formation is often mediated through questions such as “Is science for me?” or “Am I clever enough to do it?” (Aschbacher, Li, & Roth, 2010). It is argued that for youth in late modern societies, with values such as self-realization framing identity choices, science teaching and mathematics teaching need to move away from their current strongly instrumentalist emphases and value-free presumptions if they are to capture the imagination of young people. Glen Aikenhead (2006) argued that since learning science is identity work, First Nations students, in the Canadian context, need to cross a significant border to take on the perspectives and values of Western science, which often contradict indigenous ways of knowing. He advocates “culturally responsive pedagogy,” which recognizes and pays respect to other perspectives, in supporting students to engage with science and mathematics.

Gender issues are analyzed through an identity lens, as well as sociocultural and political codes (Walkerdine, 1988, 1989). Despite decades of recognition of a gap in attitudes between boys and girls in the physical sciences and mathematics, there has been little success in bridging this gap. Even where girls’ attainment levels are comparable, girls are less likely than boys to choose scientific careers. Support for girls in developing an interest in science and mathematics has focused on working with parents and teachers on exposing girls to female role models and potential futures in STEM at an early age, as well as providing mentoring to girls who, for instance, choose an engineering career. Nevertheless, such strategies need to go beyond these approaches to a better investigation of the various underlying social and environmental codes at play that prevent girls’ committed engagement with these scientific disciplines. Research shows that boys tend to display more interest in technical topics, while girls emphasize the social and personal value of science (Schreiner & Sjöberg, 2007). This implies the need for science and mathematics curricular content and pedagogical approaches that are responsive to these different perspectives.

Two themes emerge from the literature on student engagement with learning: One is the importance of encouragement to maintain students’ self-efficacy in order to enlist their continued engagement in mathematics and science. Resilience and optimism are important concepts (Williams, 2014) for teachers to understand students’ responses to science and develop pedagogies that support and encourage the students. For mathematics, development of problem-solving capabilities, and for science, engagement in inquiry processes, are significant curriculum innovations that engage students. The second theme is relevance, the increasingly prevalent social constructivist view that mathematics and science need to be linked with students’ lives, interests, and aspirations. In contrast, despite many pedagogical initiatives designed to engage students, schooling worldwide still tends to be dominated by passive, instrumental, “chalk-and-talk” modes of teaching. There is a need to promote more varied pedagogies that challenge, interest, and support students and engage them in authentic, contemporary, and imaginative science and mathematics work that will prepare them for productive and fulfilling futures.

**Context**

A key change in education that occurred during the 20th century was the expansion of secondary education in industrialized countries to encompass the entire population rather than just an elite few selected to enter the professions. This implied for mathematics and science the need to develop a curriculum that
catered for a much wider spectrum of students than had hitherto been the case. For example, this led to calls for science-for-all and mathematics-for-all movements. There were also moves toward integrated science that focused on cross-disciplinary topics. This shifted the aim of school science from being focused on science for future professionals to consideration of the science needed for future citizens more broadly. These ideas gradually consolidated around the notion of scientific and mathematical literacy. Hence, emphasis was placed on scientific ideas for citizens and making scientific information relevant to students’ personal and public lives.

Studies of the ways citizens interact with science show their different needs compared to those of future disciplinary professionals. For instance, analysis of studies of a range of cases where citizens interact with science (e.g., people arguing about the placement of a municipal landfill or parents dealing with doctors concerning their Down syndrome child) concluded that knowledge of the way science works was more useful to citizens in interacting with science and scientists than were specific concepts (Ryder, 2001). Paralleling this is the growing concern of a perceived lack of public support for scientific and technological advances. Widespread anti-evolution beliefs and challenges to the “objectivity” of science, such as political and public opposition to scientific positions on climate change, alongside reduced proportions of students engaging in STEM pathways, have raised questions about the need for citizens to better understand the nature of science and its relevance to society. Thus, scientific literacy, which is the core framing purpose in many countries’ science curricula, focuses on the need for citizens to be able to use scientific ideas to reason and develop explanations and understand the historical and social epistemic (knowledge-producing) processes of science. Recent curricula in science tend to include not only conceptual knowledge but also strands in inquiry skills (investigative procedures) and contemporary interactions between science and society, often on health and sustainability.

Alongside the formal curriculum, there are increasing partnerships between schools and the scientific community in which scientists and scientific organizations, including museums, resource centers, and outdoor science learning environments, interact with students and teachers to provide expertise and contemporary perspectives.

Theoretical Perspectives

For both mathematics and science, a key theoretical perspective on learning has been constructivism, which exerted considerable influence on approaches to teaching during the last 2 decades of the 20th century. Constructivism is broadly based on Jean Piaget’s theory of child development. For Piaget, child development involves many fundamental shifts in perspective as children learn to make sense of the world. In mathematics, radical constructivism (von Glasersfeld, 1995) holds that we cannot talk about knowledge as certain and defined, but that our ways of knowing are adaptations to help us operate in the world. In science, constructivism was drawn from a pragmatic assumption that we construct knowledge to make sense of the world. Knowledge so conceived cannot simply be transferred by textbooks to students. For constructivists, learning is an act of creation and ultimately the responsibility of individuals as they strive to make sense of the world. Social constructivists in mathematics education looked to the work of Lev Vygotsky (1981) and his zone of proximal development theory to argue that how children come to know is mediated in the social environment by more capable peers.

Learning significant concepts, therefore, is not a matter of “pouring in” knowledge but, rather, shifting students’ perspectives—in constructivist terms—from pre-existing conceptions. Research has uncovered students’ “naïve conceptions” about, for instance, force and motion, which are similar to very early scientific ideas and can act to block students’ learning of contemporary science ideas. Many naïve ideas that children bring to school in science are associated with everyday language, such as using the word suction to explain air pressure phenomena; or metaphorical uses of the words force, energy, or respiration that are not aligned with the scientific concepts; or similar uses of factor and center that are not aligned with their use in mathematics. The link among language, learning, and thought is crucial to the way we think about learning in school science and mathematics. Vygotsky argued that the way we think is fundamentally mediated by language. Research by Bruno Latour (1999) and
4. Subject Matters of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics ● 33

others focusing on ways that scientists generate knowledge has shown knowledge creation to be inevitably tied to the negotiation of material and conceptual artifacts such as models (e.g., the double helix or modern digital simulations), images (e.g., Michael Faraday’s generation-of-field line drawings or false color electron micrographs), or data representations (tables and 3D graphs). Thus, we have come to realize how learning science and learning mathematics are intensely multimodal activities (Ainsworth, Prain, & Tytler, 2011). Learning in science and mathematics is now seen as a process of induction into the discursive (language) practices of the discipline, with language being understood as including not simply natural language but multimodal representations. Modes and models that are used influence strongly what scientific knowledge can be produced and what limits to knowing can be challenged. From this perspective, inquiry approaches to school science and mathematics involve students engaged in generating, re-representing, and coordinating multimodal representations to develop reasoned explanations (Tytler, Prain, Hubber, & Waldrip, 2013).

Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression

Studies of student learning in science and mathematics have substantially moved from psychology laboratories to classrooms over the last 4 decades, sacrificing specificity and control for valuable insights that can come from studying learning in its natural environment. Classroom studies analyzing teacher and student talk, for instance, have provided insights into student reasoning, argumentation, and the conditions under which groups can operate effectively. This has included work drawing on complexity science to better understand how the ecology of the entire classroom environment works to influence children’s mathematics learning (Davis & Simmt, 2003).

Quality recorded video for playback and analysis allows researchers to study the ways that teachers coordinate multimodal resources and interact with groups of students using talk and gesture. These images show promise of being valuable for teacher professional learning. For many years researchers have worked with teachers to study the conditions under which innovation is employed and pedagogies refined as conditions in schools change and new ideas and resources are developed. Video and digital communication opens possibilities for sharing between teachers and researchers. The capacity to pinpoint, represent and replay, and share classroom video recordings offers rich ways of thinking about student and teacher learning and development.

Teaching and learning science and mathematics is becoming an increasingly global practice (Atweh & Clarkson, 2001). International testing regimes such as PISA and TIMSS have allowed countries to compare their performance across a range of dimensions, and this has been an important catalyst in many countries for policy development and change. These testing regimes have not always brought progress, as government education ministries have often swayed toward instrumentalist curricula and pedagogic approaches in an attempt to satisfy the cries of industry and provide the nation-state with competitive economic advantage in the global arena. At the same time, the possibility to communicate and share video has spawned a number of projects on the teaching of science or mathematics in different countries, in order to study commonalities and differences, such as the different language used to describe classroom activity. These projects have illuminated the particular cultural practices we would otherwise think of as unproblematic and inevitable. The move by many countries to incorporate Japanese lesson study in mathematics, an approach to teacher professional learning based on teams developing and refining mathematics lessons, is a case in point. On the other hand, however, the problem with many such initiatives is that they often underconsider the cultural specifics that make something successful in one context and not in another. Even more problematic has been their politicization in the ways in which curricular projects have been directly imported to other countries with simplistic understandings of their promised success. An example of this was the ways some U.S. school districts adopted the Singapore mathematics curriculum in hopes of boosting achievement in mathematics without considering the completely different cultural, political, and linguistic differences between the two contexts, thus failing in their expectations.

More widely, country comparisons of STEM policy and provision can help illuminate political and cultural structures underpinning curriculum and
broader policy framing (Freeman, Marginson, & Tytler, 2015) and help map trajectories as different groupings of countries (postindustrial, post-Confucian, developing) examine and develop their STEM curriculum policy and practice.

We end with a stark reminder that the study of nature and natural phenomena, and the solution to significant environmental problems threatening to end the planet’s ecological life (including humans) as we know it, falls within STEM. Thus the teaching of science and mathematics with this ethical consciousness and priority is a moral imperative. Sadly, there are so many forces reducing science to mere “fun” (Appelbaum & Clark, 2001) that this actually obscures the moral imperative in favor of entertainment. This might be the most significant “lesson” from STEM for the entire guide in which this chapter sits: Squabbles over content, sequencing, pedagogy, age-appropriateness, and so on, for any school subjects, integrated with others or not, narrow our focus too much to enable us to appreciate the global crises in the relationships among education, society, and the ecosystems in which we live. Curriculum studies perspectives can provide critical understanding of these crises, if we could avoid such reductive tendencies. Curriculum traditions, insofar as they represent disciplinary interests and learning associated with them, while important, lead us away from the need to embrace the transformative potential of education. Science and mathematics, given their weight and cache in the social domain, could lead the way to address significant personal and social imperatives, both locally and globally, as central curricular concerns.

References and Further Readings


4. Subject Matters of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics • 35


For nearly 100 years social studies has been a vital part of school curricula across the United States. The century saw the definition, nature, purpose, and content of social studies subjected to endless debate, or “wars” (Evans, 2004), while its inclusion in the school curriculum was rarely questioned. But now in the 21st century the very existence of social studies as a school subject is uncertain, which also threatens the viability of research on social studies curriculum.

First conceived by a National Education Association (NEA) committee, social studies was defined in its 1916 report as subject matter within history, geography, and the social sciences that promoted citizenship and invigorated democracy (U.S. Bureau of Education, 1916). The goals of social studies to build an efficient citizenry mirrored the broader mission of public, state-funded schooling to promote democratic citizenship, unity, and social cohesion. Today, social studies is defined by the National Council for the Social Studies (2010) as “an integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence” whose primary purpose is “to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world” (p. 3). The term social studies is commonly used as a conceptual umbrella to refer to “coordinated, systematic study” under which “disciplines [such] as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences” are embedded (p. 3). However, what constitutes good citizenship, what type of citizens should be cultivated, and how and what we should teach is still contentious. Since the early 2000s, as the neoliberal reform movement has vigorously challenged the state’s provision of public schooling and the very notion that schooling should be a public good, social studies has lacked a function. Furthermore, the elevation of a standards and accountability movement that measures and assigns value to literacy and mathematical knowledge over other subjects means that social studies is increasingly marginalized (Vinson, Ross, & Wilson, 2012).

This chapter explores the state of social studies curriculum given this contemporary context and maps out the debates, context, and theoretical approaches of social studies research. Our narrative explains how social studies emerged in school curriculum and then developed into an area of scholarly
research. From curriculum development to theoretical inquiries, social studies research is often concerned with the possibilities of improving society through social education (Woyshner, Watras, & Crocco, 2004). In summary, this chapter reviews the recent literature and documents on the social studies published during the past 10 years; synthesizes proposed key issues of the field; identifies three emerging contemporary concerns in social studies curriculum research; and, finally, sketches the scholarly inquiries, practical implications, and policy matters of the field. To navigate this quirky field is tricky, and we offer this chapter as a place to begin.

Contemporary Concerns About the Social Studies Curriculum

“We build and teach social studies from where we are” (Cherryholmes, 2006, p. 256). The social studies curriculum is shaped by contemporary global and local issues. This section explores social studies in relation to globalization, diversity, and the era of accountability, assessment, and standards-based movement.

Global Connection and Citizenship

Across the globe, racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity is increasing within and across nations and redefining citizenship as an idea that extends beyond national borders. Controversial global issues and events, such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the subsequent war in Iraq, displayed the contradictions and ambiguities embedded in globalization. New communication technologies and information networks enable hundreds of millions of people around the world to gain access to vast information and take action. Social studies educators have raised questions regarding the ways globalization and technology influence the lives of youth and have called for the need to critically reexamine ways of teaching global citizenship and learning about the world.

Sadly, social studies education has not been effective in teaching students about the complex formations of global history, culture, and identities and preparing them for global citizenship. The social studies curriculum has long been criticized for its imperial, Eurocentric focus and stereotyped understandings of the world that marginalize the stories and voices of people in and from “the other” sides of the world (Subedi, 2010). Current national and state social studies curriculum standards appear to superficially touch upon globalization as a curriculum topic without depth and complexity, if it is discussed at all. Global educators problematized the social studies curricula’s strong emphasis on nation building and its nationalistic filters that force students to see global issues through the lens of their country’s national interests and governmental policy (Merryfield, 2012). In the 21st century, technology appears as an effective educational mechanism to facilitate global communication, promote global awareness, and foster global participation. Yet, the ways in which technology mediates, or complicates, students’ learning about the world—and the current states of equal access, technological infrastructure, and teacher training—have been underresearched (Maguth, 2012).

Considering that there has been a multiplicity of epistemological and practical discourses on what it means to be a global citizen and how one learns to be one, teaching and learning global connection and citizenship in the social studies requires more dialogue and implementation (Gaudelli, 2009). Key questions that are worth further exploration include: What are the meaningful ways students engage competing worldviews through various means and technological tools? How do students learn to make globally responsible and ethical decisions as citizens of their nation and members of the global society?

Diversity and Citizenship Education

As the last century progressed, the citizenship aims of the social studies curriculum, its implementation in the classroom, and curricular and pedagogical discourses over the field have been (trans)formed and (re)envisioned as racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, sexual, and other forms of diversity. Yet, social studies curriculum has frequently been criticized for its tokenistic approach to diversity and social justice, marginalization of the stories of minorities, and inadequate images and descriptions of those who enriched our multicultural society (Banks, 2007; Woyshner et al., 2004). Gloria Ladson-Billings (2003) poignantly bemoaned the absence of race talk, the use of soft touch toward the
issues of racism, and the propagation of an American history narrative that perpetuates racial hierarchy and maintains White privilege. Scholarship related to gender has not received much attention despite women’s continuous as well as substantial contribution to citizenship education and the social studies curriculum during the past century. Discourses on sexual orientation, class, and religion have almost been unheard (Levstik & Tyson, 2008).

As immigrant children having diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds comprise a rapidly growing student population in the U.S. schools, social studies is facing new possibilities and challenges today. Almost 41% of teachers nationwide have had newcomer English language learners (ELLs) in their classrooms (Cruz & Thornton, 2013). Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, immigrant students reportedly experience multiple challenges to making sense of the traditionally White, Eurocentric social studies curriculum and to building relationships with inadequately trained teachers of ELLs, which contributes to their academic failure and disengagement from learning (Cruz & Thornton, 2013). Given the multicultural and linguistic diversity of students in schools, critical questions involving the social studies include how the curriculum should respond to changes in the student population and how opportunities to facilitate ELLs’ growth as knowledgeable and responsible citizens should be provided.

Social Studies in the Era of Accountability, Assessment, and Standards-Based Movement

The prevailing circumstances of standards-based educational reform, assessment, and accountability are critical contextual elements to make sense of the contemporary social studies curricular and pedagogical concerns. Since the passing of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), social studies has been intensely marginalized and placed on the back burner in school classrooms. The instructional time for social studies has been significantly reduced, to the point of nonexistence in some cases in elementary grades, in favor of reading, writing, and math, the focus of NCLB’s accountability measures.

Such a politicized pedagogical climate places social studies educators in a difficult position. Many social studies educators bemoan the decreasing emphasis on democratic citizenship as aims of the social studies, as technical knowledge and skills in the subject area are promoted. Furthermore, many agonize over whether to support high-stakes social studies testing in order to save the field from extinction. Although omission from standardized tests is often welcomed, it has been evident that social studies is relegated to the sidelines, as tests determine what is important (Vinson et al., 2012).

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Initiative has brought forth additional challenges to the social studies. The current Race to the Top scheme under the Obama administration supports the “college and career readiness anchored” CCSS and encourages states to adopt the initiative and to develop core-aligned standardized tests. Currently there are no stand-alone Common Core standards for social studies. The grades 6 to 12 Literacy in History/Social Studies Standards are embedded in the English Language Arts Standards. The widely defined 10 thematic strands of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) have been suggested as a framework of the K–12 social studies curriculum since 1994, and again when revised in 2010, yet only as a voluntary guideline (National Council for the Social Studies, 2010). In opposition to the CCSS, which institutionalizes social studies’ diminution in the elementary school curriculum and uses the subject as a vehicle for literacy instruction, the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Inquiry in Social Studies State Standards, currently under development by NCSS, focuses on the subject area’s disciplinary and multidisciplinary concepts and practices.

Again, conflicting views on curriculum standardization and testing exist. Some argue that the CCSS of social studies as a stand-alone subject need to be developed since social studies is in danger of being a second-tier subject that may barely be taught or touched upon in literacy instruction under the current CCSS initiative. Others oppose the standardization of the social studies curriculum as it may serve as a mechanism to adopt CCSS-aligned textbooks and curriculum guides with social studies reading passages lacking content of history, geography, and the social sciences and, thus, to control the official knowledge and skills that students learn in school (Vinson et al., 2012). Social studies research on the issues of assessment, accountability, and standardization has been insufficient. More inquiry is needed
to provide a clear theoretical framework and a solid, research-based grounding to the field and to support educators to make informed, responsible curricular and political decisions.

**Context**

As a deliberately constructed school subject with clear points of origin, social studies has long been a topic of historical inquiry. Understanding the historical and political contexts in which social studies curricula are embedded is a necessary prerequisite for social studies curricularists, for curriculum only makes sense if you know the context (Pinar, 2008).

The first national pattern of social studies curriculum is traceable to the traditional history curriculum as proposed by the NEA’s Committee of Ten in 1893 and the American Historical Association’s Committee of Seven in 1898 (Thornton, 2005). Yet historians have typically traced the subject’s origin to the NEA Committee on the Social Studies (1913–1916) whose curricular visions eventually became the dominant curricular pattern for most of the 20th century (Evans, 2004). Proclaiming that a modern education should develop social efficiency through curricular explorations of social content, the Committee’s 1916 report defined social studies as a subject matter that “relates directly to the organization and development of human society” and laid out a plan to restructure the history and geography curriculum to emphasize “efficient” and “good” citizenship (U.S. Bureau of Education, 1916, p. 17). Social studies, unlike the broader social education, pursued a specific agenda to use selected content in the social sciences, history, and geography to develop students’ capacity as democratic citizens (Saxe, 1991). In this new era of compulsory schooling laws and rising high school attendance, the report declared that the “conscious and constant” purpose of schooling be “the cultivation of good citizenship” (U.S. Bureau of Education, 1916, p. 17). Social studies was not to be a unified course or a replacement for history (Fallace, 2009). Instead the mission was to reorient the goals of the curriculum toward creating cooperative citizens and understanding present social conditions. In 1921 the fledgling NCSS further clarified, defining it as a “federation rather than a fusion of the social studies subjects” (Hertzberg, 1981, p. 37).

The report’s legitimacy and notoriety stemmed in part from the NEA Committee’s conveners, Thomas Jesse Jones and Arthur William Dunn, who were also employees of the Federal Bureau of Education. State legislators and local educationalists were amenable to the report’s suggested reorientation of the curriculum as it fit perfectly into an emerging mission to use public schools to raise patriotic citizens during World War I and after. State legislators complied, and between 1919 and 1921, 18 states passed legislation inspired by the report that required public schools to teach some combination of patriotism, citizenship, and U.S. history (Peirce, 1926). In 1923, 19 other states joined the movement, mandating the implementation of a social studies curriculum (Peirce, 1926).

The social studies movement fostered the development of problem-based citizenship education where teachers and students identified social issues and acted on them, an approach that regarded all students as citizens no matter their age or nationality. The report recommended course additions of “Community Civics” in the eighth grade and “Problems of Democracy” in the twelfth grade. This oft-called “new civics” eschewed the view that civics is merely the memorization of political facts, instead favoring the Deweyan view that students act as participatory citizens and practice democracy through cooperation and community building (Evans, 2004).

From its very beginning, whether social studies promoted subservience or social justice was in contention. According to David Warren Saxe (1991), the report’s conferees harmonized social control and social justice, the two competing goals of education. Ronald Evans (2004) emphasized the role of Thomas Jesse Jones as a creator of social studies, who was motivated by a desire to Americanize immigrants. Immigrants overpopulated American schools, particularly in urban areas where the foreign-born population was often more than twice the national figure of 13% according to U.S. Census data in 1920. Over half of the foreign-born populations were noncitizens, which brought even more urgency to the need for citizenship instruction. Ultimately, proponents of social studies agreed that citizenship was in crisis. John Dewey and Harold Rugg’s vision of schools as laboratories for democracy and participation was countered by social efficiency educators’ view that social studies could be used to achieve social efficiency if
content such as instruction in “American ideals,” which best “fit social needs,” was emphasized (Fallace, 2009; Kliebard, 2004).

Social studies curriculum remained contentious through the middle part of the 20th century, most notably as fodder for political debate in the social revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s. At stake continued to be the function of social studies. Was the purpose of social studies curriculum to advance social justice, activism, and the rights of citizenship, or to foster patriotism, unity, and a responsible citizenry? The curricular legacies of the civil rights movement and the women’s movement maturing in the late 1970s and 1980s attempted to revise the hegemonic historical and social narratives transmitted through traditional social studies curricula. Ethnic and women’s studies courses at the secondary and collegiate levels taught history and social issues relevant to Native Americans, African Americans, Latinos/as, Asians, and women. This additive approach offered a counterpoint to the curriculum that emphasized the deeds of “great White men.” By the 1980s and 1990s, many educational activists favored a complete revision of the standard narrative over the additive approach. The multicultural or bottom-up historical narrative by Howard Zinn popularized in the 1980s gained favor as it replaced White, male actors with people of color and women, as well as emphasized exploitation, conflict, and struggle. The “history wars” and the battle for a multicultural curriculum continued to influence the content of social studies curriculum into the 1990s, even as critics on the left charged that much of the curriculum actually implemented in schools was a rather superficial exploration of non-White heroes and holidays. As efforts to make social studies education multicultural became commonplace, true integration, structural reform, and eventually social action were sometimes realized (Banks, 2007).

More critical educational theorists have denounced revisions of the social studies school curriculum, especially the frameworks provided by NCSS, for leaving anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and “critical multicultural social studies” orientations on the fringe (Ladson-Billings, 2003). Supplementary materials produced by Rethinking Schools, Teaching Tolerance, and Teaching for Change help fill the demand for critical social studies curricula set by textbooks in which narrative structure and content is determined by the nation’s largest markets. In states where school textbooks are selected by the State Board of Education, which include California and Texas, the social studies curriculum has generated statewide public debate. Always politically charged, the social studies curriculum is an ideal place for conservative and liberal groups in the promotion of their own social agendas to reinforce or to revoke the current social order (Woyshner et al., 2004).

Pedagogical debates over whether content should be delivered or explored and how to balance between historical narrative and skill have also shaped the social studies curriculum. In the open schooling and counterculture, free school movements of the 1960s, pedagogical innovations that emphasized self-directed and inquiry- or project-based learning reconfigured how students learned about social issues (Totten & Pedersen, 2007). The vision of the teachers as curricular and instructional “gatekeepers” who ultimately determine how curriculum is materialized in the classroom and must be empowered to make informed, responsible curricular decisions suggested influential curricular and pedagogical implications in the social studies scholarship and practice since the 1990s (Thornton, 2005). Like the curriculum standards of NCSS of 1994, revised in 2010, that offer a thematic structure based on skills and ideas, social studies scholar Sam Wineburg and projects like the National History Day have emphasized the value in the transferable skills acquired by students who learn to think like historians. This perspective argues that teaching students to evaluate, analyze, and synthesize primary and secondary sources in order to form their own conclusions is an essential skill for democratic citizens (Wineburg, 2001).

The historical and political contexts discussed in this section are essential to understanding contemporary social studies research. How inquiries in social studies are currently undertaken is what we turn to now.

Theory

It is only in recent years that theory informs much of social studies research. Drawing upon William Pinar’s (2008, 2013) curriculum theories, this section discusses multidiscursive academic efforts shaping
the social studies curricular discourses. Traditionalists epitomize the field’s positivist origins, posit social studies as a disciplinary subject matter, and work to serve educators by developing and evaluating curricula. Their works have intended to make use of the conventional wisdom of the field and have been dedicated to the improvement of schools (Thornton, 2005). The traditional curriculum development model based on means–ends approach is evident in Ralph Tyler’s rationale of curricular decision making and Hilda Taba’s social studies program and is often involved in NCSS.

Since the 1980s, nontraditionalists have responded to multiple intellectual developments. The reconceptualization of curriculum studies challenged social studies researchers to disclose the value-laden perspective of their research and abandon a “technician’s mentality” (Pinar, 2013, p. 154). Curriculum was no longer defined as prescriptive teaching guides for school contexts, but as a life experience or endeavor, a continuous theorizing about what is worthwhile (Schubert, 2008). Exploring social studies curriculum post-reconceptualization produced scholarship that applied social analysis to social studies learning, uncovering the taken-for-granted elements in our everyday experiences and making them the target of inquiry, in and out of school contexts (Ross, 2006).

The traditional meaning and function of the social studies curriculum and its often unintended, hidden yet realistic outcomes were questioned and challenged during the 1980s and 1990s. Theorizing what knowledge best produced social mobility for underserved students—hegemonic knowledge as social capital, or official knowledge regarding power and resistance—occupied the energies of political curriculum theorists and/or critical pedagogues Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, Michael Apple, and Joe Kincheloe. As postmodernism and structuralism spread within the field of social studies, dialogues about social studies curricular meanings that are “shifting, receding, fractured, incomplete, dispersed, and deferred” have emerged (Pinar, 2008, p. 497; Segall, Heilman, & Cherryholmes, 2006). Meanwhile, the multicultural education movement of the time period influenced many social studies educators to advocate for content and pedagogical strategies that reflect the nation’s ever-increasing diversity (Banks, 2007).

Scholarly and practical interest in globalizing social studies curriculum is not a new trend, yet has started receiving its much deserved attention since the 1990s. Edward Said’s postcolonial theory and John Willinsky’s account of education at empire’s end influenced global educators to analyze how the educational legacy of imperialism shape the official knowledge of the social studies and to (re)question what it means to teach for and about global citizenship (Subedi, 2010).

These critiques of traditional curriculum study did not develop in isolation, but instead overlapped, together influencing the new path in social studies curriculum studies that emerged. The openness to theorize instead of develop curriculum is liberating for social studies scholars, but it leaves the purpose of the social studies as ambiguous as ever. Whether social studies is for promoting patriotism, social activism, democratic participation, local/community awareness, and/or individual rights and responsibilities, or to serve as a medium for anti-racist and anti-oppressive education toward social justice, is unsurprisingly unsettled.

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression**

Social studies is not wedded to a singular research paradigm. Social studies was once apprehensive about the intellectual uncertainty and the conflicting epistemologies in its field of research (Barton, 2006). However, such uncertainty serves as the driving force of curriculum research that diversifies its ways of imagining, questioning, and knowing and also supports the possibility to grow multiple forms of inquiry and modes of representation (Short, 1991). This section adopts Schubert’s (2008) four research paradigms—empirical-analytic, hermeneutic, critical, and postmodern—and a neo-Deweyan view of curriculum inquiry (varied, yet overlapping with the paradigms) to explore the dynamic lenses conceptualizing today’s social studies.

Social studies curricular inquiry within and across varied paradigms and methodologies has traditionally relied on empirical-analytic approaches based on quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods (Barton, 2006). Empirical studies drawing upon evidence-based methods aim to provide—and indeed offer,
though at varying degrees—insights for understanding site-based issues of the social studies, developing instructional methods, and designing curriculum materials. The development of hermeneutic thinking in the social studies curriculum has been less visible, yet such a paradigm has created meaningful dialogues about multiple interpretations and understandings of interactive nature of the curriculum and global citizenship education (Gaudelli, 2009). Critical/social justice inquiry has analyzed power and emancipation in the curricular discourses of the social studies, notably race-based epistemology or critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 2003), and a growing line of inquiry on culturally and linguistically relevant pedagogy for newcomers and ELLs (Cruz & Thornton, 2013). Postmodern, poststructural, and/or postcolonial lenses have shaped interesting and powerful discourses on the social studies, interrogating complex individual and public identities and making diverse meanings out of the social studies curriculum through various means such as narratives, voices, and autobiography (Segall et al., 2006; Subedi, 2010).

Relatively young fields of inquiry in the field include, but not limited to, historiography, or curriculum history, that has illuminated the critical influence of sociocultural milieu on the social studies policy, practice, and curriculum development; action research and self-study, which has provided practical ways to improve social studies teaching and teacher practice; and comparative/international research that has broadened our view of the curriculum (Barton, 2006).

In terms of the modes of expression, scholarly papers tend to be the dominant representation of the social studies inquiry, like in other subject areas (Schubert, 2008). Research journals in the field, notably Theory and Research in Social Education, and practitioner-oriented publications, such as Social Education and The Social Studies, offer an array of academic, practical, and policy discourses on the social studies curriculum and pedagogy. Media and pop-culture (i.e., games, television, documentary, music, art) have gained growing attention as new curricular texts and pedagogic tools (Maguth, 2012). An innovative curriculum project, Teaching the Levees: A Curriculum for Democratic Dialogue and Civic Engagement (Crocco, 2007), based on Spike Lee’s documentary film When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts, dealt with the controversial social issues surfaced by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, providing an opportunity to renew the American conversation on race, class, and citizenship. Transformational pedagogical forms and revisionist dialogues by historians like Howard Zinn (1995), James Loewen (1995/2007), and Ronald Takaki (1993) contributed to a larger consideration in the field of social studies on the ways to think and teach beyond the classic textbook-driven curriculum. Their texts, revealing the ways in which the social studies can reproduce hegemonic historical narratives of the U.S. past and conceal the oppression and injustice of it, have widely been read by classroom teachers and recently been published as children’s versions (Takaki, 2012; Zinn, 2007/2009).

Despite social studies educators’ continuous efforts to work with myriad forms of theoretical paradigms and curriculum inquiry, social studies is an underresearched field that still has much to be imagined, interrogated, and conversed (Levstik & Tyson, 2008). How social studies research can diversify the questions asked in the field, integrate eclectic curriculum paradigms, and thus envision the social studies curriculum in creative and innovative ways is a significant question to ask to move the field forward.

**Conclusion**

Social studies as a field of inquiry is wide and varied, as scholars continue to debate the critical issues of purpose, utility, and practice. The evolution of social studies scholarship employing myriad theoretical and methodological approaches illustrates the dynamic nature of this area of inquiry. However, as of 2014 social studies school curriculum faces its greatest challenges as public schools are consistently declared failing by increasingly dubious yardsticks and restructured by standards-based, assessment-driven reform movements. It is for this precise reason that we implore new scholars, caring educators, and informed practitioners to enter the discussions around social studies curriculum and to envision the next moments of the field. Let’s not only bemoan social studies’ marginalization but also harness the audacious spirit of the founders of social studies to elucidate why this area of inquiry is more important than ever.
References and Further Readings


The subject matters of the arts comprise the aesthetic disciplines of visual arts, music, dance, theater, and creative writing. In schools, the arts tend to be most deeply integrated into the early childhood curriculum, where there is often abundant daily opportunity for students to inquire into their lives and the world around through aesthetic experiences. Integrative and living artistic modes tend to quickly constrict over grade levels into increasingly specialized, rarified, and exclusive study of one part of an established disciplinary method. Such compartmentalization is a key example of a pressing concern for arts education: The way the arts are taught in schools is often significantly different from the ways living artists practice the arts, and from the ways most people experience aesthetics and practice culture. This chapter explores the gap between living arts and the prevailing arts curriculum.

Living arts are those that reflect and engage the lived experience. Contemporary visual artists, writers, musicians, and performers use aesthetic means to engage in inquiry with and about the world. Artistic inquiries are diverse and can be complex, ongoing, and constantly changing, because they are living practices, manifest in a full range of contexts—from “high art” sites like museums and opera houses, to popular forms such as television programs and do-it-yourself Internet projects, to unsanctioned art such as graffiti and street performance, to the arts of the everyday such as family rituals, games, religious singing, children’s drawings, and many more. These are the alive-arts that are practiced by practitioners and by all of us in the courses of our everyday aesthetic experience. Alive-arts often reflect, inspect, and question the social, political, and personal conflicts and perspectives of contemporary life, and our personal experiences of these evoke important contemplation on their potential meaning.

In contrast to alive-arts practices of everyday life, prevailing semi-prescriptive curricular models for subject matters of the arts most often represent what Madeleine Grumet (1988) described as a “dead sign”: In a majority of schooling contexts, students study and replicate modes and representations of a canon of the artistic works of dead others. The tendency of the canon in arts education across disciplines is that it highlights works of “masters” who are predominantly White men from Europe and the
United States. The time periods from which these works are drawn vary but are almost always historical; for example, in music, students usually study compositions from the Baroque era to the mid-Romantic era, from beginning of the 17th century to the end of the 19th century. The dead signs curricula are not “dead” simply because those who made the works being studied are no longer living. More significantly, it is the “signs” themselves—and the symbols, the semiotics, and the other potential meanings embedded within any given artistic work—that are so often not “alive” for students. This is because the curriculum is usually designed to encourage *rote memorization* and *imitation* of the dead canon, not a living creative response to the alive-arts all around.

In *Art as Experience*, John Dewey (1934) affirmed that the division between art as it is lived and art as it is taught impedes aesthetic education. When students cannot live aesthetic experience in school, they then produce works of contemporary relevance and force *in spite of* and not *because of* the curriculum. The drive to create is evident in the array of alive-arts practices by young people such as practicing original choreography in the hallways and playground, drawing in math or French class, making personal diary entries, writing graffiti on school buses, or creating memes during computer science time. Prevailing school curricula of dead signs are defined by the hegemonic traditions associated with the Western canon, derived from dominant paradigms that fortify and perpetuate oppressive social conditions including racism, sexism, classism, ageism, and heterosexism. Contemporary attempts to broaden the canon of art worth knowing rightfully move to include artists of color and many other marginalized groups, and yet often still perpetuate the same exclusion of the student from the living curriculum.

The current state of the subject matters of the arts as dead signs in the midst of a world of alive-arts has developed as a result of specific historical, philosophical, economic, and political influences. These influences are elaborated upon in the subsequent sections of this chapter regarding context and theory. But first, the next section addresses the contemporary concerns that emerge from the tensions just outlined. What are the differences between arts as subject matter and arts as living practice? What motivates, defines, and shapes alive-arts and dead signs curricula?

## Contemporary Concerns

Two contemporary concerns of the subject matters of the arts highlight important dimensions of the division between the practices of alive-arts and the curricula of dead signs that are so often found in schools. The first concern discussed in this section revolves around a very basic question for arts education: *What is art?* In the context of the arts curriculum, the question expands toward: Which artists are worth teaching about? Which methods should students learn? What artistic traditions are worth following? Toward what useful ends? And yet, it is significant that these expansions of the question “*What is art?*” differ greatly from the ways the question is expanded in the living practices of artists. A second concern that flows from the first is how educators and theorists begin to imagine closing the gap between the curricula of dead signs and the practices of alive-arts in order to create meaningful arts education that is animated through its relevance to the lives of learners.

*What is art?* This question is as unanswerable as Herbert Spencer’s (1861) germinal curricular question—“What knowledge is of most worth?”—because both must be constantly re-approached in the ever-changing living contexts by living practitioners. It is not the answering of the question of *what art is* that is important to the discussion of the subject matters of the arts, but the insistent asking of the question. Such a position of ongoing asking is quite consonant with the ways that living artists practice culture as inquiry. However, some controversy exists about whether curricularists should go on questioning *what art is*, or whether the answer should be considered solidified in its traditional form: the Western canon.

It is understandable that some argue for a solid “foundation” of knowledge as a platform from which to derive the design of arts curricula. Such common understandings allow for a mutual vocabulary, formulated modes of working and craft, and a much clearer dovetail for rubrics, assessments, and evaluations of progress and understanding. The tendency by arts educators to subscribe to paradigms that claim...
this type of universality is demonstrated by the slew of prescriptive arts instruction texts and curricula, cultural institutions’ teaching aides (i.e., those produced by museums, theaters, symphonies, etc.), teacher preparation curricula in colleges, and the overall move toward state and national standards in the arts. Although for some artists and art teachers the move toward disciplinary and curricular standards can induce fears of standardization and over-regulation of the creative curriculum and pedagogy, there are others who argue that the standards in the arts aim to legitimize the place of the arts in the pantheon of educational relevance (e.g., science, technology, engineering, and math—STEM). The legitimation brought about by standards opens up the opportunity for advancing the arts in schools by increasing funding for the arts, enhancing the equality of esteem for arts disciplines among the core subject matter disciplines, and increasing the respect for teachers of the arts and value for their presence at school. Proponents of unified and rigorous subject matters of the arts argue that such clarity and measurability is essential for the arts to become understandable and legitimate to a wide range of stakeholders, including parents, administrators, students, teachers, and the tax-paying public. This is an important consideration given that educational policy is rarely, if ever, made by educators. Who ultimately determines what art is and why teach art?

Therefore, the appearance of the central question of “what is art and why teach art?” represents a tension: Should arts curricularists practice curriculum like artists and resist the limiting nature of answers to such a question, or is there a greater need for disciplinary agreements? This question speaks to the complex social and political forces at play in deciding what arts are worth teaching and why. Further, for the benefit of whom? Critical pedagogues argue that the arts worth teaching should be a function of the lived experiences of the student.

The move toward a more “critical art pedagogy” (Cary, 1998), derived from the tenets and beliefs of critical theory in a broad sense, has opened up a fervent discourse and modifications in classroom priorities with teachers who introduce issues and strategies of social justice, visual culture, institutional literacy, critical pedagogy, contemporary art practice, and art activism to their students (e.g., Quinn, Ploof, & Hochtritt, 2012). These critical art pedagogies, which can be as varied as contemporary art practice in general, are situational, meaning they prioritize attentiveness to the individual needs, contributions, and preferences of the participants (both student and teacher) in the arts education experience. In this way, the empty content of the dead signs curricula is transformed into an alive-arts educational practice.

Just as the diversity of critical pedagogical modes parallel the diversity of alive-arts practice, so too the very motivations for the move toward a more attuned and democratic arts education can be as complex as individual artworks themselves. “Why teach art in schools?” is essentially the same question as “Why make art in contemporary society?” One might expect for the answers to these questions to overlap in myriad ways. However, on the whole, the motivations for teaching the arts differ significantly from those of making of art in contemporary society. Why teach art? In schools, the arts are usually taught for two primary reasons: with the intent of “enrichment” in its most innocuous form and with an eye toward fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skill sets in its more adventurous moments. Both of these motivations—like the motivations behind teaching many other school subjects—are favorably aligned with the student’s inevitable entrance into the workforce.

In the context of the subject matters of the arts, the student is seen and treated mostly as a producer—one who makes things. The rationale for this image of the student aligns with common sense: To learn art, one should make art. But others argue that this is not meaningful if the practice is one of rote imitation of dead signs and empty semiotics. Instead of cultural producers, many contemporary artists are cultural practitioners. The central focus of practitioners is not necessarily the production of art object commodities, and contemporary practice is rarely undertaken for the sake of arts ideals such as beauty or the common good. Rather, a practice is an ongoing process of living inquiry through aesthetic means, and the ideal that the arts are “good” (i.e., productive, beautiful, powerful, entertaining, or useful) is not one that is universally shared by contemporary artists. Contemporary artists work from an array of intentions, including those that pursue energies in their most raw and value-neutral manifestations. This might mean that an artist who is trying to avoid an art practice of dead signs might make a work that
appears (or actually is) boring, violent, horrifying, inconsequential, ephemeral, and maybe even invisible (e.g., conceptual art, performance art, sound art, interdisciplinary practice, relational aesthetics, art activism). The shift from traditions of production to contemporary practice can be a radical idea for teachers of the arts, particularly because the rhetoric around arts education as beneficial or enriching is so tightly imbricated with the survival of the arts as a subject in the schools. Even when the “look” of these rebel “alive arts” appears in the classroom (e.g., beat poetry, graffiti, punk, rap, experimental music, theater of the absurd), they are usually presented by educators in a ghost form that epitomizes the “dead signs”—sanitized, stripped of controversial elements, decontextualized, and otherwise emptied of authentic meaning and connectivity.

None of this is to argue that many artists are not pursuing goodness, social justice, and other types of humanitarian and ethical endeavors, nor that the everyday aesthetic goodesses of, for example, preparing a nourishing and beautiful meal for one’s family are irrelevant to understanding contemporary arts. Rather, on the whole, these aesthetic acts of “goodness” tend to be just the tip of a mostly invisible, densely theoretical, experimental, political, and personal iceberg. The “iceberg” is rarely represented in the classroom due in part to its invisibility/privacy, its gargantuaness, and its inability to be articulated. Lucero (2013) called all of this behind-the-scenes activity the artist’s “mode-of-operation” (p. 107), and Gude (2013) poignantly called for a closer attention to the way artists work in contemporary society, in order that students will not merely replicate the form of an artwork by making dead signs, but will gain through arts education the “tools to understand and participate in contemporary cultural conversations” (p. 8).

**Context of the Subject Matters of the Arts**

Throughout the history of arts education, specific circumstances have formed and shaped the subject matters of the arts toward and away from living practices. This is illustrated by a few examples of key influential contexts, beginning with discussions of the foundational *apprenticeship model* of arts education, continuing through the development of modern visual arts education, and concluding with an emerging issue in arts education debate—the role of the arts in agendas that promote STEM. The social, political, and economic forces that inform these contexts influence whether contemporary policy promotes curricula of alive-arts or dead signs. The arc of history can be seen to pitch from the former toward the latter.

The historical traditions of Western arts education are grounded in apprenticeship training models where a “master” artist trains an apprentice in the skills and traditions of a specific art form. Such training was undertaken in the course of arts work in a living setting, and it is important to emphasize that this foundational pedagogical mode was not an abstraction or a dead sign practice. On the contrary, apprenticeships were and are living pedagogical relationships where the apprentice learns in concert with the master, in the real-world cultural context of the art form they practice together. This system of long-term, one-on-one, mentorship-based education is very rare in contemporary Western practice but continues most notably in music instrumental performance education and also in other contexts such as the culinary arts. Importantly, remnants of this once ubiquitous training tradition continue in modified forms in contexts where schools emphasize the arts as sets of rote skills for possible vocational application, and where the teacher is considered a master with knowledge to convey upon the learner, but where the pedagogical relationship is more often one teacher for several dozen students, than the alive-arts dyadic one. The master-apprentice ethos is the most pervasive in traditional arts education settings, especially “fine arts” in conservatories and other college contexts.

In visual arts curricula specifically, discipline-based art education (DBAE) and creative self-expression are the two pillars that have most shaped the current state of art education. The principal author of creative self-expression, Viktor Lowenfeld (1947), proposed a means of teaching art that relied on the ideas of developmental stages derived from a notion that “creativity” is inherent and changes in specific ways with age. DBAE originated as an institutionally funded set of initiatives that promoted academicization of the arts. While creative self-expression gained popularity for its grounding in scientific evidence about human development,
These contexts represent only a few of many forces at play in the expansive practices of arts education. Although the trajectory of arts education curriculum is tending to follow the directions of education policy writ large—specifically, toward standardization, narrowed curricula, corporate curricula, testing and other quantitative assessments, and the promotion of a school environment where the arts are neglected in service of curricula that support test preparation—there also exists considerable critical resistance to these negative influences. Leading scholars and proponents of visual culture art education have made proposals for understanding and directing art education practice toward students’ own self-motivated production (see Duncum, 2001; Freedman, 2003), and the availability of certain technologies and Internet platforms has exponentially increased the ubiquity of this activity, if not its actual practice (Sweeney, 2010). As such, students investigate living artists’ modes-of-operation in order to access contemporary aesthetic ways of working and being that can guide them into a more self-reliant and critical participation in the world.

**Theory of Subject Matters of the Arts**

Beginning with John Dewey’s (1934) *Art as Experience*, curriculum theorists have addressed the theoretical tension between practices of alive-arts and curricula of dead signs in terms of the complex roles of the arts in educative experience. In suggesting that art is experience, Dewey emphasizes the importance of education as a means to “restore continuity” between art and the living processes of experience. Related subsequent theories are situated within the political processes of school and society, and the personal processes of the growth of the mind, and have implications for both. This section explores some of the enduring and emergent theories that contribute to understanding contemporary dynamics between the arts as they are taught and the arts as they are experienced.

In education, the power of the arts for the personalized growth of the individual has been extensively and sensitively explored by Elliot Eisner (2002) in *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*. Eisner argued that the complex and particular qualities of the arts contribute dimensions of depth of understanding and...
sensitivity of perception that are unlike those of any other subject matter disciplines and centrally essential for the growth of the mind. The invigorating and nuanced role of the arts in the curriculum grows increasingly important in the contemporary era of increased standardization of all subject matter disciplines, which (a) constrains the role of the arts in dominant curricular policy that emphasizes quantitative testing and (b) increases the appearance of curricula of dead signs, which are in part distinguished by their ability to yield quantitative assessment. Maxine Greene similarly champions the arts in their myriad roles in contributing to the development of the self-in-the-world, especially the imagination, and creative development of the self as a fluid ongoing process, not a finite product. Particularly influential is Greene’s (1995) concept of “social imagination,” wherein aesthetic experience enables students to critically examine the deep problems of the social world and imaginatively envision powerful change through public spaces.

Clarification of the term aesthetics is essential to understanding the current condition of the subject matters of the arts. The Western Modernist conception of aesthetics promotes the arts as crafted objects or performances characterized by high beauty, which are carried out in formalized modes by rare and individual geniuses. This definition of aesthetics was established in Classical philosophy and resonates forward, with the “sublime” importantly elaborated upon by Immanuel Kant and others. Modernist aesthetics emphasize a hierarchical canon of selected Western artworks that serve as a standard of excellence against which other art can be judged. The impact of this definition of aesthetics on the history of arts curricula is profound and continues to drive contemporary curriculum design in cases of, for example, DBAE and rigorous conservatory training curricula in the disciplines of music and dance.

Aesthetic theory in the postmodern era corresponds with the historical reconceptualization of curriculum thought in the 1970s and is marked by critiques of Modernist modes. Shifts away from singular Western narratives of aesthetic meaning toward growing multiplicities of representation and interpretation have been advanced by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1980/1987) in the concepts of “rhizome” and “becoming,” in Jacques Derrida’s (1967) “deconstruction,” in Jacques Ranciere’s (2013) aisthesis, and many of the experimental nonobjective artistic gestures made after “anti-art” artists Marcel Duchamp and John Cage, for example (see McEvilley, 2005). Most fervently in the 1960s, experimental and conceptual theater (e.g., Bertold Brecht, Samuel Beckett, and Antonin Artaud), experimental visual arts (e.g., Marcel Duchamp, Allan Kaprow, and Fluxus), experimental music (e.g., John Cage, Le Monte Young, and Yoko Ono), and experimental dance (e.g., Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, and Pina Bausch), all challenged the notion of aesthetics understood as sublime by introducing banality, boredom, counterproductivity, slowness, asynchronicity, indeterminacy, nonobjectiveness, audience participation, and other types of ruptures of established form. This important shift from the Modernist formal to the postmodernist conceptual is importantly explored by Olivia Gude (2004) in her germinal and highly influential essay, “Postmodern Principles: In Search of 21st Century Art Education.” Gude asserted that appropriation, juxtaposition, reconceptualization, layering, interaction of text and image, hybridity, gazing, and “representin’” must replace the Modernist elements and principles of design in order to promote meaningful arts curriculum that interweaves lived experiences of students, the contemporary society, and the multiplicities of aesthetics.

Emphasis on such postmodern integrations of the individual, the society, and everyday aesthetics resonates in recent movements toward civic engagement art, social practice art, and contemporary non-art social movements such as Occupy. These practices share goals of affecting social change and understanding cultural practice. While germinal curriculum texts on these topics, such as the Handbook of Public Pedagogy: Education and Learning Beyond Schooling (Sandlin, Schultz, & Burdick, 2010), focused on the social practices of pedagogy and learning outside of schools, the embedded theories of aesthetic representation and interpretation focused on the integration of makers, objects, meanings, and audiences, and so have implications for the restoration of continuity between alive-arts and school curricula of dead signs.

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression**

Historically parallel to the rise of anti-art aesthetics ushered in by the postmodern era, the development of modes of inquiry that enable a move away from
6. Subject Matters of the Arts

A dead sign curricula toward an alive-arts one began in the reconceptualization of curriculum thought during the 1970s (see Pinar, 2004). Formalized aesthetic research practices in education include a/r/tography (see Irwin & de Cossen, 2004) and arts-based inquiry (Barone & Eisner, 2012), among others. Arts-based inquiry suggests that the visual arts, creative writing, music, theater, dance, and multidisciplinary art forms are all important tools for understanding and representing levels of educational experience that cannot be apprehended through other qualitative or quantitative methods. In a parallel to arguments in favor of DBAE, advocates of formalizing the methods of arts-based research suggest that it may promote the legitimization of art as inquiry within the dominant context of educational research that values empiricism by defining common standards.

At the same time, many scholars advocate for modes of inquiry that cross and blur the perceived line that has previously kept the dead signs of arts schooling and the alive-arts of cultural practice apart. For example, a recent text by Pablo Helguera (2011), *Education for Socially Engaged Art*, points directly to the nuances of both the gaps and the overlaps between pedagogy and art, by elaborating upon an art concept commonly known as the “pedagogical turn.” The pedagogical turn in contemporary art is a mode of social practice that adopts, mimics, and manipulates the aesthetics and modes-of-operation of pedagogy, curriculum, and schooling in a way that presents them as a new materiality for making artworks. This means that works of contemporary art that have taken the pedagogical turn deal with the ubiquities of educative process, like duration, language, relationality, critical thinking, activism, generosity, research, participation, and more. Scholars who have touched on closing the gap between inquiry and art in this way include Elizabeth Ellsworth, who thought about this project in terms of space and place; Stephanie Springgay and Debra Freedman (2007), who focused on affect and embodiment; and Charles Garoian (1999), who presented the liminality of pedagogical aesthetic inquiry through discussions of the mostly ephemeral practice of performance art in his comprehensive text *Performing Pedagogy*.

**Conclusion**

The **dead signs** subject matters of the arts, as they are often taught in schools, differ greatly from the ways that **alive-art** is lived and understood in cultural practices. Dewey (1934) expressed that this rift significantly inhibits both aesthetic and educative experience and importantly pointed out that while this gap is real, it is not necessary and can be shored up. While multiple confluences of political and social influence bend arts curricula policy toward dead signs practices of standardized memorization or empty replication of dead forms, much theoretical discourse and critical praxis moves toward placing **the student** at the center of the curriculum to open practical pathways toward the meaningful connection between their lives, alive-arts modes-of-operation, and aesthetic inquiry for understanding, questioning, and reimagining the experienced world all around.

**References and Further Readings**


SUBJECT MATTERS OF HUMANITIES

EDWARD PODSIADLIK III

University of Illinois at Chicago

Subjects traditionally regarded as humanities, such as literature, philosophy, and linguistics, as well as those often now considered part of social sciences, including political science and history, underscore what is traditionally termed a liberal arts education in that their scope and depth have the potential to help students better understand themselves and their world. These courses are pathways for students to explore what it means to be fully human, hence the humanities. Embedded in this humanistic exploration is the quest to reflect on one’s identity, to develop a critical awareness of one’s self in the larger world, and to awaken a lifelong drive to pursue that which makes life most worth living.

As humanities are integrated as subject areas into the larger scope and sequence of school- and district-wide systems of curriculum and instruction, their depth, breadth, and purpose can vary depending upon a variety of pedagogical, political, and contextual orientations. What educational purposes the humanities serve, what objectives they can achieve, and how they can be fairly assessed (Tyler, 1949) have become critical talking points of debate and discussion among educators and policy makers. While some ideologies favor that the humanities be content-driven and qualitatively assessed, others maintain that its instruction should be skills-based with a direct link to employment-related preparation. While some perspectives focus on political and social activism and students’ role in determining what content is learned, others would make sure the content is taught systematically and what is learned is externally evaluated.

Each of these views constitutes relevant possibilities for the role of the humanities in schools. Integrating such a broad spectrum of ideas and points of view into meaningful and consistent educational policy, however, is a complex process oftentimes rife with conflict especially as school districts are faced with budget concerns, accountability restrictions, and emerging political/social/economic demands of the 21st century. Underlying these concerns and conflicts is a key curriculum question: What is worthwhile? In terms of the subjects of the humanities, William H. Schubert’s (1986, 2009) elaboration of this question merits further consideration: What is worth knowing, needing, experiencing, doing, being, becoming, overcoming, sharing, contributing, wondering, and imagining?

When viewed through a humanistic lens, subject matters are qualitative, reflective, and personal, which counters theory and practice in which subject matters are quantitative, formalistic, and impersonal. Studies in political science, for instance, that are comprised of rote memorization, singular points of view, and encyclopedic chunks of information are less likely to be concerned with more humanistic matters such as reflecting upon the social, moral, and political impact of politics on the lives of individuals. As a subject matter of the humanities, the information
and data inherent to political science become tools with which to better grapple with and contemplate internal and external conflicts that transcend space and time such as dignity versus alienation, democracy versus segregation, and freedom of thought versus indoctrination.

A humanities-based history curriculum is less concerned with historical categories and labels and more interested in exploring ways in which people and events can be examined and understood with greater empathy (Zinn, 1995). As a subject matter of the humanities, history is not only about facts and theories but also concerned with applying personal observation and reflection to develop a better sense of one’s self. A humanities-based history curriculum challenges students to question intrinsic values, beliefs, and ideas. History serves as a means for students to explore what is worth knowing, thinking, and doing.

Other personal questions that emanate from the depths of our humanity (such as what is worth feeling, experiencing, and understanding) are embedded in literature. Novels, short stories, poems, and drama are examples of literary genres capable of transcending scientific objectivity and leading learners into landscapes of imagination (Lake, 2013). To better know oneself, to more closely ascertain one’s values and abilities, and to explore the nature of one’s humanity are the hallmarks of humanistic education embedded in literature. It is in this spirit that Virginia Woolf (1929) proposed that “[fiction] . . . is likely to contain more truth than fact” (p. 4). Externally imposed labels, categories, and designations (characteristic of the material world) become obstacles that contain, restrict, and dilute our authentic intrinsic identities.

Linguistics and philosophy as subject matters of the humanities acknowledge the need to transcend artificial boundaries imposed by the rigidity of language and restrictions of a materialistic world. Words and categories can be powerful tools that too often elicit isolation and alienation that dehumanize individuals. A humanities-infused vision avoids the inherent limitations of “either-or” thinking and reflects upon more organic, aesthetic, and cultural aspects of human experience. Linguistics, languages, and philosophy as humanistic subject matters can serve as an empowering curriculum of self-discovery and critical self-awareness. Examining the power and impact of thoughts, ideas, and languages upon our understanding of ourselves and the world has the potential to provoke a depth of reflection that begins to differentiate between “facts” and “truth” and “external” and “internal” realities. Therefore, the primary concern of the humanities-based educator is to inspire students to think.

Contemporary Concerns About the Subject Matters of Humanities

Students understandably concerned with assessment scores that directly impact acceptance into selective enrollment high schools and colleges might question the direct impact studies in the humanities may have on their overall quantitative scores in reading and math. Will a depth of understanding of Socratic thinking and Cartesian dualities, for example, increase an ACT score? What correlation is there between having a depth of knowledge and understanding of ancient civilizations and receiving assessment scores needed for college acceptance? In these regards, students may question the pragmatic implications of the humanities. Nevertheless, in pursuit of attaining skills-based, quantitatively measurable academic scores, what humanities-based values are sacrificed? Although there are no external means to measure how strongly literature affects one’s self-understanding, or how much philosophical treatises may awaken one’s conscience, to what extent can these influences, albeit intrinsic and less tangible, be discounted? Herein lies conflict.

Job training and employment opportunities are often student priorities. How will liberal arts curriculum offerings that focus on topics as broad as transcendentalism, polytheism, and mercantilism help students attain needed employment skills and opportunities? To what extent can reading 1st-century Latin texts, for instance, help secure employment in a technology-based job market? For what 21st-century jobs will an understanding of, say, medieval life help prepare students? On the other hand, although initial employment considerations may not demand skills of imagination, contemplation, and critical self-awareness, does that make these humanities-based assets any less relevant to a life that is intrinsically and ethically worthwhile?

Teachers of the humanities face related concerns that pit externally imposed criteria against personal
values. School improvement frameworks for teacher evaluation that determine professional ratings, salary, and tenure are based on core curriculum and skills-based quantitative assessments. In a landscape where high-stakes testing is used to determine a teacher’s effectiveness, what will more closely guide a liberal arts-minded history teacher: nurturing a critical view of history, or pursuing isolated skill sets of comprehension and historical facts? Major tenets of the humanities including intuition, imagination, aestheticism, contemplation, and spiritual liberation are not items prioritized in core curriculum standards now used as criteria for teacher accountability. Nor can they be easily quantified on assessment examinations.

If a literature teacher uses isolated skill-based lessons to explore Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech in order to ensure student acquisition of specific skills, how much of King’s organic spirit of freedom and respect is sacrificed? What is lost when students excel at isolated skills of geography, history, or language but do not gain insights, understanding, and empathy inherent in the application of said skills via interpreting, questioning, challenging, and contemplating? It is ironic that a skills-driven teacher can receive a high quantitative rating for teaching a segmented and impersonal core curriculum sequence, while a humanities-driven teacher who nurtures personal growth and development may receive a lower rating. Externally imposed scales of effectiveness and rubrics of skill mastery do not adequately account for the ethical, personal, and transformative potential of humanities-based subject matters. This raises concerns regarding the intrinsic value of what is taught and why.

Administrators and policy makers likewise struggle with the question of what educational purposes the humanities serve. Formal rating systems for schools and school districts are currently based on quantitative measures. Individual teacher performance evaluations and related salary incentives rely upon skills-based student assessments. Conversely, Ralph W. Tyler (1949) championed a value-laden curriculum of a different sort wherein the “value of the dignity and worth of every human being is a value to be given consideration” (p. 88).

In light of these concerns, two central conflicts emerge. First, administrators and policy makers need to deliberate whether a specific curriculum should be selected, funded, and implemented based on its overall purpose versus its immediate (albeit more short-term) results. Contemporary trends, linking financial and academic accountability to immediate performance-based results, favor more empirically based subject matters rooted in clearly defined performance results. Second, administrators need to decide the extent to which a designated curriculum should be financed and supported based on overall merits as a process-driven curriculum (which focuses on critical thinking and reflection inherent to the process of learning) versus a product-driven one (that relies exclusively on learning outcomes). National performance standards are systematically aligned with product-driven results.

Subject matters of the humanities, however, are organic rather than systematic in nature. Courses grounded in what students are expected to learn contrast with the humanities that are rooted in what students are only beginning to learn, to understand, and to reflect upon. Unlike more quantitatively driven courses (i.e., mathematics and science) that search for “one correct answer,” humanities explore options, avenues, and ideas wherein no one answer is correct. Consequently, the immediate value and impact of the humanities are not easily measured or observed, which is a considerable handicap in this era of externally imposed academic accountability.

The contemporary, 21st-century educational landscape conforms to standards and demands for accountability. Teachers, administrators, and policy makers often find themselves guided by an academic vision of what students do not know and of what cognitive gaps educators are being held accountable to fill. This reductionist view of teaching and learning directly opposes the inherent rationale of the subject matters of humanities. A humanities-based curriculum does not focus on what is missing or lacking in students; instead, it recognizes, nurtures, and celebrates the depths of humanity already present within the students. The value of a history or literature text lies neither in rote literacy skills nor in the “wisdom” of the text itself. The intangible interaction of the ideas presented in texts with the values and points of view of the individual reader is where a humanities-based curriculum thrives.

John Dewey and Louise Rosenblatt (1904–2005), as well as Rosenblatt’s contemporaries (including Wayne C. Booth, Wolfgang Iser, and Stanley Fish),
emphasized the importance of this transaction between reader and text. The reader–response mode of critical inquiry is rooted in the experiences, values, settings, beliefs, and challenges that are most meaningful and worthwhile to students. Humanistic teaching and learning explores moral, intellectual, and social contemplation and development. These pursuits, however, are not easily aligned with contemporary quantitatively driven initiatives and externally driven systems of accountability.

This pedagogical and philosophical conflict is akin to Dewey’s (1938) observation: “What avail is it to win prescribed amounts of information about geography and history, to win ability to read and write, if in the process the individual loses his own soul: loses his appreciation of things worthwhile” (p. 49). Herein curricular conflicts deepen. To resolve these conflicts, we turn to Schubert’s (1986, 2009) key curriculum questions: What is worth knowing, needing, experiencing, doing, being, becoming, overcoming, sharing, contributing, wondering, and imagining?

Context of the Subject Matters of the Humanities

The subject matters of the humanities do not exist in a vacuum bereft of political, economic, social, and moral constructions. Curriculum planners and stakeholders are influenced by a range of relevant contexts that impact the vision, climate, and purpose of teaching and learning. The implementation of curricular initiatives and mandates in turn impacts the larger contextual constructs from which they were shaped. Although curricular ideologies and decisions are influenced by the individual and collective past, the immediacy of contemporary events, ideas, and values plays a significant role in curriculum planning, execution, and assessment.

The role of humanities within contemporary education is intricately woven into a complex, politically charged landscape. **Internationally**, issues of political, social, and economic unrest have become global priorities, while **national** issues of unemployment, comprehensive health care reform, and unequal distributions of power and wealth are simultaneously pressing. **Locally**, communities struggle with issues of poverty, violence, and housing shortages. **Individually**, people are faced with personal struggles with issues as vast as racism, poverty, isolation, and a lack of social or economic mobility. Although oversimplified here, these examples are part of the tangled complexity of priorities, interests, and concerns that impact curricular decision making.

In examining the context of the subject matters of humanities, a plethora of questions arises: How should these categories of concerns be prioritized? Should national priorities trump individual ones—or vice versa? To what extent do international or national concerns impact local or individual needs? Can a global vision of humanities-driven curricula be meaningful on a personal level? Conversely, will focusing more closely on local and personal needs in some way diminish or impair national or international concerns? Like the humanities, these questions are deliberately designed to trigger discourse, reflection, and exploration—not definitive answers. It is important that curriculum planners, policy makers, and educators themselves closely consider their responses to these and similar queries as well as to where the variety of opinions falls upon a continuum of perspectives and points of view.

Curricular decision making and planning impact not only course content but also school-wide and individual practice. For instance, a liberal arts curriculum influenced primarily by concerns of international competition and fears of worldwide terrorist threats may become driven by a nationalistic vision whose priorities then become cultural reproduction in the name of national unity and patriotism. Humanities, such as history, literature, and political science, would then serve to reinforce a common set of values and perspectives, with a unifying and underlying “national” point of view. Critics, however, might argue that such a nationalistically driven (however well-intended) curriculum path denies freedoms of voice, language, and independent thinking that it intended to nurture and preserve.

Conversely, if curriculum planning were to focus more closely on social reconstruction and equity, implementation of subject matters of the humanities would change as well. Literature, history, and philosophy content would be more aligned with cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and geographical profiles of individual learning communities thereby replacing a nationally homogeneous vision such as that previously described. Since the humanities can be implemented via a nationalistic lens or a highly individualized
one, curriculum planners need to reflect on whether
the primary purpose of school is more to nurture self-
identity or to transmit the skills, knowledge, and
values of the larger culture.

The impact of contemporary political, social, and
economic contexts upon the nature of a humanities
curriculum is wide and varied. Consider the following
real-world conflicts that characterize challenging
educational situations: an underlying long- and short-
term vision that informs a content-driven literature
study versus one that is idea-driven; a history cur-
riculum that focuses on quantitative facts and figures
versus one that relies primarily on critical reflection;
a political science instructional sequence that is
assessed through a series of predetermined learning
outcomes versus one with unintentional and unex-
pected learning outcomes; and a philosophies-based
curriculum map that relies on student-generated
questions, discourse, and debate versus one that
relies upon performance-based replication of discrete
tasks and concepts. In order to get out of this educa-
tional confusion (Dewey, 1931), we need to return to
essential questions of what is worth knowing, worth
understanding, and worth doing.

Theory of Subject Matters of Humanities

Subject matters and instruction that center on explot-
ing what it means to be fully human can be traced to
both Western and Eastern world traditions. Ancient
Greek thinkers (Socrates, Plato, Protagoras) and
ancient Roman scholars (Marcus Aurelius, Lucre-
tius, Seneca) maintained that the path to living a
meaningful life was self-knowledge and achieving a
better understanding of one’s individual soul. The
ancient African philosophy of Ubuntu is premised on
the principle of cosmic harmony and the dignity,
value, and development of the individual human
being. Chinese thinker and philosopher Confucius
(551–479 BC) and Japanese schoolteacher and edu-
cational activist Makiguchi Tsunesaburo (1871–
1944) emphasized the importance of “humanism that
aims to educate for creative, harmonious, associated,
joyful, and worthwhile living” (He, 2013, p. 64).
While Confucius thought the aim of education was
to “cultivate the self through continuous interactions
among self, community, nature, and Heaven,”
Makiguchi believed that the purpose of education is
to “create value for individual happiness and the
greater common good” (He, 2013, p. 64).

Renaissance humanists including Petrarch (1304–
1374), known as the “Father of Humanism,” Desider-
ius Erasmus (1466–1536), known as the “Prince of the
Humanists,” and John Amos Comenius (1592–1670),
known as the “Father of Modern Education,” theo-
ized that an individual’s moral and ethical develop-
ment (and by extension all society) could be achieved
through universal education that nurtured free will,
independent thinking, and social conscience.

Enlightenment thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau
(1712–1778) and his contemporaries (including
Maximilien Robespierre, Thomas Jefferson, and
Charles-Louis Montesquieu) supported education
that would develop a person’s character and moral
sense by addressing authentic human needs including
civic morality and individual liberty. Soren
Kierkegaard (1813–1855), considered the first exis-
tential humanist, advocated searching for a more
subjective truth through personal reflection.
Kierkegaard (as well as those he influenced, includ-
ing Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Ludwig
Wittgenstein) believed that human beings should
determine for themselves the meaning of faith,
ethics, truth, justice, and even reality itself. These
ideas entered curriculum discourse when Herbert
Spencer (1820–1903) published Education: Intellec-
tual, Moral, and Physical (1861) and directly pro-
posed the question: What knowledge is of most
worth? Spencer maintained that the purpose of cur-
riculum was to enable students to live a more com-
plete life. He argued for a school curriculum that
included texts, questions, and activities that would
inform students on how to live satisfactory moral,
physical, and intellectual lives.

Although Spencer’s work relied on a social
Darwinist perspective, it nevertheless influenced
many curriculum scholars who focused more on
philosophies of experience, purposeful learning, and
freedoms of intelligence. Notable among these edu-
cators is Dewey (1859–1952). In 1915, Dewey and
his wife, Evelyn, published Schools of To-Morrow,
which described authentic educational settings
wherein subject matters were infused with the spirit
of the humanities. The text describes classrooms
where literature instruction was intended to inspire
critical thinking, history classes focused on student
perspectives, and writing classes prized imagination
over facts. The schools of tomorrow envisioned by Dewey favored connectedness of thoughts and ideas over compartmentalized pieces of information. The experiences and personal interests of individuals were integral to the curriculum. The 1937–1938 Spencer-Trask Lectures at Princeton University were devoted to the meaning and role of the humanities in education. Ralph Barton Perry (1876–1957), a student of William James (1842–1910), identified literature, philosophy, and linguistics as subject matters least likely to dehumanize students and most likely to help them achieve humanistic possibilities. August Charles Kray (1887–1961) articulated history as a subject matter critical to the process of education when it was used to present and examine the thoughts, feelings, and actions of human experience and interaction. Gilbert Chinard (1881–1972) extolled a literature curriculum that would explore a reader’s individuality as it simultaneously informed the reader of his connection to a reality larger than himself of which he is a part. Alfred North Whitehead’s (1861–1947) book Modes of Thought (1938) argued that literature embodied and expressed universal struggles, challenges, emotions, and aspirations of humanity.

This idea of using subject matters to explore the meaning of being human influenced Martin Buber’s (1878–1965) groundbreaking text I and Thou (1923) wherein he advocated teaching and learning as processes of becoming. The “I-Thou” curriculum Buber proposed included studies in literature, history, and philosophy that would enable students to better understand themselves through meaningful relationships and discourse with others. Hearkening back to Spencer’s question of “what knowledge is of most worth,” Buber supported subject matters that would be used to decrease isolation with mutual understanding, dispel alienation with connectedness, and replace hopelessness with a renewed spirit of free will.

L. Thomas Hopkins (1889–1982) in The Emerging Self (1954) advocated the humanities as curricula that could nurture insight as a means to combat conformity, to promote deep thinking, and to create paths leading to greater independence of thought. Curricular theorists in the later half of the 20th century elaborated on these humanist beliefs. Rudolph Steiner (1974) originated the Waldorf School curricula that centered on the belief that a child is a soul learning to become human. G. Marian Kinget (1910–1997) published On Being Human (1975) proposing a curriculum not concerned with observing humanity (via physical laws and scientific exploration) but focused on the meaning and potential of being human. For those curriculum theorists, inner knowledge and self-awareness inherent in history and literature become agents to free the spirit of human beings from metaphorical chains of predetermined labels and biases, unquestioned and imposed restrictions and limitations.

Maxine Greene has expounded on the role of humanities to nurture a moral life. In Landscapes of Learning (1978) she argued that subject matters that encourage students to think critically, to create themselves, and thereby to choose principles to live by are most critical in developing a “wide-awakeness” toward a moral life. In Teaching toward Freedom (2004), William Ayers challenged educators to commit to curricula that lead learners to enlightenment and liberation. He proposes that subject matters of the humanities provide components of discourse, imagination, introspection, and exploration necessary to a truly democratic education. Martha Nussbaum in Cultivating Humanity (1997) argued that literature, linguistics, and other subject matters of the humanities embody a living history of human resistance, protest, and criticism. Such a liberal arts education anchored in the humanities is rooted in moral reasoning, ethical thinking, and democratic ideals.

In Love, Justice, and Education: John Dewey and the Utopians (2009), Schubert used a mixture of humanities-based resources including literature, poetry, film, and television to examine what he calls the “what’s worthwhile question.” Throughout the text, he explores the moral, pedagogical, and spiritual possibilities offered through a liberal arts education. He demonstrates how subject matters of the humanities can serve as conduits to inspire and facilitate journeys toward cultivating humanity with a stronger sense of love and justice. These are the journeys that transformed Ralph Ellison’s Invisible Man (1947) from being dehumanized by society’s systematized “lynching of souls” to his proclamation that “I feel, I feel suddenly that I have become more human. Not that I have become a man, for I was born a man. But that I am more human. I feel strong” (p. 346).
Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression

To better understand the impact of the humanities on contemporary curricular issues, teachers, administrators, and policy makers can turn to a wide array of educational inquiries. Philosophical inquiry via personal essays has been used to delve deeply into personal perspectives as they are affected by humanities-oriented teaching and learning experiences. Reflections From the Heart of Educational Inquiry: Understanding Curriculum and Teaching Through the Arts (Willis & Schubert, 1991) is a hallmark demonstration of how reflective and personal inquiries can elicit meaningful insights into the long- and short-term impact of humanities on instruction—and on the lives of students and teachers. The collected essays in the volume become the living dialogue through which an understanding of curriculum and instruction is deepened along humanistic perspectives.

Carl Weinberg (1972) collected a series of essays in his text Humanistic Foundations of Education that promotes aesthetic, historical, and psychological research methodologies that regard students and teachers as more important than impersonal educational data. George Willis (1978) in his Qualitative Evaluation: Concepts and Cases in Curriculum Criticism collected a series of essays from educational researchers (including Michael W. Apple, Madeleine R. Grumet, William Pinar, and Elizabeth Vallance) that describe a variety of qualitative approaches. Phenomenological, ethnographic, and narrative inquiries are utilized to better express and understand the personal impact of teaching and learning on students. The scope and depth of narrative inquiry also includes autobiographical and biographical exploration. Notable works (including those by Henry Adams, W. E. B. Du Bois, Freema Elbaz, and Ming Fang He) demonstrate how introspection inherent to this sort of personal inquiry is capable of transcending larger political or bureaucratic mechanisms. In The Souls of Black Folk, for instance, the singularity of W. E. B. Du Bois’s (1903) personal voice beckons a remarkable universality of intent and contemplation: “The function of the university is not to simply teach bread-winning, or to furnish teachers for the public schools, or to be a centre of polite society; it is, above all, to be the organ of that fine adjustment between real life and the growing knowledge of life, an adjustment which forms the secret of civilization” (p. 70). Case studies (such as those by R. V. Bullough, Rick Ayers and Amy Crawford, Donald Schon, and Eliot Wigginton) move away from abstract or general information and rely on concrete classroom experiences to enlighten and inform. Such case studies present real-world vignettes that personalize theory and humanize research data. Storytelling as a mode of inquiry (demonstrated by William Ayers, D. Jean Clandinin, F. Michael Connelly, and Kieran Egan) personalizes theory and captures the personal and practical nature of education. When teachers tell their stories, the intricate moral, emotional, and aesthetic dimensions of their work emerge through the narrative.

Interviews and conversations (utilized by curriculum scholars including Philip W. Jackson, Bill Smoot, Tu Weiming, and Daisaku Ikeda) and letter writing (as used in the works of writers including Jonathan Kozol, Darlene Ciuffetelli Parker, Ronald W. Sousa, and Joel Westheimer) emphasize the transactional and interpersonal nature of education practice. Such inquiries uncover intrinsic ideas that permeate the teaching and learning process. By transcending the formulaic mechanics of teaching and learning, narrative modes of inquiry, like the humanities themselves, humanize rhetorical jargon and capture nuances, values, ideas, traits, and meaning of inquiry and life.

Conclusion: Need for Continuous Reflections

The subject matters of the humanities defy the binary simplicities of “either-or” thinking. The quantitative criteria of polarities such as pass or fail, correct or incorrect, success or failure are overcome with the potential and the possibilities found in the content of humanities such as literature, philosophy, and linguistics. Humanities have the potential to take teaching and learning into a sea of ambiguity that transcends the restrictions of imposed labels and categories. History, linguistics, literature, political science, and philosophy are subject matters wherein one can begin to recognize, explore, nourish, and celebrate the essence of what makes us human.

This is the ideological realm Virginia Woolf (1929) described as containing more truth than fact.
If schools rely too heavily (or exclusively) on externally driven facts and figures, will students, as Socrates asked, truly know themselves? Or will educational and community leaders find themselves ruminating over James Joyce’s (1916) lament: What did it profit a man to gain the whole world if he lost his soul (p. 119)? The essence of these reflections returns one to Spencer’s (1820–1903) query: What knowledge is of most worth? This is a question that students and teachers of humanities should embody in their life-long pursuit of cultivating humanity (Nussbaum, 1997).

References and Further Readings


We are what we speak. Language is part of one’s cultural identity. Language itself is an individual cognitive as well as a cultural phenomenon; it arises in the life of an individual through ongoing exchanges of meanings with significant others (Halliday, 1978). The uses of language (e.g., ways of speaking and writing, choices of words) are culturally encoded. Language reflects and reinforces the values and beliefs of a given culture and, at the same time, is shaped by that culture. Language as a cultural tool also mediates how we define ourselves within particular sociocultural contexts and situations. It is an “identity kit” through which we not only define ourselves and present our own identities but also are defined and identified by others (Gee, 1989, p. 152). On the one hand, we can choose to position ourselves through our language use; on the other hand, how we use certain language(s) can be used by others as ways to project onto us their own suppositions of our identities. Oftentimes, the language we speak or use can be used to position us to be a legitimate or illegitimate member of a sociocultural community. As Gee (1989) noted, language and identity are ideological and are intimately related to the distribution of social power and hierarchical structure in particular sociocultural contexts and discourses.

Adding to the complex interrelationships between language, culture, identity, and power (Cummins, 2000; He, Phillion, Chan, & Xu, 2008) are the multiplicity and the dynamic nature of all these constructs. In the context of multiculturalism and multilingualism, one may speak more than one language and assume multiple identities and memberships and may both conform and resist the powerful discourses and projections of identities in any given context and time. At the same time, one may be subjected to the power relations within the multiple contexts and communities of practice of which one is a member, especially in increasingly globalized and transnational contexts. The fluid and multiple nature of language, culture, identity, and power further calls for close examination of the interrelationships of these constructs within specific contexts.

As Schubert and Schultz (this volume) noted, language, culture, and identity are pervasive dimensions of life that students bring with them into their school and classrooms as part of the school curriculum. Attention to how students use certain language(s) and negotiate multiple identities within and across different in-school and out-of-school contexts can have profound effects on their learning and performance in school. In the American school context, school language and literacy practices often favor the
“English-only” policy and legitimize the cultural literacy that allows the dominant group to maintain its position and control. This dominant school discourse, therefore, marginalizes minority languages and literacy practices and devalues the cultures, contributions, and histories of these minority groups (Gee, 1989). In this context, in order to acquire the mainstream language and culture, minority students may choose to reject their cultural identity and heritage, or to resist language and literacy learning in school that often leads to negative representations and failure to learn (Li, 2011). Both of these orientations can have serious consequences for students’ academic achievement and socioemotional well-being, and they can be serious roadblocks for their success in school and in life. For teachers and schools, understanding students’ language use and identity formation, as well as their processes of negotiating different identities and power relations, is crucial for developing successful pedagogies, strategies, and environments that are conducive to academic achievement and cultural affirmation.

Subject Matters of Language, Culture, Identity, and Power as Sites of Struggle

The subject matters of language, culture, identity, and power have been sites of struggle in the field of education and among the American public. The first struggle is about whether they are considered deficiencies to overcome or resources/assets to build upon for learning the mainstream or dominant language and culture. While some consider that minority languages, cultures, and identities are barriers to minority students’ academic success and English learning, others believe that they are “funds of knowledge” (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) that can be successfully and strategically used to support minority students’ academic learning and smooth transition between school, home, and community contexts. Educators with deficit thinking often attribute minority students’ underachievement in school or their struggles to achieve success in English to the students’ inability or unwillingness to learn English, and to their family and individual characteristics. In contrast, those from a “funds of knowledge” approach believe that the language, culture, and identity that minority students bring to the classroom contain rich cultural and cognitive resources that can and should be used in their classroom in order to provide culturally responsive and meaningful lessons that tap students’ prior knowledge (González et al., 2005).

The second struggle is about whether the subject matters of language, culture, identity, and power should be integrated into the school curriculum and—if they should—how to do it. Early efforts to integrate these subject matters that were manifested in the multicultural education movement received intense criticisms from social conservatives, who insisted that the common American culture was already multicultural and that excessive emphasis on diversity and differences in language, ethnicity, and identity would create divisiveness (Sleeter, 1995). The point of contention is “not so much whether education should be multicultural, but what that should mean” (Sleeter, 1995, p. 83). For example, one debate is whether teaching these subject matters of linguistic and cultural diversity will give minority students the intellectual tools they need to make it in the real world, and whether students would be better served by learning the English language better and by the mainstream core curriculum that “upholds the Western basis of institutions and thought but incorporates diverse groups into its history and culture with an emphasis on forging shared goals, beliefs and allegiances” (p. 84).

In contrast to the social conservatives’ perspectives, other scholars such as Paulo Freire, Cameron McCarthy, James Banks, Sonia Nieto, and Geneva Gay have argued that schools not only need to include the subject matters of diversity in language, culture, and identity but also need to include them systematically so that they can change the status quo of the current curriculum. These scholars believe that the conventional or social conservatives’ approach to cultural diversity is inadequate. Rather, as Freire (1987) pointed out, the solution is not to integrate them into the structure of oppression but to transform the structure so they can become beings of themselves. Gay (2010) illustrated this view:

The race, culture, ethnicity, individuality, and intellectualty of students are not discrete attributes that can be neatly assigned to separate categories, some to be ignored while others are tended to. Instead, they are inseparably interrelated; all must be carefully understood, and the insights gleaned from this understanding should be the driving force for the redesign of education for cultural diversity. (pp. 14–15)
This new multicultural framework aims to “invert the hegemony” of Eurocentrism in the curriculum and ultimately to engage teachers and students in critical reflection about the organization and arrangement of knowledge in schooling and the connections between the curriculum and the differential experiences and futures of minority and majority students beyond the school door (McCarthy, 1994, p. 1). This means school curriculum must affirm and use students’ diverse language and literacy practices, cultures, and identities as texts and actively transport the unofficial and marginalized languages, cultures, experiences, and identities into the official world of school. By so doing the school curriculum subscribes to the practice that engages both self and other and students and teachers in rethinking constructions of identity, culture, representation, and power (Li, 2013).

This transformative multicultural education that makes minority language, culture, identity, and power an integral part of the curriculum is, however, difficult to implement in the classrooms, which is the third struggle. Two key obstacles have been cited. One is teacher quality and capacity. In order to develop the ability to provide opportunities for their students to move across diverse physical and social borders, and to rewrite the hegemonic domination of certain discourses instead of just reproducing it, teachers must be able to examine their own cultural beliefs and practices, gain a repertoire of cultural practices relevant to their culturally and linguistically diverse students, and acquire pedagogical knowledge and skills about how to create spaces to connect these cultural practices to the curriculum, and in their daily instruction, coherently and systematically (Li, 2013). These qualifications require all teachers to become “teachers for social equity” who are able to see students’ inherent literate capacities, help students realize their fullest literacy potential, and challenge the policies and practices that undermine students’ literacy achievement by assuming a political orientation to literacy teaching by which issues of race, class, culture, literacy, language, and teaching intersect (Lazar, Edwards, & McMillion, 2012).

However, in reality, the majority of pre- and in-service teachers are underprepared to meet the demands of the rapid growing culturally and linguistically diverse student population. According to a 2011 national survey of K–12 public school teachers conducted by the National Center for Education Information, 84% of the teaching force is White (Feistritzer, 2011). In a 2013 survey on teachers’ preparedness for teaching the Common Core State Standards to English language learners, only 8% reported they felt “very prepared;” while 29% of them reported they were “not at all prepared” (Education Week Research Center, 2014). The majority of these teachers (more than 85%) also received little training or professional development on how to teach the Common Core to diverse students such as English language learners (Education Week Research Center, 2014). This is consistent with the results from a 2005 survey in which 87.5% of the mainstream teachers reported to have had little or no training in teaching linguistically diverse students (NCELA Newsline Bulletin, 2005). Among those who received training, the focus of their training was on instructional strategies or programs, seldom on cultural diversity. In a national survey specifically on the preparation of teachers for diversity, Frankenberg and Siegel-Hawley (2008) found that more than one in three teachers reported having had very little or no training in strategies to help culturally and linguistically diverse students. Moreover, when asked about their preparation in using one important proven method of improving both race relations and average achievement levels in diverse classrooms, only 29% of these teachers reported a great deal of training in designing racially diverse groups. Similar challenges also exist in teacher education programs, where few courses prepare teachers for the reality of multicultural classrooms (Gay, 2010).

This underpreparation of the teaching force has led teachers to “sink or swim” in dealing with the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in classrooms. Some teachers are successful teachers who are effective in developing culturally relevant pedagogy, for example, those described in Ladson-Billings (1995), even without specific training in culturally relevant teaching. Others struggle with acquiring the necessary attitudes, knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work effectively with a diverse student population (i.e., those documented in Pollock, Deckman, Mira, & Shalaby, 2010). Many struggle with “unintended cultural bias” and lack of sociopolitical consciousness stemming from their own cultural backgrounds that are different from their non-mainstream students, and they feel frustrated about their ability to enact culturally
relevant teaching even when they are provided relevant training (Young, 2010).

In addition to the challenge of an underprepared teaching force, the current standards movement that emphasizes high-stakes testing further limits teachers’ ability and agency to redesign the curriculum and seek structural change within schools in order to embrace students’ diverse languages, cultures, and identities, a point discussed in more detail in the next section.

**Welcoming and Unwelcoming Contexts**

The concerns and struggles outlined in the previous section are products of the historical, social, political, economic, geographical, cultural, linguistic, and ecological contexts of our time that are characterized by increasing interaction and transaction among people of different races, religions, languages, and cultures across the globe. On the one hand, the intersection among race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, language, and other social constructs is much more recognized now than in the early era of multiculturalism and transnationalism. Especially in today’s global society, our multiple, multidimensional languages, cultures, and identities are more readily acknowledged especially with the aid of information technology. On the other hand, such a multiplicity increasingly contributes to the building of linguistic empires (i.e., English linguistic imperialism) through language spread, shift, and dominance over linguistically diverse and multicultural populations around the world (Hamel, 2006). Domestically in the United States, language and culture conflicts between global trends and local contexts are manifested in the English-only movement. For example, in a study on the influences of globalization on K–12 language teacher education programs in the state of Arizona, which adopted an English-only policy, Singh (2012) concluded that because we are living in a globalized world with new realities, the English-only policy of Arizona is anti-global and not futuristic, as it is a major barrier to the cognitive development of English language learners and the preparation of teacher candidates for teaching diverse student populations.

Another contextual factor is related to the current policy emphasis on standardization and on high-stakes testing that devalues bilingual education and limits teachers’ autonomy in lesson planning to address cultural diversity. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), with its focus on educational outcomes and accountability, for example, terminated the Bilingual Education Act and replaced it with Title III, the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act. NCLB requires that English language learners who have been in the United States for 1 year must take tests of English language proficiency to measure their acquisition of English, and they must also take and pass the same tests of academic content as those taken by native English speakers. Given the linguistic complexity of the national tests and the absence of first language support, English language learners have been experiencing disproportionate failure rates (Menken, 2010). Similar impacts of standards-based reform and high-stakes testing have also been found on minorities who are not English learners, including Blacks and Native Americans who are also disproportionately retained in a grade or denied high school diplomas.

The standards movement has contributed to the decline of multicultural education and teachers’ ability to enact culturally relevant teaching because they are forced to implement these standards without regard to the needs and experiences of the students. One of the consequences of NCLB, for example, is that curriculum increasingly is normalized at the district level so that all students are learning the same thing, at the same time, and at the same rate (Young, 2010). As Young (2010) noted, although many districts’ rhetoric is to continue to promote culturally responsive teaching and differentiated instruction, many teachers are at a loss as to how they are expected to teach a scripted curriculum in an individualized or culturally relevant manner. Baker and Digiovanni (2005) described their observation of teachers’ practices under the pressure of the standards movement:

> [Many] teachers are supposed to be on specific lessons on specific days . . . lessons are . . . scripted and . . . deviation from the timeline is not permitted. No room is allowed for individuality or creativity in presenting lessons; only the officially sanctioned timeline of lessons is to be seen if an administrator walks into the classroom. (p. 1)

In light of their observations, Baker and Digiovanni called for culturally responsive teaching, through which schools can make a difference and begin to
address the issues of language, culture, identity, and power that have profound impact on the education and the lives of students. They raised the following critical questions:

Where does the student fit into this assembly line model of education? What experiences does the student bring with her when she enters the classroom? What are the cultural expectations and mores that the student encounters at home? What kinds of biases are inherent in the curriculum that prevent student learning? (2005, p. 1)

In addition to the macro policy context, local school contexts can also become limiting situations for incorporating the subject matters of language, culture, identity, and power. First, contemporary school policies and practices have systemic roots in racism, which aims to preserve the advantages of some groups over others by pushing non-tested curricula, including minority students' knowledge, language, culture, and identity, to the wayside (Gay, 2010; Young, 2010). Second, embedded in the systematic roots of racism, the structural relations within schools and districts can produce both welcoming and unwelcoming moments for English language learners and minority students and the knowledge they bring to school. Gitlin, Buendia, Crosland, and Doumbia (2003), in their study of the English as a second language (ESL) programs for immigrant students in a middle school, found that while there was a scattering of practices and representations that suggested that students who were enrolled in the ESL program were welcome at the school, the students were not really welcomed or valued as a cultural resource, neither in the district nor in the school. Gitlin and colleagues (2003) described,

The welcoming moments tended to legitimate school practices and policies, yet the welcoming-unwelcoming process, when taken as a whole, not only reinforced the existence of margin and center but placed these students on the margins; that is, it ultimately excluded them culturally, physically, and socially from the inherent benefits of residing at the center. (p. 103)

In a parallel study of similar spaces set aside for identifiable racial, ethnic, and gender groups in two high schools in the United States, Weis and Centrie (2002) found that such spaces can become powerful sites to empower young people in their search for identity in a society that fundamentally devalues them, and they can be used to enable these students to elaborate their own home-based identities while learning high-level skills that help them function in society. They emphasized that to make these spaces beneficial to minority youths, they must be operated under the watchful eyes of caring and committed adults from the targeted population and under the control of the community. The successful examples in this study further suggest the need to address power and agency within school contexts and beyond.

Theoretical Perspectives

The subject matters of language, culture, identity, and power must be understood from several interconnected theoretical perspectives. First and foremost is the sociocultural perspective on language and literacy learning. As noted earlier, language and literacy learning is not just a cognitive issue but also a sociocultural, sociolinguistic, and sociopolitical issue. What it means to be literate is not simply the ability to read and write, but also a way of living and a way of thinking. Literacy is a sociocultural process through which people make meaning for themselves and the world in which they live (Halliday, 1978). Defining literacy and who is literate from social, cultural, and political perspectives is significant for understanding the differences in the ways literacy is practiced in minority students’ homes and in their communities outside school. Language and literacy activities are embedded in the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which they occur. Shaped by different social and cultural norms, literacy acts—their functions, meanings, and methods of transmission—vary from one cultural group to another. These perspectives require teachers of minority students to pay attention to learners’ home languages, cultures, and identities, as well as to their learning and identification with the English language.

While sociocultural theory emphasizes the need to address the multiplicity of languages, cultures, and identities in context, critical theories such as critical race theory and the theory of sociocultural capital help address the need to consider power and agency across different learning contexts. According to Ladson-Billings (2005), critical race theory asserts that racism is ingrained in the fabric and system of American life, including the educational systems, and that the experiential knowledge of people of color is appropriate,
legitimate, and an integral part of analyzing and understanding racial inequity. Therefore, critical race theory challenges claims of the neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy of the existing power structures in society that tend to validate Eurocentric ways of knowing and marginalize and devalue minority students’ “funds of knowledge” and multiple ways of knowing (Ladson-Billings, 2005).

Another theory that is central to the understanding of the power relations in the subject matters of language, culture, and identity is Bourdieu’s (1991) theory of cultural capital. Cultural capital is the knowledge, skills, and other cultural acquisitions, as exemplified by educational or technical qualifications. Bourdieu maintained that individuals acquire and accumulate cultural resources that can be activated in cultural capital that provides social advantages and educational success. One’s language or linguistic and identity capital are forms of cultural capital that individuals can use to achieve success. Although all people possess certain linguistic and identity capital, how these cultural resources are activated into cultural capital differs contextually from person to person and from context to context. According to Bourdieu, linguistic capital is highly dependent on one’s background and social status and one’s ability to use the right words, right grammar, register, tone, body language, and so forth in a manner that is favored by the social structure of the linguistic market or the community within which certain lingual capabilities have a higher currency than others. In the linguistic market in the United States, for example, Standard English is a more favorable currency than Black English and other heritage languages immigrants bring to the country. Similarly, schools’ literacy practices and Eurocentric ways of knowing hold more powerful statuses than the funds of knowledge that minority learners bring to school. Therefore, in the linguistic market of American society and schools, power relations between the majority language and literacy practices predetermine the standards according to which linguistic capital is allocated, thus preserving the existing dominant status of the English language and its cultural ways of knowing (Bourdieu, 1991).

Identity is also a form of cultural capital. Extending Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital, Côté and Levine (2002) suggested that identity formation is shaped by identity capital, that is, various resources deployable on an individual basis that represent how people most effectively define themselves and have others define them in various contexts. These resources include both those psychological resources and an ability to evaluate reflexively and maneuver through a variety of social contexts. Côté and Levine (2002) described how identity capital works:

A resource is an asset that people can “cash in,” literally or metaphorically. In so doing, identity exchanges take place—pragmatically, symbolically, or emotionally—during contextually specific interactions, as part of a quid pro quo negotiated by the parties involved. If successful, these identity exchanges involve mutual acceptance with another individual, an informal group, a community, or an institution. And with this acceptance, the incumbent gains identity capital—there has been an increase in some aspect of “who they are.” (p. 143, italics in the original)

According to them, the development and the use of identity capital need to be understood in their particular contexts, because “the resources have an inoculation quality that can enable individuals to reflexively resist and/or act back on the social forces impinging on them” (p. 145, italics in the original). If successful, such an individualization process will empower the person to develop a sense of authorship over his or her own biography (Côté & Levine, 2002). If not, it will lead to a conforming self, one that loses its autonomy and conforms to others’ and more powerful values, which often leads to the adoption of the very values that marginalize them. Therefore, what an individual does in relation to the power relations within his or her social environments is of critical importance to identity development.

In sum, these several interrelated theoretical perspectives suggest the multiple, fluid, and political nature of the matters of language, culture, and identity, and that to successfully integrate these subject matters in the school curriculum, we must address the ever-increasing cultural and linguistic pluralism and issues of social (in)justice as expressed in linguistic imperialism, racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice and discrimination and seek to affirm diverse identity and culture in the teaching and learning process so that we can achieve educational equity and excellence leading to high levels of academic learning for all children and youths (Bennett, 2001).
on three areas: the teacher (i.e., how teachers enact culturally relevant pedagogy or how to train teachers to incorporate culture in literacy instruction), the text (i.e., teachers and students’ use and choices of culturally relevant texts and materials, including oral, written, multimedia, and popular cultural texts), and the context (i.e., focused on connections and disconnections between home and school discourses as well as between online and offline modes) (see Li, 2011, for details and associated key studies).

In addition to Li, two important volumes by Cummins and Davison (2007) extend the research on the subject matters of language, culture, identity, and power to the international contexts, linking English language teaching and learning to the issues of globalization, colonialism, and nation-state identities and struggles around the globe and in transnational exchanges.

The studies included in Bennett’s (2001) and Li’s (2011) reviews and Cummins and Davison’s (2007) volumes are overwhelmingly qualitative in nature, ranging from case studies to ethnographic studies, narrative inquiries, and action research. In light of this limitation, Li (2011) called for more research that uses quantitative or mixed methods, in order to investigate the links between language, literacy, culture, identity, and power, and thus “productively bridge the qualitative/quantitative divide” (p. 531).

### Conclusion

Contemporary concerns and struggles over the integration of the subject matters of language, culture, identity, and power in the school context are characterized by an increasingly multicultural and multilingual student population, but an increasingly standardized curriculum and instruction suggests that we have a difficult path ahead. Future work must address these contradictory conditions and forces that may hinder the exploration or implementation of effective approaches to address the polycultural and polylingual nature of today’s classrooms. As the discussion in this chapter suggests, inclusion of these multiple cultural and language practices and identities cannot be achieved simply by adding superficial cultural content, such as foods, folkways, and holidays to school activities; rather, it needs to
involve continual interface and exchange of cultural and symbolic differences and strategic reworking of the curriculum and the power structure that in turn will transform students' lives, enable academic success, and help them connect the present with the past and the future.

References and Further Readings


SUBJECT MATTERS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

PAUL M. WRIGHT
Northern Illinois University

DAVID S. WALSH
San Francisco State University

Physical education (PE) as a subject matter in the United States is at a crossroads. Since PE was integrated into the U.S. school curriculum, its perceived role in the curriculum has evolved as well as its standing in relation to other subject matters. Understandings of the content of PE have varied widely over the past century, and debates about what should comprise PE content have only intensified in recent decades. PE has been placed in the middle of a tug-of-war between two competing external factors. One side has been the pressure on schools to demonstrate student performance by means of standardized testing related to subject matters that have been elevated to the status of “core” subjects (i.e., mathematics, science, and language arts). The other side is the more recent pressure on schools stemming from public health concerns about what has been deemed the twin epidemic of childhood obesity and physical inactivity. In light of these competing pressures, PE has become a cutting-edge topic. State, federal, and local policies that had pushed for the reduction and marginalization of PE for decades in the name of academic achievement are now being reversed and overturned as school-based PE has come to be seen as key to the fight against childhood obesity (Amis, Wright, Dyson, Vardaman, & Ferry, 2012).

PE, like all other subject matters, was impacted in the later decades of the 20th century by an increased focus on the concept of academic achievement as measured by scores on standardized tests. In response to the publication of A Nation at Risk report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) and the No Child Left Behind legislation (2001), subject matters came to be organized in terms of centrality to this particular view of academic achievement. Essentially, subjects that were deemed most important in preparing students to help the United States stay competitive on the international stage were placed in the category of core subjects. In shifting focus to core subjects and making curricular decisions to prepare students to test well in them, schools pulled attention, time, and resources away from other subject matters such as art, music, and PE. This often resulted in reductions in the amount of PE offered and required in the curriculum. Uncertified teaching staff became common in PE programs. These factors and the desire among many principals to maximize time devoted to core subjects...
drewed scheduling practices in many schools to overcrowd gymnasiums. With little administrative commitment, low expectations, and limited support, it is not surprising that for several decades PE was becoming marginalized in the curriculum. Although there have been exemplary teachers and programs, the general trend during this era was a reduction in the quantity and quality of PE in the schools and serious questions about its value from the perspective of many stakeholders including principals, classroom teachers, parents, and often students themselves (Amis et al., 2012).

During recent decades, while PE was becoming increasingly marginalized, a combination of social trends gave rise to an increase in obesity and physical inactivity in the United States. A general shift toward sedentary behavior (i.e., lower energy expenditure) combined with higher caloric diets (i.e., higher energy intake) resulted in steady and dramatic increases in the rate of overweight and obesity in the United States. In fact, in the space of 30 years, the rate of childhood obesity in the United States tripled (Ogden, Carroll, Curtin, Lamb, & Flegal, 2010). Because obesity and overweight are associated with a number of preventable diseases such as heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes, this trend has become a major public health concern. In looking for strategies to halt or reverse these trends, there has been an increasing focus on the provision of physical activity for children. PE, as part of the K–12 curriculum in schools throughout the nation, has been looked to as an important lever in these efforts. This has been pointed out in the academic literature for years and promoted by organizations such as the American Heart Association and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Consequently, hundreds of local, state, and federal policies have been enacted to increase the amount of physical activity in general, and specifically the amount of PE that is required (Boehmer, Luke, Haire-Joshu, Bates, & Brownson, 2008). Unfortunately, as highlighted by Amis and colleagues (2012), these policies and laws are often unfunded mandates that offer increased expectations without support. Moreover, they generally lack clear guidelines for implementation and have no accountability measures attached to them. Therefore, in the hands of school and district administrators, who are continually deluged with other mandates that are attached to school funding and accountability measures, PE and wellness-related policies are often ignored or minimally addressed (Amis et al., 2012). Another level of difficulty in enacting these policies is the fact that many PE programs have been systematically weakened and marginalized for so long. Even with administrative support to increase the amount of PE that students receive, many PE programs struggle to provide the quality necessary to deliver the outcomes envisioned by policy makers and legislators, such as increased physical fitness, decreased body mass index, and increased levels of moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) (McKenzie, Marshall, Sallis, & Conway, 2000).

In this chapter, we examine contemporary concerns around PE as it relates to these external pressures as well as the internal tensions and debates among leaders in the field. We also explore how PE’s current situation serves as an example of the ways historical, social, political, economic, and other forces come together to influence not only small-scale curricular decisions but also how an entire subject matter is shaped and defined in the context of schooling and in the collective consciousness. Using the example of PE, we finally discuss the ways that the theory and forms of inquiry brought to bear on a subject matter shape and are shaped by it.

A Brief History of PE in the United States

To contextualize the current issues and debates surrounding PE, it is important to provide a brief history of PE as a subject matter (see Mechikoff, 2013, for more detailed history). Toward the end of the 19th century, physical training in the public schools was focused on working-class children performing exercises in unison within large groups. The development of PE aimed to equip students for useful, fulfilling, and productive lives. Early PE programs focused on calisthenics and gymnastic techniques. This physical activity content gradually gave way to an era of PE-as-sport-techniques between 1920 and 1960. The inclusion of sport techniques into the core of the practice of PE was revolutionary for the subject. PE-as-sport-techniques dominated in schools through what is referred to as the “multi-activity model” (Kirk, 2011).

The multi-activity model, which has been highly resistant to change, involves teaching numerous
sports or movement activities such as basketball, volleyball, soccer, and softball in relatively short units. Fitness activities such as weight training and aerobic exercise sometimes take place along with dance, yoga, and martial arts. The purpose of the multi-activity model is to provide students with an exposure to a wide variety of activities while maintaining student interest with its fast-changing focus (Kirk, 2011). Middle school students typically experience shorter 2- to 3-week units, while high school students experience longer 3- to 5-week units. The sport units focus on a variety of skills that make up the sport. For example, a softball unit could cover many motor skills that are used in the game such as batting, base running, catching, throwing, and fielding. Students might practice different offensive and defensive scenarios to help them use particular motor skills. The practice of multiple skills helps students develop motor patterns for use in the game or lead-up game (Boyce, Coker, & Bunker, 2006).

While local norms as well as state and district curriculum vary, there are many commonalities within the dominant form of PE-as-sport-techniques approach. A typical lesson begins with a skill-related warm-up; then the majority of the lesson focuses on skill instruction and practice and concludes with a game in which the skills learned are then to be applied. Classes may be populated by 30 to 50 students taught by one teacher and run between 40 and 75 minutes. The larger the class becomes, the more compelling the perceived need to use a “command” or “directive” teaching style, in which the teacher makes the decisions about what is to be taught and learned and in what sequence. Effective teachers provide verbal direction, visual demonstrations, and tasks to be performed with specific and general feedback (Mosston & Ashworth, 1994). For better or for worse, this has become the dominant conception of PE in the United States and represents the most common content and organizational structures.

Contemporary Concerns

As explained earlier, PE is currently a hotly debated topic among policy makers and legislators, as well as district and school administrators. With academic achievement on one side and obesity prevention on the other, the value of PE is seen by many outside the field in terms of how it contributes to other desired outcomes. These debates have also taken center stage within the field of PE. Academics who conduct PE-related research and train future teachers, along with the major professional organizations, are keenly aware of these pressures and are trying to keep up with these trends. However, different views regarding what should comprise the subject matter of PE lead to disparate and sometimes conflicting proposals as to the best ways to move forward.

Charges of Ineffectiveness

Having acknowledged that there have always been high-quality PE teachers and effective PE programs throughout the nation, the field as a whole has been harshly criticized for maintaining the status quo. Locke (1992) asserted that the dominant model of PE in practice has become characterized by required attendance without choice of activity or instructor, class assignment without the use of student needs or achievement, short classes with time eroded by management rituals and low academic learning time, short units with only introductory levels of instruction, evaluation based on participation, and program content based on instructor interest and convenience. According to Flintoff and Scraton (2001), PE is a break from academic work and at worst an unnecessary imposition impacting negatively on academic studies and rarely useful for out-of-school lives. Evans (2004) chides that PE’s inability to agree to an answer to the trend of testing and assessment may have contributed to its marginal role. Some have charged that despite the emphasis on PE-as-sport-techniques, many programs are ineffective in promoting even fundamental motor skills (Lounsbery & Coker, 2008). In addition to concerns about the delivery and general contributions of PE, it has been argued that the hidden curriculum of PE has been largely unchecked and contributed to the reproduction of social inequities concerning gender, ethnicity, social class, disability, and the social construction of the body (Flintoff & Scraton, 2001).

The Content of PE

Charges of ineffectiveness abound and beg the question, “How do we define effectiveness?” Such questions assume clear objectives as a reference point.
However, prior to the shift to emphasize academic achievement, as it is currently framed, PE and schools in general allowed for a broader and more holistic view of education (Amis et al., 2012). This is reflected in Randall’s (1967) position that the ultimate aim of PE was to contribute to the overall education of young people, including a variety of sports and pastimes, both competitive and recreational, as well as fitness and health. He also believed that PE should contribute to enjoyment, satisfaction, character development, team cooperation, and individual effort. Despite the fact that this multitude of learning outcomes has driven some in the public health community to view PE as having a muddled mission (Pate & Hohn, 1994), the content standards for PE developed by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) are broad in nature. The recently revised standards state, “The goal of physical education is to develop physically literate individuals who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity” (AAHPERD, 2013, p. 1). The five standards state that the physically literate individual (1) demonstrates competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns; (2) applies knowledge of concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics related to movement and performance; (3) demonstrates the knowledge and skills to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness; (4) exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others; and (5) recognizes the value of physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and/or social interaction (AAHPERD, 2013).

**Innovation in PE**

Amidst debates over the goals and objectives of school-based PE, several scholars and practitioners have been part of a movement to improve PE through innovative pedagogical practices such as reciprocal teaching, guided discovery, and problem-solving teaching styles (Mosston & Ashworth, 1994). Others have emphasized communicating the values and joys of physical activity by promoting sport for peace, cooperative learning, girl-friendly PE, health-related exercise, and outdoor adventure (Kirk, 2011). There have also been reformers who have challenged the multi-activity model by championing new pedagogical models for teachers such as Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU), Sport Education, and Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR). Each of these models is briefly described in the following paragraphs.

The TGfU model was developed by Rod Thorpe, David Bunker, and Len Almond (1986) during the 1970s and 1980s. They proposed a different way of teaching sports through modifications to match the level of experience and ability of the players. For example, rather than playing a tennis game with a standard racquet, ball, and court, beginners could play with short plastic racquets, sponge balls, lower nets, and smaller courts. Their priority is for players to understand the game and develop tactical awareness to aid decision making. The modifications made to the game were of utmost importance in the TGfU approach, which also requires considerable depth and knowledge on the part of the teacher. By encouraging critical thinking and problem solving, this model places greater emphasis on the cognitive aspects of PE.

The Sport Education model was developed by Daryl Siedentop (1994) in the 1980s. The premise is to teach the best components of experiencing being on a sports team. The curriculum is organized around longer seasons of a specific sport to capture the ebb and flow of a sport season rather than short units. The class is divided into teams that learn rituals, values, and traditions of a sport. Students are coached in training sessions and learn about etiquette of sport such as fair play and healthy competition. Additional roles are given such as team captain, fitness trainer, equipment officer, statistician, and referee. The genuine sport experience is also emulated through culminating events like tournaments and end-of-season celebrations. By providing an authentic and deeper experience with sport, this model provides a strong balance between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning objectives.

The TPSR model was developed by Don Hellison (2011) more than 40 years ago with a particular focus on social and emotional learning. It is a holistic, relational, and empowerment-based approach to promoting responsibility goals and associated life skills through physical activity. The primary goals include respecting the rights and feelings of others (e.g., self-control and inclusion), self-motivation (e.g., effort and teamwork), self-direction.
(e.g., working independently and goal setting), and caring (e.g., leadership and helping others). The fifth and ultimate goal of TPSR involves the transference of the four primary goals beyond the program to other contexts such as school, home, and on the streets. This model clearly places great emphasis on the affective domain and directly addressing the NASPE content standards related to responsible behavior in PE.

In many ways, these innovative practices address some of the widespread criticism of PE noted earlier in the chapter, as well as multiple learning objectives. For example, the Sport Education model is a response to traditional PE’s lack of content mastery and boring content. The TGfU model aims to improve student satisfaction with PE and to produce skillful participants in lifelong activities. The TPSR model extends lessons beyond the physical components by humanizing the field and providing strategies and a structure to impact emotional, social, and psychological development through physical activity. These are just a few examples of innovation in PE. Other innovative approaches that broaden the scope, content, and settings typically associated with PE include Outdoor Education and Adventure-Based Learning (Dyson & Sutherland, 2015; Stiehl, Parker, & Coulter, 2015).

Contextual Forces

As with all other subject matters, PE has been shaped in many ways by contextual forces. Historical, social, political, economic, and cultural factors have played a large role in the evolution of PE in the U.S. school system over the past century. Although there were explorations of the notion of education through the physical during the progressive education era, by and large the physical training model of the early half of the 20th century was consistent with the focus on efficiency that characterized mass public schooling. The shift to the PE-as-sport-techniques model in the mid- to late 20th century was consistent with the growing fascination with professional sport in American culture. Interestingly, some national initiatives in PE emerged in almost direct response to political conditions. The President’s Council on Physical Fitness and the Presidential Fitness Challenge (still used in many schools today) were initiated under the Kennedy administration during the Cold War. The rationale for this is readily apparent: PE as delivered through the public school system was identified as a large-scale and cost-effective way of promoting physical fitness and preparing young citizens to be fit for military service.

The Cold War also intensified the desire of the U.S. political establishment to demonstrate the country’s ability to compete, if not its superiority, in the areas of math and science. The publication of *A Nation at Risk* (1983), a scathing indictment of the U.S. educational system, served as a political rallying point to prioritize what have become the core subject areas. Moreover, this document and the fervor it created added momentum to the push for standardized testing and national content standards. Although content standards have been established for PE, unlike with other subject areas such as mathematics, the delivery and assessment of learning objectives in PE have not been a priority in U.S. schools. Therefore, during the later decades of the 20th century, PE’s status as a second-class subject matter was being solidified in the schools. By the time the No Child Left Behind Act was passed, it was clear that certain subject matters were of utmost importance. In fact, failure to demonstrate sufficient student performance in these areas could cost principals their jobs and result in school closings. In this context, it should not be surprising that PE had become marginalized in the minds of many stakeholders including principals, classroom teachers, parents, and students (Amis et al., 2012).

Whereas these contextual factors largely contributed to the evolution of PE up to the turn of the past century, the story more recently has become driven by economics. Clearly, obesity and overweight have reached epidemic proportions in the United States and represent a public health crisis. This also represents a major economic crisis in that the cost of preventable obesity-related diseases, especially at the rate of recent growth, is an unsustainable burden on the U.S. health care system. Employers, insurance companies, and the health care industry clearly see the need to address obesity as an economic as well as a health problem. In this context, much more legislation has been passed in recent years to increase the quantity of physical activity and/or PE provided in the schools, contributing to the current push for PE to focus on outcomes such as MVPA. However, many
of these policies have been proven ineffective due to the fact that they are unfunded mandates with no accountability measures (Amis et al., 2012).

Theory in PE

PE tends to be viewed by many outside the field in a reductionist and utilitarian way. For the past several decades, the largest challenge to PE came indirectly from those focused on academic achievement. From this perspective, PE was seen as an expendable part of the curriculum where time and space could be freed up in service of the core subject areas. Currently, PE is receiving a great deal of policy support by those taking a public health perspective. However, what is being supported is the use of PE to fight childhood obesity by those who view it as a means to another end. PE has been pulled back and forth by outside forces because of its perceived role as a barrier or facilitator to the achievement of some other outcome rather than for its inherent value.

Within the field of PE, there has been a richer debate employing a range of philosophical and theoretical perspectives. Jewett, Bain, and Ennis (1995), for example, identified several common curricular value orientations in PE, including disciplinary mastery, learning process, self-actualization, social responsibility, and ecological integration. While all of these are legitimate orientations, disciplinary mastery has been, and continues to be, the most common. Still, some innovators in the field have provided alternative approaches. Hellison’s (2011) TPSR model, for example, emphasizes self-actualization and social responsibility. A variety of learning theories are also applied within the field of PE, such as social constructivism, situated learning, and critical theory (Kirk, 2011). In addition, numerous theories from psychology and sport psychology have been applied to PE, such as social learning theory, achievement motivation, self-determination, and goal orientations (Li & Lee, 2004).

While this array of philosophical and theoretical perspectives has been applied to PE, it is evident in the current discourse that some are more prevalent. As explained throughout this chapter, the current status and future direction of PE is largely shaped by external agendas that view PE in a reductionist and utilitarian way. Perhaps unwittingly, many within the field are aligning with the perspective that PE’s value rests in its ability to serve other ends. This argument is based largely in the shift among academics and professional organizations to virtually reframe PE as a childhood obesity prevention strategy. In plotting this course, some temporary support may come from powerful external interests, but the implications are serious. Going down this path and shaping PE as a way to improve public health will likely narrow the content and the learning objectives pursued. For example, the national content standards related to self-expression and personal social responsibility clearly receive less emphasis than those related to physical fitness and physical activity. In fact, some have gone as far as to suggest that social-emotional learning objectives are not specific to PE and, therefore, do not need to be included in the content standards (McKenzie & Lounsbery, 2013). Viewed as a public health intervention, PE’s mission may seem “muddled,” but social-emotional learning objectives might be viewed more favorably by those who see it as a subject matter with the intent of fostering the holistic development of children.

Forms of Inquiry in PE

Not surprisingly, the forms of inquiry most commonly employed in the field of PE are driven by the dominant curricular value orientations and theoretical perspectives. Despite the range of forms of curriculum inquiry available (Short, 1991) and options for alternative representation, most inquiry related to PE falls into a fairly traditional research model. That is to say, either traditional quantitative or qualitative methods are employed (or the two are mixed) to ask a fairly discrete question or test a hypothesis. Most studies are conducted to yield conference presentations and peer-reviewed articles.

Some history about the place of PE as a field of study in higher education partially explains why this field tends to embrace fairly traditional approaches. The 1960s and 1970s were the decades in which the basic qualification to become a PE teacher changed from sub-degree/certificate to degree level. Franklin Henry’s (1964) paper “Physical Education: An Academic Discipline” marked the beginning of advocating for PE as sufficiently theoretical to be worthy of study at the university level. The reconfiguration and
change to PE in higher education begun in this era has shaped what have commonly become departments of kinesiology in universities today. PE teacher education became a subdiscipline of the broader field of kinesiology. In order to gain credibility and respect within the academy, many individuals and programs gravitated to particular parent disciplines such as psychology and physiology, which moved the study of PE toward specialization and fragmentation. Whereas some faculty were focused on PE teacher education, others identified with subdisciplines such as biomechanics, motor learning, exercise physiology, sport psychology, and sociocultural perspectives on physical activity. As it stands today, teacher candidates are required to take courses in these various subdisciplines as part of their licensure requirements leaving less room in their own curriculum for integrated and authentic learning about the field they are going to enter (Lawson, 2007).

Viewed this way, the reductionist approach and disciplinary mastery curricular value orientations commonly seen in the field of PE today are easy to understand. If the higher education faculty who steer this field of study and train future teachers work within a structure that is built on these perspectives, it is not surprising that they often internalize them. The same can be said for PE teachers who are trained in such a system by faculty who are a part of it. In this context, fairly safe and traditional modes of inquiry and forms of representation abound. However, some individuals have employed alternative forms of inquiry. David Kirk (2013) is one of several scholars who employ philosophical methods in the study of PE. In developing his TPSR model, Don Hellison's process has been framed as a form of practical inquiry (Georgiadis, 1992). Martinek and colleagues (2004) have argued for an alternative approach to inquiry that is based in university–community collaboration and direct service with underserved populations, called service-bonded inquiry. Many others have employed what could generally be called engaged and reflective approaches to scholarship.

In sum, there is variety in the forms of inquiry used within the field of PE, but less variety in terms of representation. This may be due in part to the traditions and deep culture of scientific research in departments of kinesiology. It is also influenced by external pressures. For a field battling for equal status and support in public schools and in higher education, there may be heightened pressure to demonstrate outcomes that are valued by stakeholders with decision-making power (e.g., physical fitness gains and MVPA). Such dependent variables and a positivist approach to inquiry provide much needed ammunition in the battle for respect in the current educational climate.

PE is at a crossroads. Like all subject matters, PE and its place in the school curriculum has evolved over time and has clearly been influenced by historical, political, cultural, and economic factors. The unique challenges for PE in the past several decades largely relate to the consequences of not being included in the core curriculum. While some see attaching to the public health initiative around obesity prevention as the key to bringing PE back from the margins, even this opportunity may come at a cost. When a subject area and its curriculum are shaped to serve some other agenda, how likely is it to truly address the needs of the students it is meant to serve? There are many different calls for action in the current literature that amount to a narrowing of the curriculum. As this field and those individuals committed to it move forward, it is recommended that they do not lose sight of the full range of value orientations, learning objectives, theoretical perspectives, and modes of inquiry that can be brought to bear. It would be folly to ignore contextual factors and external pressures; of course they must be considered in curricular decision making. However, the driving force for making such decisions should be students and what they truly need to know, value, and experience (Schubert, 1986). Otherwise, many of the complaints associated with the overemphasis on standardized testing to assess academic achievement (e.g., teaching to the test and dumbing down the curriculum) may become the future of PE.

References and Further Readings


Organization and Sequencing of Subject Matters

Zongyi Deng
National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University

Organization and sequencing of subject matters (bodies of knowledge, skills, abilities, and dispositions for teaching and learning) is a central task of curriculum making. It is essential to the formation of programs, school subjects, or courses of study that constitute an organizational and operational structure within which classroom practice takes place (Deng, 2009). Accordingly, the task is vital to the construction of curriculum frameworks, syllabi, and instructional materials that have potential to guide and influence practice (Connelly & Connelly, 2012). Furthermore, how subject matters are selected, organized, and sequenced is inexorably social and political, intertwining with questions about social class, race, gender, power, and politics (Apple, 1979; Bernstein, 1971; Young, 1971). It has been, therefore, a foundational topic in traditional curriculum studies and critical curriculum theory.

However, the topic of organization and sequencing of subject matters has lost much of its significance over the last 2 decades. In curriculum policy development and educational discourse across the globe, there has been a shift from a concern with the basic task of subject matter selection, organization, and sequencing to a preoccupation with academic standards, comparative achievement, and high-stakes testing. Accordingly, this basic task of curriculum making has been ignored or bypassed in favor of the work of developing standards, competency frameworks, and evidence-based practices (see Hopmann, 2008; Karseth & Sivesind, 2010). Likewise, the subject matter taught in school is no longer seen as the “primary object” in the contemporary curriculum field, which is largely preoccupied with political issues of power, politics, class, race, and gender surrounding or pertaining to the school curriculum (Young, 2013). As a result, there is a strong tendency to overlook “how and what knowledge is acquired and how it should be paced, sequenced, and assessed” (Young, 2008, p. 7).

This chapter provides an exposition of the topic through reviewing foundational curriculum literature. It is organized around the following questions: How should the topic be understood from the perspective of curriculum making in the social, cultural, and institutional context of schooling? What are the common orientations or approaches to organizing and sequencing subject matters, and with what theoretical or ideological underpinnings? What are the broad social and political issues pertaining to the task of organizing and sequencing subject matters? Lastly, what sorts of questions need to be asked, and with what forms of curriculum inquiry, in order to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the topic?
transforming the programmatic curriculum embodied in curriculum documents and materials into “educative” experiences for students. It requires further elaboration of the subject matter of a school subject, making it connect with the experience, interest, and capacity of students (Westbury, 2000).

In view of these three curriculum domains, organizing and sequencing subject matters is of primary concern to curriculum making at the programmatic level and has to do with the manner in which subject matters are organized and sequenced in terms of school subjects, as well as the manner in which the subject matter of a school subject is organized and sequenced in the curriculum. Here organization refers to the arrangement and relationships of school subjects as well as the formulation of the subject matter of a school subject in the curriculum. Sequence concerns the progression of school subjects across terms or years and of the subject matter of a school subject across a term or year (Goodlad & Su, 1992; Tyler, 1949).

As a task of translating the policy curriculum into school subjects, organizing and sequencing subject matters needs to be understood with reference to conceptions of schooling at the societal level, represented by curriculum ideologies or conceptions. As will be shown in what follows, there exist different orientations or approaches to organizing and sequencing subject matters, each of which is underpinned by a distinct curriculum ideology or conception. Furthermore, the task needs to be understood in relation to a broader social and political context in which schooling is situated and functions. It is inexorably political because subject matters are selected, classified, and framed in ways that “reflect both distribution of power and the principles of social control” (Bernstein, 1971, p. 47).

**Orientations, Approaches, and Curriculum Ideologies**

Research has identified four distinct orientations to organizing and sequencing subject matters, which are directed toward (1) academic disciplines and specialized fields, (2) social and economic needs, (3) students’ interest, experience, and development, or (4) social issues and problems. The first two orientations have had a pervasive and profound impact on
curriculum development across the globe, whereas the latter two have only been employed in some schools in certain countries (Tanner & Tanner, 2007).

Employed primarily at the secondary school and college level, the first orientation involves the use of academic disciplines and specialized fields as the essential criteria for organizing and sequencing subject matters. Conventional school subjects such as mathematics, history, and geography are organized along the disciplines and traditional subject lines. The subject matter of a particular school subject is identified from, and formulated according to, the “subject matter” of its parent discipline (Goodlad & Su, 1992; Tanner & Tanner, 2007). These disciplines-based school subjects constitute a “collection type” curriculum in which the subject matters of constituent school subjects are independent or “insulated” from each other (Bernstein, 1971). How school subjects are sequenced or ordered across grade levels is supposed to follow a logical order based on conceptual dependency inherent in academic disciplines: theoretically speaking, for instance, biology after chemistry (because biology draws on chemistry), and chemistry after physics (because chemistry draws on physics). Similarly, the sequence of subject matter in a school subject is expected to follow a logical progression in its parent discipline: for example, in physics the learning of Newton’s second law presupposes an understanding of the basic concepts of force and acceleration.

It is important to note that within a disciplines-based curriculum, the insulation between subject matters can be altered through various modes of curricular design. A school subject can be formed through the correlated-subject design (correlating the subject matters of two or more school areas), the fused-subject design (integrating the subject matters of two or more school subjects), and the broad-field design (encompassing and synthesizing various subject matter domains; for a detailed discussion, see Tanner & Tanner, 2007). In addition, the subject matter of a school subject can be sequenced in ways that are driven by psychological and pedagogical concerns, apart from the logical one. Four commonly used approaches to subject matter sequencing can be identified, each of which is suitable for a particular type of school subjects. As discussed in Developing and Documenting the Curriculum (Armstrong, 1989, pp. 78–79), they are:

1. The chronological approach, in which content elements are sequenced in terms of calendar time. The sequence may be from past to present or from present to past. This approach makes sense only when subject matter to be treated has some logical connection to chronological time (e.g., history and English literature).

2. The thematic approach, in which content elements first are organized under any one of several major themes. Decisions about which themes are to be taught first, second, third, and so forth may be left entirely to the discretion of the instructor (e.g., elementary school language arts programs may feature such thematic topics as short stories, creative writing, plays, and poetry—none of the topics necessarily builds on any of the others).

3. The part-to-whole approach, in which topics or units are sequenced so that basic elements of content precede more complex elements (e.g., math and foreign language programs).

4. The whole-to-part approach, which reverses the sequencing order used in part-to-whole course planning. In this design, general information is typically introduced first, providing class members with a broad overview of what they are to learn. Only after they have a good grasp of this overview is more specific information introduced that allows them to study smaller parts of this “whole” (e.g., geography).

The second orientation regards the perceived social and economic needs of a society as the essential criterion for organizing and sequencing subject matters. From this perspective, the school curriculum should consist of certain academic subjects such as mathematics, sciences, and English—which supposedly have instrumental value and relevance to various social and economic sectors—and vocational subjects such as marketing, commerce, and technologies—which provide basic skills and understanding needed for various professions or vocations. The school curriculum is largely of a collection type and is often differentiated into a series of different programs (e.g., college preparatory, vocational, or technical), each with its own array of subjects; students are placed into the appropriate program based on their ability, motivation, and likely future occupation. Three of the aforementioned approaches—the thematic, part-to-whole, and whole-to-part—can be applied to sequencing the subject matter of a school subject.

It has been proposed at various times that students’ experience, interest, and development constitute the
10. Organization and Sequencing of Subject Matters

essential criterion for organizing and sequencing subject matters. In this third orientation, the school curriculum takes the form of projects, tasks, or units of work—rather than school subjects or courses of study—identified and arranged according to the interest, need, and experience of students (Goodlad & Su, 1992). Subject matters are supposed to be derived from a wide range of sources, such as personal experience, practical commonsense knowledge and wisdom, and community-based experience, in addition to academic disciplines and school subjects (Deng & Luke, 2008). Organizing subject matters in this manner yields an “integrated type” curriculum that allows the integration of various kinds of subject matter and dissolves the traditional subject boundaries typical in collection-type curricula (Bernstein, 1971).

However, this student-centered orientation does not have a system-wide impact on curriculum making. In some countries (e.g., the United States and the United Kingdom), there exists a handful of schools using a student-centered curriculum (Goodlad & Su, 1992; Tanner & Tanner, 2007). On the other hand, using student experience and developmental stages as an essential frame of reference, researchers have identified six approaches to sequencing the subject matter of a school subject that are generally applicable to the school curriculum, regardless of the orientation(s) it takes: (1) empirical prerequisite (sequencing according to the prerequisite relationship among ideas determined empirically), (2) familiarity (sequencing according to the degree of student familiarity with a topic), (3) difficulty (sequencing according to the degree of student difficulty with a topic), (4) interest (sequencing starting with topics that can evoke student interest), (5) development (sequencing that reflects how children develop psychologically), and (6) internalization (sequencing according to stages of internalization; Posner & Strike, 1976).

It has also been suggested that broad social and political issues and problems provide the essential starting point and frame of reference for organizing and ordering subject matters. In this problem/issue-focused orientation, school subjects such as environmental studies, social studies, multicultural studies, and peace studies can be formulated to allow students to address prevalent social and cultural issues of global warning, inequality, poverty, and terrorism, among others. The subject matter of a school subject is supposed to be drawn from multiple academic disciplines and a variety of sources (personal knowledge, community-based experience and wisdom, etc.), with the intention of helping students develop critical perspectives and abilities to address particular prevalent issues and problems (Goodlad & Su, 1992). And a more integrative approach can be adopted for organizing subject matters in a way that completely dissolves the traditional subject boundaries. The curriculum thus exhibits an integrated type (Bernstein, 1971) in which subjects may be integrated and merged together. However, how subject matters are organized and arranged into school subjects or courses of study with scope and sequence that could progressively lead students to a body of worthwhile knowledge and understanding is an important issue yet to be addressed adequately in this orientation (Deng, 2010; also see Bernstein, 1971).

Overall, these four orientations stand for four “ideal types” of organizing and sequencing subject matters and are only distinct and separable in theory. In practice they become intermingled, merged, and transformed, where two or three or even four orientations are often brought to bear on constructing a curriculum. In developing a curriculum for the University of Chicago Laboratory School, John Dewey (1938/1998) articulated an approach on the basis of three premises, which can be seen as a reconciliation of the disciplines-based and student-centered orientations, together with an incorporation of the social-and-economic orientation. First, subject matters must be “derived from materials which at the outset fall within the scope of ordinary life-experience” of learners (Dewey, 1938/1998, p. 87). Second, subject matters must be selected, organized, and sequenced in a way that allows “the progressive development of what is already experienced into a fuller and richer and also more organized form”—a form that progressively approximates the subject matter of an academic discipline (p. 87). Third, the organization and sequencing of subject matters must be centered on the social nature of life in and out of the school.

It is also important to acknowledge that these four orientations are inextricably intertwined with, or underpinned by, four distinct curriculum conceptions or ideologies—academic rationalism, social efficiency, child-centeredness, and social reconstructionism—each of which stands for a distinct vision of
what schooling is for and what knowledge is of most worth or what constitute subject matters.

*Academic rationalism* construes the central purpose of schooling as helping students acquire scientific and disciplinary knowledges embodied in academic disciplines and specialized fields. Academic disciplines or organized fields are viewed as the authoritative sources from which subject matters are derived, and according to which subject matters are organized and sequenced.

*Social efficiency* defines the primary purpose of schooling as meeting social and economic needs of a society by preparing students to play future roles as productive workers and capable members of a society. Accordingly, subject matters consist primarily of bodies of knowledge, skill, and value needed in the workplace and in the society, and are organized and sequenced according to perceived social and economic needs, and in view of the differentiated roles students will play in the society.

*Learner-centeredness ideology* construes the central goal of schooling in terms of fostering personal development, self-actualization, freedom, and creativity. The curriculum is constructed around the experience, interest, and developmental stage of students. Accordingly, the experience and development of individual learners is the central factor in determining what constitutes subject matters and how subject matters need to be arranged and sequenced.

*Social reconstructionists* hold the central purpose of schooling as ameliorating social problems (inequalities, injustice, poverty, etc.) and facilitating social reform and reconstruction. They see subject matter as alternative ways of knowledge, experience, and wisdom—in addition to academic and disciplinary knowledge. The selection and organization of subject matters is based upon a critical examination of social contexts, issues, and features, with the intention of helping individuals reconstruct their own perspectives, standpoints, and actions (see Schiro, 2008).

In other words, subject matter organization and sequencing is inextricably connected to fundamental curriculum questions about the purposes and substance of schooling. And, different ways of organizing and sequencing subject matters supposedly serve different functions or purposes of schooling, reflecting differing curriculum ideologies or conceptions.

### Social and Political Issues

In addition to understanding it in terms of orientations or approaches and related curriculum ideologies, the task of organizing and sequencing subject matters needs to be understood in relation to a broad social, cultural, and political context in which the school curriculum is embedded and functions. All orientations or approaches to the task can be scrutinized from the social and political perspective of critical curriculum theory. It has been convincingly argued that the school curriculum is not something given but a social and political construction, reflecting the need, interest, and ideology of those who hold power (Apple, 1979; Bernstein, 1971; Young, 1971). Therefore, a particular way of organizing and sequencing subject matters is an expression of political interest and ideology and embodies power relations. This can be illustrated by looking at the first two orientations.

With academic disciplines as the essential frame of reference for organizing and sequencing subject matters, the disciplines-based orientation legitimates and endows the ideology of academic rationalism, serving the interest of academicians and intellectuals who have gained power in a society. This is evident in the U.S. curriculum reform movement in the 1960s during the post-Sputnik era of the Cold War and Space Race, driven by the perception of an urgent need for scientific and technological manpower. The movement was initiated by a group of American scientists and university academicians, with the support of their professional organizations and the financial backing of the National Science Foundation. It was underpinned by the *doctrine of disciplinarity*, according to which subject matters are derived from, and organized according to, the “structures” of canonical academic disciplines (Deng & Luke, 2008). Through such a doctrine, American scientists and university academicians expressed and exercised their “disciplinary power” over curriculum specialists, educators, and classroom teachers in the undertaking of curriculum making.

Likewise, to organize and arrange subject matters according to the social and economic needs of
a society entails endowing the ideology of social efficiency, serving the interest of businesses, corporations, and government sectors that see schooling as an instrument for social and economic development. Over the last decade, there has been a global trend of defining and delineating learning outcomes in terms of 21st-century competencies, spurred by various frameworks for 21st-century competencies—such as Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 21st Century Skills and Competencies for New Millennium Learners, and the Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning—promulgated by international organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Bank, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Those learning outcomes are supposed to be used as an essential frame of reference for selecting, organizing, and pacing subject matters in the curriculum and, in turn, for evaluating the “effectiveness” of the curriculum. The sponsors for those frameworks include the U.S. Department of Education as well as private organizations such as Microsoft, Apple, and Cisco, with a vested interest in developing students’ human capital to ensure a competitive economy (see Voogt & Roblin, 2012).

Furthermore, the disciplines-based and social and economic orientations intersect with the existing patterns of social structures, orders, and relations, contributing to social and cultural reproduction (Apple, 1979; Bernstein, 1971; Young, 1971). The use of academic disciplines as the central criterion for organizing and sequencing subject matters privileges students from higher social classes who come to school with the cultural capital (linguistic and cultural competences, habits, or social styles given by families) that enables them effectively to engage with academic subject matters. These students would, more often than not, find themselves in a disciplines-based, college preparatory curriculum that teaches intellectual skills and dispositions required for higher status professions (such as executives and managers). On the other hand, students from lower social backgrounds are disadvantaged as they enter school without the kind of cultural capital that students from higher social classes have. This initial disadvantage can then be exacerbated by student allocation to job preparatory or vocational programs that teach basic skills, behavior, norms, and attitudes requisite of lower status jobs (such as construction workers and security guards; see Anyon, 1981). The two different ways of organizing and sequencing subject matters, thus, can produce different identities and relations in school and classroom, reflecting the hierarchical structure of a society. Further research shows that social and cultural reproduction can be based on race, gender, and cultural background as well (see Luke, 2010).

However, the social and cultural perspective of critical curriculum theory is not without problems. Conceiving organizing and sequencing subject matters in terms of interest, ideology, and power relations, while correct at one level, loses sight of the significance of this basic curriculum-making task in transmitting powerful disciplinary knowledge to students. Young (2008) distinguished between “powerful knowledge” (concerning the intellectual powers given to those with access to disciplinary knowledge) and “knowledge of the powerful” (concerning the preservation and dominance of a particular interest and ideology associated with disciplinary knowledge). He argued that selecting, organizing, and sequencing subject matters into school subjects creates a necessary condition for the acquisition of powerful knowledge—an “entitlement” for all students, regardless of their races, genders, socioeconomic status, or family background (Young, 2013). This knowledge provides students with “more reliable explanations and new ways of thinking about the world” and “language for engaging in political, moral, and other kinds of debates” (Young, 2008, p. 14). However, by focusing on knowledge of the powerful, critical curriculum theorists have shifted the attention from curriculum making concerned with the transmission of disciplinary knowledge to the future generation to ideology critique directed toward exposing the interest, ideology, and distribution of power surrounding curriculum making in a wider society.

Also, linking subject matter organization and sequencing to social and cultural reproduction, while revealing in very significant ways, falls short of recognizing an important function of the curriculum. According to Elizabeth McEneaney and John W. Meyer (2000), there are two functions of curriculum, the allocational (providing a legitimate substantive basis for allocating people into different social roles embedded in a stratified society) and the...
Questions and Forms of Curriculum Inquiry

Three distinct types of questions can be identified in view of the preceding discussion. The first two types concern the basic task of curriculum making in relation to the constructional function of curriculum, and the third type has to do with social and political issues pertaining to curriculum making in relation to the allocational function. These three types of questions, together, call for diverse forms of curriculum inquiry to be brought to bear on investigating complex issues concerning organizing and sequencing subject matters.

The first type of questions concerns what constitutes subject matters with respect to the purposes or expectations of schooling in the 21st century. Schooling is expected to transmit powerful scientific and disciplinary knowledge to the future generation and to enable the next generation to create new knowledge on the basis of the existing knowledge (Young, 2013). It is also expected to prepare young people for their future roles as productive workers and active, responsible citizens in a democratic society. It, too, is supposed to foster self-actualization, agency, critical thinking, and creativity in students. What would these purposes or expectations entail in the current era of globalization, knowledge-based economies, and multiculturalism? What would be the implications for subject matter selection, organization, and sequencing? What would be the various kinds of knowledge or ways of knowing—disciplinary, practical, and experiential (Deng & Luke, 2008)—that are potential sources of subject matters for teaching and learning? How would those knowledges or ways of knowing be selected and on what grounds?

Questions of this kind are epistemological, normative, social, and cultural in nature and require philosophical (or theoretical), sociological, and historical forms of inquiry (Short, 1991).

The second type of questions deals with the selection, organization, and sequencing of subject matters into school subjects, programs, or courses of study for a school or a system of school (including school types and tracks). How would subject matters (various kinds of knowledge, ways of knowing, and dispositions) be selected, organized, paced, and sequenced for different groups of learners, in view of different purposes and expectations of schooling? How would various modes or approaches of organizing and sequencing subject matters be brought to bear on this curriculum-making task? How would the subject matter of a school subject be arranged, sequenced, and paced in a way that optimizes the pedagogic transmission of scientific and disciplinary knowledge for all learners, especially those from poor and less privileged family backgrounds? These are some of the important and challenging questions concerning substantive curriculum making—questions that call for philosophical, psychological, deliberative, and integrative forms of inquiry (Short, 1991).

The third type of questions deals with broad social and political issues concerning subject matter selection, organization, and sequencing in relation to the allocational function. What versions of knowledge are being constructed by whom and in whose interests? Who controls what counts as subject matters in school? How does the selection and framing of subject matters reflect and work in the interests of particular social classes and groups? How would different ways of selecting, organizing, and sequencing subject matter produce different identities and relations in schools and classrooms? Questions of this type are social and political in nature and invite critical, sociological, historical, and ethnographic forms of inquiry (Short, 1991).

Conclusion

Organization and sequencing of subject matters is an essential task of curriculum making and, therefore, a foundational topic in curriculum studies. The topic needs to be understood analytically and critically with reference to the multiple layers of context of
schooling. There exist diverse ways of organizing and sequencing of subject matters, serving different functions of curriculum, each of which is inextricably intertwined with a particular vision of what schooling is for and what constitutes subject matters. Further, each of these ways is an expression of a social interest and embodies a particular set of power relations, acting as a mechanism of social and cultural reproduction. Organization and sequencing of subject matters, thus, constitutes an important area of research in the curriculum field, which requires multiple forms of curriculum inquiry—philosophical, psychological, sociological, historical, ethnographic, deliberative, and so forth—to be brought to bear on investigating complex and challenging issues pertaining to the topic.

References and Further Readings


Our lives are increasingly enmeshed with, mediated by, and immersed in a rapidly growing and intensifying complex of sophisticated computing technologies. Since the onset of the digital information age, subject matters—the representation and presentation of disciplinary knowledge and practices—have been similarly undergoing substantive renovations and upheavals. More than a decade into the 21st century, these transformative churnings and enmeshments are far from settled. Increasingly, the forms of knowledge and modes of knowing of every subject area are being intertwined with, absorbed by, and translated into the fluid, digital landscapes and infrastructures underwriting contemporary societies.

Schools have been striving to respond to these dramatic lifeworld and disciplinary knowledge shifts through equipping classrooms with an ever-changing assortment of computing devices and software programs, as well as implementing a wide range of interdisciplinary curriculum changes and ongoing teacher professional development opportunities. Yet despite these multifaceted efforts, surprisingly few North American high school graduates today possess a literate understanding of the coded infrastructure supporting and shaping their daily lives. This knowledge gap is not simply a case of the enlightened “digital native” student versus the “digital immigrant” teacher languishing in the ignorance of a precomputing cave: In terms of computational thinking and computing science, the old and the young find themselves dwelling in the same digital darkness. Nor is this gulf a direct symptom of the “digital divide,” whereby economic disparities are further exacerbated through lack of access to computing technology and the Internet. Basic computing science education does not depend on access to computers (Bell, Witten, & Fellows, 2010), nor does one need a Wi-Fi-enabled device to grasp some of the sociopolitical, cultural, ethical, ecological, hermeneutic, and existential implications of today’s new medial, ubiquitous computing environment.

This chapter addresses three intersecting curricula concerning digital technology: the integrated information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum, the (absent) curriculum of computing science, and the hidden curriculum of digital technology. All three curricula emanate from and represent distinct responses to the digital revolution; all
three have tentacles that extend deep into the root structure of almost every subject matter in schools today. However, teachers and educational researchers have tended to treat digital technology in schools as a single, unambiguous curricular concern. The tri-partition offered here corrects this popular but erroneous conflation and instead presents a way to think this subject matter across at least three distinct but interrelated modes of understanding and practice: using, creating, and becoming integrated with digital technology. At stake in this separation is the meaningful place of schooling in the coming decades.

**Contexts of Digital Technology as Curriculum**

A brief overview of the history of educational technology is helpful in discerning key moments in the evolution of digital technology, most especially those marking the onset and recess of different curricular impulses in schools. Beginning in the early 20th century, a variety of mechanical devices were proposed to automate multiple-choice testing in schools. In the 1920s, Sydney L. Pressey developed the first drill-and-practice “teaching machine,” a device later cited by B. F. Skinner (1958) as landmark because it required a student’s active involvement, gave immediate feedback, and was self-paced. Skinner’s radical behaviorism, coupled with the arrival of early computers, securely established the programmed instruction movement in the 1950s. During this time, Skinner built his own teaching machine prototype; Gordon Pask and Robin MacKinnon Wood invented the first typing training system (Self Adaptive Keyboard Instructor—SAKI); and in 1959, Donald Bitzer established the PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations) computer-based educational system. PLATO originally ran on an ILLIAC I mainframe computer at the University of Illinois and was networked with schools through terminals. Besides offering a wide range of computer-assisted instructional modules or “lessons,” over the coming years the PLATO system also experimented with many concepts familiar to us today, including online testing, online forums, email, instant messaging (“Term-Talk” with emoticons), chat rooms (“Talkomatic”), remote screen sharing (“monitor mode”), and even multiplayer role-playing games.

The PLATO system was a bellwether for the massive growth about to unfold in educational computing. In the early 1960s, for example, IBM experimented with computer-based instructional systems and an authoring language called Coursewriter. University researchers began to develop and test computer-assisted instruction (CAI) and computer-based training modules for a wide range of subject areas and across many educational settings. By 1963, an estimated 1% of secondary schools in the United States were employing computers for some instructional purpose (Molnar, 1990). With the availability of affordable personal computing in the mid-1970s, schools began to adopt microcomputers in earnest. Teachers, often limited to one or two microcomputers per school, employed them primarily for individual CAI, that is, prepackaged drill-and-practice programs and tutorials, but some teachers also used the computers for engaging students in Logo and BASIC programming. MIT’s Seymour Papert’s (1980) *Mindstorms: Children, Computers, and Powerful Ideas* gained a foothold through this decade, arguing for the use of graphic-oriented programming languages like Logo as a way to develop children’s thinking and problem-solving skills. Papert’s constructionist learning theory, which built on the theory of constructivism, famously received the blessing of his mentor, Jean Piaget.

But by the mid-1990s, the grassroots constructionist movement was eclipsed by a different kind of “computer literacy” that had been gathering under the rubric of an integrated ICT curriculum and was reinforced by David Jonassen’s (1996) constructivist notion of digital technology as cognitive or “mind-tools.” Designing algorithms to solve problems and learning the grammars of software code were replaced by knowledge construction across the curriculum via office productivity software tools. Technology integration became the new buzzword in curriculum design; computing science and its esoteric languages were relegated to LEGO robotics clubs (a remnant of Papert’s work) and occasional specialty courses in high schools. This pivotal moment is marked by the confluence of several important developments in mainstream computing technology: The explosion of the personal computing market stabilized productivity software (word processing,
PowerPoint, and spreadsheets were now taken-for-granted tools; web browsers arrived to ease searching online; and the Internet’s capillaries extended into businesses, schools, and homes at an astonishing rate. Between 1997 and 2000, the number of Internet users worldwide tripled. Unsurprisingly, the online education or e-learning movement also took off during this period. In 1994, for example, the first accredited online high school, CompuHigh, was founded. Web-based learning management systems like WebCT (now Blackboard) were being adopted by postsecondary institutions, a trend that would soon make its way into K–12 schools.

At the turn of the 21st century, Marc Prensky (2001) declared the arrival of a generation of digital natives in schools. Claiming that “students today are all ‘native speakers’ of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet” (p. 1), Prensky’s potent rhetoric dealt a decisive blow to the question of teaching computing science in schools. If the young could already speak the “digital language of computers,” there should be no need for computing science education. In larger society, the dramatic loss of Internet sector jobs in the aftermath of the dot-com bubble bust sealed public perception that computing science as a career had a limited future. Unfortunately, the net generation did not in fact know the “language” of computers at all, but were merely growing up using computing technologies (Selwyn, 2009). An analogy is helpful here: Most of us grew up with electricity and thus know how to use an electrical outlet and a light switch; however, this practical understanding by no means equips us to grasp electricity as a physical phenomenon (electrical charge, direct and alternating current, electromagnetic fields), nor to comprehend electrical circuitry and wiring, etc. Without a modicum of schooling regarding the modern domestication of light and energy, we would remain blithely ignorant of one of the core infrastructures supporting today’s society. So it is with digital technologies and the presumption that a child grows up speaking the “language of computers.” Students of today’s integrated ICT curriculum are urged to use digital technologies—a task made easy and “transparent” by the human–computer interaction designers and developers of software and hardware, but those same students are seldom encouraged to understand these technologies in their computational tongues, that is, the many algorithmic languages of the machine.

Over the last decade, schools have witnessed an intense proliferation of mobile technologies, social media, and online instructional resources. Teachers and students have been discovering previously unimagined benefits from using these new media technologies for teaching and learning. Simultaneously, they are grappling with unexpected challenges and new worries such as cyberbullying, videogame addiction, online paper mills, and copy-and-paste plagiarism. Today, the digital technology curricular landscape is complex, fluid, and highly diverse: from learning analytics to virtual laboratories; from e-learning to massive open online courses; from serious games to gamification; from open content to cloud computing. Indeed, the balance of this chapter could be spent listing the new technologies, their manifold curricular implications, as well as the intensification of teaching and learning practices. Yet, as of 2014, no states or provinces in North America require a computing science course as a condition of graduation. This scene may be changing dramatically over the next decade. Meanwhile, digital technology’s hidden curriculum—the programmed software and hardware infrastructure—is withdrawing ever deeper into the prereflective spheres of our everyday teaching and learning practices. The coded algorithms that so few of us can read or write are silently infecting, undoing, and profoundly restructuring curricular interests, activities, and ways of knowing across all subject matters.

Contemporary Concerns About Digital Technology as Curriculum

In the following section, the three interconnected but vitally different aspects of digital technology curriculum are explicated: (a) the integrated ICT curriculum—using digital technology; (b) the absent computing science curriculum—creating digital technology; and (c) digital technology’s hidden curriculum—becoming integrated (with the governing structures of code). The first two curricular concerns were situated historically in the previous section. The third concern has developed primarily outside of educational technology scholarship, which will be addressed in the following section.
The Integrated ICT Curriculum: Using Digital Technology

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), a U.S.-based organization founded in 1998, has been instrumental in providing curriculum standards for technology integration worldwide. The original 2000 ISTE National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers included developing one’s technology skills; designing learning experiences with technology; implementing curriculum plans that include technology to “maximize student learning”; applying technology to facilitate assessment; using technology to enhance professional productivity; and modeling ethical practices with technology. ISTE updated its teacher standards significantly in 2008, primarily clarifying that “technology” refers to digital tools and virtual environments, and that “digital age teaching” involves “facilitating and inspiring student learning and creativity” with these tools. Notably, the term technology integration has shifted to technology infusion in ISTE’s recent documents, signaling an even more finely woven vision of digital technology use across the curriculum.

The idea of integrating or infusing computing technology into school curriculum actually dates back at least 30 years (Winner & Holloway, 1983); however, at the close of the 1980s, only three scholarly articles had been published on the topic.2 A decade later, nearly 100 had been published, many reporting research on government funding initiatives aimed at fostering the use of technology in K–12 public schools via hardware and software purchases, systemic integrative program changes across the curriculum, as well as pre- and in-service teacher technology training. In the professional literature, technology integration was—and continues to be—portrayed as intimately linked to 21st-century teaching: “The teacher of the future must be not only accomplished in instructional techniques and technology, but also in the integration of technology into the curriculum,” where technology integration was described then as “using software supported by the business world for real-world applications so students learn to use computers flexibly, purposefully and creatively . . . [and] organizing the goals of curriculum and technology into a coordinated, harmonious whole” (Dockstader, 1999, p. 73). Since the year 2000, the number of technology integration curriculum articles in the scholarly literature has increased by nearly 10-fold; technology integration in schools now embraces a seemingly endless range of digital technologies.

The same year Prensky proclaimed the arrival of the digital native, Larry Cuban (2001) published Oversold and Underused, where he detailed dramatic discrepancies between the huge fiscal investments in digital technologies in schools relative to the minimal academic gains being reported. Educational technology integrationists offered two main retorts: (a) Cuban is right, and teachers simply need to do a better job of integrating technology in the curriculum, and (b) current academic assessment techniques do not appropriately measure the true gains afforded by digital technology in schools. Other objections to ICT integration were also mounted, including Colleen Cordes and Edward Miller’s (2000) Fool’s Gold: A Critical Look at Computers in Childhood. Fool’s Gold questioned the widespread adoption of computing technology especially in elementary schools, arguing that an overemphasis on computers in childhood posed a variety of developmental risks—social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and moral.

The Absent Computing Science Curriculum: Creating Digital Technology

While First World nation schools have been diligently integrating ICT across the curriculum, the subject matter of computing science has been ironically neglected, often conflated with using computing technology and thus naively overlooked. The language of computing and computational thinking still remains the province of specialists, rather than addressed as “the fundamental new literacy” for the future (Wilson, 2013, p. 32). Few of us know how to read or write the coded algorithms—the software and hardware programs—that quietly script our daily lives; even fewer have a working grasp of the theoretical underpinnings of this 20th-century science that has transformed our society and inaugurated the age of the posthuman.

Computing science is a knowledge discipline with its own history, its own theoretical base, its own specialty areas, and its own set of cutting-edge problems that it grapples with. Computing science’s basic principles and logical grammars are grasplable by young children. As described earlier, there was a brief moment in the 1980s where computer literacy
in the schools was equated with developing the skills of computing science and computational thinking.

Following the ACM publication of Running on Empty: The Failure to Teach K–12 Computer Science in the Digital Age (2010), multiple U.S. organizations including Code.org, the Computer Science Teachers Association, and Computing in the Core gathered to advocate for K–12 computing science education at the national level. In 2011, ISTE added computing science to its list of standards, stating that, “while most people use technology, it is the computer scientists who create and design it” (italics in original). Then in June 2013, bipartisan legislation—the Computer Science Education Act—was introduced in the U.S. Congress, in an effort to encourage major K–12 curriculum change across the states. This bill was introduced on June 27, 2013, in a session of Congress, but was not enacted.

In January 2012, The Royal Society of the United Kingdom released Shut Down or Restart? The Way Forward for Computing in UK Schools. Subsequently, the UK Department of Education announced the withdrawal of its integrated ICT curriculum in preparation for a September 2014 roll-out of its new computing curriculum. This comprehensive, four-stage program begins with primary students (ages 5–7) learning about algorithms and creating and debugging simple programs and concludes in adolescence with further “developing and applying analytic, problem-solving, design, and computational thinking skills” (Department for Education, 2013, para. 8).

Digital Technology’s Hidden Curriculum: Becoming Integrated

Digital technology is sponsoring new epistemological and ontological regimes, “an increasingly complex geography of encoding [that] is evolving with its own emergent performative outcomes . . . [and] silently shaping our present and future possibilities of becoming” (Introna, 2011, p. 114). This evolving “geography of encoding” is digital technology’s hidden curriculum. The curriculum of the digital is a deeply programmed, invisible infrastructure that reaches into and infects the corporeal, relational, temporal, and spatial niches of our prepredicative experiences and primal practices.

The relationship we share with our technologies is co-constitutive. As we grasp hold of these powerful new technologies, they too take hold of us. Each time we adopt and integrate a new digital technology, we invite and then submit our practices to be guided, supported, and finally empowered by its responsive programs and scripts. Here, technology becomes unseen curriculum and teacher (Adams, 2012). In the performative and prosthetic context of human–technology relationships, previous gestural regimes and habits of thinking are toppled in order to make way for new ways of doing and thinking. Too, as we integrate digital technologies more and more thoroughly into teaching and learning practices, they necessarily withdraw into the prereflective sphere of the ready-to-hand, taken-for-granted lifeworld. This disappearance of the digital into the immediacy of practice tends to elide teachers’ professional responsibility to question the technologies they adopt. Instead, digital technology is dismissed as neutral (“it’s just a tool”), thereby covering over its participation in co-constituting particular teaching and learning situations, and in inaugurating new ontological and epistemological frameworks.

More radically, Bernard Stiegler (2010) has suggested that our educational institutions are being destabilized by and synchronized with the current “mnemotechnical” infrastructure—a global complex of memory and information technologies. He argues that the “programming industries” are engaged in collapsing of our prereflective umbilical to local space (cardinality) and time (calendarity) and resituating our attentional structure—consciousness—in a synthetic, deeply programmed substratum. Such a collapse affects both directly and deleteriously the traditional mandate of schools to educate and develop orthographic, critical consciousness. Stiegler (2011) predicted that the outcome of our submergence in this digital psychotechno-pharmakon, a complex global system designed to anticipate and thus control our acting and thinking patterns, will be the loss of individuation, a “dissolve into a globalized, impersonal One” (p. 5), and ultimately profound existential suffering or quasi-inexistence.

Theory of Digital Technology as Curriculum

Multiple frameworks, associated with several epistemological perspectives, have been proposed to
Actor-network theory (ANT), a more radical constructivist approach than AT, frames social activity and knowledge construction in terms of heterogeneous assemblages of humans and nonhumans. ANT is relatively new to curriculum inquiry, but is becoming increasingly popular in theorizing 21st-century sociomaterial or “posthuman” learning environments. Too, the current explosion of social media, cloud computing, and massive open online environments has brought renewed interest in social constructivism and other social theories such as Albert Bandura’s social learning theory. George Siemens in 2005 proposed connectivism as a new approach here, although some have argued it is does not represent a substantially new theory.

Critical theorists like Michael Apple (1991) have pointed out that it is naïve to perceive digital technologies in classrooms as “just an assemblage of machines and their accompanying software. [Each new technology] embodies a form of thinking that orients a person to approach the world in a particular way” (p. 75). In Let Them Eat Data, Chet Bowers (2000) examined educational computing and its individualist, constructivist narrative and argued that both are serving to reinforce patterns of thinking that undermine local cultural and environmental commons.

Media ecology, with roots in the work of Marshall McLuhan, Walter Ong, and Neil Postman, implicates technologies in the creation of new forms of culture and has maintained an ongoing interest in the relationship of technology, media (the environment that technologies create), and schooling. While McLuhan is most famous for his media theory (“the medium is the message”), he wrote about pedagogy and media education throughout his career. For example, City as Classroom: Understanding Language and Media (1977), cowritten with Kathryn Hutchon and McLuhan’s son Eric McLuhan, was intended as a high school text to engage students with the taken-for-granted world around them and to equip them with analytic tools to understand the broader significances of their new media environment. For McLuhan and McLuhan,

The ground of any technology or artifact is both the situation that gives rise to it and the whole environment (medium) of services and disservices that bring it into play. These environmental side-effects impose themselves willy-nilly as a new form of culture. (1988, p. 5)
For media ecologists, technology is the petri-dish in which a culture grows, silently shaping political impulses, social organizations, and habits of thinking.

Educational philosophers such as Michael Bonnett, Nicholas Burbules, and more recently Anna Kouppanou and Joris Vlieghe have drawn on phenomenology, postphenomenology, and philosophy of technology to grapple with the possible significances and implications of technology integration in schools. Most rely on Heidegger’s early observation that today’s computing technologies are both symptoms of and complicit in setting in motion a new ontotheological order or technological understanding of being, wherein the world, and all things in it including ourselves, increasingly shows up to us as a “standing-reserve” or resources that can be liquefied for efficient ends. Finally, cultural studies, via the work of such theorists as Donna Haraway, has given rise to the posthuman and eroded the once taken-for-granted borders between nature and culture, animal and human, human and machine. Such epistemological disturbances have ushered in considerations of cyberpedagogy and cyborg curriculum (Gough, 2003; Weaver, 2010).

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression**

Science grew up in modernity, but computing science and the digital belong to postmodernity. There is thus little surprise that the forms of inquiry into digital technology across the curriculum are multiple, hybrid, and fluid. Denis Hlynka and John C. Belland’s (1991) prescient collection, *Paradigms Regained: The Uses of Illuminative, Semiotic, and Post-Modern Criticism as Modes of Inquiry in Educational Technology*, provided early hint of the varied methodological frameworks and novel heuristics necessary to articulate and critically address the questions concerning technology across curriculum studies.

Today, an expanded range of quantitative and qualitative forms of inquiry and interpretive modes of expression inform the field, for example, David G. Smith’s (2014) hermeneutics of globalization, Norm Friesen’s (2011) phenomenology of technology, and John A. Weaver’s (2010) posthuman discourse. Emerging and intersecting interdisciplinary approaches include critical digital ethnography and arts-based research, as well as place-based, wisdom, and eco-pedagogies. At this juncture, it is clear that curricular theorists must situate their many curricular questions concerning digital technology across broad, critical, and multiperspectival approaches in order to “draw on a wide range of textual and critical strategies to interpret, criticize, and deconstruct” (Kellner, 1995, p. 98) digital technology and its unexpected but increasingly central place in curriculum studies.

**Conclusion: Need for Continuous Questioning**

Weaver (2010) wrote recently, “What is lacking in curriculum conversations is technology” (p. 143), and gestured toward the posthuman. Our humanity is, was, and always will be thoroughly intertwined with and inseparable from our technologies. A quarter of a century ago, computer scientist Mark Weiser (1991) predicted the arrival of “ubiquitous computing or embodied virtuality” (p. 94) whereby digital technologies would become as commonplace and “ready-to-hand” as alphabetic writing, that is, our first information technology. The three R’s—reading, writing, and arithmetic—decided the skills-oriented program of traditional schooling and initiated a child into orthographic (and historical) consciousness, a state of being we call literate: “Only one who writes lines can think logically, calculate, criticize, pursue knowledge, philosophize—and conduct himself appropriately. Before that, one turned in circles” (Flusser, 2011, p. 7). Citing Heidegger, Weiser (1991) importantly noted that “the most profound technologies are those that disappear. They weave themselves into the fabric of everyday life until they are indistinguishable from it” (p. 94).

The ICT curriculum and widespread technology integration in schools have been instrumental in weaving digital technologies into the fabric of subject matter, to the point where it is virtually impossible to imagine teaching and learning without them. In this way, the technologies of computing are increasingly informing, conforming, as well as transforming knowledge forms and practices, that is, the representation and presentation of subject matters. Software is increasingly “everyware” (Kitchin & Dodge, 2011, p. 217). Just as the technology of writing served to shift oral culture to literate culture, computing
technology is shifting literate culture to digital culture. In our current situation, “the human becomes either the machine’s servant or its assembler” (Stiegler, 1998, p. 23). Such potent binaries name permeable, fluid, and complex boundary conditions and ethical challenges that need to provoke educators and curriculum scholars toward further questioning and exploration, not to either/or problem solving and calculation.

Since the turn of the millennium, significant practical, theoretical, and research interest has been devoted to the design, implementation, and study of the ICT curriculum. Meanwhile, two other related but distinctly different curricula have been overlooked or conflated with the ICT curriculum: computing science education, and the hidden curriculum of digital technology. In order to grasp the larger significances of the digital in today’s educational landscapes, curriculum scholars must begin to take into account all three curricula. Such a tripartite view will provide a clearer vantage for discerning the place of schooling in the lives of tomorrow’s posthuman children.

Notes

1. The term computing science is used in this chapter to denote the discipline known also as “computer science.” I prefer the former term in part because it serves to destabilize preconceived notions regarding what the field entails.

2. The number of scholarly articles reported here is based on a search of the ERIC database using the search terms technology integration and curriculum. The actual number of educational research articles on “technology integration” in schools is significantly higher.

References and Further Readings


11. Subject Matters of Digital Technology and Computing Science Curriculum • 95


I ntegrated, holistic, and core subject matters permeate the experience of a learner as she or he interacts with the world. Learning is not an exterior set of knowledge. Rather, it is a process by which the learner explores the self and the world. The curriculum is not organized around a preset linear progression based on academic disciplines. Rather, it evokes questions that are worthwhile for students to explore. Because of this, the curriculum emerges each time differently, based on specific learners, schools, communities, and/or events. Integrated, holistic, and core curriculum can be traced back to the educational philosophy of John Dewey (1897, 1916, 1938). Dewey (1931) warned that one of the greatest sources of educational confusion resides in the artificial and arbitrary categorizations of knowledge. He said that such categories are fine for encyclopedias but not for pedagogical or curricular purposes. Others who have built on Dewey’s idea of curriculum integrated around the holistic core of personal and social concerns include L. Thomas Hopkins (1937, 1954), Boyd Bode (1938), Carter G. Woodson (1933), Caroline Pratt (1948), Harold Albery (1947), James Beane (1993, 1997), Herb Kohl (1967), John Holt (1964), and Brian Schultz (2008).

Over the years, and with the recent introduction of the Common Core State Standards, the term core curriculum has often been used to refer to a basic required set of courses or knowledge and skills (Schubert, 1986, p. 236). A required core curriculum stems from questions about what knowledge and values are necessary. However, such a required core does not necessarily involve students in asking or answering these questions. This differs significantly from a historical lineage of “real core” curricula (term from Faunce & Bossing, 1951; see Kridel, 2010, p. 144). An important aspect of real core is that students take up the questions that shape the curriculum: What knowledge or values are necessary to function in or as a society? Could a society exist or function without a core of knowledge and values? What are the advantages and disadvantages of a particular knowledge or value? How are societal values passed on? What is an individual’s place in a democratic society? What are the big problems facing society? What are possible solutions?

The term integrated curriculum is sometimes used to describe an interdisciplinary curriculum that unites two or more traditional academic disciplines or subdisciplines, sometimes under a theme (Schubert & Lopez-Schubert, 1980, p. 68). Such use, however,
leaves out the heart of real integrated curricula: the act of integrating—the mutual adjustment of learner and environment (Hopkins, 1937, p. 8). Integrating curricula explores the questions: How are personal and societal values related? How do a continuously changing self and world affect one another? What is necessary to empower this continuous adjustment? (Beane, 1993, 1997)

Holistic learning is sometimes used as another term to describe teaching the “whole child,” an approach that goes beyond a learner’s interaction with academic content. Holistic curricula, similar to integrating curricula and real core curricula, emphasize a balance and interaction between the personal and social, and there is an added emphasis on spirituality. Holistic educators might look toward a transcendent spirituality that connects an individual’s “inner or higher self to this unity” of the universe (Miller, 1988, p. 20; see also Miller, 1997, p. 106). Holistic curriculum involves the questions: How can one achieve unity in a fractured and disjointed world? How can one find meaning in life? How is spirituality learned?

While integrated, holistic, and core curricula do have differences in focus and lineage, in this chapter, living core is used as an umbrella term to refer to them as a group. Living core is quite different from a contemporary usage of “core” curriculum to mean a base set of required standards (such as the Common Core). Living core is derived from and with the concerns, needs, and involvement of the students, whereas the Common Core has already been designed for them by authoritative others without student participation in formulating the purposes. In living core, students see purposes and learning experiences as relevant to their lives; however, in Common Core, they too often do not see the connections of studies to building their lives.

Contemporary Concerns

Who am I? Who are we? Where did we come from? Where do I belong? How did this happen? What can I do? What can we do?

Such questions are repeatedly asked, explored, and tentatively answered throughout one’s life. In fact, many world events can be seen as attempts by social groups (or individuals) to answer these questions. As Beane (1993) pointed out, caring is both a personal concern as friendship and a social concern as social welfare (p. 41). Living core looks to these recurrent concerns and actions that constitute living a life—large and small, singular and social, contemporary and historical. Living core curriculum taps into the larger living curriculum that already exists. People are already asking, who am I (for example), and living core aids in the exploration of such a question. To begin an inquiry, one can look at today’s news, yesterday’s diary entry, or the tool that one uses for writing. If one slows down enough to look at the daily mysteries that are often overlooked, an avalanche of intrigue presents itself: Why do I breathe? How do I see color? How can sound travel invisibly? What happens when I go to sleep? Why do we speak this language? Why do people argue? How do you make glass? Any one of these questions could be the beginning of an inquiry that could be explored for lifetimes. The distinction of living core is that it actually takes up such inquiry and pushes it further, looking for deep concerns and intersections.

Because living core occurs within the immediate life of the learner, the learner enters a deliberative mode where they try to determine what is the best course of action out of what’s possible (Schwab, 1970). Learning is a means by which to address and deliberate on the pressing question of how to live.

Context

Since the creation of the “common school,” a central question has been what should students learn in common (i.e., the required core). For Horace Mann, “the function of the school is to build into the coming generation a common set of beliefs and attitudes” (Karrier in Miller, 1997, p. 32). The selection of a required curriculum mandates knowledge, and subsequently a public. A required curriculum creates a common ethos. A living core curriculum encourages learners to shape that common.

And yet, in an Orwellian twist, the Common Core (required core) Standards exist largely devoid of the explicitly described inquiry into cultural values that are the legacy of living core curriculum as Smith,
Stanley, and Shores (1957) characterize it. Conspicuously absent from the Common Core’s (2010) stated goals of being “college and career ready” are living core notions of citizenship and personal meaning. It is as if, instead, mandatory comparison structures built into schools are enough to ensure each student sees his or her options as essentially contained. It is as if a uniform standard is set not to ensure equality, but to justify inequality—to see one’s “proper place” (Woodson, 1933/1992, p. xiii). Indeed, it is precisely the fact that cultural values such as competition portend to be invisible, existing as structure rather than content, that indicates the depth to which they are embedded (Smith et al., 1957, p. 12). The host of standardized tests and accountability measures enacted by policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act and Race to the Top grant program effectively replaces questions as to what it is that American students “need” with a more empirical mandate to get higher test scores in math and reading. Authors of the Common Core claim that it is not a curriculum at all; rather, it only specifies “required achievements.” Accordingly, “Teachers are thus free to provide students with whatever tools and knowledge their professional judgment and experience identify as most helpful for meeting the goals set out in the Standards” (Common Core, 2010). In this way, the question of the purpose of schooling is bypassed. The “results,” the goals of education (an important aspect of curriculum inquiry; Short, 1991), are once again removed from democratic discussion as “already decided.”

Nevertheless, everything is not “already decided.” A living core curriculum reopens questions that have been “answered” by someone else by involving learners in the direction of their own learning. In living core curricula, the process of deciding what and how to learn is considered an essential part of learning. An emerging living core allows for repurposing, for the changing of goals and questions as the inquiry progresses and the general and specific inform one another. For example, after the only African American learner, Reggie, in Gregory Michie’s (1999) class was attacked by a Chicago police officer, students met with a lawyer and the Chicago Police Department’s Office of Professional Standards, alerted the media, circulated a petition, wrote letters to the mayor and the state’s attorney, and held a demonstration in a show of support for Reggie and to demand justice be done (Michie, 1999, pp. 145–162). Or, in an example from Schultz (2008), students from the Cabrini-Green housing project in Chicago decided, after listing the things wrong with their school, that what was really needed was a new school altogether. Schultz’s fifth-grade class then organized a publicity campaign designed to pressurize Chicago Public Schools into building a new school. In living core curricula, students act in the world on issues that affect them. A two-way connection is built between personal and societal actions. The contemporary context of a learner’s life is a beginning point and organizing center of living core curricula. It is this immediate, authentic aspect of living core that provides a motivation for learning absent in canned curricula: The learner needs to learn in order to address their concerns now. Learning is not in preparation for “real life,” college, or a career, but something that affects living life now (Dewey, 1897, 1916, 1938).

**Theory**

Perhaps integrating, holistic, and core curricula attempt to overcome the division originally mounted by creating a separate space (the school) for “education.” Dewey (1933) himself suggested that in Utopia, there would be no schools. (For an extensive discussion of this Utopia, see Schubert, 2009.) Further subdivision within the schools into disciplines and subdisciplines, along with other divisions such as grade levels, classes, grade-level standards, textbooks, pacing guides, and even scripted lessons, can combine to create canned lessons that are deployed to students. In contrast, living core seeks to create a democratic curriculum of, by, and for students that addresses concerns that are important to them (Dewey, 1938, p. 29; Schubert & Lopez-Schubert, 1980). This is not to say that disciplinary structures, standards, or textbooks are not used; rather, these are used as frames and resources in the service of an emergent exploration of selected concerns.

Living core curricula involves learners in organic exploration of topics where the learning outcomes, scope, and sequence are not predetermined, but rather emerge out of the current inquiry (Alberty, 1947; Hopkins, 1937). Such inquiry need not involve a school, institution, or teacher. Viewed broadly, self- or group-directed reflective inquiry and action around
a significant concern constitutes a living core curriculum. An activist group might investigate solitary confinement in prisons, centering around questions such as what is just, what is humane. An artist group might explore movement through experiments in various media, centering on questions such as what is time, what is life. A group of students might inquire into the local knowledge of the community, centering around questions like, Where do I come from? What do my community members know and value?

Living core curriculum takes the form of combining personal and social, self and world, general and specific (Schubert, 1986). Such a focus hopes to make the learner more conscious and conscientious. Beane (1993) proposed some of the skills learned during such an inquiry are: reflective thinking, critical ethics, problem solving, valuing, self-concepting, social action, and searching for completeness and meaning (pp. 40–41). Living core curriculum focuses on the intersection of the personal and social; however, historically, there has been some distinction between the child-centered and social reconstructionist lineages (see Bode, 1938; Dewey, 1938).

**Personal**

Tracing back to Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Friedrich Froebel, child-centered advocates often describe the life and personality of the child as “unfolding” (Krogh, 1990, p. 33). Over the years, various descriptors have been used to describe curricula that begin with the child: project-based, activity, personal integration, holistic, whole child, child-centered. Some child-centered advocates see society as something that gets in the way of unfettered individual freedom; therefore, the educator’s role is to protect the learner from the repressive forces of society in order to allow self-exploration and “natural” growth. The self is seen as singular, predefined, and inherently good.

However, such a purist approach overlooks the effects of the world on the self. L. Thomas Hopkins (1937) contended that the self is learned: “The self is not inherited but is built into the individual as a part of the process of interacting in the social culture” (p. 12). Likewise, following Michel Foucault, Hammerberg (2004) argued,

The techniques used to govern oneself in the learning environment are internalized in such a way that they are described as a part of a private self, as opposed to a part of the system. However, the constitution of one’s seemingly personal thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and actions must be understood as socially prepared and organized. (p. 375)

A living core curriculum must be careful to keep in mind the many structures that delimit individual, group, and world. Actions should not be taken to stem from a “true self.” The possible subjectivities and actions change based on the dynamics of the specific situation. What sort of “self” is taken up here is different from the sort taken up there. A thoughtful curriculum will acknowledge and explore the forces that simultaneously enable and constrain possible subjectivities.

**Social**

Living core continues much of Dewey’s (1897, 1916, 1931, 1933, 1938) thought, which understands education as a way to remake society as well as the person. Over the years, various descriptors have been used to describe curricula that begin with the social or world: problem-based, experience, social integration, authentic, critical. Society is in flux, and living core emphasizes this flux as something that can be influenced. Living core can be seen as an attempt to practice democracy, using means that match the ends (Alberty, 1947, p. 43). Smith et al. (1957) explicitly stated that common education transmits cultural values. Inquiry into this cultural core is a basis of living core. From Harold Rugg (1936) to Paulo Freire (1970), such an inquiry asks which and whose cultural values are handed on, and how. To the degree learners and teachers are unconscious of the values embedded in learning, they are uncritically transmitting and reinforcing those values. All school-based curricula can be analyzed for their site- and learner-specific functions as they interface with the multitude of curricula that exist both beyond and within the school (Cremin, 1975, p. 33).

Even though living core attempts to allow self-critique, the power and responsibility of the teacher to direct the questions and shape the inquiry amounts to an implicit required core. Living core curriculum necessarily has underlying values that are transmitted. No curriculum exists in a power vacuum. To select is necessary and unavoidable. This selection privileges
some knowledge and values over others. This selection is done in the context of power relations among individuals and social groups. To the degree that living core assumes (creates) the grounds of a commons within which a position may be taken, limitations exist (Ellsworth, 1997, p. 93). To the degree that living core requires participation, the message of that requirement is one of power: “A participant, or else” (p. 105). The effective required curriculum then, the one a teacher should attempt to open for student critique, is that which students can’t help but learn.

A self-reflective approach to living core focuses on the creation, definition, and connections between the personal and social. Learner disintegration is seen as something to be valued rather than overcome. Students may refuse frameworks through active “ignore-ances” and other forms of resistance or persistence (Ellsworth, 1997, p. 57). The students enact multiple identities despite demands for unity (integration) of a singular self and singular world. The students themselves are actors who resist, select, and modify both in the real world beyond the classroom and in the real world within it. A contemporary living core practitioner must not only engage students in personal and social inquiry but also pursue such inquiry himself or herself. Such a philosophy is evident when teacher Avi Lessing said, “Working on myself as a human being and working on my teaching are not separate events. To me, we can only know our work to the extent that we know ourselves” (in Ayers & Ayers, 2011, p. 55). His class takes up issues such as race, gender, loss, and love as they “play out in the room,” with the expectation that honesty and discomfort will lead to self-discovery (pp. 53–55). A thoughtful living core curriculum must attempt to be self-conscious of its mandates and limits, open to critique, and accepting of a multitude of strands that may disagree with one another.

The salient aspect for contemporary explorations extending these traditions is that both the personal and the social are not merely predefined or static. There is an important emphasis on the interaction of the personal and the social, as well as the self and the world. Over the years, various descriptors have been used to describe curricula that emphasize this interaction: organismic, integrating, emerging. Dewey was careful to maintain this middle ground in his many works on education.

### Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression

One of the most well-known inquiries into living core curricula is the Eight-Year Study, which found that “the more experimental the school, the greater the degree of success in college” (Chamberlin, Chamberlin, Drought, & Scott in Smith et al., 1957, p. 416). The Eight-Year Study used measures beyond improved academic content knowledge and instead attempted to get a picture of the overall impact in the learner as a whole. Researchers of living core often use qualitative or mixed-methods approaches, where one can see the teachers and learners, not just the teacher or the scores. A broad range of methods can be taken up by researcher and learner alike from documentary, ethnographic, and autoethnographic (ethnographic writing focused on the researcher), to narrative and arts-based. Further alignment with the theory of living core can be accomplished through methods that take the intersection of the self and the world, and the researcher and the subject, as one that is in process and in flux, where it is understood that the researcher is part of the process that creates descriptions of self and world, self-referentially acknowledging the location of the researcher–learner and the impossibility of an “objective” description of the world (St. Pierre, 2011).

First-person accounts by teachers or learners are an important means of describing a living core exploration. Kohl’s (1967) book, 36 Children, is representative of a genre discussing both the contextual disintegration (disunity) of schooling and possible living core enactments that would overcome the personal–social rifts. June Jordan’s (1985) college class’s exploration of Black English and the police murder of a classmate’s brother offer another well-known example.

Because living core curricula often involve authentic action beyond the school walls and the students are involved as researchers, it is usually the case that the group produces its own expressions of inquiries. For example, Foxfire Magazine was created in 1966 by students to publicly share the knowledge of their Appalachian community’s knowledge and traditions. Students interview their elders about topics ranging from moonshining to faith healing; production continues to this day (Wigginton, 1972).
Living core curriculum inquiry need not involve formal expression through writing (or even students who are old enough to write). Play can be its own inquiry and expression. Learners might create their own houses and community, as Meredith Smith proved in 1921 that her first-grade class did. Projects involving whole-hearted learner engagement in an activity are also a way to inquire and express, as Kilpatrick (1918) advocated.

While there is a historical lineage of school-based curriculum theorists, to limit living core to the domain of school and scholars is to make the same error that living core attempts to overcome: arbitrary division of life and learning. Taken more broadly then, any in-depth inquiry that focuses on self and world could be described as a living core curriculum. For example, an autobiographical and/or activist project may be seen as a description of real core to the degree that it is taken up as an open-ended inquiry, as when Frederick Douglass (1845) vividly described the process whereby learning and living interact with one another in his life.

**Conclusion**

Integrated, holistic, and core curricula differ markedly from dominant forms of curriculum designed by educators for students; they are co-created by educators and students based upon lived interests and concerns of students. A central feature of integrated, holistic, and core curricula is that they evolve as students work with their teachers to continuously reconstruct their understanding of and relationship with the world. Students learn that all areas of knowledge and experience have potential value to enhance their reflection, decision, and action; thus, they perceive connections between studying and creating their lives. This act of living the curriculum may occur in schools or outside of them (e.g., Hopkins, 1954). Lived curriculum is not written in advance, because it is only known as it emerges. Each instance of the living of integrated, holistic, or core curriculum is a seedbed for cultivation of subsequent instances and lifelong learning that ensues.

**References and Further Readings**


Currere is a paradigm shift in the way we think about educational experience. Currere offers a method to examine the inner life in relation to the larger society in order to deepen learning and understanding. *Currere* is the Latin root of the word *curriculum*. In this sense, *curriculum* does not mean the syllabus, the course, the textbook, or the objectives of learning. Curriculum “reconceptualized” (Pinar, 1974/2006) as currere points to the running of the course. The phrase “the running” is a metaphor for lived experience. Currere is about exploring lived experience as it is related to deep understanding of education. William F. Pinar and Madeleine R. Grumet (1976/2006) in their important text *Toward a Poor Curriculum* (which was originally published in the 1970s) “reconceptualized” the notion of curriculum by exploring the Latin root of the word *curriculum* as *currere*.

This chapter explores currere as a method of doing autobiography. First, I unpack various theories of autobiography in the context of currere. I then look at how currere has opened the door to a wide variety of types of autobiographies. Finally, I discuss how various types of autobiographies are expressed in the field of curriculum studies. I argue that policy makers have damaged public education via mandates of standardized testing and other policies, including those promoted by the No Child Left Behind Act and Race to the Top grant program. I urge policy makers to think differently about what might provide more meaningful learning experiences for students. I urge students to study the notion of currere in order to think more about what their lives mean in the context of education. If students have the opportunity to explore their own experiences in relation to a larger educational context, perhaps students would be more interested in school because school would be more interesting and meaningful.

**Currere**

In his essay titled “Self and Others,” Pinar (1974/2006) argued that

> curriculum reconceptualized is currere; it is not the course to be run, or the artifacts employed in the running of the course; it is the running of the course. The course most broadly is our lives, in schools and out, and the running, is our experience of our lives. (p. 18)

Currere—as the examination of our lived experiences—is a way to explore our interiority, our inner lives in the context of education and in the context of our relations with others and the larger society. The self cannot be understood in a vacuum but only in the context of the world around us. As we learn about others we learn about ourselves; as we learn about ourselves we learn about others. It is important to note that Pinar suggests that education can happen outside the formal structures of the school. In her essay titled “Psychoanalytic Foundations,” Grumet...
by working regressively, progressively, analytically, synthetically, one begins to reclaim oneself from intellectual and cultural conditioning. It is work to initiate a dialectical (rather than passive) relation to scholarly work, to oneself, to the world. (p. 108)

Thus, scholarly work is always already in relation to interiority and with others. Scholarship is not done in a vacuum but in dialectic relation with the political. Thus, Pinar emphasized that currere is both a study of the subjective and the social; it is both about the self and the political.

Pinar (1979/1994) wrote about the dialectical in the context of currere in another way. Here he stated, This method, as [sic] its most basic, represents a call for the cultivation of an internal dialectic. It is a call to examine one’s response to a text, a response to an idea, response to a colleague, in ways which invite depth understanding and transformation of that response. (p. 119)

This “internal dialectic” concerns one’s “response” to texts and to others. Currere as a method is also about the ways in which we move through the world via response to others and the ways in which we respond to our own interiorities. Currere allows us to arrive at a deeper understanding—as Pinar so eloquently puts it—of the educative experience. This depth comes from our interactions with others. Self-study always already includes relations with others and this sets up a dialectic. The self is never studied in isolation although, as Pinar points out, understanding at its deepest level must come from within.

To avoid the dangers of solipsism, Pinar suggests that one looks within in order to respond—with a deeper understanding—to the lived experience of the other.

Pinar (2004) continued to couch his insights in a dialectic as he claims: “The method of currere is not a matter of psychic survival, but one of subjective risk and social reconstruction, the achievement of selfhood and society in the age to come” (p. 4). It becomes imperative that we deconstruct Pinar’s words with care as he points out that currere again always involves the double movement of self and society, of the personal and the political, of “subjective risk and social reconstruction.” Here Pinar has suggested that currere means taking “risks” in order to understand interiority but that is not all. He went
on to emphasize that once one begins to look within, one must also work to change the political and psychosocial landscape. Students of currere know that it is imperative—as educational workers—to change society for the better. Currere is not simply navel gazing. Pinar (2011) continued his discussion of currere in his later work and broadened it to include the importance of history and culture as he stated,

Expanding, then, my initial emphasis from individual existential experience to the intersubjective engagement that can occur through complicated conversation, currere incorporates questions of history, society, and culture as they are personified in individual lives, passionately expressed in public service. (p. 149)

The notion of “complicated conversation” was first introduced in the 1995 book Understanding Curriculum, which Pinar co-wrote with Peter Taubman, Patrick Slattery, and William Reynolds. Currere is, at root, this complicated conversation. A conversation suggests that at least two persons are involved in understanding the world around us and our psychic worlds. Currere also includes “history, society, and culture” as understood by the individual in the context of his or her “public service.” The individual must be engaged in the world in order to make changes to that world. Pinar pointed to the ongoing dialectic between self and other, interiority and culture, history and subjectivity, psychic awareness and politics. To do public service means engaging in politics. It is imperative that one has to understand the context of that service against the larger backdrop of history and culture. It is interesting to note that Grumet (1976/2006)—in Toward a Poor Curriculum—pointed out that “currere does not seek to resolve . . . these opposites. Rather it identifies their tension as the source of energy” (pp. 112–113). Thus, the dialectic “tensions” of currere do not “resolve.” This is what makes currere a “complicated conversation” (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995). In that dialectic tension, as Grumet (1976/2006) pointed out, is “energy” (pp. 112–113). Henceforth, the dialectical tension between the different movements of currere—the regressive, progressive, analytic, and synthetic movements—is its source of “energy.” The self is fluid and moves back and forth between these movements, and the question of the self is never “resolved,” as Grumet suggested. The notion of currere as a complicated conversation means that the self is indeed aporetic (inclined to doubt); that is, one always must doubt any particular understanding of the self, because of the fluidity of the self. This aporetic movement is necessary for self-understanding. Further, understanding is always partial. Problems arise, however, if one gets stuck psychically in any of these movements. This Pinar (1976/1994) called psychic “arrest” (p. 61). To avoid psychic arrest, one must be watchful to keep the self fluid and continue to have complicated conversations about the past, present, and future as these are all interrelated pieces of our lives. We are to continually have complicated conversations not only with others but also within ourselves. Pinar (2011) returned to the notion of complicated conversation in relation to currere as he stated,

The running of the course—currere—occurs through conversation, not only classroom discourse, but also dialogue among specific students and teachers and within oneself in solitude. Because the running of the course occurs socially and subjectively through academic study, the concept of currere foregrounds the meaning of curriculum as complicated conversation encouraging educational experience. (pp. 1–2)

It is important to note that complicated conversation—in relation to currere—happens when we engage in “academic study.” Pinar emphasized this central tenet of currere especially in his later work (2011, 2012). In the second edition of What Is Curriculum Theory? (2012), Pinar said:

Put in another way, the method of currere seeks to understand the contribution academic studies makes to one’s understanding of one’s life (and vice versa), and how both are imbricated in society, politics, and culture. (p. 45)

Those who advocate for the standardized testing movement seem not to see the connection between what one studies and one’s interiority. There seems to be a disconnect between the student and what he or she studies. Standardized knowledge—whatever that means—is supposed to make students better workers for a capitalist, neoliberal world. But when students are focused on learning material to pass tests, they do not have the opportunity to explore what learning means to them or how learning changes them. The idea behind the standardized testing movement is that the knowledge one gains when memorizing disconnected facts does not have to have anything to do with the students’ lived experience. In
fact, the students’ lived experience is irrelevant. This is why many students do not like school and are uninterested in learning. If students study things that are relevant to their lives, they might like school better and might be interested in becoming erudite. What is exciting about what Pinar (2011) proposed is that academic knowledge should have everything to do with “self-formation” (p. 75) and that study and political activity helps students to change the world into which they are thrown.

Many policy makers have ignored the writings on currere for decades and instead have focused on standards and assessments. It would behoove policy makers to consult curriculum theorists in order to better understand what has gone wrong with public schooling, especially since Sputnik when curriculum theorists and teachers lost control of the curriculum as states began to adopt more detailed standards. Pinar (2012) discussed John Dewey’s concern over the threat of authoritarianism in schools, referencing Richard Hofstadter’s 1963 work Anti-Intellectualism in American Life:

For Dewey, according to Hofstadter (and as Hetherington and Weiler [2009, p. 49] point out), what is at stake is nothing less than democracy itself, as democracy becomes an impossibility in the face of mass conformist education characterized by, in Hofstadter’s words, an “authoritarian” pedagogy. Converting public schools into cram schools institutionalizes just such authoritarianism; in doing so, school reform threatens social democracy in America. (p. 3)

Policy makers have turned American public schools into dictatorial spaces where students “cram” for the next standardized test that has little to do with their own lives. This is a form of conformism, as Pinar suggests. Policy makers should consult curriculum theorists and examine major shifts and trends in the academic knowledge about schooling and what it means to be an educated person in the 21st century. We live in very complicated times, especially in view of terrorism, AIDS, tsunamis, political corruption, and nuclear proliferation. How are we educating our children to live in a world such as this? What standardized exams have to do with a world in utter chaos? Currere again is a major paradigm shift in education that allows students to not only explore their inner worlds but also explore and change the world around them. Standardized testing does not prepare young people for the world they are about to enter.

### Theories of Autobiography

Erika Hasebe-Ludt, Cynthia Chambers, and Carl Leggo (2009) claimed that “if curriculum is currere, then autobiography is the theorizing of currere” (p. 31). In order to better understand the notion of currere, we must examine various theories of autobiography since currere is an “autobiographic method” (Pinar, 2004, p. 4). Autobiography can change one’s view of the world, and it can change the ways in which the self relates to others in the world. Autobiography can change our relationships with each other because we understand relations differently. William Schubert (1986) stated:

Based on the sharing of autobiographical accounts with others who strive for similar understanding, the curriculum becomes a reconceiving of one’s perspective on life (Grumet, 1980). It also becomes a social process whereby individuals come to greater understanding of themselves, others, and the world through mutual reconceptualization. (p. 33)

Perspectives are not easily changed. However, thinking autobiographically helps to change perspectives, as Schubert pointed out. In a sense, one has to understand the self before understanding the other. But a key way to understand the self is through studying others, that is, through reading autobiographies. When writing autobiographies, the self does indeed change perspectives. Sigmund Freud suggested that in order to understand psychic problems one has to write out those problems to come to a better understanding of who one is and what one wants to become. Freud also called for the talking cure—talking through problems of self can change perspectives and help heal psychic wounds. The healing of psychic wounds can happen as a result of writing autobiographies. Joe Kincheloe and Pinar (1991) suggested that “autobiography can confront the meaning of a given world, reject it, reformulate it, and reconstruct it with a social vision that is authentically the individual’s” (p. 21). If one lives in an oppressive environment, one does need to “confront” that environment. This is an oppositional stance that must be taken in the face of oppression. Confronting the world might also result in changing that world. And the point of understanding one’s life and the world into which one is thrown is to change the world for the better. As was mentioned earlier, there is nothing solipsistic about autobiography. Thinking
more autobiographically, writing autobiographies or studying autobiographies means that one is always already in relation to the other. Some write autobiographies in order to help others or to change others while changing the self. Change involves movement. Indeed, Pinar (2004) pointed out that “my work in curriculum theory has emphasized the significance of subjectivity [or thinking autobiographically] to teaching, to study, to the process of education. The significance of subjectivity is not a solipsistic retreat from the public sphere” (p. 4). Some would like to drive a wedge between the private (thinking autobiographically) and the public (changing the world), but there is no wedge between the private and the public. What is private becomes public through the writing of autobiographies.

Pinar (2004) emphasized that autobiography is also political. Janet Miller (2005) stated:

Drawn to autobiography conceptualized as a form of political work, especially because of my growing affiliation with feminist concerns in education, I struggled to figure out how I might variously voice contributions to the “complicated conversation” that now constitutes contemporary curriculum studies. (p. 2)

Miller echoed the feminist mantra that the personal is the political. But many do not see it this way. In fact, Pinar et al. (1995) pointed out that many political scholars in curriculum studies, especially in the 1970s, claimed that autobiography was not about politics and critiqued it for being irrelevant to curriculum research and study. Miller (2005) responded to this by saying that she is “disturbed by the ways in which such work sometimes is dismissed as ‘soft,’ ‘idiosyncratic,’ ‘under-theorized,’ . . . even ‘narcissistic’” (p. 89). It is not only political scholars who tend to dismiss autobiography as a serious form of research but also—as Pinar et al. (1995) pointed out—quantitative researchers who dismiss autobiography as a method of study and research. Pinar et al. (1995) stated: “The earliest formulations of autobiography were linked with disputes with politically oriented scholars . . . and quantitative researchers” against which it is still being defended (p. 516).

Even today, more conservative educationists feel that autobiography as a research method is problematic because it is not really “real” research. What is real are numbers, statistics, graphs, and so forth. But again autobiography is more than someone simply telling their story. Susan Edgerton (1991) pointed out that autobiography is connected to many pressing issues:

Autobiographical writing enables students to study themselves. Such study links self to place, and place is simultaneously historical, cultural, and racial. . . . Via another’s life one understands more fully one’s own, as well as social and historical ties that link both lives to a particular place. (p. 78)

Edgerton complicated the notion of autobiography by connecting it to the pressing concerns of history, culture, race, and place. In the context of race and place, Kincheloe and Pinar (1991) reminded us of the autobiography of Richard Wright—called Black Boy. This book is a powerful and stunning historical account of an African American man’s struggle with the Jim Crow South. Kincheloe and Pinar (1991) said that “Wright is certainly aware of the tragedy of his Mississippi place and hates and hurts because of it” (p. 7). The reader cannot help but be stunned by the visceral descriptions of hate and cruelty Wright had to withstand living in the South. We learn much about history and the cruelties of history, especially in the South, by reading this book. The reader can be changed by studying this stunning and disturbing autobiography.

Types of Autobiography

Pinar (1994) pointed out that when autobiography and currere—as a method of doing autobiography—were introduced in curriculum studies many scholars did not take them seriously. By the 1990s, though, things had changed. Pinar told us that currere spawned a variety of ways of doing autobiography, and autobiography became a popular way of writing about educational experience. Currere—as a method of doing autobiography—opened the door for many educational scholars to write about autobiography in their own way. Pinar (2004) pointed out:

At least four major projects employing autobiography in some form are underway on the North American continent: F. Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin’s work on “personal practical knowledge,” William Schubert and William Ayers’ “teacher lore” and “student lore” projects, Richard Butt and Danielle Raymond’s elaboration of collaborative autobiography, and Margo Figgins exciting theatrical work. (p. 2)
Recall that the first book in the field to address autobiography by Pinar and Grumet (Toward a Poor Curriculum) was written in the 1970s. It took almost 20 years for others in curriculum studies to see the relevance of this kind of work. Without the notion of currere—as put forth by Pinar and Grumet—these other forms of autobiography would not have arrived on the scene. Pinar and Grumet opened an entirely new avenue of scholarship.

Miller (2005) acknowledged the work of Connelly and Clandinin—who do what is called narrative inquiry:

Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin have provided a discussion of methodological issues involved in narrative inquiry as well as “an overview of narrative storytelling approaches . . . to help locate narrative in an historical intellectual context.” (pp. 93–94)

The story of the self is always already webbed inside of an historical context. Stories of the self are also stories of history. The self does not live in a vacuum. Self is always in relation to the larger world. Connelly and Clandinin emphasize the practical value of storytelling and narrative inquiry. Pinar, on the other hand, emphasized the theoretical value of autobiography through the method of currere. Of course one cannot separate the practical from the theoretical, but different theorists emphasize different aspects of autobiography.

Another educationist who is involved in a form of autobiography is Ivor Goodson. Goodson did what he calls life history. Goodson (1998) explained:

In the life history, the intention is to understand the patterns of social relations, interactions, and constructions in which lives are embedded. The life history pushes the question of whether private issues are also public matters. The life story individualizes and personalizes; the life history contextualizes and politicizes. (p. 11)

Goodson argued that life history is, in fact, broader than autobiography because autobiography does not forefront the context into which a life is thrown. Autobiography for Goodson, then, is too narrow a term to capture the ways in which the individual is thrown into a larger world. However, Pinar—throughout his work—suggested that autobiography is always already political, historical, and contextual. Pinar’s method of currere is what separates his work from Goodson more than anything else. But again if it weren’t for currere and intellectual work done on currere since the 1970s, Goodson’s work might have evolved in different ways.

**Autobiographies in the Field**

A younger generation of curriculum scholars has taken up the challenge of writing autobiographies. Here we will only mention a few of these so that students of autobiography can study these texts in more depth on their own. This serves as a guide only and not a detailed analysis of these books because that is beyond the scope of this chapter. Mary Aswell Doll, in her work titled To the Lighthouse and Back: Writings on Teaching and Living (1995), a feminist autobiography, used depth psychology as her theoretical framework. Ming Fang He, in her work A River Forever Flowing: Cross-Cultural Lives and Identities in the Multicultural Landscape (2003), a multicultural autobiography, used narrative inquiry as her theoretical and methodological framework to explore her cross-cultural struggles before, during, and after the Cultural Revolution in China. Rita Ugena Whitlock in her autobiography This Corner of Canaan: Curriculum Studies of Place and the Reconstruction of the South (2007) wrote through the theoretical framework called queer theory while also emphasizing the importance of place. Brian Casemore, in his work titled The Autobiographical Demand of Place: Curriculum Inquiry in the American South (2008), wrote by examining whiteness, race, and White male privilege through the lens of psychoanalytic theory. Laura M. Jewett, in her book titled A Delicate Dance: Autoethnography, Curriculum, and the Semblance of Intimacy (2008), used autoethnography as her theoretical framework to examine zydeco dancing, race, and aesthetics. My 2008 book, Teaching Through the Ill Body: A Spiritual and Aesthetic Approach to Pedagogy and Illness, was an autobiography written through the lenses of psychoanalytic theory and medical humanities. I also wrote a 2009 autobiography titled On Not Being Able to Play: Scholars, Musicians and the Crisis of Psyche, which examines my life story through the theoretical frames of psychoanalytic theory and aesthetics. There are many more autobiographies being written today—too many to mention here—but one can see that this genre is alive and well in curriculum studies.
In sum, in this chapter, I have addressed currere as a method of doing autobiography, theories of autobiography, and types of autobiographies. I have introduced our readers to recent autobiographies that have been written in curriculum studies. I argued early on in this chapter that currere as a method of doing autobiography is a paradigm shift in the ways scholars view educational experience. I argued also that students would find school a much more worthwhile and meaningful project if they were allowed to explore their own lives in relation to academic knowledge. Further I argued that policy makers could learn much about education by studying the groundbreaking work done in currere and autobiography.

References and Further Readings


Using narrative and autobiography in multicultural education has increasingly drawn attention in teacher education (Guillory, 2012; Li, 2007; Wang & Olson, 2009) and is a form of inquiry engaged by scholars and activists from diverse backgrounds. Such a form of inquiry captures the complexity of lived experience and the nuances of multicultural life (Phillion, He, & Connelly, 2005), cultivates critical self-understanding, engages radical self-making as a social justice project (Taliaferro-Baszile, 2010), and encourages critical, self-reflexive practices for decolonizing education (Asher, 2005). The necessity that personal transformation and social transformation go hand in hand for both mainstream students (Howard, 2006) and minority students (Nieto & Bode, 2008) is also acknowledged. “Going within oneself” is part of the indigenous tradition of storywork, the first phase of teacher preparation for teaching through storytelling (Archibald, 2008). In short, working through their inner landscapes, prospective and practicing teachers can fundamentally challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions about what it means to be a teacher in a multicultural society and generate alternative educational possibilities for a sustainably mutual sharing of a public and planetary life.

This chapter focuses on a particular form of multicultural autobiography that one way or another involves currere in the making. Currere is a process-oriented and autobiographically informed curriculum (Pinar, 1975, 2004; Pinar & Grumet, 1976), structured as four steps (regressive, progressive, analytic, and synthetical), which guides students in teacher education to make connections between their life histories and their commitments as educators. It is a moving form of curriculum that unites content with method to achieve a deeper understanding of educational experience in its political, social, and psychic dimensions and to transform one’s psychosocial condition by taking oneself as data and seeing things in new ways. When the focus of self-reflexive and critical understanding is multicultural diversity issues, defined in a broad, multiple, and intersectional way to include race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, and language (among other layers), multicultural currere reveals the complex, lived reality of social difference and promises to move students out of their comfort zones for critically and respectfully engaging others and other worlds (Wang, 2010).

Multicultural currere as subject matter asks both teacher educators and teachers to examine their own subjectivity as beings from a particular race, gender,
and class; to unlearn social norms that play the role of exclusion; and to resituate their commitment to the work of social justice. Transforming teachers’ personal and professional identities lies at the heart of transforming teachers’ educational relationships with students, communities, and society at large. Traditionally, the site of currere is subjectivity, although situated in history, place, society, and culture, and the primary concern of multicultural education is to change unequal and unjust social and cultural structures and institutions, although each person is expected to unlearn internalized oppression. Multicultural currere adopts double lenses of personal transformation and structural change, which complement each other’s strength and avoid either the self-centered tendency of individual stories or the abstraction of social categories that subsumes the specificity of individual life.

Multicultural currere also requires interaction between autobiographical narratives and multicultural theories for students to reach new awareness. Allowing new perspectives to emerge from stories to inform theory and using social justice theories to reexamine narratives can form a dynamic interplay between theory and practice, which leads to in-depth and contextualized understandings, meaningful emotional work, and committed social action. In addition, multicultural currere as subject matter asks curriculum and educational researchers to understand their own subjective and intersubjective journey as they engage in multicultural research (Grant, 1999; Ng-A-Fook, 2006). Situated at the tensioned intersection between the personal and the cultural in education, multicultural currere challenges the dualism between individual and society and creates leading-edge pathways in social justice education.

Multicultural autobiography has various forms, but currere has a particular mode of temporality to encourage the nonlinear flow of time within and across the past and the envisioned future, as well as facilitate students’ reentry into the present with a new consciousness, which makes multicultural currere unique among other forms. By integrating life history and multicultural understanding, students learn to embrace social differences through embracing differences within the self (Wang, 2010). The primary site considered here is teacher education because currere in its origin was designed for adults who could independently engage in critical reflection.

Multicultural education is distinct from cross-cultural or global education. Multicultural education is necessarily related to cross-cultural education because of the history of colonization, migration, and immigration. For instance, U.S. third-world feminism, a strand of feminism involving women of color distinct from the prevailing White feminism (see Mohanty, 2003; Sandoval, 2000), from its birth has had a complex relationship with global decolonization movements and feminism, which sits both within and outside U.S. borders. Cross-cultural narrative curriculum inquiries (e.g., He, 2003; Li, 2002) also demonstrate how cross-cultural work can address race/ethnicity, class, and gender in more complicated and broader ways. However, as James A. Banks (2008) pointed out, despite some of the shared aims between global education and multicultural education, “global education can hinder teaching about ethnic and cultural diversity in the United States” (p. 42) because some teachers are more comfortable teaching about another country than teaching about what happens within the United States. The history, concept, and dynamics of cross-cultural education intersect with but also differ from multicultural education; these intersections and differences are not fully discussed in this chapter.

**Contemporary Concerns**

With the rapid growth of minority student populations in U.S. schools, the ability of a predominately White, female teaching force to connect to students across cultural differences has become a growing concern. While professional development and workshops in multicultural diversity issues have been offered at schools and sometime mandated for teachers, this training usually focuses on content areas and testing-oriented methods and has hardly addressed the needs of White teachers who are challenged more than ever to become multicultural educators. As Sonia Nieto and Patty Bode (2008) pointed out, to become a multicultural educator, a teacher must become a multicultural person who is open to learning from other cultures, confronts racism and biases from within, and is able to see reality from multiple perspectives. Such a process of reeducation for teachers means “not only learning new things but also unlearning some of the old” (p. 425), emphasis
PART I. SUBJECT MATTER AS CURRICULUM

in the original). White teachers must understand their own assumptions, perspectives, and subjectivity and challenge existing biases and stereotypes, especially those related to cultural diversity, in order to build the groundwork for making connections with a diverse student body. As Gary Howard’s (2006) autobiographical narrations and James Jupp’s (2013) life history studies of White male teachers demonstrate, White teachers become educators committed to social justice through a journey of learning and unlearning. It is also important to point out that the emphasis on the current gap between the White teacher force and the diverse student body does not assume that minority teachers are automatically better equipped to teach in diverse settings, because growing up in a White society, they also need to unlearn internalized assumptions to claim their own sense of the self (Prevette, 2009).

Multicultural currere offers a unique opportunity for such a process of unlearning and relearning for both White teachers and minority teachers. In its combination of critical lens and autobiographical lens, multicultural currere helps students understand the power dynamics of contemporary American society through their own lived experiences so that their questioning of the existing injustice at school and in society comes from encountering difference through dialoguing with themselves and with others. The emotional and spiritual dimensions of storytelling are enhanced by critical, self-reflexive class conversations to open up personal and collective spaces for radical curriculum making toward democratization of both self and society. To create multicultural schools, teachers, administrators, and staff must all journey internally to empty out presumptions in order to construct nonviolent relationships with students, parents, and communities.

With the introduction of multicultural education in teacher education, pre-service and in-service teachers’ resistance toward learning difficult knowledge, especially knowledge related to racism and White privilege, has been noted for more than a decade (Wang & Olson, 2009). Discussions at only theoretical levels have not effectively addressed students’ emotional dissonance, but multicultural currere provides a space for students to grapple with the difficult issues of race, class, and gender both at the emotional and the intellectual level.Currere pays particular attention to the emotional component of the inner landscape, and in its method, the emotional description of the past, future, and present is essential to the four steps. It addresses difficult emotions to release students into movement beyond where they have been stuck. Working through emotions of guilt, shame, fear, and anger to enable compassionate relationships is important not only for White students but also for all students, and it cannot be accomplished only by emphasizing the importance of empathy. Moreover, multicultural currere encourages students to trace the sources of their assumptions back to family, school, community, and the larger society to understand how their cultural identities are socially and culturally constructed. In this way, they can situate their own individual lives in a broader context and understand structural and systematic injustice with its profound impact, visible or invisible, on individual lives while at the same time claiming their own agency to proactively teach against the grain in their own work.

Multicultural education has been under critique from both conservative and radical approaches. One of the critiques from its sympathizers is that multiculturalism implies cultural identity as a static, separate, and essentialized entity. Such an essentialism has been challenged by postcolonial theory (Asher, 2005; Chilisa, 2012), poststructural feminist theory (Miller, 2005), and womanist thinking (Phillips, 2006). It is important to acknowledge that cultural identity is fluid, dynamic, in between (He & Ross, 2012), and complicated (Edgerton, 1996) and cannot be objectified into a fixed image. In today’s education, the complexity of cultural diversity requires us to understand the importance of intercultural space that blends or integrates different cultural identities not only at the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, and language but also within one layer of identity. According to U.S. Census projections, the population from multiracial backgrounds will triple from 2012 to 2060 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012), and more and more people have identified themselves as multiracial, which makes a singular racial identifier problematic. Multicultural currere does not portray cultural identities as separate entities but as interactive and embodied, dwelling in differences to generate new possibilities (see students’ own writings in Wang & Olson, 2009), so it positions multicultural education away from simplistic identity politics and toward meeting the challenge of a multiracial, multiethnic, and multilingual society.
14. Multicultural Currere as Subject Matter

Children, they do not necessarily have multicultural awareness, understanding, and insights to achieve such a goal because their own education and upbringings hardly addressed such issues.

Historically, multicultural education originated in the civil rights movement of the 1960s and the 1970s when African Americans, Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and other minority groups protested the dominance of White culture and demanded political and educational equality. While the original focus was on race and ethnicity, low-income students and students whose native language was not English quickly surfaced as groups that were also educationally disadvantaged. Other social movements, such as the feminist and gay rights movements, drew public attention to other forms of discrimination and disadvantage. Gradually multicultural education has become a broad term to consider how factors of race, class, gender, sexuality, language, and disability (and their interactions) influence educational input, process, outcome, policy, and structure in order to challenge all forms of discrimination and pursue educational equity and social justice for all students (Banks, 2005; Nieto & Bode, 2008).

Currere came from the reconceptualization movement in the 1970s in the field of American curriculum studies, a movement from the exclusive focus on techniques and procedures with ahistorical and apolitical tendencies to autobiographical, historical, and political understandings of curriculum and education (Miller, 2005). Currere, formulated as a four-step process of understanding educational experience, contributed to such a move. Over the years, it has evolved to emphasize the fluidity, multiplicity, and uncertainty of the self due to the influence of poststructural theories (Miller, 2005; Pinar, 2004). Currere did not explicitly address racial diversity initially but has developed over the past several decades to discuss multiple diversity issues such as gender, race, and sexuality (Grumet, 2010; Pinar, 2004).

The multicultural and reconceptualization movements did not necessarily intersect at their origins, but their intersections have become a site for curriculum scholars’ and teacher educators’ critical engagement, leading to hybrid modes such as the currere of marginality informed by cultural studies (Edgerton, 1996), critical race currere (Taliaferro-Baszile, 2010), postcolonial feminist autobiography (Asher, 2005),

Context

The face of the United States is changing rapidly. In 2012, the non-Hispanic White population was 63%; the Hispanic population, 16.9%; the Black population, 13.1%; the Asian population, 5.1%; American Indians and Alaska Natives, 1.2%; and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, 0.2% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). According to 2012 U.S. Census projections, the nation is becoming increasingly diverse with the Hispanic population projected to increase to 38% in 2060, the Black population to 14.7%, and the Asian population to 8.2%. Furthermore, in 2043, the White population is projected to decrease to 43% and the non-White population is projected to increase to 57%; for the first time in this nation, the White population will fall below 50% and the minority population rise above 50% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

The student population reflects the trend of increasing diversity: In 1970, the student population was 79% non-Hispanic White, 14% Black, 6% Hispanic, and 1% Asian and Pacific Islander and other races (Center for Public Education, 2013). In 2008, the student population was 59% non-Hispanic White, 18% Hispanic, 15% Black, and 5% Asian; moreover, foreign-born students made up 7% of all students (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Of students aged 6 to 17 years, 20% spoke a language other than English at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). However, the teacher force is far from being linguistically, culturally, intellectually, and pedagogically prepared for such diversity. In the 2007–2008 school year, public school teachers were 83% White, 7% Hispanic, 7% Black, and 1% Asian, and in terms of gender ratio, 76% female (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). The high percentage of White teachers compared to the high percentage of multicultural students nationwide has been widely acknowledged in American education. Such demographic changes make a historical gap more visible between teachers and students, due to the lack of multicultural understanding on the part of teachers, which leads to cultural conflicts between the home and the school and between teachers and students (Banks, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1994). This gap poses a profound challenge to contemporary education and teacher education. While the majority of teachers have the best intention to educate all children, they do not necessarily have multicultural awareness, understanding, and insights to achieve such a goal because their own education and upbringings hardly addressed such issues.
and autobiography as a queer curriculum practice (Miller, 2005), based upon both appreciation and critique of each movement. The recognition that both the inner work and the outer work are necessary for teachers’ subjective and intersubjective transformation and social change, shared by contemporary developments in both movements, becomes an underlying thread of multicultural currere.

Such a merging of the inner and outer work goes along with the contemporary social, political, economic, and cultural changes in a complex postcolonial, multilingual, ecological, and postmodern world. Subtle forms of social biases and discrimination allow people to use the rhetoric of equality without emptying out internalized messages, and these forms need to be challenged from within. Multicultural currere, which works simultaneously from both the inside and the outside of individuals, provides an opportunity for students to work though issues both internally and externally. Ironically, in an increasingly diverse society, public education has been under the burden of externally imposed standardization and accountability for at least 3 decades. Especially in such a difficult time, teacher educators need to embrace the possibilities that are offered by multicultural currere to respond to the multicultural needs of schools and children and to carve out a space for students to become “multicultural persons” (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 425).

While considering the demographic, intellectual, and social contexts, teacher educators also need to consider the geographical context of local history, which is usually laced with particular forms of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and their intersections. Autobiographical understandings of place such as the South (Casemore, 2007; He & Ross, 2012) provide a productive site for unraveling the knots of race, gender, and social class. Economic globalization and the increasing gap between the rich and the poor in the United States also challenge multicultural educators to pay particular attention to how social class, nationality, race, and gender are intertwined with both the local and the global.

**Theory**

The theoretical foundations of currere are mainly phenomenology and psychoanalysis (along with existentialism, literary criticism, theatrical embodiment theory, and Zen Buddhism). Currere is the Latin root of the word *curriculum*, meaning “the running of the course” (Pinar & Grumet, 1976, p. 18). Reconceptualizing curriculum as a process of running the course shifted the focus from disciplines to the individual in exploring how education is experienced temporally and conceptually in order to go beyond past and social constraints. This process-oriented curriculum is composed of four steps: First, the regressive step is the free associative remembrance of the past. One works to excavate the present by focusing on past experiences, attending to both cognitive and emotional aspects. Second, the progressive step is the meditative pondering of the future. One works to uncover one’s aspirations in order to perceive where one wants to go. Third, the analytic step is to examine what one uncovers in the regressive and progressive steps in relation to one’s current biographic situation, devoted to both understanding and intuition. Fourth, the synthetical step is about getting things together and transforming one’s relationship with the present, renewed for higher levels of meaning and being (Pinar, 1975, pp. 21–27).

In such a biographical movement enabled by critical and rigorous reflection, fundamental life themes emerge for students. Free association as a self-understanding technique from psychoanalysis is evident in the first two steps and is used to free students’ minds from the present situation. Students are encouraged to go deeper to uncover what is obscured by everyday life to find their life interests and aspirations. The analytical and synthetical steps reflect the interpretive aspect of psychoanalysis and its interest in both the manifest and the latent and both the conscious and the unconscious. While currere does not attempt to alter personality structures, it offers students an opportunity to integrate themselves and claim agency for making (new) meanings (Pinar & Grumet, 1976). Moreover, the phenomenological emphasis on the lived experience and concepts of bracketing and temporality are demonstrated throughout the process. Time in currere works recursively rather than linearly, and the blending of different life historical periods in memory and vision often occurs to allow internal connections to emerge (Wang, 2010). Internal time as experienced and external time as chronological interact in both phenomenological reflection and psychoanalytic hermeneutics. At the
Multiculturalism in education first flourished in ethnic studies on college campuses in the 1960s and 1970s. Its purpose was to transform curriculum so that educational institutions reflected histories, experiences, and perspectives of ethnic groups; to eliminate discrimination; and to affirm the cultural identities of minority students. As it developed, multicultural education went beyond curriculum reform to influence educational process, structure, and policies. Now it involves all dimensions of education from curriculum to teaching, from school structure to community involvement, and from disciplinary policy to testing (Nieto & Bode, 2008). Multicultural theory has different orientations, including liberal multiculturalism that emphasizes individual equality and common humanity and advocates providing equal opportunity to minority students; pluralist multiculturalism that emphasizes racial or gendered differences as positive to form plural social groups; minority-centered multiculturalism such as Afrocentrism that emphasizes that curriculum and education should center on African American experiences in order to resist White domination; critical multiculturalism that emphasizes the need to address power structures and formulate modes of resistance to work against oppression and for social justice; and postcolonial and poststructural multiculturalism that emphasizes the fluidity of cultural identity and works to mobilize power relationships toward creating more space for democracy and social justice. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss all influential theories, but we can see that the underlying thread of multicultural theory is to question existing social, political, and cultural systems and structures that marginalize minority students and to advocate pedagogical and social action to promote cultural change and to create multicultural schools for all children to fully develop their potential.

Since currere and multicultural education are both concerned with identity and subjective formation, multicultural identity theory is particularly relevant here. Critical race theory, feminist theory, social class theory, cultural studies, queer theory, womanist theory, poststructural theory, and hybrid theories such as U.S. third-world feminism or poststructural feminist theory all have underlying assumptions of identity and contribute to multicultural currere as subject matter. The example of critical race currere is discussed here to illuminate how theories of multicultural currere are usually situated at the intersections of identity and subjective formation. Blending curriculum theory and critical race theory, working through autobiographical educational experiences as counterstorytelling against the official knowledge, Denise Taliaferro-Baszile (2010) proposed a critical race currere that highlights the educational significance of the Black, Latino, Asian, and Native autobiographical voices as ontoepistemological intervention. Asserting that critical race currere is a particular form of currere, Taliaferro-Baszile (2010) linked the politics of the individual in currere and the cultural politics of liberation to democratize the interior world and to unveil the subjugated knowledge.

Three aspects of critical race currere work at the intersections. First, the emphasis on the significance of race in critical race theory takes into consideration history and context as well as feelings and the unconscious. Taliaferro-Baszile (2010) acknowledged that race intersects with class, gender, sexuality, and other subjectivities, but highlights the role of race. The emphasis of currere, although not necessarily focusing on one particular identity layer, also highlights the work of the subconscious and the unconscious in subjective reformation as well as the role of life history and its social contexts. Second, “bracketing” in currere to let repressed knowledge emerge intersects with counterstorytelling in critical race theory to reveal what rationalistic academic knowledge hides so that Black or other minorities’ subjectivity can affirm its epistemological and ontological significance. Third, the focus of the individual self in currere and the primacy of the collective agency in critical race theory give way to critical race currere as “simultaneously private/public autobiographical...
excavation for the good of the self and the group in one signifying move” (Taliaferro-Baszile, 2010, p. 492). The African American self is necessarily relational and collective, similar to that of other minority groups such as Native Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans, so the work of critical race currere is to cultivate a radical Black intersubjectivity in which subjectivity is situated. In this third aspect, currere and critical race theory become complementary, while the first two aspects work more as intersections. Both knowing and being are racialized and radicalized in education for liberation in Taliaferro-Baszile’s (2010) formulation.

Working at intersections or combinations, multicultural currere theory is inherently in between, hybrid, and fluid, yet at the same time affirmative of students’ cultural identities against oppression and discrimination. The multicultural necessity of claiming minority students’ autobiographical voices and acknowledging the multiplicity, fluidity, and intersectionality of cultural identity are mutually enhancing and enriching.

Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression

Major forms of inquiry and modes of expression in multicultural currere are phenomenological inquiry, autobiographical narratives or fiction, personal journals, poetic expression, and critical inquiry. Some studies also combine multicultural currere with other forms of inquiry such as autoethnography, aesthetic inquiry, and narrative inquiry. For instance, Xin Li (2007) has designed a multicultural autobiographical curriculum, which combines currere, narrative inquiry, and James Banks’ (2001, 2005) six-stage typology of cultural identity development in a teacher education course. Furthermore, under the influence of poststructuralism, double texts or juxtaposition (Martin, 2009; Miller, 2005) are also used to visually and textually demonstrate the multiple, fluid, contradictory nature of subjectivity and intersubjective formation and reformation. For instance, Jill Voorhies Martin (2009) used a cinematic-autobiographical lens, which combines poetry, stories, currere writings, the double text of academic and narrative voices, and film analysis to perform the rebirth of the female self.

When a curriculum inquiry involves a marginalized group, it is necessary that the mode of inquiry respect the cultural perspective and methodology of that particular group. The methodological lens of the oppressed (Sandoval, 2000), postcolonial indigenous research that centers on relational ontology, epistemology, and axiology (Chilisa, 2012), and womanist thinking can inform multicultural currere to destabilize the boundary of the self and the other in social, cultural, and historical contexts. Teacher education students from different social positions have different relationships with various contexts; for example, while the majority of them have racial privilege, they are often disadvantaged in gender or social class, or both. So understanding the role of race, social class, and gender in their own lives is complicated for all students, and while currere serves as an important method for teacher education students to critically reflect on their lives, studies of postcolonial, indigenous, critical, and feminist theories in such an inquiry are also essential for them to achieve new awareness.

These diverse modes of inquiry can reach a broad audience and invite more participants to join in the shared effort to transform both the self and society and to create a better world. Multicultural currere as subject matter transforms teacher education programs, encourages teacher educators to educate pre-service and in-service teachers as whole persons, makes an impact on teachers’ identity and practice in social justice education, invites policy makers to redesign teachers’ professional development, and productively influences the educational contexts that provide fertile soil for transformative initiatives.

References and Further Readings


If we understand education as a journey toward self-understanding, then the critical and reoccurring question (perhaps in different forms) is who am I? The question can be answered in a superficial sense by stating one’s name, race, gender, religion, parentage, and then some. But to be consciously and willfully on a journey toward self-understanding would require that the question be engaged through deep and ongoing contemplation, the kind proposed by the method of currere (Pinar, 2004). In the field of curriculum theory, currere is often engaged as a way to think specifically about one’s own educational experience in the context of the historical, social, political, and cultural realities that give it meaning. It helps one explore how the academic subjects help in understanding one’s life and how life experiences help one understand academic knowledge (Pinar, 2004). To do currere is to move through and among four moments of critical self-reflection and internal dialogue. In short, currere asks that one (1) remember and reflect on her/his past educational experiences, (2) contemplate desires and fantasies of the future, (3) consider the impact of both the past and future on the shape of the present, and (4) synthesize thinking across these moments as a way to purposefully engage one’s learning in the present.

But what if, in the process of this complicated conversation within herself, the woman of color realizes her own absence; that is, her conversation is taking shape around ideas, concepts, and texts that emerge primarily from the male psyche, from the White psyche, from the White male psyche. How is her self-understanding and thus her sense of agency impacted when she cannot see herself or can only see herself through the eyes of her others?

Critical race/feminist currere is an autobiographical exploration guided by the question: Who am I as a non-White woman? Thus, it is a kind of currere inspired by the reality of one’s absence and a quest to make oneself subject. It seeks to understand how the dynamics of race, gender, class, and other important makers of self and the ways in which they intersect and are inflected in the perpetually evolving question—Who am I? She tries to grapple with that question in part by reading autobiographically; that is to bring a text into the fold of her internal conversation. For instance, when she reads Plato, Charles Darwin, Michel Foucault, or Karl Marx, she asks, Who are you? Where are you? Where am I? Who was I when you were writing? What has not been said? What is lurking in the shadows of your thinking? What other stories are happening alongside your story? How might we work together? Is that possible? To what extent? Or not? In essence, to read autobiographically means to read as if one is a co-producer of knowledge and not simply the consumer of someone else’s knowledge. Reading in this way sends her on a journey in search of the answers to these kinds of questions.

In her journeying, she realizes the importance of seeking insight from her co-subjects, from those who...
have shared the space of otherness with her. In critical race/feminist currere, the others who are invited into the conversation represent the voice/s that have been absent, ignored, misconstrued, distorted, repressed in the curriculum/s that shapes our lives—the curricula of schooling and media, in particular. What voices have been silenced in and through her educational experiences? What do the thinkers who are women of color say about this idea or that one? To them she might ask: What does it mean to be a person who is non-White and a woman? What kinds of gendered and raced politics, geographies, and cultural cancers border your/my “I” giving it definition and deep meaning while also robbing it of its full humanity? How has your/my relationship with the other been constituted? How did you persevere and how might I? How are you healing and how might I heal? What might our futures look like? How might I/we think, speak, and act for justice in my/our own voices? These are but a few of the questions begging for deep and critically conscious self-reflection; they are questions that seek to decolonize one’s mind; that is to “free” oneself from being utterly occupied by male-centered European/American conceptions of “lesser” people.

Critical race/feminist currere is compelled by a desire to both understand and to free oneself from the confines of oppressive ways of knowing and being. The practice of critical race/feminist currere is not committed to a search for universal Truth; it is not invested in feigning neutrality; it is not interested in objectification; it is not wed to hierarchical or binary ways of thinking. It is a process through which women of color, and perhaps other people too, can wrestle with the epistemological dimensions of domination; that is to say that projects of domination (in terms of race, gender, class, sexuality, and more) are most intractable when those who are being dominated cannot think, cannot imagine, cannot be outside of the ways of knowing, being, and doing that have brought about the situation of domination in the first place.

Because currere is essentially a meaning-making process, it is important for the reader to note that the description that follows is one that emerges from my experiences of doing currere as a Black woman in the United States, as such it grapples particularly with blackness and womanness. However, this does not mean that critical race/feminist currere holds no meaning or possibility for others. There are all kinds of possibilities to consider, and I try diligently to point the reader toward other avenues, alleys, and angles of vision. The reader might want to contemplate, for one, how my experiences frame my understanding, and how her or his experiences might shape her or his understanding in very different ways, and then consider how our different experiences of currere might talk with each other, and how might we co-theorize the possibilities?

Contemporary Concerns

How is justice possible in a richly diverse and complex world, if our conceptions of justice are deeply rooted in one group of people’s ways of knowing? How is it possible when those ways of knowing are also deeply implicated in structuring and maintaining oppressive relations of power? How might other people with other ways of knowing contribute to the conversation? How might they intervene on dominant perspectives and offer other conceptions of justice? How is this possible, when those other ways of knowing and being are understood as inferior? How is it possible when she believes the only way to be heard is to speak in the language of power, even when that power is abusive? How is it possible, as a woman or a person of color, to say anything, anything at all that is not mediated by the language of domination and still be heard? How might she enter the conversation in her own voice?

The contemporary concerns are deeply rooted in a long-standing and persistent problem—the dilemma of the colonized mind. Many scholars have long spoken to the psychological chains of colonization, slavery, and imperialism set into motion by European domination that was facilitated not simply by colonization and exploitation of land but essentially sustained through the long-term colonization of educational systems designed to keep the dominated believing in the superiority of European and male ways of knowing and being and the inferiority of others. Some classic reads along these lines include the following: Carter G. Woodson’s *Mis-Education of the Negro*, Harold Cruse’s *Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, Gayatri Spivak’s *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera*, and Patricia Hill Collins’s *Black Feminist Thought*. Each
of these authors addressed the complex dynamics of power, knowledge and difference, situating racism/sexsism as not simply a problem of resource allocation but more broadly as a problem of knowledge production, circulation, and validation.

Without question, all of these scholars explicitly or implicitly locate the problem in education, or more specifically how European or Western (to include the United States) ways of knowing the world inform and often restrict what and how we can know. While these scholars and others offer new ways of thinking about the dilemma in contemporary contexts where slavery and formal colonization, for example, no longer exist but linger in legacies of knowledge, critical race/feminist currere is interested in speaking to how one might undergo the process of decolonizing one’s mind, or delinking from dominant perspectives and their reinforcement of race and gender hierarchies. Once the woman of color recognizes that this is in fact a problem, and that she too is in its grip, that she too has been convinced that she is not as good as, as smart as, as worthy as her male and/or White peers, how shall she proceed?

Context

Imagine this: In a course about great American intellectuals, there is one man of color and no women of color out of the 20 intellectuals considered. What are the women of color in the course to think? What are they to conclude about the intellectual capacities of women of color? What are they to make of the fact that others failed to notice the absence? When a woman of color tries to write the experiences and struggles of like women into the curriculum through her choice of paper topics and extra reading, she is required to validate her argument with the work of the most important scholars, the White scholars, the male scholars, the White male scholars. Does she just chalk her silencing up to necessary academic ritual? What does she become when she can only speak in the language of her other, the language that has been instrumental in her own oppression? When she tries to articulate herself at the intersections of race and gender, she does not quite fit the male-dominated perspectives on racial struggle, nor does she quite fit neatly into the White middle-class feminist perspectives. What should she do? Submerge herself in one or the other? Or carve out a space where she can speak to both from the experience of having a personal stake in eradicating sexism and racism? What ideas, images, stereotypes belie her dilemma?

How do perpetually negative stereotypes of Blacks, Latinos/as, Asians, Native Americans, and women impact the psyches of girls and women of color? How do they impact the psyches of others? How do they facilitate and reinforce race and gender hierarchies? And how do those race and gender hierarchies lead to invisibility, silencing, and disregard? How do they arrest her sense of agency and potentially usurp her contributions to the project of justice for all?

Thinking critically about the reproduction of stereotypes is one way to begin the journey toward understanding how racism, sexism, and other relations of power are maintained largely by convincing people to know themselves as “othered,” as inferior to some other group or groups of people. In a society where we have been led to believe that blackness and womanness are not only decidedly less than but also the very opposite of whiteness and maleness, all people are deeply entangled in “spirit murder,” albeit to varying degrees and enacted in different ways. Spirit murder is the ongoing series of racist and/or sexist injuries (and other kinds of disregard) spurred by the constant and even violent disregard for one’s humanity, blocking the self from fully seeing itself (Williams, 1991). Negative images and ideas of blackness as dirty, lazy, uncivilized, irrational, criminal, anti-intellectual, and/or intellectually inferior have existed globally in various forms since before U.S. slavery and have continued into the present day in increasingly more subtle, but no less damaging, terms. Likewise, there are also gender stereotypes that depict women as overly emotional and not capable or not as capable as men physically, intellectually, and otherwise. The stereotypes that impact women of color often reflect an intermingling of the two, as racial stereotypes have historically been used to bolster gender stereotypes and vice versa (Harris-Perry, 2011; White, 2001).

Some of the images that have historically disfigured, for example, Black women in the American imagination include: the docile, overweight mammy who happily serves the needs of everyone but herself; the licentious jezebel who “asks” for whatever sexual mistreatment she might encounter; the angry
PART I. SUBJECT MATTER AS CURRICULUM

Black woman who emasculates Black men; and the tragic mulatto who is the confused offspring of interracial relations. Although these images are historical, several scholars have studied how they have been rearticulated in contemporary culture (i.e., welfare queen, video vixen, and the angry Black bitch) and continue to circulate through cultural discourses that affect a wide range of social, economic, and political realities for Black women and other women of color, including health care, social services, employment, and education (Browne, 1999; Hill Collins, 2004).

If these are the common and widely circulated images in a society where there are few if any positive or complex images of Black women in school curricula or media, what do we learn to think of her and what does she learn to think of herself? Can she think? Does she think? What does she think? How do the stereotypes of Latina, Asian, or Native women circulate in the public sphere, and what should we make of her absence in school curricula?

Theory

Critical race/feminist currere emerges at the intersections of three theoretical traditions: curriculum theory, critical race theory, and Black feminist theory. Curriculum theory is, in short, the study of educational experience and thus not only offers the opportunity for one to contemplate her experiences but also values self-understanding as a critical social justice project in and of itself. There are two major works in curriculum theory that are foundational for critical race/feminist currere. In *What Is Curriculum Theory?* Pinar (2004) reintroduced currere and speaks to its significance by arguing that it is not really possible to engage in a politics of justice without working to democratize oneself. While critics of curriculum theory might suggest that such strategy for living life democratically is too self-absorbed, others might just note that the only access the self has to understanding and advocating for and/or with others is through the self, and an unexamined self is a potentially dangerous self, as it inflicts harm with no realization of that fact. Importantly, Pinar also pointed out that this process of self-actualization is not simply a private self-focused affair, but rather “an ongoing project of self-understanding in which one becomes mobilized for engaged pedagogical action—as private-and-public intellectual—with others in the social reconstruction of the public sphere” (2004, p. 37). Although currere is conceptualized as an autobiographical method open to everyone, certainly how one engages the process of currere is likely to vary depending on one’s sociocultural context and one’s position in the relations of power that govern our world (i.e., race, gender, class, sexuality) and thus also in the knower/known relationship.

To this point, Susan Edgerton (1996) in *Translating the Curriculum* introduced currere of marginality, as she tries to capture the complexity of what it means to know from the perspective of a person who is part of a historically marginalized group. Edgerton surmises that knowing from the margins is inextricably linked to but distinct from knowing from the privileged space of the center. Those who dwell on the margins must know the cultural and social context of the center in a way that those who dwell at the center are not expected to know the context of the margins. To know from the margins is to confront a persistent double-bind, which reflects both the need to say something about who you are and what you mean and to simultaneously challenge the center’s attempts to define you: “I am this,” “Don’t label me as this” (Edgerton, 1996, pp. 48–49).

To better illuminate the significance of Edgerton’s point, consider, for instance, the nature of this dilemma in Patricia Hill Collins’s (1990) *Black Feminist Thought*. In this groundbreaking work, Hill Collins delved into the complexities of power, knowledge, and difference in her attempt to say something about how Black women’s ways of knowing are different than those ways of knowing considered legitimate in the mainstream. Yet in her effort to define Black women’s ways of knowing as distinct, she confronted the challenge of not essentializing the experiences of all Black women. In essence she needs to say something important about how the experiences of Black women matter and differ, but she must do so without assuming that all Black women’s experiences are the same. For some readers, she failed to do so and was aptly criticized for not considering the diversity of experiences among Black women and for reinforcing oppressive ideas while challenging them. For others, the significance of her work was in her ability to map other ways of knowing that, for the most part, were outside of and often in contestation with mainstream ways of
knowing. And still for others her dilemma was constituted more by the fact that she tried to capture a different reality in a language—rational argument—that can only be presented in and thus read as mapping essentialist notions. In any case, Hill Collins found herself in the inescapable double-bind noted by Edgerton (1996). Critical race/feminist currere is interested in the race/gender dynamics of this perpetual double-bind and as such adds to the currere of marginality by drawing on critical race and Black feminist theories (see Baszile, 2009, for an initial attempt at conceptualizing a critical race/gendered currere).

Critical race theory is concerned with interrogating and reconstructing the relationship among race, knowledge, and the law. At least it emerged in the 1980s within and as a concern with race and legal rationality. As it has migrated into and through other disciplines, it does not always stay true to its legal roots. Some scholars find this disturbing, not in the spirit of true critical race theory. Others might suggest that while it seems prudent to acknowledge the legal roots of critical race theory, it also seems that the spirit of critical race theory—as an interrogation of the relationships among race, knowledge, and power—need not be shackled to law, but must also recognize the power of culture to not only determine the law but also decide if, when, and how it chooses to represent and abide by the law, literally or in the spirit of.

To this end, critical race/feminist currere is most interested in looking at the relations among race, knowledge, power, and the self. A scholar in this vein might ask, how are these relations reproduced through a number of interlocking rationalities—legal, scientific, neoliberal, technological—that circulate in U.S./world culture/s and work to discipline our thinking and our behavior in racist, sexist, heterosexist, ablest, and other oppressive and undemocratic ways? In other words how do these rationalities—despite the worthy things achieved within their logics—work to make invisible, to silence, to create the conditions for disregard? There are a number of ideas and concepts generated or revived by critical race theory that are useful, if not crucial, to both the theorizing and the practice of critical race/feminist currere.

Critical race scholars embrace the centrality of race as a powerful and organizing social construct in our society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). They have interrogated and situated the concept of white property as the means by which citizenship has been conferred, respected, and enacted (Harris, 1993). They have encouraged us to look at the enduring racial patterns that continue to define what it means to live in the United States as marginalized people (Bell, 2005). They have embraced and reinvigorated the tradition of counterstorytelling, naming and thus validating the importance of the experiential knowledge of people of color (Delgado, 1989). Critical race feminist scholars, in particular, have given us the concept of intersectionality, or thinking about how race, gender, and other markers of difference work in coinciding and contradictory ways to shape our realities (Crenshaw, 1989). Without these insights, without a radical shaking up of her habits of mind about race and racism, without the opportunity to explore race—blackness in particular—within a complicated conversation significantly inhabited by the Black/non-White psyche, a woman of color in search of self-understanding is likely to be utterly unable to see herself beyond the racist or raceless rhetoric that denies her a voice, a self not completely occupied by the other.

Likewise Black feminist insight and testimonies are also foundational to any search for self-understanding among Black women and other women of color, as they offer not only examples of critical race/feminist currere but also important ideas, strategies, and concepts that illuminate the importance of making ourselves radical subjects, committed to anti-oppressive struggles. Critical race/feminist currere is first and foremost the cultivation of what bell hooks (1992) has called radical Black female subjectivity. Although Black women are disadvantaged by living in a society structured by racist, sexist, and other hierarchies of oppression, this does not have to damn them to a life of pain and arrested development. It could or should instead encourage them to willfully challenge the ways in which racist, sexist, and other oppressive dynamics work to silence and make invisible those who live life at the bottom of oppressive hierarchies. To do so however, it is necessary for them first to realize their own invisibility and then to embark on the journey toward making themselves subject and investing themselves in collective struggles against racist, sexist, and other forms of domination (hooks, 1992). Importantly, cultivating a radical
Black female subjectivity requires an engagement not only in collective struggle but also with the work and life stories of radicalized Black women (hooks, 1992). The testimonies of radicalized Black women are essential for the wisdom and affirmation they offer those who are cultivating, or are interested in cultivating, a radical subjectivity; it is in dialogue with these voices especially that the becoming radical Black female subject is prepared, fortified, inspired, and encouraged to stand publicly for justice. How might other feminists of color contribute to the internal dialogue? What might currere look like when it is nurtured by Chicana feminisms or African feminisms or queer theory or theories of Black masculinity?

We cannot be actively engaged in a process of self-actualization without asking from when, where, who, and how we became. This is the point of currere’s regressive moment, to remember the people, events, and moments of our educational lives that have marked our becoming in significant ways. Part of this process is about recalling the reachable past (childhood). The other part of the process is about trying to imagine the significance of the unreachable, but ever present past. Cynthia Dillard’s (2012) recent work on (re)membering is helpful for theorizing the nature and the significance of the past in terms of critical race/feminist currere. (Re)membering, according to Dillard, is the act of not only recalling the past but also putting it back together. Engaging currere, from a critical race/feminist standpoint, requires not only (re)membering the childhood that has made one who she is, but also (re)membering the collective past that she has been taught, warned, and seduced to forget. How did I come to understand myself as a woman, as a Black person? Black? I am not in fact the color of black night or crayons or tar, where did that notion come from? West Africa, slavery, reconstruction, Jim Crow, and then some. I did not experience these places, laws, and tragedies and yet they help to define me. How is this so? And why does it matter? Who can help me (re)member? And what good will remembering do anyway? Re-searching and (re)membering in this way changes our ways of being and knowing; (re)membering in this sense is an act of decolonization (Dillard, 2012).

Jennifer Nash’s (2013) conceptualization of Black feminist love-politics is also helpful for understanding the process and importance of currere for Black and other women of color interested in cultivating a radical subjectivity. Drawing on the work of Alice Walker (1983), Audre Lorde (1984), and June Jordan (2002), Nash spoke to how the work of these Black feminists has situated love as a radical theory/practice of social justice. Black feminist love-politics, surmised Nash, emerges out of the practice of coming to know oneself in the context of the communities that help define self (I/We), learning to love oneself because of and in spite of the trauma that comes with living in a racist/sexisist society, and challenging oneself to confront and embrace difference—all as a way to envision and work for a more just world. In other words, how might a Black woman, through a radical politics of love, contribute to reconstructing the public sphere? Critical race/feminist currere is one way to begin the difficult work of self-love, loving others, and loving the world enough to commit oneself to working for better futures.

Although Black feminist theory contributes in significant ways to understanding critical race/feminist currere, it is certainly not the only body of feminist work that can or should make meaning of currere for Black and other women of color. How might the theorizing of Gloria Anzaldúa, Chela Sandoval, Chandra Mohanty, Trihn T. Minha, and Sylvia Wynters, among others, contribute to one’s internal dialogue, to one’s move toward radical non-White/nonwestern female subjectivity? Indeed what other voices, what other theoretical orientations might compel one to enter into the collective struggle for justice through a deep and contemplative ongoing conversation with oneself? The voices don’t have to always agree. What they should do, however, is provoke the questions: Who am I? Where do I stand? What am I struggling for? — and they should encourage searching for, reflecting on, and living with the always-evolving answers.

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression**

It should go almost without saying that critical race/feminist currere is itself a form of inquiry; it is inquiring about the self and its position in the world and its relation to justice. It is, in short, an autobiographical exploration grounded in the method of currere, which seeks above all else to begin the work
of decolonizing the mind. While it shares an emphasis on the self with other modes of inquiry, such as self-study, teacher research, action research, autoethnography, and the like, critical race/feminist currere is not intended to be a “research” project in the traditional sense. It is an ongoing practice of individual well-being (self-actualization) and how it might contribute to the project of collective well-being (justice for all). Practicing a critical race/feminist currere, then, is like doing yoga, tai chi, or one’s hair; one must always be engaged in it to see the promise of it.

Critical race/feminist currere could also illuminate and be illuminated by other modes of inquiry that in fact work to hide the self, like quantitative research, some forms of qualitative research, and some forms of conceptual analysis—in short, all forms of work that claim an objective perspective. For example, although we all bring biases into our research, in many instances we are not “allowed” to acknowledge or explore those biases and the impact they may have on the doing and reporting of the research. However, she who is engaged in currere is likely to take up these tensions in her internal dialogue, working through them and deciding what she will do with or about them.

Moreover, it is important to note that currere is not necessarily the work of writing autobiography; that is to say that it does not have to result in the stories of one’s life written or spoken for a public. The hope is that it does bring about self-transformation and as such it will shape one’s public work toward justice. Many women and men of color, however, have shared quite explicitly the ways in which their educational experiences inspire and influence their theorizing. Some excellent examples include the autobiographical writings of W. E. B. DuBois, Malcolm X, Angela Davis, Nina Simone, Ida B. Wells, Gloria Anzaldúa, Grace Lee Boggs, Russell Means, Derrick Bell, and Patricia Williams, among others. In fact, locating knowledge production in and through the body is indicative of Black feminist theory, critical race theory, and several other approaches to knowing that challenge the dominate European-centered conception of knowing as a relationship between subject and object, rather than one between and among subjects located in places, times, and bodies. Sharing one’s experiences or giving testimony was at one time the main mode of education for many groups of people who were denied schooling. Critical race/feminist currere works to “(re)member” (Dillard, 2012) and to continue the practice of educating through testimony—sometimes as an entrée into theory, sometimes as theory, and sometimes as an interrogation of theory (see Baszile, 2009, 2011).

Lastly, because writing/language—perhaps more than anything else—requires us to struggle with and through the language of our own oppression and as such blocks as much as it reveals, critical race/feminist currere encourages creativity. How might photographs, music, soul writing, dancing, listening, relocating your desk or your whole life help you decolonize your thinking and being? If we stay true to those ways of knowing and expressing deemed legitimate, how can we be free enough to intervene on the language of our own oppression?

References and Further Readings


Educators and members of the general public often hear that imagination is one of the major purposes of curriculum and teaching. Others counter by saying that we don’t want students to be overly imaginative without being practical and serious. What lies behind these positions? Is an imaginative citizenry wanted, or is it feared because it might push against too many of our basic convictions and assumptions?

Imagination is a term that has been appropriated in recent years in a wide range of commercial interests from public relations concerns and advertising firms, to super-high-technology movie studios. Most of these uses of the word focus on selling or improving products. In this present climate of schooling for homogeneity through the Common Core State Standards and standardized outcomes, imagination is conspicuous by its absence. At best it is viewed as an optional add-on through art or music education, which is usually the first to go when school budgets are trimmed.

The most frequently given reasons for standardized curriculum come from traditionalist views that believe the answer to poorly performing schools should be to implement a more rigorous teaching of literacy, numeracy, and science skills, continually assessed through standardized testing. Proponents of this method espouse the views of leaders such as E. D. Hirsch and his Core Knowledge Foundation, which has become an increasingly popular primary source for the Common Core movement. According to this view, equal educational opportunity is the result of the acquisition of knowledge as a standardized commodity where the emphasis is more on what should be known rather than how to know, which makes content knowledge central to learning. In this view, knowledge acquisition is treated as a commodity or product to be dispensed.

In counterpoint to this, educators who value imagination recognize the immense developmental value in children’s play and view individual student capacities, interests, and cultural backgrounds as vital features of the learning process (Lake, 2013). In this view, education is a process of exploration and interaction between content area subjects, personal meaning making, and the creation of new ideas. Indeed one of the greatest functions of imagination is that it “brings severed parts together” (Greene, 1995, p. 99). The joined parts may look to others to be completely unrelated, yet to the imaginer, they may become one entity. For example, what possible connections exist between sea algae and fuel for the internal combustion engine, or between a percentage problem in math and a rock guitar solo? Although...
imagination is one of the primary sources of learning in children's activities, especially in play, it is often treated as fanciful, “off the deep end,” or not “relevant” in this present climate of highly scripted classroom procedures and practices. These two views do not have to be mutually exclusive. For example, it is a good idea for aspiring musicians to be familiar with the core structure of musical scales through rigorous repetitive application before attempting to improvise or create new material. Both aspects can work together if core knowledge is treated as a tool for personal discovery and not an end in itself. Through imagination, students have the opportunity to experience the creation of their own “core” connections, which is much more valuable than current trends to reduce the curriculum to the lowest “common” denominator.

Imagination in the Present Context

The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the subsequent adoption of the Common Core Standards in many states have led to greater standardization of curriculum around the country. Under NCLB, schools receiving federal Title I funds have to give standardized tests as a condition of funding and can face sanctions for failing to meet test score targets. Critics argue that a profound injustice of this trend is that students must align to the same benchmarks despite their myriad uncommon differences in cultural background knowledge, socioeconomic status, interests, and physical abilities. School districts and individual teachers’ futures are determined by test scores, which at best only measure a narrow range of abilities, certainly not imagination.

Even though many companies use imagination as a buzzword, it seems to come up less often in written works than it did 2 centuries ago. In fact, according to the Google research tool Ngram Viewer, which tracks the frequency of word usage across decades, the word imagination is used less often in recent published works than it was in 1800. Books and authors on creativity and imagination in education are conspicuous by their absence. This is astounding when we consider that one of the primary ways that children learn is through imaginary role playing (Brown & Vaughan, 2009; Gallas, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978).

Curriculum Imagination as Subject Matter

It would be impossible to honor and acknowledge all of the contributions made to our understanding of the value of imagination across all time periods and cultures, but a good place to begin is with the work of John Dewey. Dewey’s work could be seen as a movement away from standardized, static views of education and as an advocacy of personalized, dynamic, experiential learning through imagination. Dewey (1934) summarized:

For while the roots of every experience are found in the interaction of a live creature with its environment, that experience becomes conscious, a matter of perception, only when meanings enter it that are derived from prior experiences. Imagination is the only gateway through which these meanings can find their way into a present interaction; or rather, . . . the conscious adjustment of the new and the old is imagination. (p. 272)

In contrast to this, Dewey aptly described standardized knowledge through the analogy of “a sausage machine which reduces all materials indifferently to one marketable commodity” (1910, p. 39). He contends that “thinking is specific, in that different things suggest their own appropriate meanings, tell their own unique stories, and in that they do this in very different ways with different persons” (p. 39), asserting that imagination as subject matter is a manifestation of personally “appropriate meanings” and “unique stories.” Imagination as subject matter emerges out of union of inward personal meaning and the external world. Through these unique combinations, imagination enables personal expression through what James Moffett (1968) called the “universe of discourse” (p. 46) in thinking, speaking, writing, building, moving, cooking, caring, teaching, reflecting, understanding, creating works of art, invention, and problem solving of all kinds, including social relationships between individuals and groups from the local to the universal.

The critical aspect of imagination as subject matter enables us to question, to wonder, and to sense gaps of incompleteness in the way others interpret things. This “approach challenges subject-object separations” (Greene, 1995, p. 99) and breaks with the “hegemony of language over perception and conceptualization of reality” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 369). Moreover critical imagination enables students to “interrogate and selectively appropriate those aspects
of the dominant culture that will provide them with the basis for defining and transforming, rather than merely serving, the wider social order” (Aronowitz in Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 152). It is instructive to contrast this with what is mentioned in the beginning of this chapter regarding commercial uses of imagination that reinforce the role of serving and having rather than transforming and being. Where curriculum imagination is the subject, both critical and creative aspects function in dialectical relationship.

The creative aspect of imagination as subject matter creates synthesis between a student’s internal perspective and the world as text. Once these connections are made, they can be transformed into an infinite variety of personal expression. Writing, music composition, interpretive dance, works of art, and every known variety of craftsmanship are acts of imaginative thinking. Greene (1995) lucidly summed up the power of imagination as subject matter:

> Once we do away with habitual separations of the subjective from the objective, the inside from the outside, appearances from reality, we might be able to give imagination its proper importance and grasp what it means to place imagination at the core of understanding. (p. 141)

Dewey (1902/1990) stated that “personality, character, is more important than subject matter. Not knowledge or information but self-realization is the goal” (p. 187). When curriculum imagination is cultivated, self-realization ensues, because it is inseparable from personal meaning creation, which joins the imaginer with all that he or she imagines.

Louise Berman (1968) built on Dewey’s view of the primacy of perception in character and personality formation over isolated disciplines of subject matter in writing that “at the base of all man’s peculiarly human functions, such as creating, knowing, valuing, and caring, is a mode of observing the world about him” (p. 25). She termed this as the ability to perceive, which she believed can be hindered by false categorization of subject matter into “disciplines.” In her view, curriculum design can become transdisciplinary through what she calls the cultivation of “process-oriented persons” (p. 179) by placing the focus of learning on “perception, valuing, creating, communicating, knowing, loving, decision making and organizing” (p. 181) in conjunction with content-specific teaching. Berman called for greater emphasis to be placed on these “process oriented skills” (p. 180), which are part and parcel with students “becoming” what they learn, not just “having” information. In a similar fashion, curriculum imagination as subject matter can be experienced and personified across all content areas in and out of classrooms and sites of learning. Berman acknowledges the role of perception in works of imagination since perceiving is inseparable from the formation of personal connections within the perceiver.

This brings us to Eisner’s (2013) notion of connoisseurship, which he defined as the “ability to recognize differences that are subtle but significant in a particular qualitative display” (p. e-3). These subtle and significant differences are often made salient through experiences of seeing how specific features relate to each other. Eisner continued: “Thus, the perception of qualitative relationships and the kinds of experience that those relationships evoke become extraordinarily important resources” (p. e-3). Eisner’s connoisseurship makes vivid what is present in the content under examination and also, through discrimination, what is missing.

### Sensing Gaps as a Form of Inquiry

For Maxine Greene as well as for Eisner, imagination as subject matter emerges out of a personal sense that something is missing, that there are gaps in understanding experience that evoke a quest that takes us beyond secondhand knowledge into personal experiences of knowing. Greene (1995) wrote that we are moved to do that, however, only when we become aware of rifts, gaps in what we think of as reality. . . . It requires imagination to be conscious of them, to find our own lived worlds lacking because of them. (p. 110)

In my 2013 book, *A Curriculum of Imagination in an Era of Standardization*, I drew upon William James’s (1890, p. 251) pioneering work in psychology, which held that “sensing gaps” is integral to the imaginative process. James saw the seeking of answers as a kind of “beckoning” that yields metaphoric connections through conscious or subconscious metaphoric thought. Such processes can be connected with recent perspectives from Malcolm Gladwell (2005), who suggested that breakthroughs of discovery are often not the result of
lengthy pondering, but might occur in a mere blink (Lake, 2013). Conversely, Albert Einstein pondered gaps in his musings about the nature of time for well over seven years as he framed his famous theory of relativity (see Henle, 1986, p. 175). Moreover Walter Isaacson’s (2007) biographical study of Einstein indicates that Einstein perceived origins of his most powerful theorizing when he was a teenager in a high school founded by Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. He claimed that Pestalozzi’s emphasis on visualization brought him to imagine himself riding on a beam of light, which in turn helped him conceptualize complex theories of physics during the decades that followed. Such extremes indicate that gaps may be sensed during the long or short term—or anywhere in between. Perhaps they transcend the notion of time.

Henle offered several reasons that gaps are sensed in our experience. These include “contradictions of all kinds” (p. 176) as well as “unexpected similarities” (p. 178). Gap sensing also occurs “when we encounter strange, unusual, striking, or new phenomena” (p. 179). Henle also mentioned “difficulties arising out of the formal characteristics of prevailing theories” (p. 181) as a source. These forms of inquiry are illustrated in the following examples.

In The Inner World of the Immigrant Child, Christina Igoa (1995) relayed a gap she sensed as a contradiction in one of her students that led both student and teacher into a life-changing encounter with imagination as subject matter. Igoa, who was director of a center for refugee children in California, relayed the story of Dennis, a 12-year-old student from China. The contradiction was in the name. Why was he called Dennis when he was clearly from China? The contradiction was in the name. Why was he called Dennis when he was clearly from China under Mao’s Cultural Revolution? When Igoa asked Dennis to write his name in Chinese, he abruptly pushed the pencil away and shook his head with an emphatic “No!” At that moment, he revealed to me the energy and force inside him. He acted out the lack of connection between us that still was unable to find expression in words. Silence. (p. 13)

Igoa allowed Dennis to work in a quiet part of the classroom until he was ready to choose to break his silence on his own. She also discovered that he liked to create stories with accompanying pictures on blank film strips. Gradually the theme of his stories went from being alone to including others. She also noticed that in story form Dennis was creating metaphors of action to rid himself of opposing forces. For example, in a second story, he is pursued by a tiger with yellow eyes and finds a place of refuge in a house where a woman is baking cookies (perhaps a metaphor for Igoa’s classroom). “After, a man came home. We said to the man, ‘We saw a tiger near the mountain.’ At night time, the man saw the tiger. He shot the tiger and the tiger was dead” (p. 28). At this point in Dennis’s life, he began to socialize more and become more expressive and confident in his school work. A few years later, before his graduation to high school, Igoa arrived to find a beautifully designed poster with a message in two languages. In English, it said “Dennis is Alive.” The Chinese characters said “Qiu Liang is full of energy and curiosity” (pp. 30–33). With the opportunity to feel safe and cared for at the center, his true self had emerged.

Another illustration from the world of music involves noted conductor and composer Leonard Bernstein, who sensed connections between music and linguistics. In his book The Unanswered Question (1976), Bernstein told the story of posing a question during graduate studies at Harvard in the 1930s and pursuing it for 2 decades until he eventually connected with linguist Noam Chomsky’s contention that language has a deep grammatical structure. Bernstein sensed a gap while listening to Aaron Copland’s 1932 Piano Variations, wherein he discovered that the first four notes of that composition served as a foundation for understanding many musical compositions in cultural context. Consequently, after 2 decades, Bernstein (1976) sensed the need to search for “some deep primal reason for a world-wide inborn musical grammar” (1976, p. 7) and decided that the unlikely pairing of music and linguistics could lead to analogies that might clarify or refute the cliché that music is a “universal language” (p. 10). Bernstein made imaginative connections between music and linguistics as he perceived the infant’s utterance of “ma” as both a cry for mother and a morpheme reinterpreted as a pitch event (1976, p. 15), one that connected the origins of music and language and eventually led him to suggest that there are musical phrases that parallel sentences, verses as paragraphs, and complete songs as essays (Lake, 2013).

Henle (1986) emphasized the experience of “strange, unusual, striking or new phenomena” (p. 179) as a reason for sensing gaps. An example of
For some years I have been afflicted with the belief that flight is possible to man. My disease has increased in severity and I feel that it will soon cost me an increased amount of money if not my life. (Wright, 1900)

Further into his letter, Wright went on to discuss his observation of the flight of birds and the tilt of their wings and drew inspiration from the mode of their flight in ways that fired his imagination to harness and extend these aerodynamic “torsion principles” to the flight of humans.

On another occasion, Orville Wright astutely spoke of not accepting things as they had always been understood. “If we worked on the assumption that what is accepted as true really is true, then there would be little hope for advance” (quoted in Goddard, 2003, p. 117). The brothers studied the failures of others in theories of flight and learned from gaps in their own thinking as well. Orville wrote of his experiences of imagination as subject this way: “We were lucky enough to grow up in an environment where there was always much encouragement to children to pursue intellectual interests, to investigate whatever aroused curiosity” (O. Wright quoted in Kelly, 1943, p. 15). Eight years after Wilbur Wright wrote his first letter to Chanute, and after enduring much scorn by naysayers, the world finally began to welcome the breakthroughs that the Wright Brothers made when they were awarded government contracts. The gaps they sensed and acted upon created a worldwide cultural revolution that made it possible for people all over the world to come much closer together with much less travel time.

Arts-Based Education and Metaphor

Another form of inquiry in curriculum imagination that holds tremendous promise across all content areas is arts-based education, rooted in Dewey’s notion of aesthetics and Eisner’s work of connoisseurship, mentioned earlier. This field of inquiry is focused on ways that the arts apply imagination to create personal spaces of knowing, understanding, and being with self and others in the world. For example, the arts can open up multiple perspectives beyond words and numbers to teach more about all aspects of life, including more about words and numbers. Greene (2001) referred to this as aesthetic...
education in contrast to Dewey’s (1934) notion of an “anesthetic” (p. 39) condition. Again Greene (2001) emphasized the cultivation of perception in students because art does automatically create personal meaning for the beholder:

My point is that, if the painting or the dance performance or the play is to exist as an aesthetic object or event for you, it has to be attended to in a particular way. You have to be fully present to it—to focus your attention on it and, again, to allow it to exist apart from your everydayness and your practical concerns. I do not mean that you, as a living person with your own biography, your own history, have to absent yourself. No, you have to be there in your personhood, encountering the work much in the way you encounter other persons. The proper way to encounter another person is to be open to them, to be ready to see new dimensions, new facets of the other, to recognize the possibility of some fresh perception or understanding, so you may know the other better, appreciate that person more variously. This is, actually, how we ordinarily treat each other as persons. We do not treat each other as case histories, or instances of some psychological or sociological reality—not, that is, in personal encounters. Nor do we come up against each other as if the other were merely an inanimate object, incapable of reciprocation. There are analogues between this and encounters with works of art, especially in the readiness for fresh illumination, in the willingness to see something, to risk something unexpected and new. (pp. 53–54)

The arts give primacy to the creation of metaphor and analogy as means of forming new connections and personalized meaning. Key scholars regard metaphoric thinking as that which gives uniqueness to humanity (e.g., Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Modell, 2003) by connecting subconscious and conscious functioning and uniting mind and body, perceptions and conceptions from the several senses, and past

with present experience. Arts-based inquiry (Barone & Eisner, 2011) has potential to illuminate these connections through visual, musical, literary, and kinesthetic metaphors, analogies, and similes.

Need for Continuous Questioning

In a curricular imagination, the subject matter is boundless and multidimensional, yet holistic and personal. It is not contained in any one discipline but shuns fragmentation. It welcomes multiple meanings and newly created metaphoric connections. The only limitations on its scope are the present horizons of the imaginer. The subject matter can be anything from the microcosm to the macrocosm. In the actual experience of imagination as subject matter, the dichotomy between objective and subjective understanding disappears.

Curriculum imagination as subject matter welcomes polyphonic expression and dialogue across differences because the exact same subject matter could have a range of meanings to individual learners. The focus of learning can be on anything that the imaginer can question or wonder about. In fact, the subject matter often makes itself known through questions that arise out of sensed gaps from within or found problems. The subject matter is multidimensional because in the realm of imagination, objective notions become personalized through metaphoric blending and repeated musings until new connections are made and new applications are discovered. Curriculum imagination as subject matter is holistically explored across multiple content areas. When imagination becomes the subject matter, the whole universe and all that is in it can be a text.

References and Further Readings


Popular culture is a complex term. It can denote everything from mass-marketed, commodified pop culture to the everyday cultural practices of particular groups. For example, the term can encompass the mass culture appeal of reality shows such as Jersey Shore as well as the traditional, elaborate quinceañera parties that many Latino families throw on their daughter’s 15th birthday. Each are “popular” practices. In the first case, popular denotes something like “mass culture.” In the second case, it denotes something like “folk culture.” Both are examples of “popular culture.”

The term itself underscores how difficult it is to locate the specific “content” of popular culture in popular culture texts. After all, no less than Shakespeare himself was considered “popular culture” for a long time (Levine, 1998). Shakespeare’s plays were first performed in the Globe Theater in London. Built in 1599 to feature the playwright’s works, it famously featured a “pit” where members of the poor and working classes could enjoy his plays for a penny. While Shakespeare has long come to symbolize the very pinnacle of “high art,” his roots are in the popular.

As this example makes clear, what counts as popular culture varies both in and across moments in time. Following Stuart Hall (Morley & Chen, 1996) and others, popular culture is best seen as a site of contestation—that is, popular culture itself is best seen as a term struggled over by different groups for different purposes over time. So instead of asking “if” Shakespeare is elite culture or not, one might ask: “Why” is he largely considered a part of elite culture today? Do certain groups benefit by reserving Shakespeare for the few? Moreover, have others looked to reappropriate Shakespeare for the many? If so, why? One need not only find Shakespeare in the Royal Shakespeare Company’s performances at Lincoln Center on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. One can also find him on screens across the globe in Baz Luhrmann’s popular film Romeo + Juliet (1996), which featured the stars Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes in a modernized version of the story. Clearly, one cannot locate the “popular” in a timeless, formal set of textual criteria.

Complicating the elasticity of popular culture is the fluidity of media itself. In the past, popular culture texts were largely located in specific media. Television was largely viewed on TV sets. Movies were largely seen in movie theaters and later on home video machines. Music was largely consumed on home stereo or portable devices. Over the last several years, popular culture has become more fluid, moving across multiple media platforms. Television shows do not have to be viewed anymore at particular times, on particular channels, on a TV set. Rather, television shows move from smartphones, to desktop computers, to Internet streaming players for TV, and through streaming services such as Netflix, hulu, or YouTube. Moreover, these new devices give
Popular Culture as Subject Matter

•

images. Much of this work has been concerned with helping students protect themselves from what are often perceived to be the sexist, racist, or otherwise problematic content of mass culture. Most of this work has been done in English and other language arts classrooms. More recently, young people have been encouraged to create their own media content as a way to understand how popular culture works (Buckingham, 2003; Miller & McVee, 2012). Popular culture, here, is more of a pragmatic “tool” than politically invested set of commitments or set of proxies for larger discussions about the status of knowledge.

In sum, it is very difficult to locate popular culture within a formal set of criteria. Popular culture is best seen as a site of contestation over what counts as “the popular.” With the rise of Web 2.0, audiences have played a more active role in the production and proliferation of popular content. The so-called “participatory turn” poses a new set of challenges for educators.

Contemporary Concerns

Educators today are facing new pressures to make schooling more relevant to more youth. The massification of schooling has put pressure on education systems at all levels to reach more and more people and help prepare them for a future that is increasingly difficult to predict. One evidences this broad uncertainty around education in the proliferation of “reform” efforts that have come to the fore in the United States (Mehta, 2013). These efforts are driven by a sense that the world economy is changing and that young people will have to demonstrate competencies in areas such as math, technology, and science to compete for the next generation of jobs. Many of these efforts (e.g., George Lucas’s Edutopia project) have stressed “technology-rich” forms of schooling. Technology, here, is used to deliver school content in the ways that draw on the competencies with media that young people have seemingly already developed. These efforts underscore a deeper anxiety about how the world is changing and how our education systems fit into this evolving landscape.

Discussions around globalization tend to focus on schools as an economic driver. That is, these discussions tend to assume that the purpose of school is to
prepare young people for their place in a global economy. But the economic narrative is only one such way to understand globalization (Steger, 2009). One can understand globalization as a set of cultural and political processes as well. More specifically, the everyday culture that young people live in their daily lives is now open to a very wide range of influences. Young people are “on the move” in new ways—both literally in terms of travel and figuratively in terms of the range of influences to which they are exposed. Young people are moving in new ways, including as voluntary immigrants and as refugees, and they are increasingly participating in new and emergent cultural formations. As students are facing a world that has changed politically, economically, technologically, and culturally, educators have had to face new questions about the relevance of school curricula.

As a generation of sociologists of education has made clear, schools play a large role in reproducing ideas about what knowledge is most valuable. Schools have historically played a critical role in reproducing so-called “official knowledge,” often by way of high-stakes testing (Apple, 2011). Popular culture is an arena where notions of what’s most valuable can be struggled over. Popular culture is a site where the authority of educators can be contested, challenged, and renegotiated. It is a site where young people’s often messy needs, wishes, and desires are articulated in ways that can challenge the presumed clarities and certainties of adults. That is not to say that popular culture will naturally lead to a popular curriculum. Rather, it is a terrain upon which that negotiation can happen.

In addition, new technologies such as Facebook and Twitter are playing new roles in generating new social formations and promoting social change. Information can now circulate around the world instantaneously and in ways that cannot always be controlled or contained by governments and nation-states. One observed this most clearly in the recent uprisings throughout the Middle East, where Twitter and other social media played an important role. People were able to communicate with each other in ways that often evaded the control of official state censorship. Countries such as China are also facing new questions around how young people can communicate with each other in ways that challenge official state control.

The rapid, worldwide proliferation of new technologies and media forms has opened up important questions about the status of culture and knowledge today. Take the film *Slumdog Millionaire*. In this film, the main character, Jamal, is able to compete successfully on a television show by demonstrating a wide range of knowledge about different subjects. As the movie makes clear, the main character was born into circumstances that should preclude his access to such knowledge. Social stratification and the stratification of knowledge are parallel phenomena. However, in the “new India,” Jamal is able to disrupt these stratifications and become quite literally a millionaire. While clearly something of a fairy tale, the film does underscore the ways access to new knowledge through new technologies is disrupting social stratification. New and emergent popular cultures are developing around the world, blurring the line between “consumer” and “producer” as never before. More and more information is now available across more and more kinds of media platforms, in ways unimaginable even a generation ago. While education has never been more important, core ideas about culture and knowledge and expertise and authority are now being challenged in new ways.

**Context**

Popular culture today can only be understood against the backdrop of the massive social and technological shifts associated with “globalization.” According to Arjun Appadurai (1996), new flows of people, technologies, images, monies, and ideologies are circulating around the world in complex and disjunctive ways. The “work of the imagination” has taken on a new role and importance here as people’s aspirations now transcend their local circumstances in complex and often radical ways. According to Appadurai, people’s aspirations are very much “social facts” that need to be taken seriously if we are to understand the complexities of our moment. Take the case of China. China’s GDP is growing at a very impressive rate, outpacing the GDP growth rate of the United States in recent years. But as larger and larger groups of Chinese begin to imagine their own futures in more expansive ways, this growth may not be as robust as it is necessary. This is particularly the case for the more impoverished rural dwellers, many of whom are moving into cities. Popular culture is engendering new imaginative
futures for people in ways that can have profound social consequences.

Popular culture is today very much caught up in the paradoxes of globalization. On the one hand, more and more people have access to more and more kinds of information and entertainment. The sites of popular production now extend around the world in ways that might have been hard to imagine even a generation ago. Take the case of hip hop. Hip hop is arguably the most important youth culture movement to emerge since the 1970s. Hip hop originated on the streets of New York City but soon became a commercially successful, global cultural art form. On the one hand, young people in the United States and around the world are continuing to be creative, pushing the genre in new directions. As the costs of technology fall, young people have the ability to produce and disseminate their work through YouTube or self-produced MP3 mix tapes on home computers or (less often now) MySpace pages. The “cost of entry” for hip hop artists today is very low, opening up the genre to a very broad range of people around the world. On the other hand, a handful of artists have emerged as global icons and are supported by one of a handful of multinational conglomerates. For example, Interscope Records is owned by Universal Music Group. Interscope has controlled a number of other labels including Aftermath Entertainment, Bad Boy Records, G-Unit Records, and Shady Records. Artists on these labels include 50 Cent, Dr. Dre, and Eminem. Moreover, Interscope is home to other popular artists including Madonna, Lady Gaga, and U2. This is tremendous amount of power for one company to hold.

The paradoxes of increasing heterogeneity and homogeneity are evidenced in the broader question of global cultural flows. On the one hand, the United States still dominates the globe in terms of film exports. In 2012, seven of the top 10 films in China were from the United States. On the other hand, demand is growing in China at unprecedented rates. China had the second largest box office revenues in the world in 2012 (at $2.7 billion), growing 30% from 2011, according to the International Trade Administration (ITA, 2013).

Increasingly companies such as Disney are working with Chinese partners to make their content more attractive to the Chinese market. For example, in 2013, Iron Man 3 was released in China with about 4 minutes of extra footage, some of which featured noted Chinese actors. The film soon broke the billion-dollar mark, becoming one of the highest grossing films of all time. Like other paradoxes associated with globalization, popular culture today indexes extremes that are hard to understand from within single, coherent frameworks whether those are associated with the homogeneity or heterogeneity of culture.

One can approach popular culture with several such perspectives or contexts. For example, one can look at: the broad, changing economics of popular culture industries; the range of ideologies that circulate around the world today through popular culture; the ways these icons “travel” across media; or the more micro-level, shifting cultural landscape against which youth now fashion selves. Each level of context has different implications for educational researchers and practitioners.

Let’s return to the aforementioned Iron Man 3. Clearly, Iron Man is one of several superheroes who have become enormously popular over the last decade through blockbuster films. Others include Batman, Spider-Man, the X-Men, and the heroes associated with Marvel’s The Avengers. These films draw on characters that have long been popular with children and certainly have pedagogical possibilities. One can imagine the character examined through several lenses.

One can focus on the changing macroeconomic structure associated with the new resurgence of superhero films. Marvel Comics was in bankruptcy as recently as the mid- to late 1990s. The company gained critical and commercial traction by aggressively revising some of its main characters in comic book form to a small number of very committed fans. These characters soon made several successful transitions to film, culminating with a sale of the company to Disney. The sale to Disney means that these characters are part of a multibillion-dollar entertainment industry with global reach. One can certainly understand a character like Iron Man as read through several different economic arrangements and their implications. How the central ownership of Marvel by Disney will affect these characters in their various permutations lends itself to a political economic approach to the “curricula” of comic books.

One can also look at the ideologies associated with the modern superhero. These films have largely
embraced large-scale spectacular action. One can look at the ways the spectacle has come to replace character-driven narratives in the contemporary film industry. One can look at the ways these films often position official authority as either ineffectual or corrupt while stressing the role and importance of the individual hero. One can look at the ways these films position imagined solutions to real-world issues (e.g., *Iron Man 3* on post-9/11 trauma or *The Dark Knight Returns* on the Occupy movement). One can look at the gendered nature of the contemporary superhero in the largely male-driven genre. These are all just examples of what a look at the ideology associated with a character like Iron Man might look like. These examples imply different work for curriculum studies scholars than those discussed previously.

One can look at the ways characters have moved across different media platforms. Traditionally, the paper comic book was the source text for superhero stories. Today, the “curriculum” of the superhero travels across multiple media—comic books, toys, video games, cartoons, and movies. One can usefully look to understand how these stories and characters are both continuous and discontinuous across these media. Increasingly, popular culture exists only in continuous motion between various media. One might, therefore, ask: What are the representations of Iron Man like in a monthly comic book? In a cartoon? In a movie? How are these similar or different?

Finally, one can look at the ways people themselves understand Iron Man or other popular superheroes. One recalls here Ann Dyson’s (1997) important early work, *Writing Superheroes*, which looked at how young people used superheroes during playground play and how these performances changed in school. As Dyson argues, the informal playground play was different in significant ways from the kinds of work done in the classroom. There was, in particular, more attention to gender stereotypes (e.g., who could play what roles) inside the classroom than outside of it. Curriculum studies scholars could usefully explore how such icons are understood, talked about, and explored. These studies are more agent-centered—that is, focused on how particular young people or communities live through popular culture. Here, popular culture is a “lived curriculum” that may or may not be connected explicitly to the classroom.

In sum, no one framework or approach can exhaust our understanding of any popular cultural phenomena. They can be understood through various frameworks such as those noted earlier. Each offers a particular narrative or context for understanding popular culture and the work that it does. Each can be usefully employed by curriculum scholars to understand some piece of the educative work popular culture can or might perform.

**Theory**

Popular culture can be understood from several theoretical frameworks. These include those associated with Marxism, feminism, poststructuralism, and cultural studies. More recently, the field has seen an assemblage of approaches associated with “participatory culture.” Several of these are long-standing. For example, work in Marxism has stressed the importance of ideological reproduction through popular culture including through the stratification of knowledge. This work assumes that all culture production reflects the underlying economic relationships in a given society. For example, Frankfurt School critics were deeply distrustful of so-called “mass culture.” These critics, including Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, thought that the “culture industry” robbed people of the kind of authentic cultural experiences that would help people realize their full humanity (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1944/2002). Rather, the mindless repetition associated with popular music and other commercial forms served to dull people’s sensibilities and make them more amenable to exploitation by capitalist economic arrangements.

While Marxism has various iterations, many stress that culture is largely dependent upon capitalist economic arrangements. They do not challenge them but serve to justify them.

Work in feminism has stressed the (gendered) pleasures of viewing and grid some of the first ethnographic studies of popular culture. Much of this work challenged the ways critics looked to “decode” popular culture texts, reflecting the inherent biases of (often male) critics. Many critics looked to decenter the authority of the critic (in particular) and the bias toward Marxist readings (in general). Many of the most important early feminist critics stressed
ethnography as a method. The goal was to understand how women themselves viewed these texts and made sense out of them. For example, Janice Radway’s (1984) *Reading the Romance* looked at the ways women at a local bookstore read romance novels and their responses to them. Radway showed that these women often read these texts in ways that were more complicated than often presumed. They also used these texts to carve out private time for themselves.

Work in poststructuralism has looked at the ways discourses around “the other” have been produced and circulated around the world. Much of this writing would come to inform postcolonialism. Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault and others, this work looks at the ways certain ideas about the world get produced, maintained, and sustained. Perhaps most notably, Edward Said (1997) in *Covering Islam: How the Media and Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* looked closely at how notions of the Middle East and Islam are produced in the imaginations of the West and disseminated through popular media. This writing has been important for uncovering the deeper structures at work in popular representations. In opposition to Marxist-influenced work, these texts take a much broader view of notions of “difference.” Poststructuralists are interested in not only questions of deeper economic structures but also those around ethnic, racial, and religious difference.

Work in cultural studies sparked something of an explosion of academic interest in popular culture. While this work was influenced by Marxist approaches to economic inequality, early critics such as Stuart Hall and others looked at the ways culture itself has its own autonomy. Many key figures argued that popular culture is a key site where individual power blocs work to gain broad assent for their agendas and projects. All popular culture can only be understood in terms of the broader political and social context. In addition, there were “no guarantees” to how popular culture would play itself out socially, culturally, or materially. For example, Dick Hebdige’s (1979) *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* explored “culture” and “style” as a kind of “semiotics” for understanding youth culture. Hebdige looked at how young people used everyday signs and symbols to create subcultural identities for themselves. Hebdige used the language of “appropriation” and “reappropriation” to discuss how young people used and reused dominant cultural symbols. In this study, Hebdige focused on the range of subcultures—skinheads, punks, mods, teddy boys, Rastafarians, and others—that emerged in London in the mid-20th century. Cultural studies has been marked by an interdisciplinary set of approaches that has lent itself to a broad uptake in applied fields such as communications and education. Indeed, work in cultural studies would have the most direct impact on opening up questions related to popular culture in education. Popular culture became a kind of “curriculum” that could be examined with the range of resources. For example, my book *Performing Identity/Performing Culture: Hip Hop as Text, Pedagogy, and Lived Practice* explored hip hop as a kind of “lived curricula” for poor, marginalized youth (Dimitriadis, 2009). In the face of trying or pressing circumstances, young people looked to hip hop to understand notions of place, history, and self in ways that rendered traditional schooling somewhat superfluous. Cultural studies was a useful framework for drawing these concerns together.

Most recently, work on “participatory culture” has come to stress the blurred line between the production and consumption of popular culture through new media. This work has its roots in the work of early cultural studies scholars such as John Fiske who looked at the ways popular cultural texts, like television shows, can be decoded in multiple ways. Fiske (1994) highlighted the ways “texts are neither commodities nor agents of the dominant ideology, but sites of struggle where the subordinate can engage in contested relations with the social interests that attempt to subordinate them” (p. 197). Approaches like that of Fiske opened up a space for important work around fandom (most notably, that of Henry Jenkins), including how different groups of fans actively appropriated texts associated with Star Wars, Star Trek, and other such cultural phenomena (Jenkins, 2006). Extending his early work on fandom, Jenkins came to do important work on participatory culture more broadly. This work has tended not to stress individual artifacts on particular platforms, but the ways popular culture itself can only be understood as traveling across multiple media platforms, changing and being reworked at every step. This work has also come to influence research in education, most especially in fields associated with literacy.
This work has stressed the active participation of individuals every step of the way. The stress on active agency is one reason why Web 2.0 approaches to culture have been picked up and mobilized by many in education. Jenkins and Wyn Kelley’s (2013) new book, *Reading in a Participatory Culture: Remixing Moby Dick in the English Classroom*, is perhaps the best example of this “turn.”

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression**

Popular culture can be understood through several distinct modes of inquiry. These include historical inquiry, ideological inquiry, phenomenological inquiry, and applied inquiry. Each can be associated with a particular mode of expression. Historical studies of popular culture tend to stress shifts in artifacts or processes over time—for example, changing constructions of childhood or girlhood. Several studies have looked at the ways “childhood” itself has been constructed over time as a privileged or “in-between” space. These studies lent themselves to historiography or the critical use of archives and artifacts. For example, Bernadette Baker (2001) has looked closely at the construction of childhood over time in her magisterial *In Perpetual Motion*. Here, she looked closely at the ways notions of “the child” as a discrete category and psychological entity emerged and the role played by different philosophers and pedagogical strategies. While not about popular culture per se, these kinds of studies allow us to adopt the kinds of categories employed to think about youth. Historical approaches can be quite helpful in this regard.

Ideological inquiry lends itself to textual criticism—that is, close and politically engaged readings of “texts” broadly constructed. This work looks at the social, political, or material forces that can be read off of such texts. Often, this work has stressed the ways popular culture can reinforce particular notions of inequality. For example, Henry Giroux has long explored the ways popular culture can reinforce notions of gender or racial inequity. In books such as *The Mouse That Roared: Disney and the End of Innocence* (2001), Giroux looked at the ways Disney icons such as Pocahontas erase brutal history of colonization and present a simple, sanitized version of U.S. history. In this book and others, Giroux looked to “decode” texts for their deeper political and ideological content. This kind of ideological critique lends itself to the critical, polemical essay form.

Phenomenological and ethnographic inquiry lends itself to the personal introspection and reflection long associated with curriculum studies as well as deep, empirical immersion in particular sites and settings. This includes the use of interviews and observations to build rich descriptions of how young people use popular texts. For example, Leif Gustavson’s (2007) important book *Youth Learning on Their Own Terms* looks carefully at the creative practices of three youth and their respective investments in zine writing and slam poetry, graffiti writing, and turntable work as they traverse multiple sites in and out of school. Gustavson focused on the deep learning that takes place in these multiple sites as well as how that learning is mediated by these youth’s classed and raced positions.

Applied inquiry tends to lend itself to action-type studies—the effort to implement and document particular programs around popular culture in the classroom. These studies tend to be aimed at teacher educators. Marc Lamont Hill’s (2009) *Beats, Rhymes, and Classroom Life* discusses a “Hip Hop Lit” class Hill helped develop and implement with a teacher at a Philadelphia high school. The class was divided into several modules, which covered various themes and facets of hip hop. In this book, Hill documented how he opened up important discussions with these youth around the politics of nostalgia, the importance of storytelling, as well as the ever complex notion of “realness.” Popular culture played a very important role in thinking through the complexities of this program.

Future studies of popular culture will have to “globalize” these methods in new ways. Just as popular culture now “travels” between platforms and across time and space, our methods must be similarly mobile. These are concerns I have taken up in recent work, including *Studying Urban Youth Culture* where I (along with Lois Weis) argued that we must now always imagine our objects of inquiry as multisited (Dimitriadis, 2008). This will be the great challenge of the next generation of scholars of popular culture and the curriculum. Future work will have to look across single sites and think more relationally about texts and practices. “Globalizing” the study of popular culture is the challenge of the next generation of curriculum studies scholars and practitioners.
References and Further Readings

At the turn of the 21st century, as the explosion of digital media propelled the country headlong into a new technological revolution, American K–12 education experienced a marked shift toward standardized testing and corporate organization. More than a decade later, the digital revolution has transformed American culture as our daily lives have become more media-saturated, technologically driven, and globally interconnected. As evidenced in the July 2013 media attitudes survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, digital media has revolutionized the way we obtain and share information. While 69% of Americans still look to television as a main source of national and international news, the percentage of the general public who rely on the Internet for the same purpose has reached an all-time high of 50% (Caumont, 2013). Perhaps even more revealing is the finding that 71% of those aged 18 to 29 report the Internet as their primary news source, surpassing television at 55%. The Pew Research Center data also show that social media has grown as a source of news and that more adults are consuming news on mobile devices (Caumont, 2013). These statistics illustrate the hypermedia landscape that patterns the lives of today’s youth, who are increasingly relying on social media networks and mobile applications as primary sources of daily information.

Meanwhile, relatively little has changed in schooling. While some of the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 have been relaxed, competitive federal funding that is dependent on the “voluntary” adoption of the Common Core State Standards has perpetuated high-stakes accountability. Although proponents claim the standards—which as of January 2015 had been adopted in 43 states, the District of Columbia, and four territories—will enhance critical thinking and provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in college and careers, it is yet unclear whether content demands will allow teachers to address the skills students need to navigate complex forms of media that dominate everyday lives. Competencies of contemporary media literacy are not adequately assessed by multiple-choice tests due to the need for students to use and produce media, as well as to understand its role in society (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012). While literacy enables us to understand, interpret, and use critical media literacy in the digital age

Julie Maudlin
Georgia Southern University

Daniel Chapman
Georgia Southern University
print-based texts, media literacy allows us to engage with multimodal texts, which communicate a message using more than one channel of communication, including elements of video, audio, and print. The wide variety of different screen-like environments in digital media, including text messaging, search engines, social media platforms, and mobile applications, demand literacy of printed text and images, both still and moving (Buckingham, 2003; Hobbs, 2007; Kist, 2004; Kress, 2003). According to Renee Hobbs (2011), developing multimodal literacies requires competencies of curiosity, inquiry, interpretation, synthesis, and expression.

A decade after he began writing about contemporary media culture, Douglas Kellner took up the issue of critical media literacy in K–12 schooling. Kellner and Jeff Share (2005) examined the concepts, debates, organizations, and policies that characterized the state of media education, defining critical media literacy as “cultivating skills in analyzing media codes and conventions, abilities to criticize stereotypes, dominant values, and ideologies, and competencies to interpret the multiple meanings and messages generated by media texts” (p. 372). They addressed the appalling absence of media education in K–12 schooling in the United States, which contrasts starkly with the ubiquity of media culture in everyday American life. Kellner and Share (2005) advocated “transformative pedagogy” (p. 4) for media curriculum. While the pervasiveness of television, films, popular music, and, especially, advertising would seem to make the need for such pedagogy hard to deny, Michael Hoechsmann and Stuart Poyntz (2012) pointed out, “Despite these terrific potentials . . . there continues to be a prevailing sentiment of doubt on the part of some key educational stakeholders” (p. 8). Because of such doubts, a reconceptualization of traditional education is not likely to be realized until media literacy is accepted as a necessity for participation in a digital democracy.

**Critical Media Literacy in Context**

In 2005, Kellner and Share noted: “While some major inroads have been made . . . most teachers and students in the USA are not aware of issues involved in media literacy education” (p. 369). Little has changed. Even though media systems are primarily image-based and/or multimodal, American education still relies almost exclusively on written texts. The idea of studying moving images, still images, and audio clips as legitimate texts is still not taken seriously. In spite of policy makers’ claims that the Common Core State Standards prepare students for the literacy demands of the 21st century, a 2012 study concluded that the “exclusion of the Internet as a central text in the standards and accompanying documents will underprepare students for 21st-century literacy demands and has the potential to further alienate at-risk readers” (Drew, 2012, p. 324). The pedagogical necessity of media literacy, however, is not a new concept. Marshall McLuhan (1962, 1964), one of the earliest proponents of media literacy, was interested in the ways media literacy impacted the interpretation of the world of the first generation that grew up with television. His studies asserted that electronic media would have a similar transformative impact on modern society that typography had on the Renaissance. The study of media and popular culture flourished and grew into multiple fields, and by the 1990s the call for media literacy education gained momentum. By 2000, interest in media literacy attracted governmental attention and spawned numerous professional organizations and institutional foundations, but those developments had little impact in U.S. classrooms.

Considering the ways in which media has transformed American society, the epistemological imperative of media literacy should be a clear justification for its inclusion in U.S. schools’ curriculum; however, there are political forces that perceive critical media literacy as a threat. Both schools and media transmit information to large swaths of people, and as Asa Briggs and Peter Burke (2009) reminded us, this is political: “The need for information in every age has been associated with the effort to control the present and the future for personal, political, and economic reasons” (p. 214). Both media and education walk the murky territory between people’s dreams of liberation and the desire of powerful elites to control those dreams. Media and education are subjected to forces of nationalism—loyalty to country and unity of its citizens—despite controversial and often destructive actions done in the name of country and citizenship. Critical media literacy acts as resistance because it fosters “signaling, generating, and building dialogue around particular power
imbalances and inequalities” (Abowitz, 2000, p. 878). In order to meaningfully advance media literacy in education, policy makers must embrace critique as an essential competency.

From Network to Networked: Critical Media Literacy in Theory

The study of codes and conventions, dominant values, and multiple meanings became important during the early years of television’s rise, but the interpretations and relational possibilities were specific to the centralized network system (ABC, CBS, NBC) that existed during McLuhan’s time. Critique of codes and conventions of the network system focused on viewer passivity (Healy, 1999; Mander, 1977), reliance on stereotypes and dominant ideologies, and ways that it limited citizen interaction on important issues.

Robert Kubey and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990) concluded that television left people feeling more passive than any other activity performed while awake. The passivity of television exemplifies McLuhan’s famous assertion that “the medium is the message.” McLuhan and Fiore (1967) contended that codes and conventions of any given medium encourage certain truths, possibilities, and relationships to form while excluding others. For example, our conventional living room arrangement points everyone’s attention to the television, as opposed to an arrangement where chairs and couches face each other. This argument was vociferously articulated in Neil Postman’s 1985 polemic, Amusing Ourselves to Death, in which he asserts that we are oppressed by our addiction to entertainment. Postman argues that print culture encourages an active, rational engagement with the texts, while image culture reduces everything, including politics, to entertainment. Postman observes that television watching is not conducive to questioning, discussion, or critique; instead, it creates passive bodies and passive minds.

Seeking revenue necessitated a primary focus on audience size, which encouraged producers to rely on stereotypes and dominant ideologies to attract large numbers of viewers. Having only three major networks owned and operated by wealthy corporations limited the range of public discourse and left out important controversial minority and dissident voices. In Manufacturing Consent, Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (1988) wrote that major U.S. networks “carry out a system-supportive propaganda function by reliance on market forces . . . and self-censorship” (p. 306). Their “propaganda model” examined how the need for advertising marginalized important social topics like state crimes, racism, gender stereotypes, poverty, and corporate corruption. As Johnston (2000) explained, a media system based on profit serves as a bullhorn for the wealthy and powerful.

During the last 2 decades, however, there has been a shift toward a decentralized networked media system, a more complex, interconnected, and participatory assemblage of television, social media sites, radio, movies, blogs, and newspapers. While the network system allowed only unidirectional and hierarchical communication—from commercial network to public audience—the networked system promised to be more active, rather than passive, more open to marginalized voices, and more capable of allowing multidirectional communication. Jerry Berman and Daniel Weitzner (1997) eagerly explained these egalitarian features of user-generated content and prioritization that could wrest control of the media system from powerful corporations and place it in the hands of the people.

Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Representation

Understanding the pedagogical implications of a networked media system requires us to consider the political, social, cultural, and economic contexts within which digital media operates. In order to illustrate the landscape, a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) using both quantitative and qualitative information is necessary. However, because the landscape of digital media is vast, encompassing many forms and modes, we narrow our detailed description to social networking, as it is the fastest growing phenomena in the digital age, and utilize that phenomenon to illustrate the ways that critical media literacy is explored and represented in the digital age.

A statistical analysis shows that 71% of Internet users in the United States, or 58% of the adult population, are on Facebook (Pew Research Center, 2015). Other popular networking platforms, such as
Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Pinterest, continue to grow and the number of people using mobile devices to access social media sites has climbed into the billions. Today’s digital media landscape offers more opportunities than ever before for users, young and old alike, to engage virtually with others, not only through the dominant social media networks but also through message boards, gaming groups, fan fiction, blogs, podcasts, and peer-to-peer messaging platforms such as Skype, Kik, and Snapchat. Social media also provides new opportunities for engaging with “traditional” media, such as television, films, magazines, newspapers, and radio. Dual-screening, the practice of engaging with the Internet and the television simultaneously, has become prevalent, particularly for live events (Caumont, 2013). Many popular live television programs, from news broadcasts to reality talent competitions, now invite real-time viewer interaction through various social media platforms. The lucrative potential of hashtags, retweets, likes, and shares is not lost on marketers, who are investing heavily in blogging and social media (Stelzner, 2014).

Those who inquire to better understand these phenomena must become familiar with the existing terms to help guide them through the literature. Forums, blogs, archives, and messaging applications have produced what Henry Jenkins and colleagues (2009) refer to as a participatory culture, which is characterized by “relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby experienced participants pass along knowledge to novices” (p. xi). Users can freely create and distribute personal updates, news articles, instant photo collages, customized videos, personalized cartoon strips, and much more. This highlights how current media encourage user-generated content as opposed to content that serves corporate and commercial interests. This mix of media and users exemplified what Jenkins (2006) termed convergence or “the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want” (p. 2). In 2007 Aram Sinnreich coined the term configurable culture to emphasize how information is not only consumed by the audience but also actively rearranged in the form of mashups, fan fiction, etc.

These terms are particularly helpful in understanding the theoretical landscape surrounding the emergence of the Internet as an informal curriculum, the participatory potential of which gave rise to a vision of a media system that was created and maintained from the bottom up, freeing ourselves from the grip of filtered information and culture-generating machines with commercial interests (Benkler, 2006). This vision of the Internet held promise for the strengthening of democracy as it would allow a digital “town hall” to discuss and form ideas in a cauldron of opinions shared among the population, across ideological, class, racial, and even national boundaries. On the World Wide Web, anyone with an opinion on local, national, or world affairs would be able to create a blog and share their ideas with the world. Musicians could upload their music and build an audience from the grassroots. Movies could be filmed and edited with inexpensive technology and uploaded for public viewing and reaction. Thus, an engaged population creating cultural artifacts, sharing multiple interpretations, giving space for marginalized populations, and creating the narratives of society seemed possible, even likely, with this new technology (Berman & Weitzner, 1997; Buchanan, 1995).

Today, we have enough history with digital media to explore whether these early promises are coming to fruition. Such an analysis requires critical inquiry, which highlights those who are disenfranchised by current media and questions the Internet's democratic potential. All citizens do not have the skills and resources to fully engage in the cultural practices of social networking. According to a recent Pew Internet study, millions in the United States alone still lack Internet access (Zickuhr, 2013). Those with limited access tend to be older and less educated. According to the May 2013 survey, 49% of those who do not use the Internet are aged 65 or older, and while nearly all college graduates are online, 41% of adults without a high school diploma are not online. Proficiency at social networking demands “extended access to those technologies, a greater familiarity with the new kinds of social interactions they enable, a fuller mastery over the conceptual skills that consumers have developed in response to media convergence” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 23).
U.S. social networkers who are fully engaged in the new media technologies that Jenkins discusses are “disproportionately white, male, middle class, and college educated” (p. 23).

Historical inquiries help establish reference points for comparisons and changes over time. For example, shifts in social media participation can be observed in the rise and fall of Myspace, which emerged as the top social networking site in 2006. Initially established as a storage and sharing site for user-generated data, it developed into an entertainment and music-oriented network that allowed users to extensively customize their own home pages with music, graphics, and embedded YouTube videos. Myspace developers only realized after the 2003 launch of the site that they had enabled users to insert html code to change background colors and images, and this accidental feature became its trademark (Gillette, 2011). The highly configurable profile space, which visually surpassed the comment feed and messaging components, reflected a rising emphasis on user-driven content and consumer control (Wilson, 2006).

In contrast, when Facebook was launched worldwide in 2006, it lacked the aesthetic of Myspace. Initially developed as a means of connecting users within a closed academic network, Facebook was smaller than Myspace, but its more restrained tone was viewed more favorably by advertisers. As Rosenbush (2006) explains, Facebook’s controlled social network, which allowed only minimal personalization and required users to confirm their identity with a verified email address, helped “limit the more egregious exercise of free expression, the sort that can scare advertisers” (p. 9). The rise of Facebook marked a shift from user-generated content and creative expression toward an externally regulated social network within which content was to be liked, linked, shared, and circulated. Within weeks of Facebook’s debut as a publicly accessible social networking site, executives were courting advertisers, promoting sponsored messages that would appear in the news feed alongside status updates from other users (Morrissey, 2006). Unlike banner ads, which were situated in the margins of Myspace and Facebook, sponsored messages, and later “engagement ads” that allowed users to interact directly with brands, converged the distinctions of “friends” and advertisers. As Jenkins (2006) observed, sponsored messages were positioned as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understands. Not all participants are created equal. Corporations—and even individuals within corporate media—still exert greater power than any individual consumer or even the aggregate of consumers. (p. 3)

In 2008, Facebook surpassed Myspace as the world’s most popular social network. There are many factors that likely contributed to Facebook’s ultimate triumph, but there is no doubt that CEO Mark Zuckerberg’s marketing strategy played a significant role. In 2007, Zuckerberg announced a new advertising plan that would allow marketers to target individual Facebook users based on personal data gleaned from their profiles and activity on the site. This further enhanced the site’s convergent potential, harnessing the flow of content across multiple media platforms—brand profiles, video hosts, blogs, news aggregators, retail sites, and more—into a centralized network of millions, and later billions, of users. The shift from Myspace to Facebook illustrates how the storing, editing, using, and sharing of media content had shifted decidedly from the interests of users to the interests of corporations.

Given this shift, it is crucial to inquire into the underlying economics of social networking and its political implications. Like the network system, the networked system has become increasingly driven by advertising. For instance, in 2013, Google pulled in more than $50 billion in revenue, and 95% of this came from advertising (Taylor, 2014). Given the hopeful anticipation that characterized the early visions of the democratic potential of the Internet, many question whether these new media giants interfere with the promises of increased political participation, more diverse voices, and an end to network monopolies. McChesney (2013) believes that “the tremendous promise of the digital revolution has been compromised by capitalist appropriation and development of the Internet. In the great conflict between openness and a closed system of corporate profitability, the forces of capital have triumphed” (p. 97).

Although there continues to be space for noncommercial utilization of the World Wide Web, it exists primarily on the margins of all that is profit-driven. As a 2010 Wired article titled “The Web Is Dead” claims, it seems that we are no longer in an open Web environment, but more often in a semi-enclosed...
and profit-motivated app environment (Anderson & Wolff, 2010). We browse from Facebook to e-mail to Pandora, each application having externally limited functionality while being firmly connected to commercial interests. While there are millions of websites, Internet giants such as Google, YouTube, and Facebook dominate user traffic and advertising revenue. In 2010, the top 10 sites accounted for 75% of the page views on the Internet (Anderson & Wolff, 2010). Google, in particular, owns approximately 11.7% of the global advertising market and is garnering half of all mobile Internet advertising revenue (Taube, 2013). Hindman (2009) argues that the “low barriers of entry” necessary for a competitive market have never been present in the web environment, and in fact, the economies of scale are similar to those of “natural monopolies,” like utilities. This means that the initial investment to produce a competitive search engine or social networking site is very high, but, once created, the costs of distribution are relatively low, which constitutes perfect conditions for monopolies to flourish.

At the forefront of the booming online advertising market is immersive advertising, which includes techniques such as sponsored news feed messages, “promoted tweets,” “advergames,” and engagement ads, all of which integrate advertising with online content so that users cannot easily distinguish between the two (Hochschmann & Poyntz, 2012). Central to the strategy of immersive advertising is the practice of data mining, the process that allows advertisers to customize immersive elements to the specific interests of individual consumers. Google recently announced plans for a more powerful user tracking system that would work across desktop computers, tablets, and smartphones and enable advertisers to more accurately target users, a move that would further expand the company’s global market share (Peterson, 2013). As Siva Vaidhyanathan (2011) observed,

We are not Google’s customers: we are its product. We—our fancies, fetishes, predilections, and preferences—are what Google sells to advertisers. When we use Google to find things out on the Web, Google uses our Web searches to find things out about us. (p. 3)

The same is true of our interactions on social networking sites: When we socialize with friends and family online, perhaps discussing movies, television shows, politics, and consumer goods, Facebook is creating the profile it will sell to corporations. While it may seem like a private platform to interact with friends and family, these social interactions are surveilled and shaped into meaningful consumer profiles to be sold to the highest bidder.

Why do we tolerate, even to some extent welcome, corporate appropriation and its obvious invasion of our privacy? In asking questions about user attitudes, phenomenological studies are possible avenues for exploration: digital ethnographies, interviews, surveys, etc. However, a question like why do we act against our own interests needs a more theoretical exploration of markets and behavior. Andrew Bard Schmookler (1993) explains how the market system operates according to a logic of its own to shape everything from the physical and social landscape to human values, all to serve its own purposes. He explains that we are driven to accept corporate controls because the market “is our servant, attending well to many of our needs. This helps to lull us into a comfortable state in which we do not bother to see how the system is also our master” (p. 5). We may appreciate the convenience of only seeing advertisements that address our interests, the ease with which we can buy the things we want, and the immediacy with which we can obtain the knowledge we desire. We may enjoy the wide range of commodities we can purchase and value the functionality of the sites, applications, and devices funded with advertising revenue. Yet, our interactions with this vast range of customized technologies reinforce the dominant ideologies of the market system. In a digital consumer culture, passivity and complacency is a threat to both individual and collective agency. We cannot expect the Internet to see its democratic potential in spite of our own complicity in the undermining of free expression and noncommercial interests. Rather, as Schmookler so poignantly concludes, “We will gain the power really to choose our future only when we understand the ways in which what the market system gives us is the illusion of choice” (p. 5).

Our lives are immersed in media, which act as a contemporary curriculum both in and out of school. We may not be cognizant of the ways it influences the relationships we form with each other and our understandings of the world. As Albert Einstein (1956/1995) said, “What does a fish know about the water in which he swims all his life?” Multiple forms of
inquiry help us gain a critical distance necessary to ask critical questions and make personal and public meaning.

**Toward a Critical Media Literacy Curriculum and Pedagogy**

Critical pedagogues such as Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, and Peter McLaren have long called for educators to take up “critique as a mode of analysis that interrogates texts, institutions, social relations, and ideologies as part of the script of official power” (Giroux, 2011, p. 4). Central to Giroux’s vision for American students is the ability not only to “read the world critically” but also to “change it when necessary” (p. xxxiv). We may not be able to alter the immersive, intrusive corporate presence that pervades our digital media interactions, but by attempting to understand the digital spaces we inhabit, we can reclaim our individual agency by changing the way we think about digital media.

Kellner and Share’s (2005) model for critical media literacy demands analysis of media codes and conventions, the ability to criticize dominant values and ideologies, and interpret multiple meanings and messages generated by media texts. As the wealth gap continues to increase, we must interrogate the pervasive multimodal texts as part of the market system that underlies the information superhighway. As Hoechsmann and Poyntz (2012), as well as many other critical pedagogues, media scholars, and literacy proponents, asserted, media education should create a space for dialogue that can help sustain democracy by ensuring access and participation for those who are marginalized. While scholarly readings of popular culture and smart mainstream commentaries on technological trends are not without value to the advancement of critical media literacy, they are not enough. We must also adopt critical approaches that draw “attention to those voices and bodies (including people who are homeless, refugees, migrant labor, sex trade workers, and others) that are regularly disappeared from view in the mainstream press” (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012, p. 200). Closing the gap between access and participation also requires allowing students to engage with different forms of digital association, community, and collective action in order to recognize and confront the structural injustices of a hypercommercialized networked system. Only by acknowledging the necessity of these critical competencies and bringing them fully into the public educational discourse can we shatter the illusion of choice and redefine the ways we think and act in a participatory culture.

**References and Further Readings**


Peterson, T. (2013). What you need to know about Google’s plan to replace cookies. *Advertising Age*, 84(33), 8.


PART II

TEACHERS AS CURRICULUM
Introducing Part II: Teachers as Curriculum

The teacher is an important dimension or commonplace of curriculum; however, it cannot be comprehended in any full sense without perceiving its interrelationship with and dependence upon three other commonplaces (subject matter, learners or students, and milieu) along with the need to continuously rebalance the relationship among these four commonplaces in the deliberations of policy makers and educators. Thus, those involved in any educational situation must ask: How do teachers and the subject matter influence one another? How do the subject matters and the students affect one another? How does the milieu or environment have mutual influence with the subject matter? Moreover, how do teachers in any given setting influence each other? It is necessary, too, to realize that answers to these questions and others that flow from them are never final but always in the making. Further, it is important to ask, within the category of teachers, how subcategories of teachers influence each other. How, for instance, do teacher-activists or those engaged in pedagogy influence teacher deskilling or teacher bashing, or how does teacher bashing or deskilling curtail or fuel pedagogical orientations and activism? Similarly, how does the current emphasis on testing and evaluation influence teachers as cultural workers or as improvisational artists, and vice versa? How do all of the conceptions of teachers relate to teacher education? How do race, class, and gender influence teachers or how are race, class, and gender influenced by any of these conceptualizations of teachers? To what extent do you think teachers are, in fact, an embodiment of the curriculum? What other questions emerge for you as you read each of the chapters in Part II?
Do you remember a special teacher? When asked this question, most people can look back into their school days and answer “yes.” What is remarkable in people’s descriptions of an important teacher is that they remember not the teacher’s professional test scores; not the student’s standardized test scores; not the benchmarks reached in math or English; not the teacher’s impact on college admission or getting a job. What is memorable is the person of the teacher in the classroom interacting with subject matter and students in varied contexts.

Plato, Comenius, and John Dewey, as well as great religious figures like Christ and Buddha, all knew that there is, in fact, no curriculum without the teacher.

A perspective of the teacher as curriculum incorporates an understanding of teachers’ crucial roles in shaping the curriculum that is lived out in schools among students, school administrators, parents and/or caregivers, and other school community members. A focus on teacher as curriculum raises to the forefront questions regarding what is planned for instruction in schools; why and by whom; and the relationship among planned curricula, taught curricula, and learned curricula. Dewey (1938) argued for the need to recognize the intertwining of experience with education. If experience is indeed educational, then there is a need to deliberate over the experiences that teachers organize in classrooms for learning. There is further a great need to uncover teachers’ own personal and professional experiences as a means of uncovering the ways in which educators might impact student learning. In particular, narrative, in various modes, has evolved as a means for both inquiring about teachers and teaching curriculum and as a means of expression for teachers as curriculum.

Contemporary Concerns About Teacher as Curriculum

Joseph Schwab (1962) declared the teacher to be one of the four desiderata, or commonplaces, of the
In recent times, however, the teacher’s role has been under attack, especially in the United States. Teacher bashing, accountability, teacher testing, scripted curriculum for teachers, and growing, exacting mandates have dishonored, “deskilled” (Giroux, 2012, p. 4), dismissed, and disheartened many teachers and limited students’ potential to “find a place in the educational sun” (Eisner, 2001, p. 372). Yet, a counter-trend also exists—recognition that the teacher is a key part of not just how but what is taught, often even indivisible from the school curriculum.

Who plans the curriculum? Who decides what students should learn? How do students learn new material? What relationship does schooling have with life? These questions point to the professional role of teachers with the curriculum. Nevertheless, recent trends in curriculum planning involve the resolution of curriculum decisions by education experts and others, often legislators, who are not classroom practitioners. Moreover, increasing standardization within the curriculum contributes to a narrowing vision of the work that educators do and the realms of possibilities for teachers’ selection of materials and activities. As a result, teachers are seen more and more as workers who are engaged in the business of transmitting predefined knowledge through a set of approved means, merely delivery people.

Policy makers in recent years, in response to the perceived failures of the schools and the cry for education as the national economic panacea, seem primarily concerned with student achievement, especially as evidenced on standardized tests. Moreover, policy makers concerned with the curriculum see problems with teaching and learning as centered around teachers. Thus, the itemization of numerous and specific standards, increasing standardization in teaching, and testing through standardized tests are promoted as answers for enhancing student academic success. The primary question of these policy makers seems to be: How can schools be held accountable for test scores?

Teachers, on the other hand, bring to classrooms a wealth of knowledge and experience that might shape positive learning environments for students. Teachers have knowledge of subject matter, of teaching, and of their own students and other contextual features of local curricular situations and interactions. They also bring their desires to contribute to communities. They might ask the following questions regarding improving teaching and learning in their classrooms and schools: How might lessons be planned that include the needs and interests of their students? How might learning be maximized given the special emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of the increasingly diverse students in their classrooms? How might students’ own cultures and languages be respected and acknowledged in the curriculum? How might parents and community members participate in children’s learning in meaningful ways? How might students maximize their learning while juggling extracurricular, financial, and familial responsibilities?

Teachers might also pose questions regarding the overall success of the students in their charge. They might ask: What activities and materials are worthwhile for preparing students for future societal participation? How can students best learn to be independent and lifelong learners? What are possible connections between civic and moral education and schooling? Although teachers are focused on aiding their students to achieve academic success, the questions they ask reach across broader goals that point to the personal, moral, and civic well-being of pupils. Teachers can and must respond to students as whole human beings.

Understanding the teacher as curriculum requires making sense of and accounting for the perspectives and questions of policy makers, teachers, students, and family members and/or caregivers, among others. The questions that are outlined in this section shed light on some of the multiple layers of the curriculum in contemporary classrooms; much more is at stake than test scores. The task of the teacher as curriculum is complex, interactive, multidimensional, and personal.

Context of Teacher as Curriculum

Controversy has long surrounded teachers and teaching, but criticism has been ongoing and especially intense since the A Nation at Risk report (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), through the enactment of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, and now with the Obama administration’s...
Race to the Top grant program, which prompted some states to use test scores to evaluate teachers. Teachers have been portrayed as the major cause of curriculum that lacks rigor and, in fact, the cause of decline of public education in the United States.

Standardized test scores have become the ultimate curricular goal; an effort to measure teacher success by student test scores is referred to as “value-added.” The traditional value of the teacher as thinker and creator of curriculum who constantly seeks to meet student needs has all but evaporated. Henry Giroux captured the situation by stating, “But this role of teachers, as both caretakers and engaged intellectuals, has been severely restricted by the imposition of a stripped-down curriculum that actually disdains creative teacher work while relegating teachers to the status of clerks” (2012, p. 3). Giroux argued that the current status of teachers is the result of a business model of education advocated by politicians wishing to privatize public education.

The mass media can be charged with responsibility as well. Somehow, much of the American public has simply come to accept the general devaluing of teachers, teacher education, and even the notion of “authentic” teacher development. Teachers are not seen as trusted professionals. At the same time, many would speak well of the teachers they know at their own children’s schools. Nevertheless, results of the devaluing of teachers nationwide have included increased bureaucracy, insufficient school funding (and in some states, such as Texas, reduced school funding, when increased enrollment and inflation are taken into account), significant teacher layoffs, and low morale. The problem of attrition among teachers remains great, as well, with 50% of teachers leaving the profession in just the first 5 years (Craig, 2014).

Compounding the burden of ongoing attacks on teachers are the factors making education in the United States increasingly complex. The demographics are changing as historically underrepresented groups grow and more students enter school speaking a language other than English. School funding remains severely limited and vastly unequal. Technology changes daily. The economy is uncertain. Yet, teachers, perhaps more than anyone, encounter these issues constantly in the faces of their students. Teachers are vital to a meaningful curriculum when they are allowed to act as professionals who plan, enact, assess, and revise curriculum.

Theory of Teacher as Curriculum

Teachers and curriculum were not always thought of as two separate and distinct entities. The *Institutio Oratoria* of Quintilian (1980), for example, grows from the personal knowledge and experiences of Quintilian, who in first-century Rome “met with great success as a teacher and was the first rhetorician to set up a genuine public school and to receive a salary from the state” (p. vii). Quintilian was both teacher and curriculum. The teacher was the wise, able person from whom one could learn philosophy, one’s trade, and much else. The teacher was and remains a model, the exemplar of the *curriculum in action*. Obviously, the teacher is a key part of the hidden curriculum (Jackson, 1990), the sense of values and moral contract that exist in schools. What the teacher knows and does matters; it also matters who the teacher is.

Moreover, a professional argument for the teacher as curriculum has been constructed over the years via shifting views on the roles and duties of educators among educators and policy makers in the United States. In *The Curriculum* (1918), generally seen as the first textbook on curriculum, Franklin Bobbitt argues for the need for teachers to take on the role of *curriculum discoverer*. This responsibility of teachers includes observations of real tasks in authentic contexts, the identification of learning objectives necessary for students to acquire to complete such tasks, and the creation of learning activities that are aimed at correcting knowledge incorrectly learned informally. This early view of teachers acknowledges the connection between student learning and teachers who were expected to select and facilitate the curriculum.

Dewey (1938) positioned his view of curriculum on students’ needs and interests, yet teachers were critical for ensuring that the curriculum captured and expanded upon such student interest and perceived needs. At the same time, Jane Addams (1908) highlighted the great significance for educators to include the cultures of students in the curriculum as a means of fostering especially immigrant students and to build bridges between the school and the family. Her view on teachers focuses on teachers as leaders of the curriculum, with students and family or community members as vital resources available for teachers in their work with curriculum.
In the 1960s, during the Sputnik era, curriculum again became a major public issue and the curriculum moved out of the purview of teachers. Instead, so-called subject matter experts in mathematics and science were sought out for the purpose of creating a curriculum that would enable youths to excel in these areas as a means of fighting against the perceived Communist threat (Franklin & Johnson, 2008). This perspective served to ignore teachers as central to curriculum. This discipline-centered view of curriculum further overlooked students' individual needs and the contexts of teaching and learning.

Schwab (1969) famously declared the state of the field of curriculum studies to be dying due to an overreliance on theories about curriculum and the use of experts outside of classrooms to decide the curriculum. He called for a need for a practical vision of curriculum that focused on real, rather than idealized, aspects of classroom life as a major source for curriculum planning. Moreover, he recognized the teacher as one of the main agents of the curriculum, and he argued for the need to include teachers in all curriculum deliberations.

Several students of Schwab have been responsible for turning a practical lens on the curriculum, which further served to cast a view of teacher as curriculum through the image of teachers as makers of the curriculum (Craig & Ross, 2008). For example, F. Michael Connelly and D. Jean Clandinin (1988) created the metaphor of “teachers as curriculum planners” to counter curriculum that is pushed through teachers and schools via a conduit. Instead, the authors saw teachers as planning the curriculum in response to their personal practical knowledge of teaching, subject matter, students, and schools. This knowledge is brought about through the experience of teaching and by formal study of teaching. In other words, teachers greatly affect the curriculum, and they work alongside students and others on curriculum landscapes to shape curricular situations and interactions in context. This standpoint on teachers and the curriculum is critical, as it recognizes teachers as having practical and formal knowledge of teaching, of students, and of subject matter content (Fenstermacher, 1994). If teachers are seen as possessing knowledge, then they are the professionals responsible for professional decisions and actions.

In addition, globalization and diversification of both teacher and student populations has highlighted the need for diversity within the curriculum. Christine Sleeter and Jamy Stillman (2005) displayed how standardized curricula might further institutionalize narrow conceptions of valid knowledge, exclude multicultural perspectives, and support a dualistic view of society between members of the majority culture and all others. Furthermore, Elaine Chan (2006) examined how teachers might create the curriculum in accordance with their experiences of culture with students, while Candace Schlein (2009) and Ming Fang He (2003) explored the effects of intercultural knowledge and experience on teachers’ curriculum interactions. In the face of growing diversity and cross-cultural movement in schools worldwide, teachers remain prime commonplacesthe curriculum who are necessary for mediating and enhancing curricula that embrace all students.

In contrast to the body of work underlining the teacher as curriculum, various national reports and books over the years have called for overhauling education; both state and federal mandates have resulted. Once again the planning and control of the curriculum has shifted out of the hands of teachers in favor of standards and standardization by nonpractitioners and politicians and business leaders. Nevertheless, many maintain that teachers are essential to curriculum.

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression**

**Forms of Inquiry About Teachers as Curriculum**

There are numerous forms of inquiry that support the view of the teacher as curriculum. Lawrence Stenhouse in the United Kingdom initiated action research as a form of investigation conducted by and for educators. Within the action research tradition of inquiry, teachers undertake studies that are rooted in their practices and areas of interest among students. As such, action research enables teachers to claim agency in their classrooms as knowers of the curriculum and of pedagogy who develop the curriculum on an ongoing basis in relation to inquiry findings. Paulo Freire focused on the teacher in Pedagogy of Freedom (1998). He declared of himself as teacher:

I teach because I search, because I question, and because I submit myself to questioning. I research because I notice things, take cognizance of them. . . .
I do research so as to know what I do not yet know and to communicate and proclaim what I discover. (p. 35)

Narratives highlighting teachers as researchers are further important sources of inquiry about teachers as curriculum. For example, the works of Vivian Gussin Paley (1995, 2000) outline her own efforts at understanding and improving teaching and learning in her early childhood education classroom. Other teacher narratives undertake a social justice orientation, such as Brian Schultz’s (2008) Spectacular Things Happen Along the Way, where he examines his interactions with diverse and urban students within the frame of a civic education student-led project. Ming Fang He and JoAnn Phillion’s work (2008) on personal, passionate, and participatory inquiry is another important area of this body of work.

The narrative inquiry tradition shaped by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) is a form of research that acknowledges the interaction of teachers and students’ experiences as the curriculum that is lived out in schools. Significant areas of research under the umbrella of narrative inquiry include Phillion’s (2002a, 2002b) and Chan’s (2006) research on narrative multiculturalism, and Betty Eng’s (2008), He’s (2002, 2005), and Schlein’s (2009, 2010, 2014) studies of cross-cultural teaching and learning. Narrative inquiry further includes the incorporation of various modes of expression, such as poetry (Li, 1998), dream stories (Schlein, 2007), and metaphor (Kitchen, 2011).

**Modes of Expression About Teachers as Curriculum**

Parker Palmer, in his personal account of teaching—The Courage to Teach (2007)—asked, “How can the teacher’s selfhood become a legitimate topic in education and in our public dialogues on educational reform?” (p. 3). Palmer includes the notion of teacher as curriculum in the book, which examines the teacher’s selfhood in relation to the practice of teaching based on teacher lore. William Schubert and William Ayers (1992) define teacher lore as follows:

Teacher lore includes stories about and by teachers. It portrays and interprets ways in which teachers deliberate and reflect and it portrays teachers in action. Teacher lore refers to knowledge, ideas, insights, feelings, and understandings of teachers as they reveal their guiding beliefs, share approaches, relate consequences of their teaching, offer aspects of their philosophy of teaching and provide recommendation for educational policy makers. (p. 9)

Teacher lore comes with a variety of purposes and in various media, from the personal journal of a new teacher struggling through the first year to the portrait of the heroic teacher in novels and Hollywood movies. Teacher lore can be fiction or nonfiction; it can range from brief true accounts of teachers to whole fictions. Teacher lore can be memoir, biography, case study, anecdote, or essay. Its history is ancient, but only relatively recently has the value of teacher lore been argued in the academic world.

The idea of teacher as curriculum is captured and encouraged in teacher lore that engenders ongoing reflection. Furthermore, teacher lore aids teachers to gain new understandings of and to ameliorate their practices (Schwarz & Alberts, 1998). After writing about a failed classroom lesson, a teacher may develop with his or her supervisor professional goals and means of accomplishing those goals as part of a narrative-based teacher evaluation program (Wood, 1992). Discussions of teacher films and books, such as Michie’s Holler If You Hear Me (1999), may serve as the initial content of collaborative professional development, as described by Gretchen Schwarz and Joyce Alberts (1998, pp. 127–132). An educator may write autobiography or read it in order to understand aspects of schooling. William Pinar (2004), who has enacted an autobiographical approach to curriculum, says, too: “The educational task is to take the cover stories we as Americans tell ourselves and look to the back pages. We must teach what the cover stories hide, exposing and problematizing the ‘hidden curriculum’” (p. 39).

Being validated as knowers is also important, especially in a time when teachers are so easily dismissed. Teacher lore can also confirm a teacher’s own reasons for creating a constructivist curriculum, such as Ayers does in his memoir, To Teach: The Journey of a Teacher (2010, 3rd ed.). A curriculum scholar may be inspired by the poetic, scholarly, many-layered study of self and curriculum in Hongyu Wang’s The Call From the Stranger on a Journey Home: Curriculum in a Third Space (2004). Policy makers, too, can certainly learn much from the frank teacher account of actor and temporary teacher Tony
PART II. TEACHERS AS CURRICULUM

Danza (2012), which challenges many current school practices and mandated curriculum reforms.

Conclusion: The Curriculum Is a Living Experience

The curriculum is not a static entity. In fact, undertaking a perspective of the teacher as curriculum includes acknowledging that the curriculum is a living experience. The curriculum is what happens in classrooms among teachers and students. It is shaped by teachers with students in connection with their experiences, interests, and interactions. Understanding the teacher as curriculum is especially important for ensuring that schools are equitable and socially just learning environments.

Culture is a critical aspect of teaching and learning. When students do not recognize their own cultures in the curriculum, they might ask questions about their own cultures in relation to the majority culture. They might ask: Why are all the names in textbooks and classroom materials English or European? Why are there so few children of color in textbooks? Why are halal foods not offered in schools? Why is there school on the Lunar New Year? Such questions might overlay hidden concerns about the value of students’ own cultures and languages in school and in society. The teacher as curriculum asks these questions along with students or attends carefully to those questions that might be spoken or silenced in order to ensure that students are curricular beneficiaries. Curriculum, as dynamic and complex experience, should not be legislated by governments, prescribed by policy makers, insisted upon by corporate interests, or evaluated by standardized tests.

The era of heightened curriculum standardization limits the enactment of the teacher as curriculum, especially in terms of formally accounting for students’ cultural needs. The potential cultural homogenization of the curriculum might lead to questions by students’ family members or caregivers. They might ask: How can their home cultures be supported in public schools? How might their customs, values, and religious beliefs be promoted and not subordinated through the curriculum? How can parents and/or caregivers include their voices about the curriculum? Understanding the teacher as curriculum is important for including the voices of all curriculum stakeholders. Finally, in a time when teaching has become more difficult, the vital role of the teacher as, in, and with the curriculum must become paramount. Human relationships lie at the heart of learning.

References and Further Readings


An intuitive approach to this chapter would be to pounce on commonly accepted, yet narrowly defined, definitions of teacher activist that conjure images of fist-pumping call-and-response marchers with picket signs and union cards. Being teachers in Chicago—a space many refer to as the epicenter of educational reform and resistance—we, the authors, resonate with these vivid images. Yet, for two related reasons, we have deliberately chosen to explore a broader conception of teachers as activists. The first reason is tactical, as this guide is geared toward an audience of newcomers to the field of curriculum, and we want to avoid giving off the wrong impression. The second reason is practical: There is some dissension, even between us, about what activism is, exactly. Does it happen inside or outside of classrooms, or both? Is it an individual or a collective activity, or both? Is a teacher an activist whenever resources and opportunities of the profession are leveraged for social change? What if teacher activism is quietly kept? Do less recognizable forms of opposition count? Most scholars cannot agree on responses to these questions, and neither do we.

In this chapter, we offer some useful generalizations about teachers as activists, including contemporary concerns and contexts, theoretical frameworks, and forms of inquiry that grapple with what the phrase might suggest.

**Contemporary Concerns and Contexts of Teachers as Activists**

Historically, U.S. schools serve specific public goals that teachers are instrumental in reaching. These goals can be broken down into three broad categories—political, social, and economic (Spring, 2013). For the political goal, teachers are asked to indoctrinate patriotic citizens and prepare future leaders. The social goal of public education asks teachers to cultivate students into responsible law-abiding citizens. The economic goal of public education in the United States commands teachers to prepare students for the labor force and the free market (Spring, 2013). However, teacher activists, who most consider a different kind of teacher, go about addressing these goals in unique ways.

Teacher activists are teachers who work toward socially just transformational change both inside and outside of the classroom (Giroux, 1988; McLaren, 2003; Picower, 2012). The politics of transformational change require challenging dominant interests and
the beliefs and practices that sustain power in everyday life (Cunningham, Findlay, Kadar, Lennon, & Silva, 1988). This change is not bound to, or defined by, the images of chaotic rabble-rousing demonstrations that the word activist may invoke in some. Instead, teacher activists are charged with being politically astute educators. Their work calls them to contribute to equity in outcomes for students, schools, and the wider community in metamorphic ways. Therefore, an activist orientation forms when educators understand their practice and themselves in relationship to the society in which they live and work (Bottery, 1996).

Understandings of teacher activism are centered on issues of equity, access, oppression, and power. However, teacher activism is not a body of literature in and of itself. Instead it draws on multiple fields, such as critical and culturally relevant pedagogies and antipressure, antiracist education while most closely relating to social justice education (Picower, 2012). These bodies of literature are the grounding for teacher activists to “examine matters of importance to them, to ask why things are the way they are, to analyze who benefits most from the status quo, and to explore possibilities for changing conditions they don’t like” (Hinchey, 2008, pp. 122–123).

The idea of teachers as activists can come with a sense of discomfort for the one who proclaims the title and for the one who stands witness to such a proclamation. Teachers, and those who come to know teachers in their simplest form, find comfort in teachers in their formally and informally assigned roles as a mentor, a parent, a guide on the side, a sage on the stage, a counselor. However, in the current era of standardization, accountability, and CORPORATIONS-STYLE schooling, the word activist often triggers an accelerated heartbeat and audible sigh. Because of these reactions, teacher activists often find themselves on the defensive with colleagues or supervisors for paying too much attention to happenings outside the classroom, presumably at the expense of what is going on inside it. Nevertheless, teacher activists continue to forge ahead despite the grumblings, relying on their understandings of the inextricable nature of inside/outside class occurrences and the interplay of their richness to add real-world context for teaching and authentic learning. Other stakeholders in the teaching profession—politicians and policy makers, for example—may claim that teacher activists proselytize and are too radical, too political. To that concern, teacher activists would say something akin to what Patricia Hinchey (2008) articulated: “There is no such thing as a politically neutral school; and, there is no such thing as a politically neutral teacher. The question is not whether particular ideologies are being promoted, but which ones are—and how well we like them” (p. 115).

### Theory of Teachers as Activists

Given these sociopolitical contexts, it is reasonable to wonder why teacher activists engage in this kind of work. Our answer borrows from sociologist C. Wright Mills (2000): “One’s life experiences feed one’s intellectual work” (p. 200). Teacher activists do not see a neat split between their work and their lives. They take both too seriously to allow such separation, and they want to use each for the enrichment of the other.

Teacher activists draw on a wide range of frameworks such as multiculturalism; critical theories; theories of care, spirituality, and love; multidimensional ethical theory; and theories of participatory democracy and antipressure education to make sense of and reconcile the duality of their lives and work. Michael E. Dantley and Linda C. Tillman (2010) captured many of these theoretical lenses with five specific characteristics that clarify the definition, application, and requirements of teachers as activists: (1) a consciousness of the broader social, cultural, and political contexts of schools; (2) the critique of the marginalizing behaviors and predispositions of schools and their leadership; (3) a commitment to the more genuine enactment of democratic principles in schools; (4) a moral obligation to articulate a counter-narrative or narrative of hope regarding education; and (5) a determination to move from rhetoric to civil rights activism. What teacher activists are after is social justice.

Teacher activists might be considered what some call transformative or public intellectuals. Public intellectuals recognize the demanding labor of pushing back on institutions that help to maintain the social, political, and economic status quo. They are compelled to engage these issues anyway on the basis of a particular principle assumed to be universal: “that all human beings are entitled to expect decent
standards of behavior concerning freedom and justice from worldly powers or nations, and that deliberate or inadvertent violations of these standards need to be testified and fought against courageously” (Said, 1994, pp. 11–12). There are no hard-and-fast rules to follow in expressing this commitment—in either overt or less recognizable ways. But as public intellectuals, teacher activists take on a responsibility “to raise embarrassing questions, to confront orthodoxy and dogma (rather than to produce them), to be someone who cannot easily be co-opted by governments or corporations, and whose raison d’être is to represent all those people and issues that are routinely forgotten or swept under the rug” (p. 12). The core of activist teaching and inquiry “must be human knowledge and human freedom, both enlightenment and emancipation” (Ayers, 2006, p. 87). At the bottom of this is a recognition that education can and should be for enlightenment and liberation.

However it is defined, in order for teachers to meaningfully ground their work in activism, certain resources are necessary. Catherine Marshall and Maricela Oliva (2010) argue that teachers “need strategies, revolutionary ones in some contexts, for rethinking and taking leadership for social practices to better meet diverse students’ needs. Also educators need the language to translate intellectual contexts into practice and experiential understandings. They need guidance, encouragement, examples, and support to practice leading discussions with community groups and politicians” (p. 4). They also need scholarship, large bodies of interdisciplinary research to lean on for sustenance and perspective.

Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression

A long tradition of inquiry for social justice has been strengthened over the past 2 decades by a purposeful focus on teachers and their activism. Much recent writing has combined philosophical, historical, and narrative musings about teacher activists in practice. For instance, William Ayers, To Teach (2001/2010); Lisa Delpit, Other People’s Children (1995/2006); Herb Kohl, I Won’t Learn From You (1993); Gregory Michie, Holler If You Hear Me (1999/2009); Vivian Paley, White Teacher (1979/2000); and Therese Quinn and Erica Meiners, Flaunt It! (2010) would assist teacher activists to know about the conditions and strategies. Kevin Kumashiro, Against Common Sense (2009); Ladson-Billings and Tate, Education Research in the Public Interest (2006); and Marshall and Oliva, Leadership for Social Justice (2010) would help teacher activists to navigate the constraints and possibilities of justice work. William Ayers, Teaching Toward Freedom (2004b) and Teaching the Personal and the Political (2004a); Rick Ayers and William Ayers, Teaching the Taboo (2011); William Ayers, Jean Ann Hunt, and Therese Quinn, Teaching for Social Justice (1998); William Ayers, Kevin Kumashiro, Erica Meiners, Therese Quinn, and David Stovall, Teaching Toward Democracy (2010); and bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress (1994), Teaching Community (2003), and Teaching Critical Thinking (2010) would invite teacher activists to consider the core of inquiry to be “human knowledge and human freedom, both enlightenment and emancipation” (Ayers, 2006, p. 87). Across these texts, the personal essay is a privileged mode of expression, or what distinguished essayist Phillip Lopate (1995) appropriately called “a mode of thinking and being” (p. xii).

“At the core of the personal essay,” Lopate (1995) noted in The Art of the Personal Essay, “is the supposition that there is a certain unity in human experience” (p. xxiii). In contrast to the formal essay, the personal essay is characterized by informality, an intimate style, autobiographical content, and a conversational tone. The author of a personal essay “seems to be speaking directly into your ear, confiding everything from gossip to wisdom,” telling about himself and, to some degree, about all of us (p. xxiii). For example, Ayers (2001/2010) opened To Teach with this:

Why teach? And why teach now? Hasn’t anyone told you not to teach—and mentioned, by the way, that teaching is excruciatingly hard work and that you will never receive the pay or the community respect you will so richly deserve? Why do you persist? (p. 1)

Ayers (2001/2010) broached an answer by explaining why he writes—confessing sheer egoism, aesthetic enthusiasm, historical impulse, and political purpose—and drawing parallels between the urgency of teaching and of writing in this particular moment, all before tacking back and forth from exploring the contested space of schools to revisiting his own journey in them. There is a disarming accessibility in the
Teachers as Activists

20. Teachers as Activists • 163

and sharing—programs, policies, and strategies for how to do and proliferate activist teaching.

Of course, there is also a wider audience for teacher lore (Schubert & Ayers, 1992). The audience includes students, parents, community members, educational technocrats, and policy makers with the purse strings and institutional power to act upon what they have read: small local stories written to shed light on and shape something big. Such forms of inquiry and modes of expression, and others that we have not explored (e.g., social media), deepen our knowledge of epistemologies, frameworks, and possibilities for activist teaching.

This brief chapter paints with broad brush strokes a picture of teachers as activists. We have presented an overview of scholarly discourse about the defining characteristics of teacher activists, including contemporary concerns and relevant contexts, theories, and forms of inquiry. It is worth noting, in conclusion, that the term teacher activists is sometimes conflated with the expression “social justice educators.” Much like the discord about the meaning of activism, a number of distinctions can arguably be made between “teacher activists” and “social justice educators,” specifically in terms of the extent and nature of out-of-school activities for change. We have not found utility in making such a demarcation, nor did we intend to advance arguments on either side. Instead, we provide an introductory explanation of who teacher activists are, what they do, how and why.

References and Further Readings


change: The politics and practice of organizing. Toronto, ON, Canada: Between the Lines.
Teachers and Pedagogy for Communal Well-Being

Nathalia E. Jaramillo
Kennesaw State University

Since the onset of formal, primarily Western, systems of education, teaching has been informed by a set of social relations that are deeply imbedded in a colonial–capitalist history and legacy. The first schools to emerge in the United States, for example, overtly implemented differentiated and exclusionary curricula and instructional practices to reproduce a stratified social order. An elite pedagogy based on the “classics” was offered to the sons of the upper classes, whereas young girls, indigenous people, immigrants, and the children of slaves were either excluded from education altogether or forcibly assimilated into their predeter- 
mined roles as housewives, domestic servants, or laborers. Those early days of reproducing social roles (in sociological terms, social reproduction) and systems of classification established the foundation for a global education system that would carry the seeds of control and indoctrination, but would also develop into an emancipatory space replete with possibilities. One of those possibilities is the development of pedagogy based upon the ideals of reciprocity; an ethic of care; a reconfiguration of the relation between self, community, and society; and an openness to previously silenced knowledge forms. This type of pedagogy is anchored in the notion of communal well-being.

Education has played a central role in the formation of societies and evolving conceptions of nationhood for millennia. It is firmly linked to the identity of a nation and forms part of what Louis Althusser (1971) called “ideological state apparatus” (p. 143). The institution of schooling is integral to producing the overarching belief systems, values, and social and economic practices of a nation. Althusser, like the historical–materialist thinkers who preceded him, argued that children learned basic techniques and knowledge in schools to prepare them for work in society. In addition, schools transmitted the rules of good conduct, morality, respect, and civic and professional conscience (Althusser, 1971). In other words, education was about the reproduction of skills, habits of mind, and forms of orderly conduct required by class domination in capitalist society.

History teaches us that in capitalist society there are those who accumulate wealth, those who live in dire poverty, and another segment of the population who fall somewhere in between. Within this social system education is (mis)conceived as one of the main mechanisms by which the distribution of opportunity (i.e., wealth) can take place. In general, politicians and ordinary citizens alike argue that education can ameliorate society’s ills and bring more stability to an unequal social order. For this syllogism to gain
meaning, two assumptions about the relationship between education and capitalism need to be in place. First, there is the belief that the distribution of wealth can happen in spite of historically entrenched systems of social stratification in capitalist society and, second, that education can undo its own legacy of differential treatment for the poor, indigenous, Black, Brown, and colonized.

At a (sub)conscious level, teachers transmit messages about the meritocratic and seemingly color-blind structure of capitalist society to their students through the curriculum, methods of instruction, and systems of reward and punishment that situate students along a social continuum. While much has changed since Althusser first described the ideological nature of education, it is still the case that schools transmit values, skills, and knowledge(s) to support the dominant and overarching social and economic systems of society. Flash-forward to the 21st century and the primary economic system is still capitalist, yet with a twist. The capitalism of today is highly unfettered, leading to increased inequality between the poor and the rich, and a rage for individualism that belies our collective responsibilities to one another and the wider society. The underlying belief system within capitalist schooling is that when students work hard enough they can achieve academic success. Through testing and standardization, students are taught that their individual achievement is both their responsibility and the most important objective in learning. Textbooks that promote one-sided presiding views (and at other times, revisionist interpretations) of history, primarily grounded in Western and Eurocentric philosophy, teach students that rational and progressive actions depend upon the White elite. Instrumentalist and skills-based teaching methods let students know that their creativity and unique talents do not have a place in the classroom. Teachers are rarely given the time to consider the underlying intents of their pedagogical practice, and the student experience is hardly interrogated.

This chapter examines teachers and pedagogy within the overriding structure and relations of a colonial–capitalist society. Pedagogy refers to the theories and practices that inform teaching and learning approaches. Pedagogy also reflects the habits of thought that accompany teacher’s perceptions and ideas about the meaning and social context of learning. The argument established in this chapter is that in order for education to meet the needs of all learners, educators need to reconsider the aims and objectives of pedagogy within a deeper theoretical and philosophical scheme. New concepts and other frames of reference need to enter into the conversation and inform instructional practices and relationships to make education a humanizing process that builds upon learners’ potential. Through a historical and sociological analysis of education, a reconceptualization of pedagogy can take place. Specifically, this chapter sets forward a discussion on what it means for teachers and pedagogy to be in the service of communal well-being.

### Pedagogy in the Age of Standardization, Fear, and Profit

Teachers are expected to meet the economic demands of nations by producing an effective and competitive workforce while they also confront the needs of diverse populations. The concerns of communities are often eclipsed by the overwhelming power exercised by a historical legacy of social differentiation and relations of economic exploitation that wield their influence over education. Social groups have become increasingly polarized over time. The impact of religious difference, poverty, wars, economic policies that cause migration, and continued ethnic and racial strife weighs heavily on communities and nation-states. The relationship among teaching, learning, identity, and nation building becomes increasingly entangled in a broader web of social relations and can yield an array of policies and initiatives that potentially bring disorder to an already convoluted scenario. Efforts to standardize teaching and learning, for example, are encouraged on the pretext that standardization will ensure equality for a diverse population. Policy makers, who push standardized curricula that require teachers to deliver lessons literally by a script, pitch their efforts as a way of securing teacher quality. The underside of such standardization is, however, that the needs of students and communities, who confront increasing forms of social dissonance through poverty and racial segregation, remain unattended, and ultimately education continues on a path of relative disarray.

When local actors attempt to intervene in the politics of teaching and learning and make education
relevant and meaningful to the histories and contexts their communities face, pedagogy becomes a highly politicized issue. The tension arises when the needs of a community and the vision that accompanies education as a political act do not match the stated goals of a nation and its political sector. In other words, the dominant ideology—values and belief systems—of education are disputed. At times, pedagogy becomes so contested between dominant and subordinate social groups that it yields legal mandates that prohibit certain teaching practices. For example, in 2011 the Arizona state legislature banned Mexican American Studies (MAS) in public schools for its alleged un-American character. MAS had been in place for over 4 decades and put into practice a philosophy based on indigenous values and ethics (Rodriguez, 2010). Teachers worked collaboratively with students; the curricula included literature and philosophy written from the standpoint of marginalized sectors of society; and students were encouraged to make learning relevant and meaningful to the needs and contexts of their communities. In response, the state legislature found the program potentially treasonous (for allegedly advocating the overthrow of the U.S. government) and definitively anticapitalist as the logic of collective well-being superseded the individualist and profit-themed interests of mainstream teaching and learning.

In other contexts with sundry degrees of social conflict, pedagogy can quickly turn into a question of life and death. Teachers in Colombia, for example, have in many instances been targeted and assassinated for the leadership role they assumed in displaced and war-torn communities, or for infusing what were considered political pedagogies in the classroom. The point here is that education globally is multifaceted and assumes unique characteristics given the sociopolitical and historical contexts of communities.

In addition to questions of identity and nation building, pedagogy in the 21st century is most strongly affected by capitalist economic interests and policies. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have their grip on the education of the so-called developing world, promoting pedagogical agendas based on economic servitude that force nations to become indebted to international financial organizations. As the relationship between pedagogy and capitalism becomes increasingly fortified, initiatives are begun intended to jump-start a nation’s economy or meet the will of corporate entities that profit from the adoption of commodified teaching materials and services. Recently, transnational financial institutions have advocated criterion-based pedagogy, learner-centered pedagogy, outcome-based pedagogy, and objective-based pedagogy in developing nations (see Klees, Samoff, & Stromquist, 2012). For the lay observer and educator on the ground, the cacophony of pedagogies creates a highly fluxed and chaotic educational scenario. With each passing year, a new educational fad makes its way into the classroom and, just as quickly, is replaced by something else.

Within this social panorama, teachers and pedagogy are caught in the crosshairs of meeting a nation’s civic demands and a community’s utopian visions for the betterment of their children and youth. Pedagogy is a generalized term that covers the roles of teachers and students, the academic objectives of teaching and learning, and the rules that guide the actual practice(s) of teaching: simply, it is the “delivery system” (see Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995/2000). Pedagogy is also the vehicle for incorporating (or excluding) students from education, the mechanism of either alleviating or aggravating social ills, and is a reflection of the philosophies and theories that underpin teaching and learning. The interrelationship between the act of teaching and the ideas that inform it is further complicated by the political, economic, historical, and social context of education, which is perhaps the reason why teachers when asked about pedagogy often respond with a bewildered grimace. It is difficult to provide a concrete definition of pedagogy given the complexity and interplay of forces that shape education’s form and content.

In an age of increased standardization of teaching, a continued legacy of unequal educational outcomes for historically dispossessed and marginalized groups, and new challenges in the wider social order—from ecological contamination to political, religious, and ethnic clashes across the globe—rather than losing significance, pedagogy gains in importance. Pedagogy captures the spirit of teaching and learning; it is the means through which teachers and students communicate, demonstrate understanding, establish community, and inquire, critique, and reflect on their local and global surroundings (Ayers, 1988). The challenge is in making pedagogy accessible and relevant to
teacher education, policy, practice, and curriculum, as well as encouraging teachers to sift through the ideological muck and think about the potential of education to bring about a more humane and just social order. Pedagogy should be connected with a purpose beyond the acquisition of skills and habits to perform successfully in the dominant social order. It so follows that the aim of this chapter is to examine teachers and pedagogy and their relationship to the ideals of a democratic, diverse, and socially just society to transcend the legacy of education of social stratification through, and by, education.

The Global Context of Pedagogy

Coloniality: The Enduring Logic of Social Differentiation

It is often the case that the conquest and colonization of the Americas in the 15th century is considered historically irrelevant, and perhaps even a necessary stage for industrial progress and development. What is often misunderstood, however, is that conquest and colonization established the conditions for an emerging world order that continues to infect our everyday experiences and relationships with others. In the 1980s sociologists discussed the colonial legacy of a global world order through world systems theory. This theory proposes that nations are situated either on the periphery or in the center of economic and social power. The “core” nations, such as those in Western Europe, the United States, and Japan, had control over a majority of the world’s wealth and resources, while those on the periphery, such as South America and Africa, experienced devastating poverty and a lack of proprietary rights over natural resources that could provide economic stability for the majority of their people. Notable Latin American sociologists and philosophers have since extended world systems theory to include the stratification of a global world order based not only on economic relations but also on racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, sexual, gendered, and epistemic dimensions. This latter group is referred to as decolonial thinkers.

Decolonial philosophers, sociologists, and educationalists draw our attention to the origins of social stratification in the world system. They indicate that the Spanish conquest of the Americas established the conditions for evolving systems of social differentiation. Christianization, patriarchy, Eurocentric ideas over knowledge and being (epistemology and ontology, respectively), racial constructs, the elimination of indigenous languages and ways of life, and the systems of classification that established acts of inclusion and exclusion (i.e., the civilized versus the savage) set into motion a universal structure of social difference. Peruvian decolonial sociologist Anibal Quijano (2000) referred to these processes as the “coloniality of power,” which suggests that the racial axis of the global social order has a colonial origin and character, but “it has proven to be more durable and stable than the colonialism in whose matrix it was established” (p. 533).

Education within formerly conquered territories and in nations with “semi-colonials” (a term used by notable African American philosopher W. E. B. Du Bois [1988, p. 230] in reference to the segregation, poverty, violence, discrimination, and exploitation of African Americans in the United States) plays a role in reproducing the colonial legacy. Various education theorists and researchers have documented the ways that dominant views on race, ethnicity, culture, language, sexuality, and knowledge continue to affect teaching, learning, and the experiences of marginalized communities. Research has also shown how teachers and administrators’ views of communities affect the school culture (Jaramillo, 2012). How teachers perceive and value a community relates to the ideas that are continuously reproduced about, and concomitantly by, the community. And these ideas have a material grounding in the coloniality of power. Coloniality, understood as the enduring logic of social differentiation, actively shapes the teaching encounter as it functions to operationalize racial, cultural, linguistic, and epistemological hierarchies.

Globalization

The collapse of the Berlin Wall separating East (communist) from West Germany (procapitalist and democratic) functioned at the level of an allegory for the onset of globalization. The ability to consume goods and move freely across once-contested borders turned into globalization’s raison d’être. The technological revolution, access to information via the Internet, and an epistemological break from abstract universalisms (i.e., communism) to concrete localisms
one that has a strong philosophical grounding in classic liberal theory (Harvey, 2005). Neoliberal capitalism widely affects the organization of social life and has a profound impact on conceptions of society, ways of life, values, and social relationships. The conceptual apparatus of neoliberalism, as noted by David Harvey (2005), appeals to our “intuitions and instincts, to our values and our desires” (p. 5). In general, people want the freedom to acquire more goods, live comfortably, and have flexibility of movement. In theory, neoliberal capitalism makes such promises. In very simple terms, neoliberal capitalism is about loosening the state’s grip on regulating the economy, providing corporations with rights of ownership historically allocated to individuals, and decreasing the role of the state in matters of public welfare.

In recent years, globalization has become a point of increasing focus in education research as the interplay among nation-states, societies, economies, and cultures has transformed the nexus of global interactions, structures, and power relations. Globalization has resulted in a seeming appreciation for worldwide ethnic and cultural diversity, yet it has also established the pathways for exporting and importing education as a commodity. Treated as such, key elements of education such as pedagogy are standardized to ensure quality and are replicated in multiple school settings, with nearly complete disregard for the context-specific conditions of communities most vulnerable to foreign intervention. The commercialization of education allows for private providers to access educational services and commodify teaching and learning (Burbules & Torres, 2000). The effects of globalization on education and public services in general tend to support what is now referred to as neoliberal capitalism.

Neoliberal Capitalism

Teachers in the 21st century confront a changing political economy and social structure rife with laissez-faire economics and the ideals of classical political economy. This is understood as the neoliberal turn; for education it translates into increased standardization and accountability measures intended to infuse teaching and learning with market principles. Since the 1980s, neoliberal capitalist policies have been the mechanism through which globalization operates. Neoliberal capitalism has steadily encroached on most aspects of public life, redefining the public–private realm and the role of the state in governance matters and ushering in an era of increased privatization of public services. Neoliberal capitalism is considered an epoch of capitalist society and
globalization, and neoliberal capitalism are mutually informative processes, not necessarily contingent but rather co-constitutive.

**Progressive, Critical, and Decolonial Pedagogies**

Many theoretical perspectives link the macrostructural elements of society with the concrete work of teachers. Since the early days of progressive pedagogy, theorists have been concerned with the wider purposes of education and ensuring that pedagogy reflects and contributes to democratic ideals and goals. Most notable is John Dewey, who advocated for pedagogy to be participatory, experimental, scientific, rational, and connected to students’ real-world experiences. The progressive framework established the importance of communication in the teaching encounter, providing students the opportunity to relate and build upon their existing knowledge and experiences in the classroom. The centrality of communication in the classroom aimed to uncover student experience as the basis for intelligent problem solving.

Pedagogically, this translated into establishing community in the classroom, hands-on and experiential learning, and problem-solving techniques. The idea was that, if education was to support democracy, then the qualities and characteristics of democratic citizens needed to be fomented in the classroom. Teachers were asked to abandon their authoritarian roles where they stood in front of a class telling students what to learn and how to regurgitate course material. Within the progressive tradition, teachers adopted the scientific method of observing, testing, and evaluating their teaching practices and they harnessed their energies toward making learning both participatory and relevant. In many ways, the classroom replicated idealized democratic society, where collaboration, communication, and shared understandings could yield an active and informed citizenry.

Progressive pedagogy had a number of effects on education, but most notably, it paved the way for other forms of student-centered pedagogy. When democracy is upheld as the central construct for education, then various social groups interpret democratic schooling from their contextual specificity. Culturally responsive pedagogy, for example, lauded the democratic ideal and articulated the cultural role of student experience. This form of pedagogy engages students’ personal and cultural strengths, intellectual capabilities, and prior accomplishments (Gay, 2010); it aims to cultivate students’ understandings of power relations in wider society (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Similarly, equity (or multicultural) pedagogies (Banks, 2007) attempt to resolve the relative absence of diversity in education by creating room for the expression of race and ethnicity in the classroom. In either case, the idea is that, for student experience to link up with democratizing the classroom, a group’s cultural history needs to be taken into account. Culturally responsive and multicultural pedagogies operate on the premise that students’ identities are closely linked with the history of their formation as a cultural group. Pedagogy, therefore, must demonstrate an understanding of students’ culture to provide access to learning.

**Critical Pedagogy**

Critical pedagogies, conversely, dispute that democracy is attainable in a capitalist society where wealth is concentrated in the hands of the few while the majority live in poverty. In critical pedagogy, culture cannot be understood separately from economic relations. Through ideology critique, denaturalizing what is assumed to be unchangeable, and deobjectifying the commodity culture of contemporary capitalism, critical pedagogy challenges educators to create spaces where students can more fully comprehend how new social relationships can be wrought for transcending the alienating conditions of late capitalism. As an emancipatory philosophy, critical pedagogy calls upon educators to (1) recognize the political nature of traditional schooling (Shor, 1992); (2) understand how educational reform must engage communities’ experiences and belief systems (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Valenzuela, 1999); (3) replace banking education and rote memorization practices with classroom and teaching practices that support critical thinking skills (Freire, 1970); (4) challenge the teacher–student hierarchy by employing a dialogic approach to pedagogy (Freire, 1970); (5) encourage student agency by providing students with the support and knowledge necessary to understand the world and change it in positive ways.
(Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987); and (6) support a dialectical perspective that embraces critical praxis—uniting theory and practice—as a tool for envisioning and fomenting social change through engaged inquiry, reflection, dialogue, and collective action (Freire, 1970; see Jaramillo, Ryoo, & McLaren, 2012). In sum, critical pedagogy challenges normative notions of representative democracy and advances student and community participation in the teaching encounter. Teachers in this instance are encouraged to develop the skills and understanding necessary to foster engagement with subject material and to connect knowledge with real-world issues.

**Decolonial Pedagogy**

Decolonial pedagogy is a relatively recent development in educational theory and is closely linked to the Latin American decolonial school of thought. It stems from an awareness of the enduring logic of the coloniality of power in schools. It applies not only to the subaltern groups struggling assiduously for the right to learn but also to groups in all school settings that find themselves in the throes of cultivating future generations of youth in a society increasingly marked by intolerance, violence among and between groups, hypernativism/nationalism, and a widening disparity between the rich and the poor (Jaramillo, 2012). Decolonial pedagogy requires teachers, students, and communities to participate in a rigorous critique of their social environment in order to identify the relations, practices, and belief systems that shape their social understandings. Theoretically, decolonial pedagogy stems from an acknowledgment that the world we inhabit carries the seeds of colonial–capitalism. In decolonial thought, Western conceptions of democracy are challenged on the basis that they espouse individualistic and profit-based aims and objectives. Decolonial thought is, therefore, anchored in other epistemological frameworks, value systems, and an ethical commitment to caring for others, the environment, and other ways of knowing. For example, the concept of living well, which anchors education policy in Bolivia and Ecuador, captures the essence of decolonial pedagogy. Living well establishes, among other relations, social and economic justice, participatory democracy, intergenerational justice, and transnational justice, a principle that highlights the importance of developing secure and peaceful relationships with other nations to ensure our collective well-being (see Carpenter & Jaramillo, 2014).

Decolonial pedagogy reflects curricula, teacher–student and school–community relationships, and instructional practices that support the notion of global, collective well-being. Prominent in decolonial pedagogy is Catherine Walsh and her analysis of interculturality. Walsh (2010) characterized interculturality as the production of knowledge(s) that include both marginal and dominant ways of knowing. For Walsh (2010), interculturality creates the space to generate new thinking about the social, political, ethical, and epistemic considerations of everyday life. In linking knowledge with the history, perspectives, worldview, and logic of the historically silenced and oppressed social subjects, dominant knowledge is transformed. Here, the point is that teachers and policy makers, for example, need to enter into dialogue with suppressed knowledge(s) and voices to advance educational practice in support of diversity. The intent is to refashion national and global education policy and practice with a new understanding of social difference. As opposed to pedagogies developed in service of the colonial–capitalist mode of social differentiation, decolonial pedagogy wields social difference in support of collective humanity. Rather than using education as a mode of indoctrination into singular worldviews and epistemologies, it aims to transform social structures and institutions that continue to inflict colonialist models upon aggrieved populations.

**Forms of Inquiry**

The challenges facing teachers and pedagogy have been well documented, and this chapter specifically sheds light on the context of teaching encounter within coloniality of power and advent of neoliberal capitalism. Education policy needs a moratorium on the fanaticism of testing and standardization that have commodified learning, supported instrumentalist teaching practices, and transformed education into a profit-generating enterprise. Schools are not businesses; they bear history, are places where people gather, and have an enormous potential to serve the immediate needs of a community and the long-term goals of societies.
To speak of forms of inquiry in service of developing education policy, practice, and relations in pursuit of communal well-being is relatively uncharted territory outside the Latin American region. It requires a movement within and beyond standard forms of inquiry that have previously been noted in curriculum theory (e.g., Edmund Short’s [1991] notable work in curriculum inquiry). In the points that follow, a select number of questions and methodologies are proposed to guide educational inquiry in pursuit of other frames of reference, logics, and values that could better inform teachers and pedagogy.

Imaginative. Does pedagogy render new thinking and learning about society to create generations that can attend to future social issues? Does pedagogy encourage students to think about concrete social issues and to propose alternatives to the problems they confront?

Reciprocal. Does pedagogy establish a set of practices in the classroom that requires students to think about all members of a community and all of its life-forms? Does pedagogy encourage students to think about past and future generations and the kind of society that is actively co-created?

Decolonial. Examine the narratives and values of educational practice. Is pedagogy disentangled from its colonial–capitalist history? Does pedagogy reproduce racial and epistemological hierarchies?

Intercultural. Does pedagogy lead to greater understanding about suppressed knowledge forms and co-existence with the “other”? Does pedagogy support the development of new ideas that transcend epistemological hierarchies for collective understanding?

Ecological. What is the relationship between pedagogy and society? Are students encouraged to think about the interdependence of learning with doing in society?

References and Further Readings


Teacher bashing and teacher deskilling are terms often used in radical critiques of contemporary school reform, which has led to teachers and schools being evaluated based on test scores and conformity to externally imposed standards. If students do not achieve uniform measures of accountability, teachers are bashed for alleged incompetence or noncompliance. As early as the A Nation at Risk report (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), teachers and schools were blamed for so harming the United States that an attacking power could not do more damage. This argument is largely based on the assumption that the purpose of education is to give a nation a competitive edge in the global marketplace.

Radical critics argue that recent reforms actually deskill teachers. Teachers, they contend, have acquired skills, knowledge, and dispositions that enable them to continuously adjust their instruction according to the needs of particular students in particular places. Large-scale policy, they assert, cannot do this. When teachers are forced to relinquish their capacity to understand their students’ needs and interests and design curricula that are appropriate for them, then the teachers are deskilled (Apple, 1982a, 1989; Giroux, 1988; Illich, 1972). Teacher bashers counter by saying that the teachers actually have no specialized knowledge about what their students need; therefore, they should only be allowed to determine strategies for giving all students what government authorities say are the common (core) needs of all.

To defend this position on deskilling, conservative and even liberal proponents of current school reform policies are frequently heard citing international test score comparisons that indicate that the United States is falling behind other major industrialized nations. Those who say teachers are unfairly bashed respond that the tests are not indicative of what students know, do, or value. The tests, they say, provide no information on students’ curiosity, imagination, or creativity (Schubert, 2009). Moreover, they are about immediate, not long-term, learning. Meanwhile, those who want to bash teachers argue that these qualities are not as important as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—and literacy. Further, they have no confidence that publicly run schools are capable of the needed changes, so they call for privatization of the schools. Those critical of teacher bashing and concomitant deskilling maintain that conservative moves to privatize are not in the interest of improving quality but rather in shifting greater amounts of funds from public schools to the private sector.
Whether one sides with those who bash teachers or with those who contend that teachers’ skills are destroyed by current policies, many recognize that teachers are under immense surveillance in the workplace. Proponents argue that external policing is needed because teachers cannot be counted on to be self-accountable. Opponents of teacher bashing cite resignations of demoralized teachers, which have intensified over the past couple of decades. In New York City, for example, there is concern about “experience drain” and “a marked jump in resignations among teachers who usually don’t leave—those in their sixth through 15th years” (McAdoo, 2014). This trend is emerging just as teachers are being deprofessionalized in a variety of emotionally devastating ways. Those critical of teacher bashing point out that educators are vilified for their “failures” even as their judgment and work have been shackled (Apple, 1982b, 1989; Giroux, 1988; Schubert, 2009).

Contemporary Teacher Deskilling

Specific examples of how educators have lost control of what and how they teach are offered as illustrations: a federal reading program, a required pedagogic approach, and a widely adopted set of standards. These examples are far from the only ways that teachers’ work has become more controlled; yet, they illustrate the diversity of means through which teaching has been constrained.

Reading First

The Reading First program was established under the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), ostensibly to guarantee effective instruction in reading for children in low-income communities. Costing almost $1 billion a year between 2002 and 2007, the program provided substantial funds to schools willing to implement scientifically based reading curricula, which was defined as intensive phonics, preferably in a scripted, whole-class, direct instruction format (Cummins, 2007). The program prescribed one way of teaching reading to poor children, and countless teachers were forcibly kept from using whole language—and even balanced literacy—approaches that they felt would have served their students better. Some educators were forced to remove the high-quality literature with which they had been teaching from their classrooms (Cummins, 2007). With all of this imposition, the result according to many was a resounding, and admitted, failure. The U.S. Department of Education’s own report on the program found that it had no statistically significant effect on reading comprehension on the Stanford Achievement Test Series (Institute of Educational Sciences, 2008).

In fact, the program may have had a detrimental effect. Race- and class-based achievement gaps on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which had been narrowing in the 1990s, showed no additional progress post-NCLB. This is likely because of how scripted, intensive instruction on discrete skills, to the exclusion of meaningful encounters with captivating stories, affected reading engagement. Reading engagement, defined as diversity of reading, frequency of leisure reading, and attitude toward reading, is a better predictor of achievement in reading on the Programme for International Student Assessment than the strong, proven correlates of age and socioeconomic status (Brozo, Shiel, & Topping, 2007). In other words, children who love to read are better readers than both wealthier and older children without a love of reading.

Why then, many question, would the federal government push on poor children curricula so clearly unsuited to fostering a love of reading? Generously assuming that this was not a deliberate effort to further disadvantage an already struggling population, Reading First demonstrated a startling lack of respect for teachers’ professional judgment and autonomy. Those who would bash teachers and argue against the value of their skills would say the program was an attempt to protect children in poverty from the poor teaching of educators who have long failed to inspire achievement in this population of students. Despite the program’s failure, efforts to control teachers’ work have continued unabated.

Response to Intervention

Similar in its effect on teacher autonomy, if not as obviously harmful to students, is Response to Intervention (RtI). Designed to identify students in need of special services sooner than the prior discrepancy model—and in fact to prevent students from ever
lagging so far behind their classmates, RtI is a pedagogic process required by the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act. Its implementation involves teachers in screening all of their students according to established benchmarks, then dividing them up into tiers based on their degree of struggle. Tier 1 students are progressing typically; Tier 2 students are in need of mild to moderate instructional interventions; and Tier 3 students require intensive interventions. Students in Tier 3 who are not responsive to these interventions are likely to qualify for special education (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). None of this sounds intrinsically objectionable. Indeed, it sounds like what excellent teachers have always done with their students, and the approach was documented in the literature on students with disabilities before it became law (Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003).

The problem, leading to teacher bashing and deskilling, comes with the amount of top-down control exerted over teachers’ pedagogic choices in the process. Interventions are required to be scientifically proven, and progress is to be monitored on a biweekly schedule (Reschly, 2005). “Science” is no more broadly considered here than in Reading First, and approved interventions, like approved reading programs, are most likely to come from large publishers that can afford the studies that will render them “research-based.” The result has been such a relentless focus on easily tested discrete skills that critics have pointed out the urgent need to link these to “other, functional performance criteria” (Daly III, Martens, Barnett, Witt, & Olson, 2007, p. 562). In addition, RtI has involved micromanaging of teachers, who are required to document every step in the process. Hours are being taken up with paperwork, which could have been spent preparing for instruction.

In RtI there is a nugget of good pedagogy at the center that values constant assessing and addressing of individual students’ needs. This is part of what good teachers do naturally and fluidly, without call for schedules, charts, and packaged materials. The fear on the part of many policy makers is that there are not enough good teachers out there to ensure that all students will get the individualized attention they need. Ironically, by deskilling rather than trusting teachers to do this work in the way that is best for them and their students, the federal government has hindered their ability to do it. RtI, though well intended, standardizes, commercializes, and mandates the individualized pedagogic and curricular work that teachers have always done with their students.

### Common Core State Standards

According to many who criticize the pervasiveness of teacher bashing and deskilling, the most recent threat to teacher’s creative control over the curricula comes from the Common Core State Standards. As of late 2014, 43 states and the District of Columbia had fully adopted the standards (Layton, 2014). The standards, whose development was funded by the Gates Foundation, have been promoted as a means of increasing the rigor of primary and secondary education in the United States. Many practicing teachers are enthusiastic about the Common Core, perhaps because the standards they are replacing in many states are inch-deep and mile-wide sets of competencies that leave teachers scrambling just to “cover” all the material. Teachers have been so accustomed to having almost no curricular leeway in their work that this less expansive intrusion on their professional decision making seems like a welcome change.

A quick survey of the education landscape reveals a plethora of Common Core–aligned goods and services available from private vendors to districts, schools, teachers, and parents for purchase—reflecting teacher deskilling as the assumption is that teachers are incapable of creating their own materials. These privately marketed educational products are made especially attractive by high-stakes testing. Some who have experienced teacher bashing wonder if teacher professionalism is under threat primarily because it stands in the way of corporate profit seeking. Of course, the corporate vendors and many policy makers would argue that the standards and their related products are needed to ensure that all students are presented with the required content through competent instruction.

Many teachers and education professors, however, are concerned that the Common Core takes the creative intellectual work of curriculum design out of the vocation of teachers—a joy that some young teachers have never experienced. This is bad for teachers, for their fulfillment in the work. Worse, it is bad for students, who know the difference between
Teacher bashing took a great leap forward in 1957 when the Soviet Union launched the satellite Sputnik, beating the United States in the space race. U.S. schools were blamed by creative politicians for not providing adequate K–12 math and science education (Spring, 2011) and thus began the era of teacher as scapegoat—which has continued unto today. Teacher blaming got another big boost with the earlier mentioned *A Nation at Risk* report (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), which employed dubious logic in concluding the United States was lagging behind in the global economy because of low-quality schools (Spring, 2011). Teachers have yet to lose their utility as easy targets of blame; a 2012 report of the Council on Foreign Relations (Klein & Rice, 2012), coauthored by a former U.S. Secretary of State, asserted that poor schools are endangering U.S. national security. This is a wide-ranging array of failures for one group to be responsible for, especially when considering the relative dearth of resources provided to educators in relation to the other segments of society that arguably have a hand in these outcomes.

Unsurprisingly, the scapegoating of educators for what seems like every conceivable societal ill has resulted in drastically diminished respect for teachers’ professional expertise. The preceding section has already examined how this has led to increasingly top-down and intensifying control of teachers’ work, but the disparaging of professional educators has had effects well beyond the classroom. Classroom-based knowledge and experience has been so devalued that superintendents—often referred to as district CEOs—are being hired without having spent any time in the schools at all. Even principals are coming from outside the field of education, as with the leadership academies of the Broad Foundation “designed to recruit noneducator corporate, military, and nonprofit leaders” (Saltman, 2010, p. 79). In today’s climate, being a professional educator is an unrespected qualification for having a say in the way schools are run.

Even teachers need to know little about teaching, curriculum, and education as a scholarly discipline, considering the proliferation of alternative and fast-track certification programs—as well as “service”-style entities such as Teach for America (TFA)—all of which are replacing veteran teachers with superficially trained young people and career changers. In
PART II. TEACHERS AS CURRICULUM

The current condition of class warfare that can be viewed through a critical theoretical lens. The role of the schools in social reproduction, which has always been largely successful (Apple, 1982b; Spring, 1989), is now stronger than ever, with teachers—except for those of the most elite students—moved out of the petty bourgeoisie and into the ranks of the proletariat, alienated from their labor. Hence, it is argued through these theoretical lenses that the deskilling of teachers is detrimental not just to teachers as a labor group but also to the nonelite classes as a whole. Teachers who are not allowed to think critically about their own work cannot model autonomous and self-directed labor for their students, and the kinds of knowledge and skills that can be measured on a multiple-choice exam do not lead to questioning or reconstructing of societal structures.

Scholars who examine education using a feminist theoretical framework often respond that teachers’ present-day experiences of deprofessionalization are really nothing new. Historically, they might argue, there has always been a gendered division of labor in teaching, with much of the intellectual work at the mostly male administrative level and all of the nurturing, emotional work done by the mostly female teaching force (Freedman, 1998). The difference is one of degree. Teachers, who are still mostly women, are now doing even less creative thinking about curriculum and pedagogy, and their work is even more intensively controlled by hierarchies, often headed by men in cities where schools are under mayoral control. With more bureaucratic tasks and bigger class sizes, teachers are doing less intellectual labor and are being constrained from their empathetic and supportive work of the past.

Those who theorize educational reform from critical and feminist orientations hold that teachers who do not follow the directives of competitive standardization, Common Core for the masses, and raising test scores are punished by bashing, deskilling, and banishment. Further, they assert that teachers who lived through the behavioral objectives movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and the back-to-basics movements of the 1950s and 1980s, experienced similar criticism for not following rules conjured up by “the power elite” (Mills, 1956).

Without discounting the interpretations of either of the groups of theorists just discussed, a poststructuralist theoretical approach offers an additional
22. Teacher Bashing and Teacher Deskilling

Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression

Those who promote teacher bashing and deskilling are convinced by, and try to convince others through, forms of inquiry that are not used much in the scholarly community of curriculum studies. Elaborate schemes of reasoning are developed by groups such as the National Center for Teacher Quality to support criteria for evaluating teachers, schools, and student performance, but the research basis for their policy mandates is not fully clarified. There is great reliance on test results without explication of a theory of measurement or a philosophy of evaluation. Their modes of expression are those of popular news magazines such as *U.S. News and World Report*. Their reports, evaluations, and mandates are not informed by the kinds of qualitative and quantitative intellectual reasoning that David Berliner, with Bruce Biddle (1995) and Gene Glass (2012), demonstrated in showing that educational crises in the United States from the 1980s to the present have been manufactured to serve the interests of the power elite.

Alternatively, many forms of inquiry are used to depict teacher bashing and deskilling as a basis for critiquing it: discursive essays using critical theory perspectives; arts-based renditions in which settings and situations are vividly portrayed by connoisseurs of the topic; critical ethnographies; narratives and stories. Stories have been a form of expression and mode of inquiry for this topic even before it was currently named. Examples include autobiographical and first-person accounts of teaching by such teacher authors as John Holt (1964, 1967, 1989), Herbert Kohl (1998), George Dennison (1970), and Jonathan Kozol (1992), who began writing about injustices in schools in the 1960s and continued their critiques relative to contextual dilemmas of several subsequent decades.

Researchers have also examined more eclectic approaches to qualitative research, such as interpretations through story, narrative, dialogue, and commentary. For example, Robert V. Bullough Jr. and Stefinee Pinnegar (2001) published an essay that uses the literary devices of the romantic, tragic, ironic, and comedic hero as a metaphor for the various ways that teachers can present themselves as protagonists in the stories that are self-study research projects. While there are many approaches that can, should, and will be used to document the phenomena of teacher bashing and deskilling, the most powerful ways to bring these home to the most people will be through the sharing of teachers’ stories. Each of these heroic modes has a different influence on public views of teachers and what they are experiencing.

The teacher as romantic hero, while a sympathetic character, actually furthers the project of teacher bashing and deskilling. Valiantly confronting the challenges of teaching, the romantic hero is usually the sole effective teacher in his or her underresourced school. The other members of the faculty are generally part of the problem, and the hero must make tremendous personal sacrifice to ensure the success of his or her students. Typical of these stories is the film *Freedom Writers* (LaGravenese, 2007), in which the young Los Angeles teacher works multiple jobs and goes through a divorce in order to provide her students with what they need. Not only does the story present the vast majority of teachers as uncaring and incapable, but it also implies that the only way to be a good teacher is to show the same degree of selfless commitment as the romantic hero.

Next described is the tragic hero, who is overwhelmed by the challenges of teaching and ultimately
succumbs to despair, usually leaving the classroom. The spate of recent, and public, teacher resignations can be viewed through this framework, as can some of the more troubling portrayals of teachers in films such as Half Nelson (Fleck, 2006). That movie’s hero is a heroin addict and arguably a welcome portrait of a complex, whole, flawed human being as teacher—as opposed to the myriad sainted romantic heroes found on the multiplex screens. Sadly, stories of tragic hero teachers are more likely to result in intensified teacher bashing. Similarly, the resignations resonate powerfully with those who understand and value the work of teachers, but will likely be viewed as avoidance of accountability by those who support the current “reforms.”

The ironic and comedic heroes travel the middle road between the victorious and the vanquished. Both are nuanced and complex characters, but the ironic hero is likely to remain somewhat besieged at the end of the tale, while the comedic hero emerges with hope. The French film The Class (Cantet, 2008) presents a beautiful example of the teacher as ironic hero. In it, a whole faculty of caring, committed teachers struggle to do right by their high-need students. Some of his own mistakes, but mostly structural forces, hinder the ironic hero’s efforts, but he stays with his students. Jack Black in School of Rock (Linklater, 2003) is both comedian and comedic hero. Far from perfect, he blunders in his classroom, but ultimately finds joy in teaching. These are the stories that are most likely to help slow the phenomena of teacher bashing and deskilling. Teachers here are real people facing real challenges with more or less optimism. Either way, they stay in the classroom, serving as models of perseverance and commitment.

Teacher bashing and deskilling harken back for more than a century. In the 1890s, the progressivly oriented Joseph Mayer Rice surveyed schools and ultimately concluded that there was only hope in tightly managing them, since excellent teachers were so few and far between. Throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century, the saga has continued. Historian Ellen Lagemann (2002) has described the debate as a struggle between Dewey’s faith in humanity and democracy—thus in teachers and schooling—on one side, and Edward L. Thorndike’s dictum that education must be measured as a basis for policy decision making on the other side. Lagemann’s conclusion was that in the realm of policy and practice Thorndike has won. Still, many scholars in the area of curriculum studies hold tightly to the Deweyan faith in a human process for determining high-quality education in ever-changing environments in and out of schools. For them, the best approach resides in the everyday decisions and actions of teachers and learners. They hold that to bash or deskill this ever-renewing process is to deny our children democratic and meaningful lives.

References and Further Readings


In many countries around the world, and especially in the United States, high-stakes standardized testing has become the central tool used to measure performance in publicly funded schools. The growth in the use of these tests comes as part of an education reform movement to create systems of “accountability” based upon test score improvement. This is part of an education reform movement that also generally includes support for charter schools, alternative certification for teachers, the closing of underperforming schools, and the challenging of teachers’ unions and teacher tenure as part of a vision for restructuring public education within a model of privatized, free-market competition. In the United States in particular, standardized test scores are increasingly being used to make decisions about teacher tenure, student matriculation and graduation, funding allotments, overall school evaluation, school closures, and principal/administrator evaluation as well, thus making these tests “high-stakes.”

More recently such “accountability” policies have been structured around models of “value-added measurement” and “student growth” in an attempt to statistically isolate the positive and negative effects of any single teacher on the test scores of any single student. Tests are also increasingly being used to evaluate teachers in the process of entering the teaching profession. Many U.S. states, for instance, require subject matter–level tests (e.g., the Praxis or the West series) for entrance to a teacher credentialing program, and several also now require that candidates pass a performance assessment, the edTPA, in order to earn their credentials. In turn, policy makers are now also suggesting that teacher education programs be evaluated based upon the value-added test score results generated by graduates of their own programs.

Contemporary Concerns

It is important to recognize that, for many, the use of high-stakes standardized tests to evaluate the performance of teachers (and students and schools) is based on an impulse to increase educational equality and transparency. The idea behind this impulse is that with the right measurement, standardized test scores in this case, the public can adequately judge the quality of the curriculum, school, and teaching. Given the long history of educational inequality between the rich and the poor, as well as among racial groups in the United States, ideally such testing would not only provide the kind of transparency necessary to see the inequality but also provide a means for addressing the same inequality.
Despite such equitable impulses, the use of high-stakes standardized tests to evaluate the performance of teachers has proved to be quite controversial for multiple reasons. For instance, research has consistently shown that the use of high-stakes testing within systems of accountability has led to an increased focus in the curriculum on tested subjects to the increased neglect of nontested subjects. Thus the commonly tested subjects of math and language arts/literacy are coming to dominate schools’ curricula to the loss of other important, nontested subjects such as social studies, science, art, music, and physical education. This has been particularly true in schools with high concentrations of low-income students of color—who have historically performed more poorly on these types of high-stakes standardized assessments. Thus, ironically, the very students such test-based accountability policies were supposedly designed to help are oftentimes getting a much less enriching curriculum and less engaging educational experiences than their more affluent counterparts in higher performing schools and districts.

Further, studies also demonstrate that teachers are shifting their instruction toward the tests. That is, they are increasingly moving toward the kinds of decontextualized, rote thinking such tests often ask of students. In response to the pressures of high-stakes accountability, teachers in low-performing schools, in particular, are being required to teach totally “scripted” curriculum that has often been written by textbook or assessment companies that decree exactly what words teachers should be saying to students on any given day. Principals then can potentially discipline teachers for being “off script” if they are not following the language provided. Advocates of test-driven, scripted curriculum argue that the quality of classroom instruction is so uneven that these scripts at least guarantee that all students are receiving the same level of instruction and thus students who have historically been underserved by their teachers and schools (low-income students of color specifically) can at least receive “fair” instruction in their classrooms.

The increased use of scripted curriculum creates multiple contradictions for teachers and teacher evaluation, however. First, given that such scripts are used more often with low-performing students, teachers working with children of the highest need have less flexibility in creating a curriculum that connects to students’ lives, communities, and concerns. This creates the possibility for a curriculum that is more alienating and less effective for the students such scripts are ostensibly supposed to help. Second, in the case of using high-stakes standardized tests to evaluate teachers, the implementation of scripted curriculum ultimately means that teachers are being evaluated for teaching that is not “theirs.” Put differently, when such scripts are used relative to high-stakes tests, ultimately teachers are being evaluated on curriculum they did not write and pedagogy they did not create. They are being evaluated for their teaching, when in reality they do not have ownership of the teaching that is taking place in the classroom.

The third contradiction created when systems of test-based accountability are coupled with scripted instruction is professional: Within these systems teachers are not viewed as educated and trained professionals. Many teachers hold advanced degrees in their fields, have years of professional experience, passed subject matter tests, met credentialing requirements, and successfully graduated from teacher education programs. Using a standardized test and a scripted curriculum functionally suggests that teachers are not capable of using professional judgment in their practice.

One of the most pressing contemporary concerns about using high-stakes standardized tests to evaluate teachers revolves around questions raised regarding the validity of using test scores to evaluate an individual teacher’s effect on an individual student’s test scores—referred to as value-added measurement (VAM). For instance, researchers have found many statistical problems with VAM-based student growth models. One study found that there was a 35% error rate when using a single year’s worth of data to evaluate teaching, and a 25% error rate when using 3 years’ worth of data. In other words, even when using 3 years of test score data, there is still a one-in-four chance of misidentifying a teacher as below standard instead of at standard. Another study found that one-time, randomly occurring factors (i.e., a dog barking outside of a classroom window, or whether a student had breakfast or got into an argument on the way to school) accounted for 50% to 80% of any test score gains or losses. Other studies find that high-stakes standardized tests seem to do a better job at measuring the demographics of who is in the classroom, not the teaching: In some cases the same teachers that
scored in the top 20% on value-added measures in 1 year end up in the bottom 40% in the next.

Other critical issues have also been raised with regard to using high-stakes standardized test scores to evaluate teachers. For instance, advocates of VAM have been unable to clearly sort through “peer effect”—that is, they have not been able to isolate how much test scores improve or decline purely based on whether a student is surrounded by high-performing or low-performing peers. Another non-statistical issue is that of cognitive transfer: We do not have a way to tell if, for instance, a student’s language arts/literacy test scores can only be attributed to the language arts teacher alone or if a social studies, art, music, or science teacher contributed to the student’s performance in this area. Additionally there appear to be high levels of subjectivity in the grading of some tests, particularly essay exams. Essay tests are often scored by temporary workers who are paid “piece rate” based on the number of exams they can grade during a given time period. When being paid 30 to 70 cents a paper, scorers are considered slow if they spend more than a minute grading a student’s essay exam. Reports from inside the test-grading industry also relay stories of managers telling scorers to start giving higher (or lower) grades on essay exams in order to make the overall results consistent with the previous year’s grades—thus creating what test makers refer to as “reliability” in measurement from year to year.

Despite these concerns, politicians, policy makers, and statisticians who advocate for VAM still hope to find better ways to use tests to more accurately measure the impact teachers have on student learning, at least as measured by such tests.

Contexts

High-stakes standardized testing and its use to evaluate teachers is best understood within its historical and political contexts. Fundamentally the use of standardized tests to measure large populations originated with the IQ tests first developed by French psychologist Alfred Binet. Binet developed his IQ test in 1904 to assess if young children were mildly developmentally disabled, producing the “Binet Scale” of intelligence. He divided mental age (as measured by his test) by the chronological age, thus producing an “intelligence quotient,” or IQ. Cognitive psychologists in the United States such as Henry Goddard, Lewis Terman, and Robert Yerkes adapted Binet’s testing and measurement of IQ in very specific ways that fit the race-and-class politics of the United States. Mainly they distorted the original use of the tests and injected their own underlying presuppositions about humans and human ability. After testing large pools of U.S. Army recruits, for instance, these psychologists claimed to have objectively determined that immigrants, the poor, and non-Whites were all less intelligent than White, affluent, and U.S.-born individuals.

Through the work of these psychologists, and with the support of educational philanthropists of the time such as Andrew Carnegie, IQ in the United States became conceived of as hereditary and fixed. IQ testing almost immediately worked its way into public schools, an institution that was struggling with a massive increase in school-going population of young people. Such assessments laid the groundwork for the first mass standardized tests, the results of which were used not only to justify admissions into colleges but also to place students into ability groups and on differential educational tracks.

The historical origins of high-stakes standardized testing within IQ testing also shaped conceptions of teacher work that carry through into contemporary uses of such tests to evaluate teachers. In the early 1900s several educational leaders applied Frederick Taylor’s concept of scientific management in factory production to systems of educational management and planning. For Taylor, efficient production relied upon the factory managers’ ability to gather all the information possible about the work they oversaw, systematically analyze it according to “scientific” methods, figure out the most efficient ways for workers to complete individual tasks, and then tell the worker exactly how to produce their products in an ordered manner—a process more popularly known as “Taylorism.” Under the guidance of curriculum leaders such as Franklin Bobbitt, David Snedden, and others, scientific management provided a particular logic of efficiency in U.S. education: Objectives for teaching and learning are determined by administrators or policy makers; the administrator gathers all possible information about the educational process and develops the best methods for teachers to get students to meet the objectives, in
large part because teachers were not seen as being capable of determining the most effective instructional methods themselves. Further, in this early view of public education, principals and other administrators should use tests to determine “weak” and “strong” teachers as well as rates of teacher pay or access to other privileges.

Thus, the metaphor of Taylorism is easily mapped on to public schools very neatly. Students are the “raw materials” to be produced like commodities according to specified standards and objectives. Teachers are the workers who employ the most efficient methods to get students to meet the predetermined standards and objectives. Administrators are the managers who determine and dictate to teachers the most efficient methods in the production process. The school is the factory assembly line where this process takes place. Moreover, school plants were designed to resemble factories.

The contemporary use of high-stakes standardized tests to evaluate teachers in the United States is directly indebted to this history. As noted earlier, since the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the advent of mandated tests, teachers are increasingly changing curriculum and pedagogy under the high-stakes pressures created by standardized tests—most often in ways that align with the structures of the tests themselves. Some scholars have referred to this as “multiple choice teaching.” Further, as discussed earlier, low-performing school districts feeling the pressures created by high-stakes standardized tests are increasingly becoming more prescriptive about how teachers should teach. In these regards high-stakes testing not only standardizes the content of the curriculum as well as the forms such content takes in the classroom, but it also works to standardize teachers’ pedagogies as they work to deliver test-driven curriculum in an efficient and often prescribed manner.

The rise of scripted curriculum in this context represents a deskilling of teacher labor, where teachers have seen their curricular decision-making power severely diminished and are essentially being instructed on what to teach and how to teach it—across all subject areas. In a manner highly reminiscent of Taylorism, such a vision conceives of teaching as a technical operation, one where many of the more complex skills associated with the profession (e.g., curriculum planning and knowledge of students and communities) are rendered less and less acceptable relative to high-stakes standardized testing. Similarly the contemporary standardization of teaching through testing allows for increased managerial and administrative control over teachers (labor) and students (products) in the process of education. The rise of scripted curriculum in conjunction with VAM combines to illustrate the dual process of control and surveillance that lies at the heart of contemporary definitions of accountability within education policy.

The current political context for using high-stakes standardized testing to evaluate teachers is also indebted to the historical origins of testing and the factory production model of education. The current education reform movement is constructed around several policies: charter schools, school closings, alternative pathways to teacher certification, rejection of teacher tenure (and, by extension, teacher unions), merit pay, VAM, and high-stakes standardized testing. For the most part these contemporary education reforms are constructed on the slippery foundation provided by high-stakes standardized test scores. Charter proponents claim they can raise test scores in competition with regular public schools. Merit pay, also known as performance pay, ties economic rewards for teachers to increased test scores. Proponents of alternative pathways to teacher certification claim that their teachers can competitively raise test scores better than those certificated in colleges of education from universities. Finally, as discussed earlier, proponents of VAM claim they can statistically isolate an individual teacher’s effect on an individual student’s test scores. Thus, similar to the educational Taylorism of the early 1900s, the basis for the current swath of education reforms is constructed around a business model of education that assumes competitive production, and high-stakes standardized test scores provide the metric upon which the entire model functions.

Theories

There are numerous theoretical approaches to understanding the use and impact of high-stakes standardized tests to evaluate teachers. The first, and perhaps the most obvious, would be associated with “positivist” approaches to understanding education.
Positivism assumes that researchers are objective in their inquiry and, as a general rule, it also values quantitative data over qualitative data for being the most objective data available. Positivist theoretical understandings of the use of high-stakes standardized tests to evaluate teachers assume that the tests themselves provide accurate and objective quantitative measures of both teaching and learning. As such, positivist approaches to understanding the evaluation of teachers support the use of VAM for measuring student growth and, by extension, evaluating teachers.

The social sciences have also provided some effective theoretical lenses to analyze the use of high-stakes standardized testing to evaluate teachers. For instance, social scientist Donald T. Campbell (1976) coined an adage, now referred to as “Campbell’s Law,” which states: “The more any quantitative social indicator (or even some qualitative indicator) is used for social decision-making, the more subject it will be to corruption pressures and the more apt it will be to distort and corrupt the social processes it is intended to monitor.” Educational researchers have used Campbell’s Law to explain the evidence that arise from the use of high-stakes standardized testing, particularly teaching to the test, curriculum shrinkage, and ensuing cheating scandals. They essentially argue that the quantitative nature of generating test scores, coupled with high-stakes consequences, ultimately corrupts the process of education that tests are supposed to be measuring in the first place. In this regard, Campbell’s Law would suggest that the accuracy of using tests to measure teacher effectiveness is suspect, if not corrupt.

There are also a number of critical theoretical approaches to understanding high-stakes standardized testing and the evaluation of teachers. For instance, some educational researchers have drawn on the work of Michel Foucault, who has argued that exams exert disciplinary power over those being evaluated by creating high levels of visibility for those with authority to identify and ultimately punish those who do not fit easily into a given system. In the case of teacher evaluation then, a Foucauldian analysis would see the use of high-stakes standardized testing to evaluate teachers purely as a means of asserting power over teachers (and, by extension, students). Additional critical theoretical lenses for analyzing using high-stakes standardized tests to evaluate teachers include Marxism and neo-Marxism. Both of these lenses look at teaching as part of a labor process where students are produced and teachers provide the labor within systems of education. Further, both of these lenses also examine how larger socioeconomic structures and relationships shape and influence policies and practices associated with teacher evaluation.

However, while a Marxist perspective might focus more on the political economy of teaching, testing, and evaluation, neo-Marxists also tend to look at the more cultural aspects of schooling and, at times, at how high-stakes standardized tests reproduce socioeconomic inequality through the control of knowledge and the selective transfer of power through cultural control. In this area, for instance, educational researchers have made use of sociologist of education Basil Bernstein’s theories of how cultural codes are transmitted through classroom language, pedagogy, and curriculum knowledge. According to Bernstein, social relations are embedded in the very structure of language and knowledge, such that those relations are then transmitted through classroom discourse and pedagogy. A Bernsteinian analysis of the use of high-stakes standardized tests to evaluate teachers could possibly look at how education policies, as well as the tests themselves, are structured to compel teachers to comply with the demands of testing in their classroom practices in ways that reproduce socioeconomic inequality (Au, 2008). A Bernsteinian analysis could also identify ways in which teachers’ identities are defined by the policies associated with such testing.

Other theories centered around race and gender also inform how we might understand the use of high-stakes standardized tests to evaluate teachers. Feminist theorists, for instance, have analyzed not only the ways in which teaching developed into a “feminized” profession historically but also the implications of having a predominantly female teacher workforce being legislated and evaluated (through education policy) by the U.S. state and federal governments, governing bodies that are supramajority male. Using this lens, when looking at the use of high-stakes standardized tests to evaluate teachers, education researchers drawing on feminist theory have raised questions about the assertion of male governmental power and authority over what has historically been construed as a female profession,
with the tests being the operational vehicle for this power. Critical race theory (CRT) has also been used to examine the racialized outcomes of high-stakes standardized testing. CRT analyses of high-stakes tests point out not only that historically in the United States such tests have always exhibited racial inequalities in results but also that the negative effects of high-stakes testing are disproportionately concentrated within communities of color. This in turn creates a negative association for teachers who may not want to work with large populations of students of color for fear (real or imagined) of a higher likelihood of getting poor, test score–based evaluations.

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression**

There are multiple forms of inquiry and modes of expression associated with using high-stakes standardized tests to evaluate teachers; these are related in many ways to the theories just discussed. As is the case with all educational research and policy, there exists a tension between quantitative and qualitative approaches to understanding every aspect of high-stakes testing, including the evaluation of teachers. Quantitative approaches place high value in the numbers (quantities) generated by the tests, and this value is generally built upon the assumptive accuracy and objectivity of the numbers produced by the tests. Quantitative analyses of using high-stakes standardized tests to evaluate teachers—such as the earlier discussed models of VAM—are thus largely mathematical and statistical, with researchers and analysts using algorithms and various forms of statistical manipulation to look for correlations between sets of quantitative data. Thus, the basis of VAM and other quantitative approaches to teacher evaluation is the extrapolation of the correlation between student test scores and teacher performance. It is important to note that the majority of high-stakes standardized tests produce single numbers (or sets of numbers) and thus are themselves quantitative measures.

While quantitative approaches are only interested in the numbers, qualitative approaches look more toward human experience and meaning making. Thus, qualitative researchers attend to forms of evidence like interviews, observations, journals, recorded conversations, blogs, policy documents, meeting minutes, and curriculum, among others. Qualitative researchers seeking to understand the use of high-stakes standardized tests to evaluate teachers thus inquire into how teachers might be feeling and making sense of the use of tests in their evaluations or documenting how such policies are changing their practices (and, by extension, the curriculum and learning experiences of students). Qualitative researchers also might analyze official policy documents, speeches, or interviews with policy makers regarding the creation and logics of such policies for teacher evaluation. Qualitative research into the impacts of high-stakes standardized testing on teaching and learning has also been done formally through ethnography, a mode of inquiry that relies on observations, interviews, and document analysis as forms of qualitative evidence relative to teacher practices and student experiences.

Given the quantitative nature of high-stakes standardized tests, as well as the focus of this chapter, it is important to note that there are more qualitative methods for evaluating teachers. These might include formal observations by administrators, peer observations, formal reflective portfolios of representative teacher work, and other ways not associated with generating numbers, but based more on the ongoing development and growth of teacher practices. Examples of these forms of assessment include “performance assessments,” such as the assessment for National Board Certification and the edTPA, both of which require video of teaching, collections of student work, collections of teacher work, and significant reflection on the practice of teaching itself. Other examples include “communities of practice” where teachers develop study groups around areas of improvement and work to implement changes with the support of their peers, as well as participatory action research where teachers identify issues for improvement, develop and implement a plan for researching their own practice around that issue, make adjustments to their practice, and research whether their adjustments addressed their originally identified issue. These non-test-based possibilities for teacher evaluation point to a limit of using high-stakes standardized tests for teacher evaluations: Standardized tests, as a quantitative measure, only provide a snapshot of a moment of time—a small sample of student or teacher work when teaching and learning are processes that take place over time. These qualitative measures of teaching and learning, however, are seen by some as being more subjective.
than quantitative measures, even though the levels of subjectivity and objectivity of any measure of teaching and learning are up for debate.

There are, however, more “mixed” approaches to studying high-stakes testing and teacher evaluation that combine aspects of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Some researchers use test scores in combination with observations, interviews, and survey results to inquire into this area, and many labor contracts for teachers unions are being built around a combination of using student test scores and observations by administrators to evaluate teacher performance. Another fundamentally “mixed” mode of inquiry is that of “qualitative metasynthesis,” which seeks to combine the data generated by multiple qualitative studies into more generalizable quantitative findings. Because of the political and methodological tensions within the field of education, many researchers rely on these mixed methods because they feel that doing so speaks to a broader audience that is likely to include policy makers, researchers, teachers, and community members across the spectrum of quantitative and qualitative understandings of high-stakes testing.

References and Further Readings


Whether education is understood as the reproduction of a culture for a new generation or as the improvement or transformation of that culture (Gutierrez, 2000), education is a cultural intervention in which teachers play a significant role. In what ways can teaching be understood as “cultural” work? How might teachers see themselves as “cultural workers” (Freire, 2005)? How should teachers go about doing that work? These questions foreground the ideas and arguments this chapter aims to address. We argue that the concept of teachers as cultural workers involves two core commitments. Teachers are deeply committed to empowering students to make substantial societal change. Teachers are committed to bringing about social change as active citizens within and outside of schools.

The first task of cultural work of teachers includes interrupting social forces of inequality such as racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, nationalism, and ableism, exposing these realities to students, and equipping them with analytical skills to understand how these forces of inequality operate and can be interrupted. Teachers’ cultural work also involves recognizing the hidden curriculum (Apple, 1982/1995) of schools and interrupting those choices that are often symbolic or not part of the explicit curriculum and that perpetuate marginalization of particular groups of students and inequalities within schools as teachers develop their “courage to teach” (Palmer, 1998).

Contemporary Concerns

Historically, public education in the United States was thought to be for the purpose of self-governance and a functioning democracy (Gutmann, 1999; Meier, 2009). Why is this focus still important today? What are the central elements necessary to keep this focus in mind? Within this context, we recognize the central role teachers play to educate the whole child. This perspective can be lost in an educational and social culture that is focused narrowly on test scores and academic achievements (Apple, 2006; Ayers, 2010). There has been a prevailing emphasis on preparing children for a competitive workplace environment that often conflicts with education as cultural work. When teachers consider these conflicting purposes of education, it is crucial that they recognize their roles as cultural workers in relation to children, parents, colleagues, and others.
with whom they work. Paulo Freire (2005) suggested that teachers respect the importance of diverse identities and understand how their own identities can influence the ways in which they work:

We have a strong tendency to affirm that what is different from us is inferior. We start from the belief that our way of being is not only good but better than that of others who are different from us. This is intolerance. It is the irresistible preference to reject differences. (pp. 128–129)

Freire pointed to a central problem that can inhibit teachers from carrying out their important cultural work. Teachers must recognize their roles and identities in order to build empowering relationships with their students.

Another issue that is strongly linked to the purposes of education is the extent to which teachers perceive their roles. Most teachers perceive themselves as either transmitters or transformers of the prevailing culture. For teachers who consider themselves as cultural workers, instead of operating within and maintaining the status quo, they act as agents of change. In the United States, the majority of teachers and administrators are White and middle-class, while the student populations are increasingly becoming ethnically and socioeconomically diverse. What message does that send? Apple (1982/1995) argued that the hidden curriculum of schools, the messages from various decisions that are not part of the explicit or published curriculum but are part of students’ school experiences, can have devastating effects on the lives and identity development of students. Urban schools often are obsessed with control and “security.” The knowledge and history that is officially presented often lacks the knowledge of people of color. Students and their families are left to wonder: Is this school a place for people like me? Am I welcome here?

For Freire and those who “dare to teach” as cultural workers, education is a political practice. Teachers know the complexity and diversity of the world in which their students live. They understand the cultures where their students’ languages, syntax, semantics, and accents are found in action and where certain habits, likes, beliefs, fears, and desires are formed that are not necessarily easily accepted in teachers’ own worlds (Freire, 2005, p. 129). They are encouraged to continually challenge themselves to think outside of their comfort zones and cultural upbringings and to see their students as fully human with funds of cultural heritage and knowledge as they help their students to build on their strengths and look beyond themselves as they grow.

**Current Challenges**

Today’s educational system is far from equal and fails to provide adequate education for all. The original purpose of education for the public is often lost in political discourses about education (Meier, 2009). To restore the original purpose of “public education for the public good,” teachers must view themselves and act as “models of thoughtfulness and care; exemplars of problem solving and decision making; people capable of asking deep questions, drawing necessary connections, incorporating the surprising and the unexpected and the new as it occurs in classroom life” (Ayers, 2010, p. 6). To inspire all children, education must involve modeling thoughtfulness and justice and exploring real-world problems without shying away from contradictions and dilemmas in an unfair and unjust world (Ayers, 2010). Teaching solely from textbooks and materials can have the effect of presenting history as immovable and irrelevant to the current world. For Ayers, education for democratic citizenship requires students to perceive themselves as capable of playing a vital part in knowledge creation, decision making, and building new history.

Teachers should also recognize the forces of exclusion and inequality in schools and societies and provide all children with the high-quality education they deserve. In other words, teachers must be concerned with “educating all students for participation in intellectual and academic complexity” (Ayers, 2010, p. 6). Teachers’ work is to break down the barriers to full participation of historically oppressed or excluded groups and to offer everyone an intellectually ambitious education. Teachers should not avoid difficulties but face issues of “injustice, racism, imperial ambition, and war” (p. 6).

Further, teachers must empower students and help them to develop “cultural competence” (Gay, 2010). This means helping students understand themselves within a cultural context and understand those who are different from themselves in terms of
cultural assumptions and habits so that they can build upon their own cultural knowledge and new skills necessary to work and live together to govern a shared democracy. Gay (2010) describes this as culturally responsive teaching:

using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them. It teaches to and through the strengths of these students. . . . Culturally responsive teaching is validating and affirming. (p. 31)

Emphasizing the importance of cultural competence, Ming Fang He (2003) noted that one of the defining features of countries in the Western world, such as the United States, is the large number of residents who move from place to place around the world. She reminded us that education for democracy must be mindful not only of national interests but also of the global community that we share. She wrote:

Immigrants/refugees’ struggle for identity and balance in their new lives is paralleled with a quest for a global community in the making (Dewey, 1916)—a community where people listen to and hear the voices of those who live lives different from their own, a community that creates the possibility for developing mutual respect, empathy and compassion, a community that thrives upon the passionate involvement and commitment of its members for social change. (He, 2003, p. 146)

He makes clear that teachers, no matter where they are from, must be prepared to teach students who have different experiences and cultural values from themselves. As teachers struggle to reflect on their identities, they must also support students who may be struggling to find their own identities within shifting historical, social, political, economic, geographical, cultural, and linguistic contextual forces. This cultural work requires a continuous process of self-reflection so that teachers can create inspirational learning environments and develop trusting relationships with students and families to meet the needs of diverse students and families.

Research on Teachers as Cultural Workers

There has been a wide array of research literature that explores teachers as cultural workers through critical examination of the role of teachers and public education for the greater good. Prominent studies have provided sociological research addressing the power of ordinary teachers coming together to create change in their communities to address social and educational problems (Anyon, 2005; Ayers, 2004; Ayers, Quinn, Stovall, & Scheiern, 2008; Ball, 2006; Carini, 2001; Palmer, 2007). Historical accounts have described the challenges and rewards of everyday teaching in classrooms and/or mobilizing toward larger social actions (Freire, 2005; Horton, Kohl, & Kohl, 1998; Meier, 2002; Meier, Engel, & Taylor, 2010; Payne & Strickland, 2008; Reese, 2002). Cultural and political analyses recognize the democratic values of teaching as intellectual work (Giroux, 1988) to collectively promote the public interest rather than private profits and benefits (Apple, 2000, 2006; Knoester, 2012a, 2012b; Kozol, 1981, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009; Nieto, 2003, 2008; Sáid, 1994). This work offers understandings of struggles taking place in schools and educational settings.

For Freire (2005), to become a teacher as a cultural worker, one has to start with humility:

I shall start with humility, which here by no means carries the connotation of a lack of self-respect, of resignation, or of cowardice. On the contrary, humility requires courage, self-confidence, self-respect, and respect for others. Humility helps us to understand this obvious truth: No one knows it all; no one is ignorant of everything. We all know something; we are all ignorant of something. Without humility, one can hardly listen with respect to those one judges to be too far below one’s own level of competence. . . . Listening to all that come to us, regardless of their intellectual level, is a human duty and reveals an identification with democracy and not with elitism. (pp. 71–72)

Teaching is a complex relationship, which must be built on trust and love, rather than domination or fear. Freire also pointed out that “authoritarians’ stance . . . is sectarian” (p. 73), which would lead to harmful or mis-educative results, including student apathy, fear of resistance against injustice, fear of freedom, excessive obedience, and inability to effectively participate in a participatory democracy. The cultural work of teaching should be prosocial, encourage empathy with others, and help to build the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to create and participate in an inclusive and responsive democratic community.

There are those who enter teaching for the wrong reasons, because they crave control of students or strive to be the center of attention. This temptation
must be fought against. Humility must be extended to the desire to understand what is going on inside of a child’s mind. Assessment of students must be respectful of the knowledge and potential of all students without jumping to conclusions about a child’s abilities and potentials through high-stakes testing, rigid tracking, or savage segregation. Humility must be sought as teachers assess the learning of students with justice and care. As educational theorist Patricia Carini (2001) wrote:

I resist the oversystematization and depersonalization of the school, which threaten to eclipse life on the human and daily scale . . . the ever narrower definition of “normalcy” and the consequent classifying and pathologizing of children. (p. 1)

Carini’s words refer to the common practices of seeing children through overly simplistic numbers and designations including test scores. Although teachers must be aware that state and federal laws require students to be tested using standardized tests on a regular basis, teachers do not have to be limited to using only tests to inform their teaching. Teachers must also come to know their students well through a wide range of assessments, both formal and informal. Informal assessments include observing students as they work, looking at student work closely, continually interacting with students, and asking colleagues and parents for their input on how to best meet the needs of students. More formal assessments include standardized assessments of reading, writing, and other abilities; teacher-designed tests and rubrics for student work; interviews with students; exhibitions of student work; and portfolios of student work. The term authentic generally refers to assessing students as they complete work that is worth doing on its own—not only because it is a “test” for the teacher’s purposes. Assessment is a crucial way to build the relationship of trust and respect. Teachers must get to know their students well in order to build this trust and to support students as they learn and grow.

Forms of Inquiry on Inspiring Teachers

Much of the educational research and theory discussed in the previous section drew from powerful forms of inquiry such as ethnographic inquiry (Hymes, 1996), multicultural and cross-cultural narrative inquiry (He, 2002; Phillion, 2008), inquiry as stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), “research with a heart” (He & Ayers, 2009), critical inquiry (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008), and personal-passionate-participatory inquiry (He & Phillion, 2008). The modes of expression are perhaps more likely to reveal the values and ethics involved with the cultural work of teaching. The Latin phrase in loco parentis, meaning “in the place of the parent,” comes from English common law and is part of the legal framework that allows schools and teachers to make decisions about the welfare of children in their care. But this role is more than legal. Teachers need to view their students through a parental lens and work to support the development of each child emotionally, intellectually, and physically. As John Dewey (1990/1900/1902) eloquently wrote, “What the best and wisest parent wants for his child, that must we want for all the children of the community” (p. 7).

When children are viewed holistically, they are seen as more than a test score or a check mark on an attendance sheet. Rather, children need a full and enriching curriculum, including art, music, physical education, science, social studies, literature, and math. They need warm and accepting classroom communities and opportunities to breathe fresh air outside, to play and experiment, to make decisions about their own learning, and to create meaningful work, which has the potential to strengthen their identities as committed students and world citizens (Nussbaum, 1997). One celebrated long-time teacher, Ron Berger (2003), described the rich learning environment of his school in this way:

When I share beautiful student work from my classroom with others, I’m often asked how the students came to be this way, how they came to care so much about doing quality work. This is what I say: They entered a school culture where high-quality projects are celebrated everywhere in the building. They didn’t spend their years reading textbooks in unison or filling in blanks on worksheets—since pre-school and Kindergarten they’ve been creating books, drafting maps, researching local history, and designing experiments. (p. 66)

Berger’s teaching was hands-on and experiential, as this quote indicates, but education that is mindful of the parental role of teachers looks out for how students’ self-determination and identity development require much more than test-taking skills. Those hands-on and experiential activities in his teaching, which were more likely to be remembered
by students, helped challenge students to think critically about what they already know and positively transformed students’ views of themselves. Berger also challenged students to solve problems with and within their communities. By asking students to solve “authentic” problems, students were more likely to see the relevance of their work and to be able to “step into the shoes” of those adults who were professionally working on these problems. In Berger’s sixth-grade classroom, for example, students conducted analyses of local groundwater for contamination, tested local residents’ basements for radon, and studied the work of people in various professions, often working closely with those in the field.

In Brian Schultz’s (2008) reflections on teaching, he described how he involved his students in political struggles to improve the learning conditions at their school. While the students in Room 405 confronted the inequities they were facing every day in school and in the community, Schultz, as their teacher, encouraged them to challenge these inequities. He advocated for his students to have the opportunities to challenge and confront inequities in their lives by identifying problems and centering the curriculum on these issues. He mobilized multiple resources, from the community and beyond, to support and encourage them to draw on their strengths to take actions to resolve the issues. He fostered a democratic learning environment that engaged students academically and socially in issues within the school and the community. It was clear to the students how what they learned was relevant to their lives as they were able to better understand how actions in the world can have significant consequences.

These are powerful examples of how teachers can make their students’ academic work directly connected with and relevant to realities outside of the school’s walls. Others have noted the importance of play and imagination (Meier et al., 2010) and the significance of critically analyzing the hidden messages of television and advertising in order to allow students to better understand how authors of these messages view young people as consumers, which may detrimentally affect the positive identity development of children (Molnar, 2005).

How can teachers guide the learning of their students if they do not model what they hope their students learn? In It’s Our World, Too! (2002), Phillip Hoose profiles young children who have acted within their communities to make a difference for others. Hoose writes about a boy who worked tirelessly to turn an abandoned lot in his neighborhood into a public park after a different child was struck by a car while playing in the street. Teachers must also provide examples of this behavior for their students and use their leadership abilities to foster a better community in which children and adults can live.

Sonia Nieto (2003, 2008) points out the connections among public education, good teaching, and democratic society. In What Keeps Teachers Going? (2003), Nieto describes various aspects of teaching: teaching as evolution, teaching as autobiography, teaching as love, teaching as hope and possibility, teaching as anger and desperation, teaching as intellectual work, teaching as democratic practice, and teaching as shaping futures. For Nieto, the basis of good teaching lies in the possibility of seeing teaching as building relationships to empower students. She illustrates the importance of the teacher/student relationship in nurturing hope and care for students and the cultural, linguistic, and social challenges of building such relationships. She argues that improving teaching follows various pathways, and teachers’ personal reflections are necessary as they perceive themselves as agents for changes in schools and communities. Teachers’ hope for, belief in, and words and actions toward their students can often have lifelong impacts on students.

Jean Anyon (2005) reminds us that “failing public schools in cities are . . . a logical consequence of the U.S. macroeconomy—and the federal and regional policies and practices that support it. Teachers, principals, and urban students are not the culprits” (p. 2). Although this chapter focuses on the importance of teachers’ work, we also need to remember that schools and teachers exist within larger contexts. Although they may not be able to achieve significant change alone, teachers, as cultural workers, can be involved in larger debates and movements that hope to interrupt the forces of inequality and suppression in schools and societies. Teachers are citizens and can model for their students how to be actively involved with the communities within and outside of the schools. Teachers need to practice democratic decision making within their schools and participate in their communities by, for instance, attending and participating in school board meetings, union
meetings, and campaigns and elections. The stories; personal essays; autobiography; visual art, music, theater; and science projects of teachers are important modes of expression that illuminate how teachers carry out cultural work.

As teachers reflect on their cultural practice, it is important to continually inquire into their purposes and means to best achieve their goals. There are many purposes of education: to reproduce the knowledge of adults for a new generation, to prepare young people for a healthy and successful life, to prepare young people for an occupation in the economy, and to prepare a local community to compete in the global economy. Yet perhaps most importantly, the aim of education is to cultivate thoughtful and capable cultural workers and world citizens for a more equitable and just world.

In this chapter, we challenge readers to think about how teachers, as cultural workers and as public intellectuals (Giroux, 1988) in often hard times, teach against the grain (Simon, 1992; also Cochran-Smith, 1991, 2001), teach for social justice (Ayers, Hunt, & Quinn, 1998; Darling-Hammond, French, & Garcia-Lopez, 2002), teach to transgress (hooks, 1994), teach community (hooks, 2003), teach critical thinking (hooks, 2010), teach the taboo (Ayers & Ayers, 2011), and teach toward freedom (Ayers, 2004). The radical democratic, cultural, and intellectual quality of teaching creates a space for cultural workers to exile voluntarily to teach in between (He, 2010, 2013; Saïd, 1994, 2003) to educate the next generation of citizens but not for profit (Nussbaum, 2010).

As cultural workers, teachers need to understand their roles as citizens, instructors, and as parents to their students. They must teach with humility and sensitivity. They must teach with hearts and minds. They must advocate for individuals, groups, families, tribes, communities, and societies that are often underrepresented, misrepresented, or excluded in the official narrative (Ayers, 2004). They need to build solidarities with other educational and cultural workers in schools, communities, neighborhoods, and tribes to build up courage (Freire, 2005; Palmer, 1998) and to create spaces of radical hope, love, and justice (Schubert, 2009) in the midst of contested theories, practices, and contexts. They must often develop creative strategies to “transgress orthodoxies and enact educational and social change that fosters equity, equality, freedom, and social justice” (He, Scott-Simmons, Haynes, & Tennial, 2009, p. 220) and to promote a more balanced and equitable human condition through personal and political acts of teaching in an unjust world.

The cultural work of teachers is never finished and is in continuous progress. Teachers can always find better ways to connect with their students, families, colleagues, and communities to better align their practice and thinking with the purposes of their work. Knowledge about teaching and learning is always partial. How can teachers both look inward and learn from others about their experiences, reflections, analyses, and ways of knowing? Educational discourse is dominated by quick and easy evaluations that reduce students’ knowledge to test scores. We encourage teachers to find ways far beyond tests, from the informal normative assessments that teachers conduct everyday within their own classrooms—looking at student work, evaluating student responses, noticing students’ interactions—to multiple forms of educational research that is conducted by scholars and other practitioners who critically reflect on their practice. Other research that teachers might use to improve their practice may not even mention children and the classroom, but might delve into social forces that affect how individuals and groups are differentially impacted by various institutions and relationships influenced by economic forces, race, nationality, gender, and ability. Teachers as cultural workers are engaged citizens of the world who bring the world to their teaching and their teaching to the world. What must teachers know about cultures in schools and societies to interrupt the reproduction of inequalities to cultivate humanity (Nussbaum, 1997) through teaching? This question must be continually asked and actively pursued by thoughtful educators as they teach to inspire.

References and Further Readings


Questions about the preparation of teachers relate back to questions about the role of teachers, and indeed the role of schooling, in the society. Richard Hofstadter (1963) noted, “The figure of the school teacher may well be taken as a central symbol in any modern society” (p. 309). This does not mean there has been agreement over the nature or purposes of teaching, nor over the education and preparation for the profession. The roles and expectations of what it means to become a teacher have changed as public demands and political agendas have changed throughout history (Spring, 2011). Many have explored, witnessed, and documented this power and influence, and as Seymour B. Sarason, Kenneth S. Davidson, and Burton Blatt (1986) explained, the “events and conditions outside physical boundaries of the school profoundly affect the processes, goals and quality of education,” most importantly, the education of its teachers (pp. 1–2). These conditions and events will continue to influence and be influenced by multiple routes, pathways, and programs designed to prepare teachers—curricula of teacher education.

The history of conversations about how best to prepare teachers includes an ever-lingering array of questions about why teacher education is needed at all. David T. Hansen (2008) acknowledged the debate over the values and purposes of teacher education:

To ask what the purposes of teacher education are is to presume such an education is necessary. However, from the time that schools for children and youth emerged on a wide scale in the 19th and 20th centuries, many critics have asserted that teachers do not require formal, professional preparation. (p. 10)

We find ourselves now, in the 21st century, embroiled in similar and increasingly intense debates about the structure, function, purpose, and curriculum of teacher education programs. Stakeholders far and wide are claiming ownership of various ideas and positions. Professional and academic educational associations such as the American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education, the American Educational Research Association, and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development are touting “academic rigor” and “best practice.” Private corporations, educational lobbyists, and venture philanthropists (e.g., Bill and Melinda Gates) are positioning themselves, ideologically and financially, at the center of all education debates. Various organizations such as Teach for America and The New Teacher Project are leading the way in circles that believe teachers are better prepared outside of colleges and schools of education and claim to be able
to “fix classrooms” with their corps members. As Jennifer L. Milam noted, a host of proposals, reports, commentaries, and critiques,

all set out to define, (re)articulate, and (re)form teacher education and schooling; however, few, if any studies have taken seriously the historical situation and evolution of teacher education and its relationship to the present, a critically important undertaking if one is to fully grasp and understand the complexities and difficult natures of the educational issues that exist today (Fraser, 2007). (Milam, 2010, p. 5)

This chapter is an attempt to capture the present moment in teacher education and to offer some comment on contemporary issues facing the field and how it is situated historically, socially, politically, culturally, and economically in today’s educational realm; to explore the theoretical underpinnings of teacher education from a curriculum studies perspective; and, finally, to lend some insights into the forms of inquiry and modes of expression that support generative and thoughtful investigations in teacher education. Even for those who are not explicitly teacher educators, this topic is important in that it aims to highlight some of the nuances of teacher preparation that resonate in/about/through/alongside other curriculum and pedagogical issues in education and schooling.

**Contemporary Concerns**

Teacher education, a relatively new enterprise, only became institutionalized and formalized in the mid-1900s when colleges and universities began to prepare a significant number of teachers. Prior to this, teachers were often prepared in normal schools for 2 years, at most. The current complexities and contemporary concerns in teacher education are reflective of the haphazard development of the profession itself and a lack of consensus about who should teach, how they should be prepared, who is best suited to prepare them, and how to evaluate the efficacy of teachers and their impact on student learning. There are myriad concerns about teacher education. Depending on the person asking the question and his or her position in relation to teaching and teacher education, the specific issues and their priority, urgency, and importance vary. When one examines the current landscape of teacher education in the United States, it is possible to identify significant concerns that continuously emerge from the way one addresses and frames one enduring question: What is the purpose of schooling?

While the purpose of schooling continues to be a heated debate topic among parents, politicians, and citizens alike, one thing on which most agree is the need for a “good teacher” for all children. In fact, the intense focus on the importance of the teacher has been both the strength and the weakness of teacher education. The holding of the teacher as the “the most important factor” in the success of students, as noted by President Barack Obama in his 2009 remarks to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, is a difficult position for the field of education. This position, which has long bolstered college and university teacher education programs, ensures the sustenance and advocacy for the profession and reinforces the continued need for resource investment in educator preparation. It is also a position, however, that has led to the blaming of teachers as the primary reason for educational failure, societal inequality, and even economic downturn. This is a paradoxical position further complicated by society’s divergent positions on the purpose of schooling. For example, if one holds that the purpose of schooling is cultural assimilation and passing to the young predetermined factual knowledge, prescribed skills, and support for the current structure and function of society, a good teacher is the one who delivers content well, manages students appropriately, and produces capable citizens to fulfill available roles in society. Conversely, if one holds that the purpose of schooling is social transformation and change, the development of a critically thinking, socially engaged democratic citizenry, a good teacher is the one who allows students choice and voice in the curriculum with less concerns with management but with meaningful engagement. A good teacher nurtures young people to envision the world as it could be rather than as it is. Therefore, one’s position on the purpose of schooling guides one’s image of “good teachers” and, thus, it guides how those “good teachers” are prepared. Derived, then, from the importance of teachers in society and from the image of what constitutes good teachers, the remainder of this section focuses on four
dimensions: (1) relevancy, (2) professionalization, (3) accountability, and (4) equity and diversity.

Relevancy

Teacher education has long wrestled with the balance of preparing teachers with just the right amount of both academic content and pedagogical knowledge and skill. Initially, most teachers had little more education than those who they taught. As it became more formalized, teacher education provided content- or discipline-specific preparation as well as support for developing effective and productive pedagogy and practice for the classroom. Those outside of education (e.g., business and industry) demanded that content (what to teach) take front-and-center stage in the preparation to teach, while those in education, especially in teacher education, demanded greater attention be paid to developmental pedagogical knowledge (how to teach). Complicating this issue is the view held by academics, politicians, and even the general citizenry that professional educators and teacher educators alike are “mushy, wooly-minded, misguided and misleading intellectuals who have made shambles of our schools” (Sarason et al., 1986, p. i). This often widely held perception of teachers and others who work in education has systematically undermined the profession of teacher education and continues to fuel questions about the relevancy of formal teacher preparation. Moreover, the profession of teaching has come into greater focus and under greater scrutiny through critiques such as A Nation at Risk (1983) that claimed education was at fault for U.S. failures to thrive in the competitive global marketplace. According to Levine (2006), such publications over the years have been replete with rhetoric that demands more content from academic disciplines, more focused and technologically centered education, and less traditional developmental education coursework. The U.S. Department of Education’s 2011 publication Our Future, Our Teachers cited the statistics that “only 23% of all teachers, and only 14% of all teachers in high-poverty schools, come from the top third of college graduates” (p. 6). This statistic not only underlies the criticism that most teacher preparation programs do not have high enough admission standards, but also implies that the vast majority of teachers currently teaching are just not academically prepared—especially in high-need areas such as math, science, technology, and engineering. These statistics, coupled with political and economic concerns that our children are being outperformed by children in other nations, are used to reinforce arguments for increased efforts toward recruitment and higher admission standards into teacher preparation and they are also used to push teacher education to focus more on content. Along with greater emphasis on content, some states (e.g., Texas) have passed legislation requiring secondary teachers to have a degree in the content area they intend to teach, citing the need for teachers to be “highly qualified” in a content area in order to improve student learning and achievement. Colleges of education are marginalized in the conversations about teacher preparation and are increasingly being targeted for a lack of rigor and standards and inadequately preparing future teachers for the classrooms into which they are headed (e.g., Teacher Prep Review, 2013). The push to remain relevant is a challenge for colleges and schools of teacher education—and many find themselves at the center of institutional efforts to reorganize or reprioritize and they are being asked to justify their position as essential to the future of education.

Professionalization

Alongside the criticisms of lack of rigor and poor practice that have pointed to colleges of teacher education as the root of poor teaching and student failure, the contemporary conversations surrounding standards and accreditation have all but swallowed teacher education into the belly of standardized testing and hypergoverning accrediting bodies. Taubman (2009) asked:

How did we allow the language of education, study, teaching, and intellectual and creative endeavor to transform itself into the language and practices of standards and accountability? How did it happen that we approved the use of pervasive testing that would shock us into compliance? How did we become complicit in the erosion of our own power, and why did we embrace the advice of salesmen, financiers, corporate lawyers, accountants and millionaires? (p. 128)

In short, in an effort to be seen as professionals worthwhile in the new education enterprise, to remain relevant in a storm of ridicule and viable in a sea of skeptics, teachers, administrators, and
educational leaders, as well as colleges and schools of education and teacher education, have coalesced into a “professionalization” that has had serious unintended consequences.

Professionalization of education and teacher education has limited the focus of schools and colleges from a broader liberal arts study of education to a focus solely on school practice. Intense focus on understanding what students learn via standardized measures of achievement has become the norm, and these measurements also reflect perceptions on the efficacy of teachers as determined by accrediting bodies such as the National Council on the Accreditation of Teacher Education and the new Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. The aforementioned focus on content- and discipline-specific knowledge is what is required. Strict enforcement of dubious mandates by such oversight organizations puts immense pressure on teachers and teacher educators, because failure to comply could result in the loss of accreditation or even dissolution of programs, schools, and/or colleges. The unintended consequences of professionalization through standardization, the reductive curriculum, increased surveillance from testing and accountability, limited opportunity for creativity and exploration at all levels of education from K–12 and beyond, including teacher education, are the price that has been paid in exchange for an aspiration of teachers to be seen with respect as professionals in the field of education. It is this professionalization that now demands a strong response from those in education.

Accountability

Accountability is the mantra in every nook and cranny of every K–12 classroom, conference room, parent–teacher conference, and faculty and staff meeting. It is today’s hallmark of American education, the multibillion-dollar industry that aims to capture our students’ knowledge, skills, development, and aptitude on standardized measures of achievement and the “primary engine of educational reform,” as noted by Kris Sloan (2010) in Meeting the Challenge of High-Stakes Testing. While there are divergent perspectives on standardized testing, and there is support for and critique of testing from all sides of the political and social arenas, accountability through high-stakes testing seems to have a foreseeable future. Teacher education now has its own version of high-stakes accountability known as the edTPA (formerly the Teacher Performance Assessment), a measure aimed at capturing future teachers’ ability to plan, teach, and assess student learning. It is likely that the edTPA will become part of the progression of teacher evaluation linking teacher education programs to students’ performance on standardized tests under the guidance of a specific teacher (Youngs, 2013). Moreover, while legislatures and state boards of education iron out the full impact of this measure, teacher educators in colleges of education are feverishly working to (re)align curriculum, content, and programs for an assessment that likely will have long-lasting and significant consequences for programs.

Initially begun with the enacting of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965, the modern testing movement was supposed to ensure equity and access for all to a quality education. As large numbers of children were not being well served educationally (especially students from economically poor households or racial and ethnic minorities), the push for testing was to measure and assess all children in an effort to raise standards. In other words, it was not acceptable that some children were receiving a quality education while others were matriculating through 12 years of public school without basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills. As the ESEA was reauthorized by successive administrations, the push for more testing grew—as did the growing demand for higher standards. With each new reauthorization came a new batch of tests and higher stakes. Presently, we are in the midst of an unprecedented squall of assessment and high-stakes accountability with the adoption by most states of the Common Core State Standards. This push for national alignment and accountability has fostered an extension of standardized assessments and their influence. By 2010 most states had adopted the Common Core, and by 2015 many schools were using new standardized tests developed by two different partnerships of states. The implementation and use of these assessments are increasingly being tied to funding (both federal and state) as well as performance rankings that impact property values and community growth. Several states (e.g., Ohio, Indiana, New York) have implemented “no pass, no promotion” regulations that keep children in certain “tested” grades until they receive a passing score. Teachers in some states are now being compensated based on their students’
performance on these measures. Teacher education has been on the margins of the accountability movement, removed from the day-to-day realities of pervasive surveillance in classrooms. State boards of education assess not only student learning but also teacher capability with these tests. In short, teachers’ efficacy will be determined by students’ scores on a standardized test, which will be used to measure the value of teacher preparation. To be clearer, if Ms. Smith’s third-grade students perform poorly on their state assessment, not only Ms. Smith’s performance but also that of the teacher education program in which she was prepared will be in question. Just as schools and districts are being “graded” based on student performance, so too will teacher education programs as they are now being held accountable for the teachers they prepare and those teachers’ impact (or failure to have an impact) on student learning.

The implications of the accountability movement on teacher education are significant. Not only is this a change from teacher educators’ previously privileged distance from testing, but it also demands that teacher education pay much closer attention to distance from testing, but it also demands that teacher change from teacher educators’ previously privileged on teacher education are significant. Not only is this a performance but also that of the teacher education program in which she was prepared will be in question. Just as schools and districts are being “graded” based on student performance, so too will teacher education programs as they are now being held accountable for the teachers they prepare and those teachers’ impact (or failure to have an impact) on student learning.

The implications of the accountability movement on teacher education are significant. Not only is this a change from teacher educators’ previously privileged distance from testing, but it also demands that teacher education pay much closer attention to who they recruit and who they prepare to be teachers, how they go about preparing them, and in what ways they ensure that the teachers graduating from their program are prepared to measurably impact student learning as indicated on the narrow range of learning measured by high-stakes testing. No longer can teacher education sit solely in a position of criticizing standardized testing. Educators must take a stance of responsibility in preparing future teachers for the rigors and intricacies of assessment and provide opportunities for candidates to “dig meaningfully into the viscera of educational testing” (Sloan, 2010, p. 192). While policy makers expect teacher and teacher educator compliance, there is little evidence that accountability mandates are justifiable by educational scholarship. Moreover, even if the tests did measure outcomes representing defensible purposes, a major question remains about whether educators or the society at large should be responsible for low scores among impoverished and minority populations. Who should be accountable for such socioeconomic conditions?

Equity and Diversity

This accountability question leads to a fourth issue in teacher education—equity and diversity—which has endured since the inception of schooling and teaching. It challenges teacher education to be inclusive and equitable. Present since the infancy of public education, the roots of inequality and racism entwined and grew with teacher education. Many schools across the United States, including rural and urban areas, suffer from inadequate funding, lack of resources, and underqualified teachers who are expected to teach the most vulnerable youth (Kozol, 2005). As also noted in the U.S. Department of Education’s Our Future, Our Teachers, “the teaching workforce does not reflect the diversity of the nation’s students, with a student body that is increasingly [B]lack or Hispanic being taught by a teaching force that remains predominantly [W]hite” (p. 7).

Many new teachers entering classrooms report that they feel unprepared to meet the demands of an increasingly diverse student population that includes English language learners and students with disabilities. Achievement data demonstrate that children of most racial and ethnic minorities, those for whom English is their second language, and those from economically disadvantaged homes are consistently outperformed on nearly all measures of standardized achievement by White students as a group. Taken alongside increased calls for accountability and for tying student performance to funding, this is a recipe for a two-tiered educational system wherein teachers of the second tier are unable to meet the needs of the students.

Much research has been conducted in teacher education that focuses on diversity and equity (e.g., Banks, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Sleeter, 2005). However, in most teacher education programs, future teachers’ opportunities to learn about such matters are limited to one or two isolated classes on “diversity” or “exceptionalities” and less-than-stellar experiences in schools that serve “diverse” populations as part of their clinical preparation or field experiences. While this has been the typical approach to preparing future teachers to work in diverse contexts, research points clearly to the inability of today’s teacher education to prepare future educators for the classroom and to support the high achievement of all children (Nieto, 2000). Perhaps the silver lining in this hyperaccountability moment is that teacher education will continuously be challenged to prepare teachers for the classrooms. Teacher education practices and policies must confront, deconstruct, and reconstruct teacher preparation to support sustained community engagement,
clinically based partnerships, and inter/transdisciplinary curriculum and pedagogy embedded in dynamic schools that serve a diverse population of students. If teacher education fails to meet this challenge, the future will most certainly be grim.

**Theory to Practice and Practice to Theory**

There are diverse calls for a dramatic and sweeping restructuring (and even elimination) of teacher education, recruitment, and professional development, as well as the reforming of professional standards for certification, accreditation, and assessment. This is certainly not new, nor will it end with the current rounds of reform, revolt, or revision. While the history of teacher education is long (Borrowman, 1965), it is imperative that teacher education researchers and theorists respond differently (qualitatively and quantitatively) than they have in the past if there is hope to survive or flourish.

There are many different branches of teacher education study and scholarship that aim to prepare the best teachers possible to serve young people. However, this general purpose is a moving target dependent upon one’s political, professional, and personal position in relation to education and what is meant by **good or best** teachers. Thus, it would benefit teacher education, as Madeleine Grumet (2010) explained, “responding to the apparatus and discourse of state and accrediting agency oversight, responding to the ways that knowledge and community are conceptualized in neoliberal economics and school governance” to avoid having its work continue in such a way that supports a “system that obliterates school communities, diminishes knowledge, and discourages democratic participation in the construction of schooling” (p. 68). In exchange for these responses, teacher education ought to more thoughtfully engage collaborative preparation, make meaningful use of autobiography, and value the classroom as a space not just where teaching is practiced but where the practice is a reflection of theory and theory resonates with the rhythms and cadence of practice.

Where there are great challenges, there are great opportunities. Institutional change requires not only changes in ideology and habit but also the exploration of new and innovative ideas, institutional restructuring, and the pondering of a future that none of us can predict. What will future classrooms look like?

How will we meet the needs of a population we cannot know now? For what future are we educating our children? The nature of a dynamic society is that it is multidisciplinary and complex, and teacher education must work in concert—sustaining collaborations, working across disciplinary boundaries, and building strong partnerships with surrounding communities that serve and benefit practicing teachers, current students, and concerned citizens.

Teacher education programs must turn a critical eye on themselves with the understanding that change is not to be delegated but embraced. William Pinar (2004) stated:

> Whether “fast” or “slow,” teacher education (if it remains at all) must be reconceived from a skills-identified induction into the school bureaucracy to the interdisciplinary, theoretical, and autobiographical study of education experience in which curriculum and teaching are understood as complicated conversations toward the construction of a democratic public sphere. (p. 229)

Curriculum theory offers promise to reconceptualize teacher education that takes at its center the teacher and her or his lived experience alongside with understanding the teacher as a person full of complexities, complications, desires, and dreams. Teacher education programs that focus on the relationship between the personal and the professional endure beyond those programs that are built upon the whims of dominant education reform rhetoric and politics. As William Ayers (2001/2010) stated:

> Teaching is highly personal—an intensely intimate encounter. The rhythm of teaching involves a complex journey, a journey of discovery and wonder, disappointment and fulfillment. A first step is becoming the student to your students: uncovering the fellow creatures who must be partners to the enterprise. Another is creating an environment for learning, a nurturing and challenging space in which to travel. And finally, the teacher must begin work on the intricate, many-tiered bridges that will fill up the space, connecting all the dreams, hopes, skills, experiences, and knowledge students bring to class with deeper and wider ways of knowing. Teaching requires a vast range of knowledge, ability, skill, judgment and understanding—and it requires a thoughtful, caring person at its center. (p. 135)

Teaching is more than a set of disconnected standards, objectives, and measures. Being cared for and taught by caring teachers means an intense engagement in schools, schooling practice, and school cultures. In teaching and teacher education, theory can
no longer be pondered in isolation detached from practice; practice can no longer be detached from theory. Connecting theory with practice enables teachers to inspire their students as they dwell in the difficult space between curriculum-as-planned (or regulated) and the curriculum-as-lived or enacted each day in the messiness of the classroom. This is the space where teachers live and work amidst the tensionality of the impossible and the possible (Aoki, 2005). To be more concrete, classroom management cannot be taught without understanding the intricacies of children in the classroom—their needs, challenges, gifts, and potentials. Managing a classroom cannot be broached with only a set of “skills” or “practices”; instead, it demands a teacher’s reflective and recursive engagement with theory and practice, the personal and the political, as is carefully articulated in Paulo Freire’s (1970) work on pedagogical praxis and William Ayers’s (2004a, 2004b) work on teaching the personal and the political and teaching toward freedom.

**Teacher Education Inquiry and Modes of Expression and Representation**

Inquiries in teacher education are as diverse as the numbers, structures, and compositions of the existing teacher education programs, and as myriad as the conceptualizations of researchers who engage in forms of inquiry and modes of expression and representation. Teacher education inquiries are concerned with a multitude of questions and studies that include, though not limited to, the following: content and curriculum of teacher education programs; recruitment and preparation of teachers; dispositions of teachers, diversities of student learning, content- or discipline-specific matters; historical and philosophical assumptions and implications; interventions in learning and teaching; and in-service or professional development in teacher education. Presented here are a few of the most significant areas of inquiry in teaching and teacher education.

**Philosophical/Historical Studies.** Early philosophers of education, from John Dewey and Alfred North Whitehead to George S. Counts and Carter G. Woodson, approach curriculum of teacher education contemplatively and consider what it means to teach, in what context, and in relation to the world. Studies of this work are eclectic, thoughtful, and take many forms from traditional to poetic and informative to imaginative. Similarly, movements and programs of the past are studied for their relevance to contemporary issues of curriculum of teacher education.

**Empirical Research in Teacher Education.** Unmistakable is the surge of empirical (read: experimental) research in teacher education. This work primarily approaches teaching and teacher education through measured, measurable, and quantifiable results. Most recently, this has come to include value-added measures and shines a glaring spotlight on test scores and assessment. This is a dominant form of research across the field of teacher education.

**Theoretical Work in Teaching.** Curriculum theorists have long pondered the purposes and outcomes of education. Theoretical engagement with teaching and teacher education weaves together multiple disciplines, perspectives, and epistemological viewpoints to propose, speculate, and critique teaching and teacher education from innumerable points of view.

**Practical (Practitioner) Inquiry.** Also known as “teacher action research,” this branch of inquiry holds teacher position and person as central to understanding the classroom, teaching interactions, and student learning. For teachers, practitioner inquiry that explores and improves practice is integral and necessary. There is a large body of literature on practical action research and teacher lore.

**Narrative Inquiry.** A branch of investigations concerned primarily with the meaning made by people through and with their experiences in teaching and education. Using texts that may include stories, journals, field notes, letters, conversations, and photographs, narrative inquiry seeks to understand the organization of human experience and the meaning brought forth thereafter. Not concerned with generalizability, narrative captures the quality and complexity of human experience.

**Arts-Based Educational Research.** Characterized by both a purposeful effort to enhance perspectives related to a certain human experience as well as the presence of aesthetic qualities (or design elements),
25. **Teacher Education Curriculum**

Arts-based research is not intended to “predict” or “determine,” rather to understand more fully the experience at hand. To “view” or “interpret” an encounter from varied perspectives that include, but not limited to, poetry, painting, performance art, dance, and/or music is the cornerstone of this mode of inquiry.

Aforementioned forms of inquiry in teaching and teacher education parallel a wide array of modes of expression and (re)presentation. Scholars, researchers, practitioners, theorists, teachers, and artists all approach inquiry from a specific epistemological position that informs, colors, distorts, and shapes the outcomes of inquiry. Modes of expression that include auto/ethnography (Ellis, 2004), narrative (Josselson, 2011), empirical data in charts and graphs (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005), portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 2002), poetry and spoken word (Baszile, 2008), and even film and documentary (e.g., “The New Public” or “The Raising of America”) present a particular position of knowing about teaching and teacher education. To understand the complexity and beauty of teaching and learning and teacher education, we need to embrace the complexity and multiplicity of these forms of inquiry and modes of expression and representation as pieces of a much larger puzzle for which we do not yet have the full color image on the front of the box.

### References and Further Readings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher/Editor</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Notes and Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayers, W.</td>
<td><em>Teaching the personal and the political: Essays on hope and justice</em></td>
<td>New York, NY: Teachers College Press.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellis, C.</td>
<td><em>The Ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography.</em></td>
<td>Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the midst of curricular experience of schooling, one often hears students say, “What does this have to do with my life? Why don’t teachers and textbooks speak to my needs, interests, and life in general?” Meanwhile, parents, teachers, educational leaders, and news reporters frequently inquire, “Why do subject matter content or teaching approaches often lack resonance with students of color or those from nondominant cultures? Why does their response seem to say they see no relevance in school experience to their lived experience? What can be done to more fully engage students from diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds in teaching–learning processes? How could educators relate curriculum and teaching to student lives and concerns so that they can understand themselves better and live better lives as they grow up?” Such concerns of students, educators, and other concerned adults call for greater relevance and transformation of knowledge in teaching and curriculum.

Culturally relevant pedagogy, synonymously referred to as culturally relevant teaching, is an approach to teaching that is concerned with the relationship between what students learn in school and the knowledge, identities, and experiences students value and bring with them to school. Drawing from and linking these two spaces is recognized as “good teaching” (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 159) that enables students to acquire academic success and to maintain and strengthen cultural identities in the context of the teaching and learning process while adopting a sociopolitical awareness of the world in which they live. While Gloria Ladson-Billings most notably theorized the term culturally relevant pedagogy in the 1990s, this approach to teaching and curriculum has long historic roots. It is also connected to similar pedagogic approaches known by different monikers, including culturally congruent curriculum (Au & Jordan, 1981), culturally synchronous teaching (Irvine, 1990), and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010, 2000; Irvine, 1992, 2003; Villegas, 1991, 2002). What each of these approaches shares is the recognition that teaching and curriculum are situated in sociocultural contexts that operate inequitably and differently value the knowledge, experiences, values, and identities possessed by students and the communities and families in which they exist.

We consider the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy by first outlining the contours that shape its theoretical foundation and then situating it in historical and contemporary contexts. This discussion illuminates the purposes, goals, and deep connections...
culturally relevant pedagogy has to historic curriculum traditions, as well as the challenges it currently faces and the promise it holds for teaching and curriculum practices. We conclude by considering some key modes of inquiry and presentation associated with the concept of culturally relevant pedagogy.

**Theorizing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

In 1994, Ladson-Billings considered the question: What are the characteristics that define excellent teachers of African American students? The challenges encountered by African Americans to gain access to equitable opportunities to learn in the United States and the concomitant disparities in achievement associated with them made this question necessary and timely. As important as this question was, the fact that Ladson-Billings framed this inquiry from the perspective of what works points to an even more important facet of her theory. Effective teaching and curriculum for African American students must approach these students in culturally affirmative ways.

Ladson-Billings’s inquiry into the teaching approach of eight teachers identified by school staff and community members as effective pedagogues of African American students illustrated how these teachers held a similar orientation and commitment toward teaching. Culturally relevant pedagogy, she found, played out in the perspectives teachers held around three key areas of student learning and development, including academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness. The teachers in the study were both Black and White and taught in vastly different ways. However, they each held a similar perspective toward teaching that recognized that students needed to find academic success in ways that affirmed their cultural identities while also developing an awareness of and willingness to act toward the amelioration of societal inequities.

Building from a growing body of literature on culture and teaching that focused on a micro-level of classroom dynamics (Ladson-Billings, 1995b), culturally relevant pedagogy acknowledged the problems students of color often encountered in schools when their teachers come from dissimilar racial, cultural, linguistic, and sometimes socioeconomic backgrounds (Au & Mason, 1983). It also recognized that schools traditionally have been institutions that helped to sustain and reproduce inequalities. Thus, the teachers in her study recognized that student academic success should not come at the expense of altering students’ cultural identities and without awareness of how schools and societies operate in inequitable ways.

Concomitant with Ladson-Billings’s research on culturally relevant pedagogy, other scholars were also advancing theories on cultural approaches to teaching that took into account both micro- and macro-level concerns with cultural mismatch and its location in social arrangements and patterns that exist outside of simply focusing on the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). These included the early theories of culturally congruent curriculum (Au & Jordan, 1981), cultural synchronization (Irvine, 1990), and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010/2000; Irvine, 1992, 2002; Villegas, 1991, 2002). Culturally congruent curriculum, cultural synchronization, and culturally responsive teaching recognized and drew from the cultural knowledge and ways of being and acting that students brought to the classroom. These approaches expanded on what counted as valid curriculum by challenging dominant, normative expectations of school knowledge and by engaging and affirming students’ cultural selves while empowering and transforming students and the curriculum encountered in the classroom and beyond. It is not surprising that culturally relevant pedagogy, as well as the work of related theories on cultural synchronization and perhaps, more specifically, culturally responsive teaching, is often invoked synonymously and interchangeably. While not seeking to collapse differences among these theoretical ideas, we point this out to acknowledge the connections between these important bodies of work.

Collectively, the theories on cultural synchronization and responsiveness support and exist alongside culturally relevant pedagogy, with the latter offering a pedagogic framework that takes into account cultural competence as it plays out in students’ cultural identities, experiences, and perspectives. Yet these theories do so in ways that not only ensure the academic success of students but also seek to develop their sociopolitical consciousness by equipping them to recognize, critique, and act to ameliorate societal inequity and injustice.
Historical Movements That Engender Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

The underlying perspectives and principles that inform culturally relevant pedagogy have historic roots that go back to at least the beginning of the 20th century. Understanding the historical trajectory of the concept of culture in education is important because it helps to explicate the theoretical tensions that predate and continue to inform the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy itself.

During the early 20th century, theories about culture began to emerge in the U.S. academic literature. As well, much of the discourse about achievement and education largely focused on the so-called inherent capacities of immigrants, Native Americans, African Americans, and other historically underserved racial and ethnic groups. This school of thought argued that racial groups such as African Americans possessed an inferior biological composition that predetermined their capacities to function in society. Several well-known scholars including Franz Boaz, Alain Locke, Robert Park, and Ruth Benedict, however, vehemently challenged these ideas. Much of this scholarship moved from the perspective that a person’s status and placement in society is not defined by some innate set of racial categories but rather is subsumed within sociocultural contexts. The argument went that “race” had no biological basis and that cultural and ecological forces informed all social milieus.

A number of scholars and other writers drew from this work, advocating for educational reforms that recognized the connection between the social and educational status of African Americans and their home and community contexts. The importance of culture and understanding different cultures also became vitally important with growing racial tensions that emerged in southern and northern cities, including St. Louis, Chicago, and New York. In what was commonly called the Intercultural Education Movement, scholars sought to understand how cultural knowledge could be used through school curriculum to foster unity and goodwill in a diverse society (Banks, 1992). This debate would endure through mid-century with focus placed on the extent to which culture could be used as an explanatory thesis for making sense of social and educational mobility.

By the early 1960s, culture became a key vehicle to explain the context of poverty and academic underachievement. The notion of “culture” went through a process of change in the 1960s where poverty and underachievement were not viewed as outcomes informed by a set of mitigating contexts but social circumstances that were inherent to Black and Latino culture, or what Oscar Lewis (1966) called the culture of poverty. In essence, “culture” was employed as a way to identify presumed deficiencies in historically underserved racial and ethnic groups. The use of culture to explain the absences and deficiencies in racial and ethnic groups was a dominant discourse of education through most of the 1960s.

By the late 1960s, a new usage of culture emerged that argued culture in the urban schools should not be seen as deficient but as “different.” This became known as the cultural difference theory, referring to the difference from normative culture. Cultural difference theory recognized that culture was informed by the convergence of temporal and spatial contexts that shaped how people adapted to their social realities. The idea of difference was that rural and urban contexts helped to produce ways of learning and expression that are different but not deficient from what were accepted as conventional ways of speech and interaction. The theory also acknowledged that if teachers assume that only one way to culturally express oneself in class exists, issues of conflict and misunderstanding ensue. In subsequent decades a number of educational movements including the ethnic studies and multicultural educational movements drew from these notions of culture to develop curricular materials and pedagogical practices that focused on students’ culture as assets rather than as deficits or as a liability to learning. At the forefront of this theoretical turn was the work of multicultural education, which called for a robust analysis of culture inside and outside of schools.

Such theories of culture would endure through the early 1990s when scholars explored the extent to which teachers, specifically Black female teachers, drew on culture as a way to create a classroom that was relevant to students’ lives. For example, scholars Jacqueline Jordan Irvine (2003) and Michele Foster (1997) explored how Black teachers used culture to inform the educational experiences of African American students. The concept of culturally relevant pedagogy, then,
The first challenge focuses on the failure to understand and enact culturally relevant teaching and curriculum as it was initially theorized (Brown, 2013; Morrison, Robbins, & Rose, 2008). The theory points to an orientation and concomitant approach to teaching and curriculum that is interested in student academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness. However, it is not uncommon to find a primary focus placed on “cultures.” This can play out in the assumption that one is offering a culturally relevant educational experience solely because one includes books and other curricula material that reflect the groups of color represented in the classroom. This perspective renders culturally relevant pedagogy as nothing more than a method for inclusion of representative curriculum. It also presumes that culturally relevant pedagogy is only needed for students of color. Indeed, while the inclusion of multiple groups’ knowledge is absolutely necessary, it is not something that only students of color need to experience in school. All students need to have access to a range of diverse bodies of knowledge in order to recognize and affirm the contributions of peoples across the globe. A consequence of the singular, myopic attention placed solely on an assumed essentialized notion of culture is the fact that little to no attention is sometime given to concerns with sociopolitical consciousness. In this way, the problems with (limited) representation paradoxically help to perpetuate problems with representation by reinscribing and framing who needs (and does not need) culturally responsive teaching in the first place.

While cultures are often noted as the key defining element of culturally relevant pedagogy, this emphasis is interestingly linked to the idea of academic achievement. This reflects the belief that culturally relevant pedagogy can help to close the achievement gap, or what Ladson-Billings (2006) reconceptualized as an opportunity gap due to the education debt owed to historically underserved students of color in the United States. This reconceptualization astutely recognized that disparities in achievement between students of color and their White counterparts were integrally tied to the accumulated impact of inequitable distribution and allocation of resources and opportunities to learn between these two groups. Coupled with the reticence of mainstream teaching to embrace a critical equity orientation to teaching

Contemporary Concerns: Origins, Reflections, and Innovations

The salience of culturally relevant pedagogy remains strong in contemporary education discourse, practice, and policy (Paris & Alim, 2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy is found in scholarly literature and practice across a multidisciplinary field including K–12 teaching and teacher education, professional development, curriculum, schooling, special education, leadership, and classroom teaching; in higher education; and in disciplines outside of education such as nursing, social work, and business. Scholars have picked up and used culturally relevant pedagogy in the context of classroom teaching, curriculum development, school leadership, classroom management, and student assessment. Not surprisingly, K–12 schools and teacher education programs both in the United States and around the globe recognize that teachers need to hold a commitment to and effectively enact culturally relevant teaching, even as they might struggle to bring this goal to fruition (Young, 2010). This struggle is not new. It is related to the long-standing difficulties of transforming dominant, normative discourses to better reflect the values, perspectives, and experiences of diverse groups in the United States (King, 2004). It is also reflective of the rapidly changing world in which we now live—a world full of complexities related to diversity and culture.

In the contemporary context, culturally relevant approaches to teaching continue to thrive. Teacher education programs work to prepare teacher candidates to teach in culturally relevant ways. School districts recognize the necessity for teachers to draw from culturally relevant and responsive instructional and curriculum approaches. Yet in spite of the proliferation and popularity of culturally relevant approaches to teaching and curriculum, challenges exist. These challenges concern two primary areas. The first is the failure to enact culturally relevant teaching and curriculum in ways that align with the theory itself, while the second deals with the construct of “cultures,” including the limitations with and implications of using the term in curriculum and teaching practice.
and curriculum, this preoccupation with achievement and culture has likely helped to support a narrow interpretation and application of culturally relevant pedagogy in practice.

In the case of schools, Morrison et al.’s (2008) review of literature on culturally relevant pedagogy showed that very few studies attended to high expectations, cultural competence, and critical consciousness—the three orientations held by teachers and explicated by Ladson-Billings (1995b) in her formative piece, Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. Morrison and colleagues (2008) found that generally one or two aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy were addressed, with most emphasis placed on cultural competence where general attention on culture was represented. Evelyn Young’s (2010) work with an urban school and its implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy also supported these findings of misinterpretation and overemphasis on the construct of culture.

These findings are not idiosyncratic. In a search conducted by the first and second authors of this chapter on the extent literature from 1990 to 2010 related to “culturally relevant/responsive teaching and/or pedagogy,” 375 articles were reviewed. This inquiry found that most of the work across each of the 3 decades examined focused primarily on culture, with very little emphasis placed on sociopolitical consciousness. This is not surprising and is likely related to the overall trepidation and resistance to curriculum knowledge recognized as controversial (read: contrary to normative, dominant, and hegemonic ways of knowing and being). Similarly to the superficial conceptualization that multicultural education encountered often through a celebration of food, heroes, and holidays (Sleeter & Grant, 2006), or the simplistic rendering of culture as a static element of marginalized groups, culturally relevant pedagogy has also, in many ways, become simplified in some educational discourse and practice (Ladson-Billings, 2014). It is important to stress this last point because it both flattens the pedagogical theory and gets defined in particularly essentializing and racialized ways. In effect, culturally relevant pedagogy becomes understood as the pedagogic method for dealing with Black students and other student populations of color (only) that historically have experienced low academic achievement (e.g., Latinos/as, Native Americans). As a consequence, it is generally not recognized as a vehicle to adopt a more inclusive, relevant, and potentially transformative curricula knowledge for all students.

The contemporary challenge for those drawing from a culturally relevant pedagogy framework, then, is to remain steadfast in defining and enacting a critical and holistic understanding and use of the theory. In doing this, the cultural competence component will assume a less reified place and perhaps allow for a less culturally essentialized understanding of the pedagogy. Our recognition of the critical, complex nature of culturally relevant pedagogy, while acknowledging that such an approach is “just good teaching” (Ladson-Billings, 1995a), supports a powerful pedagogy that is useful and transformative for any school, teacher, classroom, or student.

In recent years, scholars have critically reflected on culturally relevant pedagogy, considering how the theory might evolve to account for contemporary concerns around culture, particularly how it gets used in essentializing and static ways. In 1999, Tamara Beauboeuf-Lafontant argued the need for a politically relevant pedagogy that focused on the critical, political work that Black teachers enacted to counter the deficit-laden societal discourses that surrounded the Black students they taught. Django Paris and H. Samy Alim draw from the construct of “culturally sustaining pedagogy” (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014) to argue the need to make culturally relevant pedagogy a more expansive theory. According to Paris and Alim (2014), culturally sustaining pedagogy acknowledges the need for an enlarged notion of culture that is fluid, nonessential, and cognizant of the similarities and differences that exist among people who are members of the same cultural group. While recognizing that cultural groups have never been static, Ladson-Billings (2014) has acknowledged the utility in “remixing” culturally relevant pedagogy (i.e., Culturally Relevant Pedagogy 2.0) to address the hybrid nature of culture—both in and across cultural groups in contemporary times. What these scholars recognize in their critical reflection on culturally relevant pedagogy is the need to sustain cultural practices through teaching and curricula practices that affirm and draw from, rather than marginalize and denigrate, the cultural knowledge that students bring with them to school. However, such cultural knowledge transcends traditional cultural boundaries, with children and youth
engaging in cultural practices that require rearticulation in an academic and societal discourse that has traditionally approached culture as static, fixed, and bounded.

Scholars have also pointed to the need to ground teaching practices in the lived experiences of children and youth. In the contemporary global context, scholars and practitioners have called for this recognition in the context of hip hop pedagogy (Emdin, 2010; Hill, 2009; Love, 2014; Petchauer, 2012), an approach to curriculum, teaching, learning, and schooling that draws from the philosophical traditions of the hip hop art form. This work can move in at least two ways: the first links students’ interests and participation in the hip hop culture with the official school knowledge; these students are expected to learn, while the second recognizes the value of inserting hip hop–informed epistemologies in official curriculum knowledge. In both instances, the cultural knowledges related to hip hop are recognized as valuable and commensurate with the canonized, formal school curriculum often aligned with Western, European worldviews, experiences, and perspectives.

**Modes of Inquiry and Forms of Expression**

**Modes of Inquiry**

As discussed earlier, culturally relevant pedagogy enjoys a popular place in the scholarly literature. The extant scholarship on teaching, specifically in the context of culture and diversity, offers a wealth of research on the topic that cuts across multiple disciplines and areas. The vast majority of these draw from traditional qualitative and action research traditions (Morrison et al., 2008). In the qualitative realm, where the majority of the research on culturally relevant teaching resides, the studies often look closely at events that take place in classroom, school, and teacher education spaces. The early work produced during the 1990s also focused on theorizing the defining qualities, practices, promises, and challenges associated with preparing educators to do culturally relevant work. At the formal curriculum level, research and theorizing around culturally relevant teaching is sometimes targeted to a specific core content area (e.g., literacy, science, math, social studies). This body of work considers the possibilities of a culturally relevant teaching and curriculum in light of subject area knowledge and pedagogic domains.

**Forms of Expression**

Culturally relevant pedagogy is primarily recognized as an approach to teaching and curriculum that is enacted in classroom practice and other learning spaces. Yet it is an approach to teaching and curriculum that is not prescriptive concerning specific strategies and methods. Rather, it is more about how teachers understand and orient themselves to their work. In her study, Ladson-Billings (2009/1994) places this orientation to teaching and curriculum in the context of how teachers view self and others, knowledge, and social relations. Here culturally relevant teaching is concerned with the community that is created in the classroom around learning. Questions related to how teachers view their own responsibility as teachers and the relationships they hold with their students, their students’ families, and the greater community are of particular importance. There is also concern about the relationships that are fostered in the classroom between students and the extent to which these relationships encourage collective learning and growth, rather than competition and individual student academic success only. Additionally, the constructs of culturally relevant teaching manifest in the assumptions held and decisions made about knowledge. What counts as valid, worthwhile knowledge? How does this knowledge connect to and affirm the experiences and knowledge associated with the identities of the students in the classroom?

The salient forms of expression of culturally relevant pedagogy, along with the related construct of culturally responsive teaching, as both curriculum and pedagogic discourse, manifests in research and theoretical scholarship. The foundational work in this tradition was presented in the context of classroom- and school-based research and in empirical-based theorizing around increasing culturally relevant/ responsive knowledge in classrooms and in teacher education programs. This, of course, is found in the scholarship of Ladson-Billings (1995a, 1995b, 2009/1994, 2014). Additionally, Irvine (1990, 1992, 2003) explored the need to consider how culture should, but often does not, get factored into classroom practices or teacher education in ways that
enable teachers to support and affirm Black students. Ana Marie Villegas (1991, 2002) conceptualized how to equip teachers to provide an inclusive and responsive set of instructional approaches for marginalized students of color. Geneva Gay’s work (2010/2000) illuminated key concerns around curriculum and its failure to provide and prepare teachers to offer affirmative, inclusive, and critical content knowledge to students. Research studies also examined whether and how culturally relevant pedagogy existed in the classroom and, in the case of Tyrone Howard’s (2001) work, how students responded. Studies in this tradition also explored how existing teachers understand and implement culturally relevant teaching in the classroom. The strength of this body of work is that it illuminates both what does and does not work when culturally relevant teaching and curriculum is utilized. Additionally different but related orientations to teaching and curriculum that are concerned with transforming hegemonic knowledge, such as the funds of knowledge approach (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), exist alongside culturally relevant/responsive pedagogies. Collectively this work offers a palliative to ineffective practices that historically have maintained subtractive experiences (Valenzuela, 1999) for students whose identities are marginalized in schools and society.

How, then, can schools offer these students an educational experience that draws from, affirms, and humanizes the knowledge they, and their families and communities, hold? How do we ensure that students maintain a strong sense of self, community, and understanding of issues of equity and justice? A fully critically enacted culturally relevant pedagogy offers a clear vision for achieving these goals. The cornerstone of this concept is that if given the opportunity all students can achieve at high levels while developing a strong sociopolitical consciousness without giving up their cultural identities. Historically grounded and responsive to the needs of an ever-changing global society, culturally relevant pedagogy continues to serve as a necessary curricula intervention in a world punctuated by inequity, uneven power relations, and the existence of dehumanizing perspectives about students of color (Brown, 2013). Brown recognizes this as key if we are to truly adopt what she calls a critical humanizing sociocultural knowledge for teaching. In so doing, it maintains the promise of disrupting and ultimately transforming what gets taught and how it is taught in school for the betterment of all students.

Note

1. The terms Black and African American are used interchangeably in this chapter.

References and Further Readings


Elliot Eisner (1994) defined curriculum as what students have the opportunity to learn in a particular context at a particular time. He postulated several important forms of the curriculum: (a) the explicit curriculum concerns student learning opportunities that are overtly taught and stated or printed in documents, policies, and guidelines, such as in course syllabi, state standards, or on school websites; (b) the implicit curriculum is intended or unintended but is not stated or written down but is actually inherent to what students have the opportunity to learn; (c) a third form of curriculum, the null curriculum, deals with what students do not have the opportunity to learn. Thus, information and knowledge that are not available for student learning are also aspects of the curriculum because students are actually learning something based on what is not emphasized, covered, or taught. What students do not experience in the curriculum becomes messages for them. For example, if students are not taught to question, critique, or critically examine power structures, the students are learning something—possibly that it may not be essential for them to critique the world in order to improve it. From Eisner’s perspective, what is absent is essentially present in student learning opportunities through the curriculum.

The focus of this chapter is on Black teachers as curriculum texts in urban environments. In this sense, the curriculum is defined as who, not merely what, students have the opportunity to learn because texts of people’s (students, parents, counselors, and teachers) identities are inundated with learning opportunities. The intersections of curriculum and teacher identity shape this chapter. Drawing from Eisner, students experience a null curriculum when they are not exposed to Black teachers. Curriculum theorists such as Gail McCutcheon, William Reid, William Pinar, Annette Henry, and O. L. Davis have all focused features of their work on the role and salience of teachers and teacher identity in the learning opportunities available to students. Teachers play an enormous role in, and have great influence over, what is taught, even in the midst of curriculum policy reform that in many schools has led to a narrowed and scripted curriculum. In this sense, teacher identity in addition to their worldview can have a serious bearing on what students are exposed to, for how much time, and why (McCutcheon, 2002). Teachers’ race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender, among other identity markers, shape what they teach and even how they enact a curriculum. Their very being, their experiences, and the ways in which they interact with their students and the curriculum are curricular...
in nature. Students “read” teachers and engage in an iterative process of knowing and coming to know that is shaped by the social environment (Milner, 2010). Put simply, students read teachers themselves as teachers make the curriculum come to life: The kinds of personal examples teachers use to illustrate an historical moment, for instance, provide a teacher with the opportunity to illuminate particular forms of the stated curriculum.

While some groups of students experience curriculum opportunities that connect well with their developing interests, experiences, opportunities, and assets, other students experience curriculum interactions that barely touch the surface of these intersecting areas (interests, assets, experiences, and so forth). Students of color (Black and Latino/a), those living in poverty, those whose first language is not English, and those who attend urban schools tend to be underexposed to powerful curriculum experiences that can make a meaningful difference in their learning and lives (Delpit, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2009). These students do not necessarily see themselves reflected in the curriculum—either in terms of what is taught or in terms of who teaches the curriculum (Gay, 2010) and how the curriculum is taught (Milner, 2010). Accordingly, students need and deserve to interact with and be exposed to teachers from various racial and ethnic backgrounds in order to experience different worldviews. What happens when students in a particular environment, such as an urban environment, experience learning opportunities solely from a White teacher? What learning opportunities are omitted from their learning opportunities? Eisner would suggest that these students are experiencing a curriculum indeed, albeit an absent form of the curriculum regarding other racial and ethnic groups of teachers—they are experiencing a null curriculum.

Much has been written about Black teachers, their experiences, curriculum work, and teaching in public school classrooms (Foster, 1990, 1997; Irvine & Irvine, 1983; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Monroe & Obidah, 2004), and this literature is not limited to public schools but also highlights Black teachers’ experiences in higher education, namely in teacher education programs (Bazsile, 2003). Agee (2004) explained that a Black teacher “brings a desire to construct a unique identity as a teacher. . . . She [or he] negotiates and renegotiates that identity” (p. 749) to meet their objectives and to meet the needs and expectations of their students and the broader school culture.

bell hooks (1994) makes it explicit that Black female teachers carry with them gendered experiences and perspectives that have been (historically) silenced and marginalized in the discourses about teaching and learning. Although teaching has often been viewed as “women’s work,” Black female teachers and their worldviews have at times been left out of the discussions—even when race, equity, multiculturalism, or social justice was the topic of discussion. In her historical analyses of valuable African American teachers during segregation in North Carolina, Siddle-Walker (2000) explained that they were:

Consistently remembered for their high expectations for student success, for their dedication, and for their demanding teaching style, these [Black] teachers appear to have worked with the assumption that their job was to be certain that children learned the material presented. (pp. 265–266)

Much of the literature focuses on the potency and potential of Black teachers teaching Black students, both in rural and urban contexts. From a historical perspective, researchers such as Annette Henry, Jacqueline Jordan Irvine, Michelle Foster, Linda Tillman, Gloria Ladson-Billings, and Jerome Morris found that teachers prior to desegregation worked overtime to help their African American students learn; although these teachers were teaching their students during segregation, they were also preparing their students for a world of desegregation (Siddle-Walker, 1996). Moreover, as Tillman (2004) explained, “these teachers saw potential in their Black students, considered them to be intelligent, and were committed to their success” (p. 282). There was something authentic about these Black teachers. Indeed, they saw their jobs and roles to extend far beyond the hallways of the school or their classroom. They had a mission to teach their students because they realized the risks and consequences in store for their students if they did not teach them and if the students did not learn—mainly due to structural and systemic forms of racism, discrimination, and hegemony that could stifle student success. An undereducated and underprepared Black student, during a time when society did not want or expect these students to succeed, could face dire consequences such as drug abuse, prison, or even death.
Contemporary Concerns

Several contemporary concerns should be considered in thinking about Black teachers as curriculum in urban environments. In terms of race, the teaching force remains largely White (Sleeter & Milner, 2011), and the trend of the declining number of Black teachers was well documented as a warning in a systematic review years ago (King, 1993). This means students across different milieus are exposed to curriculum texts most often shaped by White teachers (with more than 80% of teachers being White). If we believe that students actually learn something from the racial identity of teachers, then there is a great need to diversify the teaching force and increase the number of effective African American teachers teaching, especially in urban environments (a point that will be expanded later in this chapter). In this way, students learn (and should learn) more than a prepackaged set of materials tied to a subject matter domain such as mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies.

Although research has demonstrated the capacity and success of teachers from different racial and ethnic backgrounds for curricula and instructional success with any racial or ethnic group of students (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milner, 2010), there are learning aspects ingrained in the racial identity of teachers and their students that cannot be accounted for when the racial and ethnic background of teachers and students is inconsistent. For instance, Easton-Brooks’s (2014) research demonstrated positive relationships between teacher racial identity and student achievement. But whether serious gains on Black student test scores are prevalent or not when they are taught by Black teachers, focusing on test score gains is insufficient when examining the importance of Black teachers teaching Black students. A central area of concentration needs to also concern sociological and psychological connections Black teachers are able to garner with their Black students. In other words, what is the potential potency of students being educated by a Black teacher that goes beyond their results on a test? Do Black students connect more directly with their Black teacher? Do Black teachers better understand the nuances embedded in Black students’ experiences both outside and inside the classroom? In what ways do Black students see and mirror the possibilities of their own lives through their experiences and interactions with their Black teachers? In what ways can Black teachers serve as mentors and role models to their Black students? How do Black teachers help Black students understand, negotiate, combat, and disrupt racism and other forms of discrimination inside and outside of school?

Indeed, while Black teachers often serve as mentors and role models to their Black students, Pang and Gibson (2001) maintained: “Black educators are far more than physical role models, and they bring diverse family histories, value orientations, and experiences to students in the classroom, attributes often not found in textbooks or viewpoints often omitted” (pp. 260–261) from the curriculum. Thus, Black teachers are texts themselves, but these teachers’ text pages are inundated with life experiences and histories of racism, sexism, and oppression, along with those of strength, perseverance, and success. Consequently, these teachers’ texts are rich and empowering—they have the potential to help students understand, read, examine, and change the world (Freire, 1998) in new and provocative ways.

As a field, administrators report that they “struggle” to recruit African American teachers into their classroom although historically teaching was a viable and attractive field for African Americans (Foster, 1997; Siddle-Walker, 2000). So, a serious point of concern and unsettlement is around how energy should be spent regarding teaching demography in schools. As a field, should more attention be spent on diversifying the teaching force (Sleeter & Milner, 2011), or should collective efforts be dedicated to educating the mostly White teaching force to teach all students, including Black students? To what degree are these questions mutually exclusive?

Black parents may be concerned about and even skeptical of White teachers’ motives, interests in, and ability to teach their Black children. Because of their own experiences, interactions with White people outside of school, and experiences in school, they may feel Black teachers’ abilities and skills make them more efficacious in teaching their children. In what ways do Black teachers support Black student learning and development that other teachers might learn from—especially when all teachers should be working to build partnerships with parents?

Another concern focuses on the limited number of Black people preparing to become teachers and what
these prospective teachers' experiences are in teacher education programs (both traditional and nontraditional). Teacher education programs tend not to focus much of their attention on the development of Black teachers enrolled. Programs tend to be largely tailored to meet the needs of White teachers, and Black teachers along with other teachers of color are left out of curriculum and other learning opportunities necessary for development. Where curricular materials were concerned in her study, Agee (2004) explained that “the teacher education texts used in the course made recommendations for using diverse texts or teaching diverse students based on the assumption that preservice teachers are White” (p. 749). Still, Black teachers often have distinctive goals, missions, decision-making, and pedagogical styles that should be more fully developed in teacher education preparation.

Finally, another pressing concern centers around undervaluation and disrespect that some Black teachers experience in public schools. African American teachers may feel irrelevant and voiceless in urban, rural, and suburban contexts—even when the topic of conversation concerns Black students (Buendia, Gitlin, & Doumbia, 2003). Research has suggested that pre- and post-desegregation, Black teachers have been able to develop and implement optimal learning opportunities for students (Siddle-Walker, 2000)—yet in the larger school context, they may be ridiculed for being too radical or for not being “team players.” Moreover, these teachers may be seen as “too mean” or punitive to their students (Delpit, 1995). Consistent with others' research such as that of Michelle Foster and Lisa Delpit, Irvine and Fraser (1998) described an interaction between a student and a Black teacher by borrowing James Vasquez's notion, “warm demanders,” a description of teachers of color “who provide a tough-minded, no-nonsense, structured, and disciplined classroom environment for kids whom society has psychologically and physically abandoned.” They depict what happens when Irene Washington, an African American teacher with 23 years of experience, tells a student:

“That’s enough of your nonsense, Darius. Your story does not make sense. I told you time and time again that you must stick to the theme I gave you. Now sit down.” Darius, a first grader trying desperately to tell his story, proceeds slowly to his seat with his head hanging low. (Irvine & Frasier, 1998, p. 56)

An outsider listening and observing the Black teacher’s tone and expectations for Darius may frown upon the teacher’s approach. However, this teacher’s approach is grounded in a history and a reality that is steeped in care for the student’s best interest. As Irvine and Fraser described, the teacher understood quite deeply the necessity to help Darius learn. She understood the necessity to “talk the talk.” Indeed, Black teachers often have a commitment to and a deep understanding of Black students and their situations and needs because, both historically and presently, these teachers experience and understand the world in ways similar to their students. In addition, the teachers have a commitment to the students because they have a stake in the African American community. Importantly, these teachers lived in the Black community where students attended school. They shopped in the community, worshipped there, and their own children attended the neighborhood school (Foster, 1997). Pioneers in this research such as Foster, Ladson-Billings, Delpit, Patricia Hill Collins, and Henry have described the interactions and practices of Black teachers with Black students as other mothering (or parenting). However, in spite of their success with their students, Black teachers can feel isolated and ostracized because they offer a counterstory or counternarrative to the pervasive views, practices, and interactions of their mostly White colleagues.

Context: “Urban” Black Teachers as Curriculum

Although there is insight to be gained from a variety of sociopolitical contexts such as suburban and rural PreK–12 grades, higher education, and teacher education, much of the focus on Black teachers and their influence has been in urban social contexts. However, it is not quite clear in much of the knowledge base in this area how urban is defined. In an attempt to define and name the context of urban, consider the following conceptualization of an urban context (Milner, 2012) for Black teachers as curriculum. The first is urban intensive, which refers to large cities in which schools are located. The size and density of a particular community makes these environments unique and particularly intensive. Metropolitan cities such as Chicago, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and New York,
with populations in excess of 1 million, provide a layer of intensity in that at times limited resources are expected to service an immense number of students in schools and the surrounding city. What sets these cities apart from other cities is their size—their sheer density. In sum, urban intensive speaks to the scope and concentration of people in a particular locale. The broader environments and outside-of-school factors such as housing, poverty, and transportation are directly connected to the curriculum (what happens and is taught) inside of the school, and there are many assets in large cities such as transportation options and business infrastructure.

A second type of urban is urban emergent, wherein schools and districts are in large cities but typically have populations smaller than or very close to 1 million. Nonetheless, these cities are still faced with many of the same characteristics as urban-intensive schools but not on the same scale. Examples of such cities are Nashville, Tennessee; Austin, Texas; Columbus, Ohio; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Charlotte, North Carolina. A third type is urban characteristic where districts are not necessarily located in or even near large cities but may be located in suburban or rural areas. Yet, these communities are beginning to experience some of the shifts and realities seen in much larger districts—especially increasingly diverse populations, increases in the number of immigrant families and students, and increases in the number of residents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

The realities of large growing cities and districts is that there is a need to think about the role of Black teachers in “urban” environments. In many ways, all teachers are seeing some if not many of the characteristics that are common in urban-intensive schools, even in urban emergent and urban characteristic contexts. In what ways do Black teachers complement our knowledge base in these contexts? Generally, in some combination, urban education and urban sociocultural contexts can be conceptualized related to (1) the size of the city in which schools are located: dense, large, metropolitan areas; (2) the students in the schools: a wide range of student diversity, including racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic; and (3) the resources: the amount and number of resources available in a school, such as technology and financial structures through federal programs as well as property taxes (Milner & Lomotey, 2014).

In these urban environments, Black teachers can have a meaningful impact on students’ academic and social success because they often deeply understand Black students’ situations and their needs. Common among this research and tenets of these Black teachers were their development and maintenance of high expectations for their students, their ability to empathize with the students, and their ability to bring the curriculum to life for their students. In essence, they make the curriculum relevant, responsive, and real for their students.

**Theory: Black Teachers as Curriculum**

Theoretical and conceptual frameworks regarding Black teachers as curriculum texts have been shaped by principles related to what Ladson-Billings described as culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy. The construct culturally relevant pedagogy is often used to discuss or describe the theory of culturally relevant teaching, while culturally relevant teaching is used to describe the practice of the theory. Ladson-Billings (1992) maintained that it is an approach that empowers students to critically examine the curriculum in order to make sense of and improve the world.

Central to this approach is the notion that teachers develop skills to understand the complexities of students’ cultural ways of experiencing the world. Moreover, the construct suggests that students develop a critical consciousness and that they move beyond spaces where they simply or solely consume knowledge without critically examining it. So the idea is that teachers create learning environments and learning opportunities where students develop voice and perspective and are allowed to participate (more fully) in the multiple discourses available in a learning context.

Black teachers have been identified as those who create culturally relevant curriculum because they have the ability to recognize students’ cultures as an asset, not a detriment to their success. These teachers actually use student cultures in their curriculum planning and implementation, and they allow students to develop the skills to question how power structures are created and maintained in U.S. society. In this sense, the teacher is not the only, nor the main arbiter of knowledge (McCutcheon, 2002). Students
are expected to develop intellectually and socially in order to build skills to make meaningful and transformative contributions to society. In addition, culturally relevant pedagogy is an approach that helps students “see the contradictions and inequities that existed in their local community and the larger world” (Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 382). Through culturally relevant curriculum development and enactment, teachers prepare students with skills to question inequity and to fight against the many “isms” and phobias that they encounter while allowing students to transfer what they have learned through classroom instructional/learning opportunities to other experiences both inside and outside of school.

Three interrelated tenets shape Ladson-Billings’s conception of culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy: academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness. Ladson-Billings (2006) expressed her regret for using the term academic achievement when she first conceptualized the theory, partly because people immediately equated academic achievement with student test scores. What Ladson-Billings actually envisioned, however, was that culturally relevant pedagogy would allow for and facilitate student learning: “what it is that students actually know and are able to do as a result of pedagogical interactions with skilled teachers” (p. 34). Thus, academic achievement has to do with teachers being able to help students understand why they are learning the things they are learning in spaces where students can develop knowledge and skills necessary for success.

A second tenet, cultural competence, for Ladson-Billings is not necessarily about helping teachers develop a set of static information about differing cultural groups in order for them to develop some sensitivity toward an “other culture.” Rather, cultural competence is about students’ acquisition of their own cultural value and heritage. Such a position of cultural competence runs counter to the ways in which other disciplines such as medicine, clergy, and social work might think about cultural competence. Black teachers have been identified as particularly poised to help students in urban environments come to more deeply understand themselves as positive contributors to the fabric of the United States and beyond (Milner, 2010). What Ladson-Billings means by cultural competence is “helping students to recognize and honor their own cultural beliefs and practices while acquiring access to the wider culture, where they are likely to have a chance of improving socio-economic status and making informed decisions about the lives they wish to lead” (p. 36). Cultural competence concerns the ability of teachers to foster student learning about themselves, others, and how the world works in order to be able to function effectively in it and potentially change aspects that are unjust. The idea is that in order to have a seat at the table of those in power, one must deeply understand those in power in order to participate in and contribute to the conversation ultimately to challenge, change, and transform power structures.

A third tenet of culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy according to Ladson-Billings is sociopolitical consciousness. Sociopolitical consciousness is about the curriculum opportunities on a micro- and macro-level that have a bearing on teachers and students’ lived experiences. For instance, the idea that the unemployment rate plays a meaningful role in national debates as well as in local realities for teachers and students should be centralized and incorporated into curricula and instructional opportunities to cultivate teachers and students’ interests and consciousness. Ladson-Billings (2006) stressed that this tenet is not about teachers pushing their own political and social agendas in the classroom. Rather, she indicated that sociopolitical consciousness is about helping “students use the various skills they learn to better understand and critique their social position and context” (p. 37).

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression**

Studies regarding Black teachers as curriculum texts have largely been qualitative in nature, and their experiences have been represented in first person and by other researchers through the use of story and counterstory. The germinal work of Foster provides a compelling frame and exemplar for how much of the research regarding Black teachers has been conducted—namely by interviewing and listening to the voices, perspectives, and experiences of Black educators (novice, veteran, and retired Black teachers). Other research has examined the intersecting nature of voice scholarship and teacher practices. For instance, the germinal and exemplary work of Ladson-Billings demonstrates both Black teacher voices as well as examples from their actual teaching practices.
Thus, this research follows both a narrative form as well as a counternarrative frame—in order to problematize, nuance, and complexify what we know and believe we know about Black teachers and their teaching. The inquiry also privileges the strengths of these teachers as curriculum developers and provides compelling examples of teachers working with students and their families who succeed (Milner, 2010), a serious shift from dominant discourses that would suggest that Black students, in particular, are incapable of learning and success. Another important aspect of the systematic research examining Black teachers as curriculum is a study and discussion of the environments (classroom) where the research is conducted. In this sense, the research seems to reject the notion that teachers and teaching practices can be considered in isolation of the social environment around them (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Examples prevalent in germinal books of the role and salience of Black teachers as curriculum is prevalent in the work focused on teachers’ history and the surrounding community such as Vanessa Siddle-Walker’s (2000) *Their Highest Potential* and voices of teachers themselves such as Foster’s (1997) *Black Teachers on Teaching* and the intersecting nature of teachers’ voices and practices in Ladson-Billings’s (2009) *Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Students*. I have attempted to contribute to this literature with my 2010 book, *Start Where You Are but Don’t Stay There: Understanding Diversity, Opportunity Gaps, and Teaching in Today’s Classrooms*. Compelling books, too, focused on first-person accounts in higher education can also be found, such as hooks’s (1994) reflective scholarship of being a Black woman professor in *Teaching to Transgress*. Journal articles, book chapters, and other scholarly works also provide some representative samples of research on Black teachers as curriculum.

**Conclusion: Need for More Research**

There is much to be learned from the scholarship on Black teachers as curriculum texts in urban environments. This work has both empirical as well as practical implications. For instance, empirically, the literature stresses the role and importance of *racial* identity in curriculum work. Of course, other identity factors are necessary in understanding and conceptualizing the identity and curriculum intersection; race remains a critical component in examining the curriculum even in the midst of postracial discourses that would suggest that the United States as a country has transcended race. To the contrary, more research is needed that addresses how Black teachers’ practices shape learning opportunities in (urban) schools and how policy makers can perhaps learn from the work of these teachers. Moreover, there are practical implications embedded in the literature that would suggest that Black teachers themselves (as forms of the curriculum) have transferable insights and practices from which other teachers might learn. This point is not to suggest that Black teachers are perfect—just that they do offer insights that can improve educational practices with students. But perhaps most importantly, how do Black teachers negotiate their own identities and teaching in the midst of policy mandates that increasingly attempt to automatize curriculum and learning opportunities in the classroom? In what ways are student learning opportunities hindered by scripts that fail to adequately address the social, intellectual, political, cultural, and affective connections that Black teachers are able to cultivate without such structures? These questions and the aforementioned issues remain essential as we work to better meet the needs of every student in every classroom, everyday.

---

**References and Further Readings**


TEACHERS AS IMPROVISATIONAL ARTISTS

LASANA KAZEMBE
University of Illinois at Chicago

AVI LESSING
Oak Park and River Forest High School

A moment of grandeur comes to everyone when they act out of their humanness without need for acceptance, exhibitionism, or applause. An audience knows this and responds accordingly.

Creativity is not the clever rearranging of the known.

—Viola Spolin

Reflecting on our multiple identities of poet, teacher, theater actor/director and the degree and extent to which those identities have shaped our teaching over many years is germane to this chapter. How we have developed and enacted improvisational techniques/approaches in the classroom to start conversations, make connections, and enhance (overall) the quality of classroom engagements is a strong feature of our message here. Oftentimes for artists, the extemporaneousness of performance is a means of deepening our relationship to art. Seasoned artists are able to take advantage of unscripted and unpredictable moments and use them to enhance interaction with audience members (i.e., participants).

Much of our thinking on teachers as improvisational artists is informed by theoretical considerations posed by Bernard Downs (1978), R. Keith Sawyer (2004, 2007), Naphtaly Shem-Tov (2011), and a few others. Shem-Tov (2011), for example, understood improvisation as a spontaneous act of discovery and regarded it as a mode of knowing that can improve teaching. Sawyer (2004, 2007) encouraged teachers to utilize improvisational techniques as a means to improve their skill as discussion leaders as well as their overall educational effectiveness. Additionally, Elliot Eisner (2004) invoked and rallied critical thought in many ways and particularly by posing the question: “What can education learn from the arts about the practice of education?”

For this chapter, we start with sharing thoughts about the concept of improvisation and exploring its nature, metaphorical characteristics, complexities, and challenges. We then explore some ways in which improvisation is made manifest and discuss particular skills that teachers (as improvisational artists) should
cultivate in order to heighten educational engagements. We offer specific ways in which teachers improvise as well as complexities and challenges of specific improvisational modes. We end with our discussions on potential outcomes and benefits of effective improvisation in educational settings as well as practical ways in which teachers can sustain improvisationality.

What Is Improvisation?

A typical expectation is that, before entering the teaching space, the teacher has taken time to appropriately prepare. Educational stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, administrators) naturally expect this to be the case. The formal lesson plan, after all, is a major concern of effective teachers and those seeking to be seen as effective. The word prepare has subjective connotations and can take on many definitive forms. For some, preparing might mean investing many years and thousands of dollars on one’s education in the name of teacher preparation. By one measure, effective teachers are classified as having spent hundreds (if not thousands) of hours reading articles and books, critically examining and synthesizing ideas, engaging in numerous discussions with others inside (and outside) the field from mild conversations to full-blown arguments, and spending considerable time observing and analyzing classroom activities.

Many teachers will (and do) invest a great deal of time in learning about the technical aspects of pedagogy. Indeed, as education in Western society has become more commodified, a blinding plethora of books is published monthly on the subject of teaching. As directed by education technocrats, this system has a tendency of rewarding those who toe the line of conformity to prescribed “best practices” for teaching. They are rewarded for strict adherence to standards, mandates, and other prescriptive teaching practices. Increasingly, too, there are multiple routes that one can take to prepare to teach. But what is the place of improvisation in the face of common images of preparation?

With its rigid, restrictive, and conformist atmosphere, the contemporary educational landscape poses serious challenges to teachers seeking to infuse creativity and imagination into their teaching. A key challenge for improvisational teachers is to move beyond the comfortable confines of language and craft and to expand the notion of what teachers can be(come). In connecting theatrical modes to education and classroom teaching, Shifra Schonmann (2005) describes improvisation as a pedagogical device and elaborates on its usefulness as a tool for creation, conversation, and the cultivation of rich, reflective educational experiences. Thus, by its very definition, improvisation calls for one to be spontaneous, creative, and flexible. This means moving out of comfort zones of personal psychological security and familiarity. Also, it means moving away from proximal zones of established practices, rote expression, and scripted outcomes. In improvisation, one does not acquire or prepare materials; instead, one prepares body, mind, voice, and actions to respond to what is happening in a space. This can happen in a jazz ensemble with other musicians, with other improv actors in an ensemble, or with one’s students in a classroom.

For teachers, improvisation should not be seen as something one does in lieu of knowing what to do. Conversely, improvisational teaching is an orientation that calls for one to be curious, experimental, sensitive, and imaginative. Well in advance, one has to acquire an understanding of why such things even matter. In the realm of the artist (as well as that of the teacher), this translates into an ideological and practice orientation that challenges and in some ways resists conformity, rejects authoritarianism, proactively resists inhibitions, and prizes acting on impulse from a place of instinct. The metaphorical characteristics of improvisation are framed by the artist’s ability to be self-aware and self-critical. Shem-Tov (2011) wrote of improvisation as a “mode of knowing and thinking and doing” (p. 103) and, therefore, a technique of creation. However critical they are of established practices and traditions, practitioners of improvisation are first knowledgeable of said practices and traditions.

One misunderstanding of improvisation is that it requires no craft or preparation. In fact, it’s the opposite: Improvisational artists take years to master the rules, boundaries, and unspoken norms of their art form, so that bending the rules or trying something new is always done in conversation with the form, rather than in ignorance of it. In music, before the immersion into the avant-garde (Sun Ship, Stellar
Teachers as Improvisational Artists

John Coltrane’s musicianship was developed via more conventional, less improvised expression (My Favorite Things, Giant Steps, Standard Coltrane). If improvisation can be summed up colloquially as a breaking of the rules, then before the rules can be bent or broken, they must first be learned. Thus, in a real sense, effective improvisation is not a forgetting of traditional or standard practices; rather, it is an innovation on those practices that can contribute to the realization of new experiences, practices, and modes of knowing, thinking, and doing. In short, these are the complexities, challenges, and potential promises for teachers seeking to employ improvisational approaches to their teaching.

Improvisation as Uninhibited Exploration

As Shem-Tov (2011) related, the unexpected and unplanned already occurs in classrooms. The real question is: How might teachers take advantage of this? How might teachers hone their “reflective expertise” (p. 104) in order to broaden and deepen educational experiences? In the case of teaching, as in that of performance, improvisation is not a reckless, anything-goes approach devoid of thought and regard. Instead, improvisational artists conceive of it as a daring, anything-might-be-possible approach that is the warp and woof of good teaching. In this sense, one of the biggest mistakes teachers can make is to try to plan improvisation. Dwayne Huebner (1999) phrased it like this: What may transpire? For teachers, functioning as improvisational artists means using both the right and left sides of the brain. Downs (1978) emphasized the value to be realized by pursuing complementary aspects of these two hemispheres. As teachers, the overall quality of our practice is heightened when we can understand and leverage the existing connection between scripted behavior and what Downs (1978) referred to as the “sacredness of intuitive behavior” (p. 1). Improvisation not only makes the teacher and the student more creative but also demechanizes both classroom space and bodies within the space. Too often, schooling is only directed at one aspect of the brain—the prefrontal cortex, which controls working memory. However, we now know that the brain undergoes major changes during adolescence. Neurobiologist Daniel Siegel (2013) pointed out if we want to impact young people, we cannot simply teach reading, writing, and arithmetic, but we must also develop connections in students’ brains to foster relationships, reflection, and resiliency. He calls this practice, which for him is as fundamental as brushing one’s teeth, brain brushing.

If there is alacrity of mind and body, a training toward attention and presence, then teacher and student are much more likely to embrace educational experience based on collaboration and connections. This type of education stresses what each person can add to the ongoing play/concert/class that’s already in progress, that is, what Paulo Freire (1970/2000) called a problem-posing pedagogy, rather than a traditionalist education that he referred to as the banking method. This is not so far from the way John Dewey (1938) thought about education, as an experience that determines future experiences, as opposed to a list of skills to learn. Improvisational teaching, at its best, is not only a pedagogical stance toward the classroom but also an expression of how one might encounter others, solve problems, exist within a group, listen, speak—in short, live.

Like artists, teachers seeking to utilize improvisational approaches must be courageous enough to sail past the horizon. However, before even doing that, they must be expansive enough to imagine new realities beyond the horizon. These imagined realities may include new curricula, more effective methods, richer dialogues, and/or improved classroom encounters. This entails asking questions, posing challenges, and (sometimes) ignoring obvious starting points. This mode of thinking aligns with poet Baron Georg Philipp Friedrich von Hardenberg’s (1798) idea of romanticizing the world by seeing the “familiar as strange” and the “ordinary as extraordinary.” We can, in our explorations, educate the senses and engage in a form of productive anarchy against comfort and conformity. With such a pedagogical approach, we can explore yet simultaneously avoid being destructive and dismissive. Uninhibited exploration requires vision, courage, and the belief in something greater and grander.

How Is Improvisation Manifested?

We have already shared importance of saying “no” to pedagogical inhibitions and “yes” to impulse that engages curiosity, imagination, and creativity.
We now offer brief thoughts on how improvisation is manifested and identify particular skills that teachers (as improvisational artists) should cultivate in order to heighten education through improvisation.

Eisner (2004) suggests a pedagogical model wherein teachers are prepared in a similar way as artists (e.g., dancers, poets, painters). Sawyer (2006/2012) wrote of the importance of improvisation in teaching and teacher education. He also related how some teacher training programs incorporate improvisational techniques and principles drawn from those undertaken by stage actors. What happens, however, if one is unable to improvise or improvises poorly? What constitutes effective/ineffective improvisation? Is it possible to improvise on an improvisation or to pretend to improvise? How do we, in fact, avoid betraying, mechanizing, or cheapening the natural aspects of improvisation?

Study in improvisation can contribute to effective teaching, and as with other pedagogical approaches, there are criteria for determining effective and ineffective improvisation. Taking cues from performance theory and the life of dramatists, teacher improvisational artists are encouraged to engage in four fundamental practices: (1) say “yes” literally and metaphorically during turns in conversation; (2) add something new to what is being developed/shaped/created; (3) take the initiative to interrogate one’s practices; and (4) practice and cultivate active listening. Sawyer (2008) informs us of research in the learning sciences regarding the cognitive structures underlying expert performance. He mentions four categories of knowledge in which teachers should attain skill prior to attempting to teach as improvisational artists: deep conceptual understanding, integrated knowledge, adaptive expertise, and collaborative skills.

Deep Conceptual Understanding

Teachers must know facts and should always seek to add to their storehouse of factual data. However, this basic surface knowledge is embedded in a sophisticated web of complex, interrelated phenomena that all exist at the same time. For instance, Schwab’s (1970) four commonplaces, while on the surface being four discrete categories of teaching and learning (teacher, student, subject matter, and milieu), are in effect always connecting in seen and unseen ways. Effective teachers are those with the ability to see and understand the relationship between surface facts and underlying conceptual structures—always reinventing and becoming new.

Integrated Knowledge

Effective teachers are aware (and act on the understanding) that all knowledge is related in an integrated framework. Again, this integration is not mired in some codified formula but is always existing between people and their connections to one another, the text, and the environment.

Adaptive Expertise

It refers to the ability to appropriately recall and flexibly implement solutions, routines, and practices to address a variety of challenges and situations. Theatrical improvisational teachers will often describe an improv scene this way: Two people dig a hole, jump into it, and try to figure a way out. The way out is never prescriptive, and the skills people learn are the problem-solving skills to navigate their way through an existing form (whether it be a scene, jazz piece, or classroom project).

Collaborative Skills

The term collaborative skills refers to the ability of two or more experts to work jointly to accomplish a task or set of tasks. Collaboration has now become a buzzword in educational circles, but it is much harder to execute in spaces and in times where competition is valued. True collaboration signifies that we are neither dependent nor independent, but rather that our fates are inextricably bound with one another. Interdependency means that we succeed or fail together. There are specific improvisational techniques that teachers can develop and leverage in order to enhance the quality of educational engagements. According to Shem-Tov (2011),

The principles of improvisation technique can be implemented in the classroom by the teacher as a reflective mode in order to enhance the flexibility of the teacher’s reactions to spontaneous occurrences in the classroom. (p. 104)

Active listening, letting go of inhibitions, and listening to/trusting one’s intuition are just a few of these
techniques. Others include listening to silences, valuing emotional integrity, and enhancing ideation (how we consider and form thoughts and concepts). Active listening refers to listening to both what is being said and what is not being said. Often, teachers are in such a rush to speak that their words overlap and crash into those of others. Or, they are used to doing the majority of the talking, which has grafted an authoritarianism or type of dominance onto their teaching. Such a situation disenchants learners and undermines the entire process. The experience becomes less of an enterprise of sharing and potentially transformative encounters and more of a verbal traffic jam. Effective teachers are sensitive to this and will practice active listening as a technique to enhance opportunities for students to be not just heard but also listened to. In a truly improvisational space, everyone pays attention to who is talking and who is not. Participation does not simply require one to speak, but to be involved in other ways: listening, tracking, connecting, taking notes, gesturing, and tuning in.

Relatedly, listening to and trusting intuition is another effective tool in the improv artist’s toolkit. As with the other tools, this listening to/trusting intuition is a constantly evolving process that can be sharpened over time. Performance artists can no doubt recount memories of times when they have solely relied on intuition to guide them through a performance or recitation. Like a telegraph operator tapping out a message, that inner voice or “sixth sense” sends clear instant instructions such as what poem to recite, which lines or words to emphasize, or how to modulate emotional projection. Seasoned performance artists develop an ear for listening to and then trusting the inner voice. For improvisational teachers, intuitive voice also comes into play when we teach, and many have come to rely on it as an essential aspect of teaching practice and philosophy. When such intuitive listening/trusting has resulted in “effective classroom engagements,” our practice is always edified and strengthened by those successes.

As an improvisational technique, letting go (or saying “no”) to inhibitions has the potential of exposing participants to more of what is possible and of who they really are. Fear lies at the core of inhibition. Acknowledging and then working through fears are initial steps in keeping inhibitions at bay. In order for a classroom to become truly improvisational, not only must it be imbued with the right intentions and some training, but it also must allow people to make mistakes, to analyze success and failures, and to make changes for future experiences. Thus, improvisational teachers must not only improvise with students but also be transparent about the process of improvisation. This is a pedagogical as well as a curricular shift: Instead of being apart from the students, the teacher participates; instead of the teacher possessing the knowledge and offering it to the students, teachers and students co-construct learning in the present; and instead of the process being essentially beside the point, curriculum and the transaction are one whole process. What matters most in getting from point A to point B is not that one gets there, but that the journey is rich and qualitative.

For many, classroom silences can seem confusing, scary, or wasteful because they are viewed as infringing on instructional time. Interestingly, we sometimes relate metaphorically to silence by citing references to insects (crickets) or unfortunate animals trapped in awkward situations (i.e., deer in headlights or mice in church). When attempting to create authentic critical interaction with their students, many teachers have experienced the prolonged silence that frequently accompanies the “student stare back” or the “classroom rubbernecking.” In the realm of improvisation, creativity, opportunity, and possibility live in those spaces of silence. As opposed to putting pressure on the teaching moment, listening to silence serves as a mechanism for pacing, refocusing, and organizing the energy in classrooms. In addition, listening to silence is a handy method for promoting enhanced critical reflection and distinctively authentic collective engagement. Natalie Goldberg, a Buddhist writing instructor in her 1993 memoir The Long Quiet Highway: Waking Up in America, recalls visiting her old high school in New Mexico 20 years after she graduated. She really only remembers one teacher and, in particular, the one time he called all of the students over to the window while it was raining. When we are more present, our attention is heightened, and we remember more.

What is the process for valuing emotional integrity? Valuing emotional integrity speaks to valuing the unification of thought-speech-will in ourselves and those outside of ourselves. It means not doubting or second-guessing another’s abilities, potential, etc., but taking purposeful advantage of the alignment of the senses and purposes of teachers and students together.
Ideally, when emotional integrity is valued, it creates the conditions necessary for the contextual appreciation and elevation of creative abilities and other skills in the improvisational toolkit. Honesty is perhaps the highest and fullest expression of emotional integrity. For poets, stage actors, musicians, and other artists, the importance of honesty (not simply professing to possess it, but actively practicing it) cannot be overstated. This integrity undergirds and influences everything about how improvisational teachers approach artistry, including the quality of their connectedness (i.e., rootedness) to the art and the audience. This manifests in a similar way for teachers and students in classrooms. Students know instantly when teachers are not being honest as a dishonest stance betrays a lack of empathy and respect. Like improv artists, teachers have to not only know their craft but also be honest about what they know (and don’t know) about it. For teachers, the practice of emotional integrity is a validation and a commitment to maintaining a holistic, compassionate educational environment.

Referring to the act of forming ideas and concepts, ideation is related metaphorically to the process of imagining and activating the products of the imagination. Colloquially, ideation is often referred to as brainstorming. For improv artists and teachers as improv artists, ideation is a key ingredient in the design process and is usually activated following an “a-ha” or “light bulb moment.” As artists and teachers, we should understand that the “light bulb” represents the beginning (and not the end) of a transductive process of creation. This creative process is the starting place for our ideas—whether visual, concrete, or abstract. Another important aspect of ideation is for teachers to understand how to positively manipulate ideation in the improvisational moment. This means resisting emotional and psychological inertia, utilizing silences, and trusting our intuition.

**Challenges and Complexities**

This chapter shares theoretical and practical insights drawn from the world of improvisational artists and attempts to translate skill and techniques from that world to the world of teaching. We are not saying that it is compulsory for a teacher (in order to be effective) to have a background as an improvisational artist. Nor are we implying that the application of improvisational methods is the only approach to creating more expansive educational experiences. As with other considerations concerning pedagogy, teacher effectiveness, and education (writ large), this one, too, is fraught with challenges and complexities. We shall discuss a few of these.

Teachers seeking to draw from the thinking/methods of improvisational artists have to cultivate an appreciation for imagination, intuition, curiosity, and emotional integrity. Beyond that, they have to develop and leverage a unique set of improvisational skills to reinforce their orientation. An authoritarian school culture would typically prove resistant to such an orientation and would, therefore, challenge a teacher on this front. Utilizing improvisational techniques is difficult in today’s classroom environments owing to strictures on instructional time, mobility, and the restrictive nature of contemporary educational policy. Many teacher education programs promote a canned, corporate-driven approach that emphasizes training, efficiency, and bottom-lines. While this sounds challenging (because it is), the bigger challenge is to locate ways to deal with school cultures that inhibit conditions that support improvisational teaching. Maintaining authenticity presents another challenge for teachers seeking to incorporate improvisational techniques to improve their effectiveness. How do teachers cultivate improvisational principles in highly competitive, test-driven environments controlled by outside authorities? How do they maintain realness with themselves and with the students they face each day? For improvisational artists, believability is contingent upon the degree to which they have developed an honest relationship to their craft and an unqualified belief in themselves as artists. Effectiveness, whether in art or teaching is (in part) a result of integrity, both in principle and in practice. In today’s educational culture, however, pressure from the top or the threat of job loss often forces teachers to maintain a loyalty to the status quo and to not stray from established methods; much less question said methods. Essentially, for artists and educators alike, this challenge evolves into a critical conversation over what we value and how we promote what we value. Paul Robeson (2002) conveys this beautifully: “Sing me your folk songs and I’ll tell you about the character, customs, and history of your people” (p. 211).
There are ways to know when we are being positively affected and/or shaped by artistic experiences. Obvious expressive ways include displays of emotion (i.e., smiling, laughing, crying, cheering). Less obvious are the silences and internal dialogues that play out when individuals are edified or touched by a song, poem, painting, etc. Many performance artists are familiar with the foot stomping, snaps, call-and-response, and general exclamations of excitement and affirmation issuing forth from audience members. On some level, in fact, the style of improv expression is geared toward evoking such responses. In plain speak, it ain’t hard to tell. Determining one’s effectiveness is one of the many complexities faced by improvisational artists.

Teachers have to confront similar complexities in their use of improvisational techniques. In a classroom of 30 students, what happens when the majority of those students are not expressive? What can be done in a situation where students’ internal silences (the teacher’s best efforts to the contrary) are overwhelming a lesson? Moreover, it is highly unlikely that such complexities will manifest as singular occurrences. It is more likely that teachers will find themselves confronted with a torrent of classroom “in-the-moment” complexities including student disinterest, crossed boundaries, or instructional miscues. Looked at from a strengths perspective, this represents an opportunity for teachers to develop a constructivist stance (Bruner, 1996) and thereby orient themselves to a teaching philosophy and ideology rooted in a critical, constructivist tradition. In such instances, improvisation does not mean the avoidance of complexities; it simply means that one’s improvisational skills will be constantly and spontaneously field-tested in the educational moment—which is the very definition of improvisation.

Some Closing Thoughts

In this chapter we point to numerous educational benefits that can be realized from educating teachers to understand and utilize improvisational techniques in their theoretical and practical approaches to teaching. Acknowledging inherent challenges and complexities within this methodology (as with any other), we remain convinced that there is so much for teachers to learn and build upon from the aesthetic world of improvisational artists.

Shem-Tov (2011) refers to improvisation as a mode of knowing. The skills (active listening, trusting intuition, resisting inhibitions, etc.) utilized by effective improvisational artists can be put to immense use in the classroom. Improvisational teaching is an opportunity for both students and teachers to contribute to a deeper and more meaningful educational experience. Improvisational teaching encourages educators to enliven their practice by cultivating deep conceptual understanding, integrated knowledge, adaptive expertise, and collaborative skills. The value of educational practice is deepened via improvisational techniques that call for all participants to appreciate and practice active listening, emotional integrity, and to listen to and trust their intuition. At the same time, effective teachers/improvisational artists understand the necessity of having vision, courage, and what Duke Ellington referred to as “get-with-itness” (1990) in order to transform and evolve their practices.

References and Further Readings


PART III

STUDENTS AS CURRICULUM
Introducing Part III: Students as Curriculum

The student or learner is an important dimension or commonplace of curriculum; however, it cannot be comprehended in any full sense without perceiving its interrelationship with and dependence upon the three other commonplaces (subject matter, teachers, and milieu) along with the need to continuously rebalance the relationship among these four commonplaces in the deliberations of policy makers and educators. Thus, those involved in any educational situation must ask: How do students and the subject matter influence one another? How do teachers and the students affect one another? How does the milieu or environment have mutual influence with the students? Moreover, how do students in any given setting influence each other? It is necessary, too, to realize that answers to these questions and others that flow from them are never final but always in the making.

In asking how students influence one another, we are by implication asking how they are a curriculum for one another. What should we think about the deeper meanings of this curricular commonplace? To what extent should students’ experiences be tapped and inscribed as curriculum? When might it be helpful or harmful to do so? How do and should our responses to these questions differ when we consider immigrant and minority students; students from culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse backgrounds; or students who have differing (dis)abilities? What happens when we consider students as humans as contrasted with commodities or objects to be manipulated? What happens if the focus is on students for joyful or worthwhile living as compared with serving a national or corporate purpose? Again, what questions emerge for you about curriculum vis-à-vis students as you read and reflect on the chapters in Part III?
Who knows what is worthwhile for the educational benefit of a student? The phrase students as curriculum refers to a tradition of perspectives on curriculum and teaching that have persisted in education for over a century (Schultz, 2011), fostering an ongoing debate. What knowledge and content should be devised, developed, and designed for and taught to students to enable them to become more fully functioning members of society? Should curriculum development be exclusively the prerogative of credentialed adults, educational experts, and policy makers, or should it involve the public, parents, and students themselves? If curriculum as subject matter is designed by experts, is it received by all students in the same way? Or do students mediate what is presented by accepting, rejecting, and refashioning it according to the lenses they have developed through their unique experiential, cultural, and other contextual background? If so, even if all students are presented with the same content and engaged in the same learning activities, is the learning they derive the same or different? Thus, the interpretation of content and learning experiences may be a basis for concluding that the student, at least in part, is the curriculum.

If students are curriculum in the sense that they shape it through their sources of meaning, should they be involved proactively in the process of curriculum development? Does such involvement call for democratic construction of curriculum by students and teachers in concert with one another? How does this fit with the fact that policy makers outside of classrooms and schools often make curricula and bestow them on schools? Moreover, is the student also the curriculum when the larger educational project is deemed to be a process of developing self-understanding and self-direction in the world? Who is best positioned to know if this is being accomplished: policy makers, educational leaders, teachers, parents, or students themselves? From another angle, when one considers that any classroom or learning environment usually contains many participants, do they not also learn from and with the relationships they have with one another? In this sense students can easily be construed as curricula for each other. Teachers, too, learn from, with, and alongside their students, so should we not view students as curricula for the continuing education of teachers? If that is so, should policy makers who create curricular mandates learn from students, thus from perceiving students...
Contemporary Concerns About Students as Curriculum

Teachers ask: “Why aren’t students interested in the material we present?” Is it possible that the students perceive no connections in curriculum that appear relevant to their lives? Should students be expected to be receptacles of learning that has no apparent worth to them? Educators of adults often say that their students demand to see relevance, and we consider younger students to be less mature than adults, so why should educators expect children and youths to become docile recipients of what someone else has determined to be of value or worth to them?

Teachers lament: “Students are disruptive or else just sit there without engaging in the curriculum. Sometimes they try to derail the curriculum by becoming disruptive or by pushing for digression to other topics.” Could it be that students have given up on finding worthwhile ideas, knowledge, experiences, and skills in schools? Should they be expected to deem the curriculum worthwhile, or should they accept it and the rationale that someday they will use it and realize its relevance? When they push for digressions, are they merely seeing if they can transform boredom into entertainment, accepting the idea that schooling will not be meaningful? In so pushing, can they become curriculum—the subject matter of what is learned from unintended curriculum of schooling? When students are of a different social class, race, ethnicity, or culture from the teacher, might they assume that the curriculum is an importation from such difference or an imposition that implicitly says that their background is inferior, in need of revision, or irrelevant to what is worthwhile?

Students wonder: “Why do I have to sit through this? I know it is at best a set of hurdles to jump over, but why? I can’t wait until the school day is over so I can get back to Facebook and Twitter, and listen to the latest music on my smartphone. When I surf the net I can follow my interests, and the music, videos, and conversations I find there help me build my life and think about what I want to be and do.” Would students be more interested in school if their curriculum were organized differently? Does the compartmentalization of school curriculum into separate subjects enhance or obscure any subject’s connection to each other? Does emphasis on isolated knowledge and skills within each separate subject detract from their use to solve problems of life encountered by students? Are central ideas, big questions, forms of inquiry, and modes of expression carried out in the disciplines of knowledge consciously made available to students as epistemological bases to help them conduct their lives with greater facility?

Policy makers ask: “How can we ensure teachers and students are held accountable for achievement aligned to the curriculum? Why do schools and teachers achieve less with students than their counterparts in other advanced countries of the world? How can we create a population of students who help us compete in the international marketplace? Why are our test scores so low?” Are policy makers focused on too narrow a set of goals for schools? Should preparation for the distant future continue to be the prime rationale for students to remain in and do well in school? Should curriculum help students see its value in understanding problems they perceive as important now, in the present? When the need for school improvement is emphasized primarily as a way to enhance national or corporate competitiveness, what is left out? Should education also help students understand and transform themselves cognitively, affectively, socially, ethically, physically, and spiritually? Should school curriculum edify, bring personal meaning, self-direction, and promote public responsibility? Should it inspire students to strive for justice, seek higher moral ground, and encourage cultivation of humanity?

Policy makers demand: “Our lack of competitiveness in the global marketplace is embarrassing, and our students’ test scores show it. We need to be more rigorous! If teachers cannot do the job, they should be given scripts and simply forced to get higher scores from their students.” Do test scores portray student capabilities adequately? Why do students and teachers increasingly join together in solidarity to oppose testing? Could it be that they suspect that the scores do not represent indications about whether they learned what is worthwhile? Why do the psychometricians and test makers warn against using the tests they designed for evaluating and rating teachers...
and students? Do the tests show anything about curiosity, imagination, inventiveness, thoughtfulness, kindness, compassion, problem posing, problem solving, capacity to wonder, reflectivity, or creative responses to the problems of life? How would policy makers respond to requiring them to take, say, the Graduate Record Examination or, for that matter, the same tests that high school students are forced to take, and having the results posted in newspapers as an indicator of whether they were capable at their jobs? If they received low scores, would the policy makers not criticize the validity of the test to indicate what is worthwhile for them?

**Context of Students as Curriculum**

Contexts such as economics, politics, culture, language and ethnicity, health and ability, geography, and ecology deeply influence education and the curricula offered by educational institutions. Economically and politically we live in a highly global environment that some see as “Spaceship Earth”—a world that communication, transformation, and information exchange have made a small community. Others see globalization as maneuvering by the wealthy and powerful to control the world by homogenizing cultures, languages, and consumption priorities. Both of these perspectives have some validity. However, the ways in which education positions itself on a continuum relative to these extreme positions have immense implications for curriculum. Students’ in-school curriculum and out-of-school experiences combine to form a larger curriculum that shapes their outlooks on the world and their places within it. Should students be seen as products (noting the common factory-oriented phrase “we turn out good students”) or as creators of who they are and the kind of world in which they want to live? Will nation-states, with their corporate ties, fund education that reflects the interests of the students, their families, and communities, if these interests do not fit their economic and political goals? Educational mission statements are often offered as democratic; however, critics argue that top-down policy mandates are autocratic and allow little discretionary decision making by local educational leaders, teachers, and especially by students. Therefore, curriculum is often promoted in the interest of officials who have little or no direct connection with local schools, a state of affairs that some argue provides curricula that are more autocratic than democratic (see Apple & Beane, 2007). If students live under autocracy, can they still learn to participate democratically?

Culture, ethnicity, and language are pervasive dimensions of life that students bring with them into the school and classroom. These powerful aspects of human functioning are thus an integral part of the curriculum. Norma Gonzalez, Luis Moll, and Cathy Amanti (2005) have called these *funds of knowledge*. This research shows that students bring, from their homes and cultures, abilities to mediate and interpret everything that happens in schools, including curriculum. Similarly, the health of students, environments in which education occurs, treatment of students with respect to ability–disability, and the ecology that surrounds and infuses the educative setting all have great impact on a student’s response to curriculum. Geography and ecology, for instance, can be related to forces of nature, or they can contribute to economic affluence or to devastating poverty and all points between in any school locale. All of this has a massive impact on how students reflect and somatically respond to an imposed curriculum.

Even those who do not accept the idea that students are mature enough to engage in deliberation about the kind of curriculum that is best for them admit that students are the curriculum in the sense that they bring understandings and practices from their contexts to the classroom. Some classrooms in urban areas have more than a dozen cultural and linguistic groups represented, and the students interact so they constitute a curriculum for one another whether or not it is part of policy-making deliberation and official curriculum development.

**Theory of Students as Curriculum**

How can we understand the complexities in the lives of students as they meet the educational experiences schools provide? While the general public, policy makers, and many educators have long viewed curriculum as the subject matter or content dispensed to students, there exists a legacy of curriculum discourse about the place of students in what they are taught and learn (Schultz, 2011) and the experience of living the curriculum (as explicated in chapters on *currere*...
in this volume). Controversy over the students’ role in curriculum can be traced to one of the first books on curriculum: John Dewey’s (1859–1952) *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902). The book is an orientation that Dewey and his wife, Alice Chipman Dewey (with advice from social worker Jane Addams and educational leader Ella Flagg Young), developed at the University of Chicago Laboratory School, beginning in 1896. By changing the conjunction and, which occurs frequently in the titles of Dewey’s books, to the verb *is*, we see more clearly his meaning through rephrased titles such as “the child is the curriculum” or the “curriculum is the child.” Dewey’s work was influenced by Frederick Hegel’s (1770–1831) philosophy of integrating opposites of thesis (point of advocacy), antithesis (oppositional point), and synthesis (reconciliation between the two), which becomes a new thesis, and the process continues again and again. Thus, the curriculum and the child were not considered opposites by Dewey, but rather can be seen as a synthesis of evolving growth through increasingly complex interdisciplinary experiences. Dewey’s theory was similarly influenced by Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1861) and his American followers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Charles DeGarmo, Frank McMurry, and Charles McMurry), who emphasized the importance of an *apperceptive mass* or repertoire of experience within the learner that must be built upon if new curricula are to be viewed as valuable and thus embodied by students. Recently, Dewey’s theory has been related to the long-suppressed ideas of Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934), including his *zone of proximal development*, holding that a student must reach a point of almost understanding something or having a kind of connective tissue to enable the emersion of a new understanding. Building on Dewey’s work, progressive educators have argued that students already affect curriculum through their experiential repertoire and, thus, should have a voice in curriculum making by actively and democratically helping educators decide what they learn and how.

During the 1920s many progressive educators, often women, put variations of Dewey’s theory into practice throughout the United States and in other parts of the world. Great debate between progressives and traditionalists ensued with diverse camps in each. During the 1920s a virtual all-star team of curriculum scholars (including William Bagley, George Counts, Charles Judd, Franklin Bobbitt, William Kilpatrick, W. W. Charters) led by Harold Rugg conducted a series of meetings under the auspices of the National Society for the Study of Education (NSSE) to identify central concerns of the burgeoning curriculum field to prevent it from collapsing due to internal discord. In 1927 they produced a landmark statement in volume 2 of the NSSE yearbook, *Foundations of Curriculum Making*. Their major contribution was to make a short summary statement about what the diverse curriculum scholars agreed to be central concerns and to pose questions that they all agreed to be necessary, which were elaborated by Timothy Leonard and Peter Hilton (2010). Several of the questions directly address the students’ place in curriculum: “Is the curriculum to be made in advance?” (p. 959). This question is asked primarily due to the progressive concern that if students and their actively evolving situational interests are not involved, it might not meet their needs at all. “To what extent is the organization of the subject matter a matter of pupil-thinking and construction of, or planning by, the professional curriculum maker as a result of experimentation?” (p. 960). Deweyan progressives saw this as a dualism necessary to resolve by integrating both student and educator expertise in the continuous reorganization and reconstruction of curriculum. “What, if any, use should be made of the spontaneous interests of children?” Spontaneity of children is often seen as digression that should be terminated; however, many progressive educators saw the emergent interests of children as educative about the natural process of education. In fact, Dewey started the Laboratory School as a place where educators, philosophers, psychologists, and others could learn about education from observing and interacting with children who pursued their interests. Thus, the salience of *the child IS the curriculum* is central here. This perspective may be found earlier in the commentary of Francis W. Parker (1837–1902), who advocated curriculum and methods as existing within the child instead of within a branch of knowledge.

Theories of many other scholars, often not recognized as paramount among curriculum scholars, complemented progressive theoretical positions. For instance, the Waldorf school movement derived from
theories of Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) draws many parallels between experience in life and art—emphasizing spirituality, community, and personal transformation with students at the center of the process. Maria Montessori (1870–1952) developed theories and methods about the need to engage learners in meaningful experiences that addressed their spontaneity and imagination. Women progressive educators who were too often neglected by male proponents of progressive education often moved with great facility to recognize, build upon, and learn from the learner’s natural inclination, as epitomized in the title of a key book by Caroline Pratt (1948), titled *I Learn From Children*. Theories of L. Thomas Hopkins (1954), progressive educator of early and mid-20th century, were based on his own teaching, curriculum leadership, and guiding the Laboratory School at Teachers College, Columbia University, and are significantly based on analogies from embryological theory—holding that learning, like growing cells, moves from expansion to differentiation, to integration—and thus provided a rationale for integrated, democratic, emergent curriculum developed in relationship with the evolving lived experiences of children. A great deal of the emphasis on the primacy of the child or student as curriculum traces back to the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) and his depictions of what can be learned from children in nature that is later distorted and destroyed by impositions of adult society.

Building upon experiential understandings of students, the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s developed curriculum theory for Freedom Schools that grew out of the African American resistance to dire effects of slavery and Jim Crow laws particularly in the American South. Directly relating to the plight of African Americans in the United States, Septima Clark, Charles Cobb, and many others developed a Freedom School curriculum based on questions (see SNCC, p. 224) from the lived experience of extreme racial prejudice, epitomized in: “Why are the changes of gospel songs into Freedom Songs significant? What does ‘We Shall Overcome’ really mean in terms of what we are doing, and what we can do? Why do we have no student government, or why does the administration not take student government seriously? Why are we not taken seriously?”

International emphases on the student as curriculum are prevalent and are noted here due to their significant influence in the United States. In 1921, A. S. Neill developed Summerhill School in England on the premise that schooling should be fit to the child rather than manipulating the child to fit the curriculum. Neill (1960) conveyed his work with students as in *Summerhill*, a now classic book that delineated theory and practice of curriculum in which all experiences grew from the students’ interests, needs, and relationships. After mid-century in Brazil, Paulo Freire (1970) developed a philosophical, political, and practical position or *praxis* on the pedagogy of oppressed persons couched in critical Marxist and post-Marxist theory and the radical psychoanalysis of Erich Fromm, and especially from Freire’s own work on literacy with Brazilian peasants. Freire decried the dominant *banking* pedagogy of many educational institutions wherein knowledge is assumed to be a product deposited like currency in the heads of students, countering it with a *problem-posing pedagogy* that sought literacy by having students name and read their worlds. Freire often constructed pedagogical relationships through the use of artifacts from the lives of the peasants with whom he worked or from photographs of their contexts. This evoked telling of stories about oppression, hardship, and loving relationships that they wanted to relate to wider audiences; thus, students became literate in order to share their knowledge and experience. In sharing, they were the curriculum. During the highly popular counterculture of the 1960s in the United States, books written by teachers about their experiences in the classroom, including those by George Dennison, John Holt, James Herndon, Herb Kohl, and Jonathan Kozol, portrayed students as insightful participants in curriculum development by telling stories about how classroom curricula derived from the students’ own questions and imaginations. Adding complexity, Joseph Schwab (1970) saw curriculum as students and much more. Schwab argued that curriculum was an interplay among students, teachers, subject matter, and milieu or contextual forces that had to be continuously monitored and rebalanced.

A wide array of theories, which deal with race, gender, class, sexual orientations, language, culture, identity, and place such as multiculturalism, critical
race theory (Lynn & Dixson, 2013), critical geography, and decolonization, focuses on social justice and culturally responsive curriculum for, by, and with students. For instance, Gonzalez et al. (2005) call for building curriculum on funds of knowledge that students bring to school from homes, neighborhoods, and cultures. This is an antidote to the subtractive schooling that Angela Valenzuela (1999) criticized, namely, school practices that strip away the cultures of students of color and homogenize them into White, middle-class society. The society itself was seen as subtractive by Lesley Bartlett and Ofelia Garcia (2012), and building upon funds of knowledge can help school to be additive, thus providing culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2009) and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010) by taking seriously students’ lived experience, all of which enables greater awareness of how to teach other people’s children (Delpit, 1995).

Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression About Students as Curriculum

Forms of Inquiry About Students as Curriculum

Multiple forms of inquiry have been used to study students as curriculum, many of which are implicit in the theoretical positions noted above. Philosophical inquiry is represented in the work of Rousseau, Herbart, Steiner, Dewey, Montessori, Hopkins, Freire, and Schwab, while historical work is present in the writings of Lawrence Cremin, who chronicled the pervasiveness of progressive education. The Eight-Year Study (1933–1941) was largely an empirical inquiry (both quantitative and qualitative) that heralded teacher and student collaborative experimentation; it was published in five volumes and more recently elaborated on by Craig Kridel and Robert Bullough (2007). A central part of the study consisted of the longitudinal comparison of students schooled traditionally with a comparison group who were educated progressively. When the groups were compared on multiple indicators as they attended traditional colleges and universities, it was revealed that the progressive students achieved more favorably and fared much better than those who experienced traditional curriculum in most social, emotional, and cognitive indicators. That this study had little impact on educational policy raises major questions about how policy makers relate to educational research.

Modes of Expression About Students as Curriculum

Key modes of expression or representation of students as curriculum are illustrated by the fifth volume of the Eight-Year Study, which consists of stories from educators in the 30 participating schools. Other stories by many progressive educators document students as curriculum from the 1920s to the 1940s as illustrated by Pratt (1948). Aforementioned books by Neill on Summerhill and Freire on pedagogical praxis are replete with stories of students as curriculum. Among the few books on education that have reached best-seller status are those by the counterculture teachers in the 1960s; prime examples can be found in the works of Holt, Kohl, Kozol, and Dennison.

The foregoing modes of representation influenced narrative inquiry (e.g., Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), one of today’s most prominent forms of representation used to portray teachers and students as participants in curriculum. Related modes of expression are found in teacher and student lore (Schubert & Ayers, 1992), phenomenological inquiry (van Manen, 1990) and arts-based research (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Exemplary work that extends eclectic blends of such modes of expressing students as curriculum include the following: William Ayers’s Teaching Toward Freedom (Ayers, 2004); Michael Apple and James Beane’s (2007) portrayals of teachers who engage students democratically in the creation of curriculum; Chris Carger’s (2009) novelistic longitudinal saga of the struggles of a Latino from childhood to adulthood in search of education in urban America; and Ming Fang He’s (2003) transnational and counternational portrayal of the curriculum of student experience in between cultures and in exile (He, 2010). Examples of first-person teacher narratives include Greg Michie’s (2009) characterization of students as curriculum for each other, including himself as teacher; and Brian Schultz’s (2008) story as a teacher who argued that part of his role was to challenge a group of students attending a school serving a housing project community with the responsibility to ask what is worthwhile for their lives. In these accounts, seeing students as curriculum in such ways invigorated the
prepare them for democratic living? Drawing upon Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address wherein he admonished the public to realize that democracy requires government of, by, and for the people, the educational corollary would be curriculum that can be authentically for students only if it is of and by them (Schubert & Lopez Schubert, 1981). Thus, students as curriculum is a concept that makes curriculum a process of continuous growth of students with teachers, subject matter, and milieu, rather than a commodity of knowledge or skills merely to be received by students. As Dewey argued, it can lead to a society that is less acquisitive and more fully built upon humane relationships that move toward greater justice (Schubert, 2009).

Conclusion: Need for Continuous Questioning

How can educational policy makers, curriculum leaders, teachers, and others concerned with education encourage an ethos of listening to and learning from students (Schultz, 2011)? Can curriculum that does not recognize the insightfulness of students prepare them for democratic living? Drawing upon Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address wherein he admonished the public to realize that democracy requires government of, by, and for the people, the educational corollary would be curriculum that can be authentically for students only if it is of and by them (Schubert & Lopez Schubert, 1981). Thus, students as curriculum is a concept that makes curriculum a process of continuous growth of students with teachers, subject matter, and milieu, rather than a commodity of knowledge or skills merely to be received by students. As Dewey argued, it can lead to a society that is less acquisitive and more fully built upon humane relationships that move toward greater justice (Schubert, 2009).

References and Further Readings


One thing that makes me unsuccessful is my mom. She is always mad with my brother and that makes me get mad, too. She thinks my brother is a gangster but he is not. She always tells him, “Luis, don’t talk to those guys . . . .” She always asks me if Luis is involved with gangsters. . . . I know my brother and he is good. . . . I always spend time worrying and looking out for him. When my mom asks me questions, I cannot concentrate on my homework. In class, I am thinking about my brother and who he talks to. One thing that makes me unsuccessful is my mom because she thinks my brother is a gangster.

—Fernando

Fernando was an eighth grader in one of the language arts classes where we recently implemented our visual sociology project, called the Through Students’ Eyes (TSE). The project—co-founded by Kristien Zenkov, the lead author of this chapter, and Jim Harmon, a veteran classroom teacher—is a collaborative venture with university scholars and classroom teachers. Over the past decade we have used visual sociology or “photovoice” methods to ask hundreds of diverse middle and high school youth to share their perspectives on school via images and accompanying writings. Fernando had recently moved from El Salvador with his family to an exurban community outside Washington, D.C., where he was a student in one of these teacher’s classes. Classified as a “high-beginning” level-two English speaker of other languages (ESOL) student, he appeared to be almost entirely unmotivated to participate in his daily school activities.

Only when Zenkov and this team of educators—veteran and pre-service teacher educators and teachers—treated Fernando as an authority on his own schooling experiences, trusted him as a researcher with valid perspectives on these experiences and the curricula he was encountering, and asked him to take photographs that depicted what in his life impacted his success in school did he show any interest in engaging with these activities and materials. Eventually he described and illustrated how the assumptions teachers and even his family members made about his academic abilities had resulted in what previous teachers had concluded was an impenetrable indifference to school. Just as Fernando’s image and reflection elucidate the
guiding “ask first” notion of curriculum this chapter examines, they also illuminate an orientation that considers students’ experiences as curriculum.

Two central questions that have historically guided critical explorations of curriculum are “What or whose knowledge is most important?” and “Who benefits from the curriculum that is ultimately propagated and shared in schools?” The very idea of considering students’ experiences as curriculum necessitates not only that these core questions remain alive and operational but that they also become inquiries that orient the ongoing, everyday revision to any curriculum. Recognizing students’ experiences as curriculum means that all participants in the educational process must appreciate, live, and work with the belief that curriculum is and should be under constant revision.

It also compels a dramatic transfer of power in the who, how, and where of curriculum development efforts. To appreciate students’ experiences as curriculum, students and teachers become the primary inventors of curricular experiences. Their lives and perspectives—inside and outside of school—become the key subject matter of these curricula. This notion is novel in curriculum studies because it assumes that students’ experiences are and should be the key content of any curriculum. Moreover, it holds that any curriculum is simultaneously about how we explore students’ experiences and about what young people detail and divulge regarding their experiences.

Theory and History of Students’ Experiences as Curriculum

The notion that students’ experiences should be core elements in any curriculum relies on the principles of critical pedagogy, which support institutional conditions and societal structures that facilitate student empowerment (Kincheloe, 2004). Considering students’ experiences—in and out of school—as curriculum is rooted in democratic principles. These principles assume that a central purpose of schools is to prepare an educated and politically engaged citizenry, even as the democratic citizenship objective remains a key component in intense debates over curriculum (Beyer, 1998).

It is important to contextualize the notion of students’ experiences as curriculum in the work of key scholars and curriculum reform events of the 20th century. Historically a primary purpose of public schooling in the United States has been to assimilate diverse immigrants who entered the country during the Industrial Revolution into a new “American” culture. Of course, schools’ purposes were never this singular or free from debate. Throughout the 20th century a series of cultural, social, and historical events pulled the curriculum in many directions, often pitting economic productivity objectives, critiques of social predestination, and the development of social change agency against each other (Kliebard, 1998), with curriculum theorist Lester Frank Ward famously asserting that an equitable distribution of knowledge could mitigate social class distinctions (Iannelli, 2013; Kliebard, 1998).

John Dewey’s thought is foundational to notions of students’ experiences as curriculum. Dewey conceived of curriculum as inherently integrated and child-centered. Early in the 20th century, he argued that the school curriculum not only should encompass students’ experiences and identities outside of school but should also involve teachers and students in connecting and cultivating these experiences to curriculum inside school (Dewey, 1915/1956). Dewey highlighted the intimate theoretical and practical relationship between curricula and pedagogy. He saw curriculum as alive, as a means to engage students in active learning, and he assumed that students and teachers would share responsibility and ownership for teaching and learning. Underlying these Deweyan ideas and ideals was a belief that the world of school and the domains outside of school were intimately connected and should reflect one another.

Curriculum historian Herbert Kliebard (1998) described three dominant frameworks that guided curriculum development at the beginning of the 20th century: scientific, developmental, and child-centered. The scientific emphasized social efficiency, was associated with Franklin Bobbitt, and viewed curriculum as “geared directly to the activities one needed to perform in one’s adult life” and to be prepared for the workforce (p. 27). The developmental position, whose primary proponent was G. Stanley Hall, was built on culture-epochs theory and held that the development of the human race paralleled that of the individual and that these equivalencies should be primary in the selection and application of
any curricula. Countering both of these theories was the child-centered theory of William Kilpatrick, which is especially relevant to the concept of students’ experiences as curriculum (Kliebard, 1998).

The social reconstructionist movement provides another theory that supports students’ experiences as curriculum insofar as it advocated democratic means and ends that focused on the social good (Kliebard, 1998). Yet, following World War II and again after the Soviet Union’s launch of Sputnik, curricular attention shifted back toward social efficiency, emphasizing math and science curricula to offset perceptions that the United States had failed to maintain its economic and educational superiority (Kliebard, 1986). Contemporary tensions in public and policy debates reveal even more dire consequences for children, youth, and teachers, with state and corporate emphases on a globalized competitive ethos as the basis for education.

Perhaps the most significant and most recent curricular framework that advocates for a students’ experiences as curriculum orientation is culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP; Ladson-Billings, 1994). CRP recognizes culture as a core element of student experience, assumes that pedagogy cannot be politically or culturally neutral, and calls on educators to help students challenge the current social order. While CRP has been mindful of the cultural dimensions affecting student learning (Esposito & Swain, 2009), it also addresses cultural mismatches between various components of students’ lives and schools in an effort to facilitate students’ academic success while building teachers’ cultural competence through culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010) and culturally relevant political education (Journell & Castro, 2011). CRP acknowledges that many students need assistance developing critical counternarratives about their cultures, their academic abilities, and the relationships between these and their school experience (May & Sleeter, 2010). Such counternarratives illuminate how students’ cultural experiences can be part of the curriculum and its content.

Why “Students’ Experiences as Curriculum” Now?

Despite the lack of emphasis on it today, curricular history clearly reveals that the concept of students’ experiences as curriculum is not new. Moreover, the concept of CRP provides a modern foundation for considering students’ experiences as curriculum. Yet, numerous other trends and pressures push against this idea, such as standardization of curricular objectives (as promoted by the Common Core State Standards—CCSS) and the use of scripted curriculum and high-stakes tests as primary measures of student achievement (Jenken, 2011). In this oppressive climate, support for integrating students’ experiences into the curriculum can be found in grassroots efforts focused on developing the often-tenuous relationships of diverse youth and families to schools. Given these fragile connections it is more important than ever that teachers, theorists, and policy makers consider students’ experiences as curriculum if schools are to be the core of participatory democracy.

The CCSS represents the most recent attempt to provide uniformity to the highly varied and often unequal curricular expectations and content in U.S. schools. With their focus on college and career readiness, such guidelines intend to prepare students for educational and economic opportunities in a global context. As of January 2015, 43 states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity have adopted the standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, n.d.). Yet those who mandate CCSS only tacitly acknowledge the inequitable expectations they place on diverse students and their teachers (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2012), because they continue to demand that schools, teachers, and students perform in highly prescribed and uniform ways. Even a cursory examination of the CCSS content, development, and implementation reveals that they disregard the realities that a students’ experiences as curriculum orientation considers.

Numerous scholars have documented the proliferation of scripted, basic skills programs in U.S. schools, particularly in reading and math, since the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Dudley-Marling, 2014). Such programs are attractive to policy makers and the general public because they are presumed to be efficient and effective, implemented without expensive teacher training, and counted as “research-based” in large part because they often rely on reductionist quantitative
measures of student achievement. However, this approach to curriculum reform weakens the notion that teaching is a complex activity by reducing it to a scripted technical task. Curriculum as created by distant developers not only deprives children and youth of the high-quality teaching support they need but also makes curriculum less relevant to students’ cultures and experiences (Dudley-Marling, 2014).

These trends toward the standardization of learning objectives, curricula, and teachers’ pedagogies conflict with the changing realities of student populations. The rapid demographic increases in ESOL populations already evident in many educational settings will affect virtually every U.S. teacher in the future (Cruz & Thornton, 2013). School and its foundational language simply do not mean to these youth and their families what they do to many of their teachers, the vast majority of whom are White, native English speakers (Sleeter, 2008). One piece of evidence of this shift in communities’ relationships to school is the fact that the 2009 high school dropout rate was 31% for Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds born outside the United States, compared to the rate of 8% for 16- through 24-year-olds as a whole (Chapman, Laird, Ifill, & KewalRamani, 2011). (For at least some of these students, a better term would be the “pushout” rate because of the school-related factors that cause students to leave.)

Ultimately, schools are attempting to serve students who have an extensive range of capacities or literacies in their native languages, cultures, and relationships to school. Thus, while curriculum theorists have long argued for child-centered, socially oriented, and culturally relevant curriculum, it is clear that the concept of considering students’ experiences as curriculum is more urgently needed now than ever before. Research consistently illustrates how students who actively—rather than passively—experience the curriculum and who see themselves in the curriculum enter into important, committed relationships to their own learning, to school, and to civic institutions. They value their own funds of knowledge (Gonzales, Moll, & Amanti, 2005), appreciate connections between themselves and their peers and the wider world, and develop an ownership of their learning that carries over into other domains of their lives.

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression: Examples**

In an effort to understand diverse youths’ perspectives on school, to engage them in meaningful school activities, and to consider their experiences as curriculum, Lois Easton and Daniel Condon (2009) have explored students’ points of view on educational institutions. These inquiries rely on the principle that undergirds all work oriented around a students’ experiences as curriculum approach: that youths can be participants in their own learning and distinguish ways that can help them navigate their academic experience. Many such inquiries are also grounded in youth participatory action research (YPAR) methods. YPAR is a recognized form of experimental research conducted within a participatory community with the goal of addressing an area of concern and identifying actions that can improve the quality, quantity, and equity of outcomes (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). YPAR often focuses on “critical youth engagement,” helping young people—especially those from economically disadvantaged and immigrant communities—to understand and address conditions of structural injustice. YPAR also enables educators and students to understand that curriculum developers have historically considered youths’ experiences as valuable content (Biddulph, 2011; Zeller-Berkman, 2007).

An important assumption behind current notions of students’ experiences as curriculum is the idea that curriculum is understood both as pedagogy and as content. When a curriculum is pedagogy, the very development of objectives and materials becomes the focus of learning; that is, curricular content is the process of generating these goals, texts, information, and resources, with students intimately involved in every step of their development. In this instance, students’ experiences in creating these materials become the curriculum itself. Strongly related to the idea of students’ experiences as curriculum is the practice of considering students’ out-of-school circumstances, histories, and interests as key elements of the curriculum (Schubert, 2010).

Multiple examples of a “students’ experience as curriculum” orientation exist in literature on teaching and educational research. The three illustrations below highlight the notion that curriculum can be understood
as both pedagogy and content. These examples integrate dimensions of diverse forms of inquiry (e.g., historical, philosophical, narrative, arts-based, critical ethnography, oral history, and phenomenology) and modes of representation (e.g., story, essay, critical interpretation, vignette, conversation, and student commentary).

The Living in the Future Project

Barbara Brodhagen, Gary Weilbacher, and James Beane (1998) provide an example of students’ experiences as curriculum that is grounded in embracing students’ questions and concerns; it is founded upon their belief that if “curriculum is to support a genuine search for self and social meaning, then it ought to be drawn from concerns young people have about themselves and their world” (p. 118). Their approach to curriculum integration does much more than blur traditional subject matter lines. It calls on teachers to make a mindful, deliberate pedagogical choice to allow students’ opinions and voices to lead all aspects of the curriculum. They admit that this process is neither quick nor easy, for it challenges the traditional ways in which teachers select and present curriculum. Teachers become facilitators while students generate topics of study through self-questioning and group discussions; students also select activities to explore skills and knowledge necessary for study.

This curriculum as pedagogy illustrates key principles of students’ experiences as curriculum noted earlier. It is a process in which adult perceptions are not the lens of authenticity, nor are adult-expressed opinions allowed to become deterministic or a self-fulfilling prophecy for a student. In every sense it is student-centered. Brodhagen and her colleagues (1998) reported how this approach has allowed students to become active participants, learn how to collaborate, experience validation, embrace ownership, and share in knowledge construction. This teacher/researcher team has used Beane’s curriculum design theory, which assumes that curriculum should be “organized around themes found at the intersection of self/personal concerns of young people and issues affecting the ‘common good’ in the larger world” (Brodhagen et al., 1998, p. 118). These scholars reported that students developed the knowledge and skills they needed as they completed the activities they selected for their themes of inquiry. They also reported that students already knew about a wide range of topics and naturally bridged subjects or even dissolved traditional subject lines.

It is evident that these experiences helped students to become aware of, articulate, and even make their relationships with the world core elements of the curriculum. As an illustration, the students created the Madison 2020 Project, which enabled them to research different aspects of city planning and culminated with inviting the local city planner to listen to the students’ recommendations about future urban plans. Other activities involved survey development and analysis (integrating writing and math), taking predictions from a 1900 magazine article and researching the modern-day outcomes (integrating, history, writing, reading, and public speaking), and even considering what students might look like in the future, eventually ending in a futuristic sketch of each student (integrating the arts).

The TSE Project

The TSE project we have been involved with similarly relies on the assumption that children and young people can inform the content of the curriculum and even serve as experts on these objectives and materials (Zenkov & Harmon, 2009). As an example of a pedagogy as curriculum approach that enacts students’ experiences as curriculum, TSE activities rely on nonstandard school media—including visual and technology-focused tools and texts—as the means through which youth document and share their experiences. These media have been particularly effective bases for pedagogies that engage diverse young people in literacy and school activities and reveal their perspectives on school and its goals, structures, and content (Gold, 2004). Research has documented how image-based tools motivate students to develop an awareness of and to share personal insights related to their school experiences (Smyth, 2007; Zenkov & Harmon, 2009).

TSE has been used with several hundred young, diverse, mostly urban, and frequently English language learning people in a range of U.S. and international settings. The project calls on youths to use digital photographs and related reflections to consider,
illustrate, and describe the purposes of school, supports for their school achievement, and obstacles to their success. The majority of TSE students are children of high school dropouts or come from families where school has not been a trusted institution. Generally the project is conducted weekly or every other week for 2 to 4 months in a language arts class, after school, or on Saturdays. Each participant takes an average of 100 images in response to project questions via “photo walks” around his or her school and neighborhood. Following a writing elicitation process and conference, each young person typically writes about a minimum of three images that provide insights into his or her relationship with school. We as the project co-directors and numerous other teachers involved in the TSE analyzed the more than 3,000 image/writing combinations that participants have produced from the more than 20 versions of the project, tracking and coding prevalent visual and descriptive themes in these adolescents' visual and written data.

While these themes provide insights into young adults’ answers to the project questions—which might ultimately inform schools’ curricula and offer content that honors students’ experience as curriculum—this project primarily operates as a pedagogical intervention and writing curriculum. Through the years of implementing this project with hundreds of youth in the United States and four countries, the project curriculum—a pedagogy as curriculum—has revealed how the very act of asking youth about their school experiences via these multimodal methods is an example of students’ experiences as curriculum. Pedagogical insights include the importance of including “get to know you” activities with diverse youth; intentionally building one-to-one relationships with students; introducing often risky but personally meaningful activities in the early stages of any curriculum or course; and engaging in discussion and image-based composition processes—rather than typing or hand-scribing—with students as a foundational component of a writing curriculum.

The What Kids Can Do Project

Relative to the illustrations of students’ experiences as curriculum discussed above, it is clear that the content of youth’s lives can be the focus of student learning, integrated as the materials and texts encountered in the classroom. A third example of such projects can be found in What Kids Can Do (WKCD), a national nonprofit founded in 2001 by an educator and a journalist who were committed to supporting adolescent learning in and out of school. Like all examples of students’ experiences as curriculum, WKCD recognizes the power of what young people can achieve when given the opportunities and supports they need to be engaged in creating curricula. Such approaches formally acknowledge what youth can contribute to their own and others’ education when teachers, administrators, policy makers, and community adults take students’ voices and ideas seriously. WKCD engages the youth in most need of recognition—diverse young people who are marginalized by schools and society—as collaborators and leaders in curriculum development efforts. WKCD is unique in that it operates its own publishing company, Next Generation Press, which develops and distributes materials with youth voices at their core. Two books by WKCD co-founder Kathleen Cushman—Fires in the Bathroom: Advice for Teachers From High School Students (2003) and Fires in the Mind: What Kids Can Tell Us About Motivation and Mastery (2010)—are widely used in schools. WKCD also operates a virtual center for showcasing youth as researchers and activists—the Center for Youth Voice in Policy and Practice.

WKCD not only honors young people’s perspectives and explicitly shares these via its materials but also often challenges less student-centered curricular traditions. A primary example is the book SAT Bronx (available online), in which the students of Bronx High School share many of the specifics of their life realities in the unique form of a standardized test. They challenge readers to appreciate the vocabulary, anecdotes, and statistics of their daily experiences—simultaneously teaching audiences about their worlds and highlighting the cultural bias in most standardized examinations. This example constructs curriculum from the cultures, languages, and behaviors of urban youth by co-opting the curricula and assessments of U.S. schools and transforming these into practices that recognize students’ experiences as curriculum.

Conclusion

In the early years of the 21st century, there is ample evidence that schools and their curricula are often
perceived as—and frequently actually are—less and less relevant to increasingly diverse student populations. Numerous educators, scholars, community members, and activists are engaged in educational reforms, pedagogical interventions, and curriculum development projects that are making students’ experiences central elements of school curricula. As detailed in this chapter, these efforts can be classified as those that recognize both pedagogies as curriculum and content as curriculum, along with hybrid activities. The questions of “What or whose knowledge is most important?” and “Who benefits from the curriculum that is ultimately propagated and shared in schools?” must continue to guide critical explorations of curriculum if schools, their pedagogies, and their curricula are to serve all students and our nation’s democratic goals.

It is critically important for the increasingly diverse students in U.S. schools to engage in school and achieve at high levels. The primary impediment to these youths’ school success may be the fact that school and its traditions and curricula are part of a culture they do not yet understand. And too often teachers and others in school do not appreciate the deeply rooted origin of young adults’ frustrations. A central assumption behind students’ experiences as curriculum lies in curricula and pedagogies constructed upon listening to and learning from students’ ideas about school, their places in it, and the subject matter they study (Schultz, 2011).

Ultimately, appreciating students’ experiences as curriculum requires that educators, community members, and policy makers view curriculum and curriculum development as reflexive processes utilizing media with which children and young people are already proficient. Multimodal, technology-focused, and non–language-based tools and methods incorporate untraditional explorations of youths’ perspectives while resulting in habits of thinking, reading, writing, and speaking that go beyond surface meanings to understand sociological phenomena (Bell, 2008; Fobes & Kaufman, 2008). These tools do not rely on understanding nuances of the English language or the school’s culture and can be used to develop media that may be more universally understood.

The core of a students’ experiences as curriculum orientation is the almost counterintuitive practice of asking students—rather than telling them—about the nature of school, curricula, and teaching practices. By assuming that they should consider these natures, educators make the very different and positive conjecture that they can do so. A students’ experiences as curriculum approach is also rooted in the principle that educators must never assume that a student’s failure to engage with curriculum or to complete a school task is evidence that he or she is not interested in or incapable of learning the material or of completing work. Young adults and children are calling on and challenging educators to be extraordinarily resilient in the face of their rejections of school and its curricula. Similarly, educators who adhere to the idea of students’ experiences as curriculum need to be resilient as they engage students in the work of making students’ experiences central to the curriculum.

References and Further Readings


Immigrant Students’ Experience as Curriculum

Elaine Chan  
*University of Nebraska–Lincoln*

JoAnn Phillion  
*Purdue University*

Ming Fang He  
*Georgia Southern University*

Curriculum is a dynamic interplay between experiences of students, teachers, parents, administrators, policy makers, and other stakeholders; content knowledge and pedagogical premises and practices; and cultural, linguistic, sociopolitical, and geographical contexts. In this chapter, we examine immigrant students’ experience of language, culture, identity, and power as curriculum, which engenders controversies and challenges in research, policy, theory, and practice. Given the diversity of experiences that immigrant students bring to their North American school curriculum situations, it is likely that their experiences of languages, cultures, and identities shape their perceptions of North American school communities differently than those of their mainstream peers.

**Contexts**

North American communities are becoming increasingly diverse and complex. In the United States, the foreign-born population (nearly 40 million) represented 12.9% of the total population in 2010, with individuals born in Latin America and the Caribbean representing 53.1% of this population, those born in Asia representing 28.2%, those born in Europe representing 12.1%, and those born in other areas of the world representing 6.5% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The foreign-born population in Canada has also been increasing. Canada was home to 6.8 million foreign-born individuals, representing 20.6% of the total population, in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2011).
The immigrant population is contributing to further diversity within the overall population. The Hispanic population in the United States grew from 35.3 million in 2000 to 50.5 million in 2010 to make up 16% of the total population, while the Black or African American population represented 13% of the total population for a total of 38.9 million people. The Asian population grew by 43% to 14.7 million people, or 5% of the total population; the rate of growth in this group was faster than any other major race groups between 2000 and 2010 in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

Between 2006 and 2011, 1.2 million foreign-born people immigrated to Canada, to make up 17.2% of the foreign-born population and 3.5% of the total population of Canada. As with the United States, Asia (including the Middle East) was the largest source of immigrants between 2006 and 2011, while immigration from Africa, the Caribbean, and Central and South America also increased. In Canada, more than 200 languages were reported as a home language or mother tongue, and 6.6 million persons (20% of the population) reported speaking a language other than English or French at home. For roughly 6.4 million persons, the other language was an immigrant language, spoken most often or on a regular basis at home, alone or together with English or French (Statistics Canada, 2011).

These demographic changes in North American society are reflected in the increased diversity within the student population. The number of immigrant children between the ages of 5 and 20 living in the United States grew from 3.5 to 8.6 million from 1970 to 1995, and increased to 9 million in 2010 to represent 22% of the school-aged population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). In Canada from 1991 to 2001, there were 310,000 school children between the ages of 5 and 16 among the 1.8 million immigrants. For many of these children, the first language learned and used at home is different from the language of instruction in school (Minister of Industry, 2003).

**Contemporary Concerns**

This changing population reinforces a growing need for issues of educational quality to be defined according to notions of multicultural education in order for educators to develop innovative ways of meeting the needs of culturally, linguistically, ethnically, and religiously diverse student populations. Learning to design, implement, and assess curriculum for immigrant and minority students has become critical for educators and other stakeholders. Existing practices and policies in schools often fall short, and implications of the mismatch between student needs and school policies and practices are enormous for policy makers, administrators, educators, students, and parents.

For example, although society is aware of the increasing diversity within communities, the extent of complexity surrounding the integration of individuals who arrive from political, social, religious, linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and/or socioeconomic circumstances that differ from mainstream society is becoming more apparent. Immigrant students’ struggles to integrate into schools and neighborhood communities become more complicated socially, politically, and educationally. Many immigrant students are learning to speak, read, and write in new languages (Cummins, 2001), while their families struggle with economic insecurity or poverty, language barriers, migration issues, and acculturation. Limited access to safety net programs further complicates academic, physical, emotional, and social development difficulties associated with economic insecurity.

As immigrants struggle to survive and thrive economically, to establish homes and careers, and to support their children in academic and social pursuits, political contexts highlight and reinforce challenges they may encounter as they settle into new communities. Policies such as President Obama’s “Dream Act” recognize some of these challenges by granting younger immigrants “deferred action” status. While not conferring lawful status upon undocumented immigrants, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals allows eligible immigrants to live free from the fear of deportation and to work legally for a period of 2 years during which time they may apply for a Social Security card and obtain a driver’s license. Policies such as these were intended to alleviate struggles associated with integrating into the U.S. society for immigrants whose circumstances enable them to benefit from them. The development and implementation of these initiatives, however, also raise questions about the place of undocumented immigrants in society, the social...
infrastructure available for their support, the equitable distribution of limited financial and social resources for some segments of the population over others, and the place of members of some ethnic and racial groups over others.

Similarly, while the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and associated practices were implemented to enhance teacher accountability for academic performance of students through increased standardization and testing, these practices have been found to hinder the academic advancement of some students. Certain provisions of the NCLB, such as holding states accountable for providing services, curricula, qualified teachers, and assessments that support English language learners (ELLs), are intended to improve the education and opportunities for success for ELL children. Other NCLB requirements, however, may be detrimental to ELLs. Students with special education needs or ELLs whose language skills may hinder their performance on standardized testing, for example, may then fail to meet graduation requirements, which in turn limits higher education opportunities. The emphasis on testing and accountability also penalizes low-performing schools that often, by geographic segregation, have larger ELL populations who fall under NCLB-regulated minority and low-income categories. Likewise, initiatives under the federal Race to the Top grant program, while attempting to support the design and implementation of rigorous curriculum standards and assessments, ignore differences of immigrant students and the challenges they experience as their families settle down in new countries.

Meeting the curricular needs of students with diverse backgrounds is a persistent challenge facing North American educators. Although educators, policy makers, and other stakeholders have been aware for decades of the shifting and changing demographic composition of schools and societies, these changes have become more critical as we learn more about the complexity of designing, implementing, and assessing curriculum for diverse populations. Many immigrant students in North American schools continue to suffer from prejudice, exclusion, and marginalization, and these challenges may, in part, be reinforced by the mismatch between existing policies and practices and the needs of immigrant students in school. While there is growing awareness of challenges immigrants may encounter and the need to alleviate tensions associated with settlement into new communities, policies may still be interpreted as not especially supportive of immigrant communities or may highlight anti-immigrant sentiments. Addressing the mismatch between immigrant student needs and existing practices and policies and the complex intersections of racial, ethnic, cultural, social, political, academic, linguistic, and economic forces in education is an important starting point for understanding immigrant students’ experience of language, culture, identity, and power as curriculum.

Understanding Immigrant Students’ Experience as Curriculum Through Theory and Practice in Language, Culture, Identity, and Power

To understand immigrant students’ experience as curriculum, we consider a wide array of theory and practice in language, culture, identity, and power (He, Phillion, Chan, & Xu, 2008). We draw upon John Dewey’s theory of experience, culture, and curriculum; Joseph Schwab’s curriculum commonplaces (i.e., learner, teacher, subject matter, and milieu); Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin’s narrative conception of curriculum; and William Schubert and William Ayers’ s autobiographical reflections, student and teacher lore, and notions of curriculum. To understand immigrant students’ experience as curriculum through their experience of language, culture, identity, and power, we turn to multicultural/critical multicultural perspectives (Nieto & Bode, 2011); culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000/2010); culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994); culturally contested pedagogy (Li, 2005); critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1988; McLaren, 1989); funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005); sociocritical literacy in the third space (Gutiérrez, 2008); hip-hop culture, language, identity, and politics of media literacy (Ibrahim, 2014); cross-cultural and multicultural narrative (Chan, 2007; He, 2003; Phillion, 2002; Phillion & He, 2007; Phillion, He, & Connelly, 2005; Schlein & Chan, 2013); personal/passionate/participatory inquiry into social justice in education (He & Phillion, 2008); critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Lynn & Dixson, 2013); globalization,
corporatism, and critical language education (Luke, Luke, & Graham, 2007); decolonizing methodologies (Tuuhiwai Smith, 1999/2005); Native American social and political thought (Grande, 2004); and indigenous storywork (Archibald, 2008). The interconnections among language, culture, identity, and power illuminated in the perspectives listed are crucial for understanding immigrant students’ experience as curriculum.

Languages

Key language issues center on English language learning and heritage language maintenance (Cummins, 2000; Wong-Fillmore & Meyer, 1992); English as a second language education and culturally congruent curriculum and teaching (Au & Jordan, 1981); and the length of time necessary to attain academic English proficiency. Immigrant students must master academic content while attaining English proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking in order to function in their new English-speaking world (Cummins, 2001). Keeping up with their English-speaking peers in both academic content knowledge and English proficiency becomes increasingly challenging as their school curriculum becomes more demanding. In addition, high-stakes testing and academic assessments used to determine immigrant students’ progression and graduation often disregard their English proficiency, which further hinders their academic achievement.

Cultures

Closely related to language issues are issues of cultural discontinuity among homes, schools, and communities (Li, 2005; Soto, 1997, 2002; Valdés, 1996, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999; Vasquez, Pease-Alvarez, & Shannon, 1994), cultural incongruity in learning and teaching styles (Au & Jordan, 1981), race, ethnicity, gender, and class (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998; Grant & Sleeter, 1986; Isajiw, 1999; Lee & Zhou, 2004; Lewis, 2003). Increasing familiarity with popular culture, such as hip-hop culture, media, and youth subcultures (Ibrahim, 2014), among immigrant adolescents in the United States may alienate their parents from their experience, while parents’ adherence to home languages and cultures may embarrass their adolescent children. Immigrant parents’ cultural values of familial interdependence and respect for elders are deeply challenged by the North American cultural emphasis on independence and interrupted by the shifts in power and authority that may occur when immigrant youth serve as language and cultural interpreters for their parents. Due to these potential cultural challenges, immigrant children tend to learn English more quickly than their parents and surpass their parents’ educational levels as they continue in the North American school system, thus further hindering communications and interrupting the balance of power and authority within families and generations (Cummins, 2000; Wong-Fillmore, 1991; Wong-Fillmore & Meyer, 1992). The geographical separation inherent in immigration may further complicate communications among family members and generations.

Existing literature suggests that despite good intentions to engage immigrant students in their school communities, their experience of language, culture, identity, and power outside of schools complicates their school experience. Tensions are derived from underlying differences in perspectives that are influenced by immigrant students’ experience of culture, language, identity, and power in schools, families, and communities (Chan, 2010; Hamann & Zuniga, 2011). Other tensions are derived from power differences between members of different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups whereby immigrant students’ experience of language, culture, and identity are perceived as less valuable than those of mainstream peers (Crago, Annahatak, & Ningiuruvik, 1993; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999; Vasquez et al., 1994).

Identities

Language and culture are at the center of controversy over issues of identity. Immigrant students’ identities are recognized as complex, fluid, and changing over time and place (Chan, 2007, 2010; He, 2003, 2010). Their identities are developed in relationship with their peers, teachers, parents, grandparents, and other members of their families and communities, shaped by their participation in ethnic groups, and impacted by sociopolitical, cultural, and linguistic contexts (Lee, 1996; Lee & Zhou, 2004; Li, 2002, 2005). The shock of entering new cultures and making a place for oneself is a daunting task.
Acculturation for immigrant students often involves painful decisions about what to save or sacrifice and what to adopt or reject. Tensions can erupt as immigrant students reject family ways of conforming to mainstream ways of living while maintaining their cultural identities and yearning for popular culture such as hip-hop culture, media and youth subcultures (Ibrahim, 2014). These potentially detrimental cultural gaps between home and school curriculum (Li, 2005; Valdés, 1996), sometimes referred to as “conflicting stories to live by” (Chan, 2010) or “ruptures” (Hamman & Zúñiga, 2011), may be further emphasized when home and school cultures differ significantly (Li, 2005; Soto, 1997; Valdés, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999; Vasquez et al., 1994).

**Power**

Power issues such as exclusion, marginalization, segregation (Pain & Smith, 2008); discrimination and racism (Hartlep, 2013); poverty (Batalova, 2005); educational inequalities (Oakes, 1985); and displacement (Fazel, Wheeler, & Danesh, 2005; Hamman & Zúñiga, 2011) impact significantly upon immigrant students’ experience of language, culture, and identity. For instance, anti-immigrant sentiments perpetuate exclusion, marginalization, segregation, and disempowerment in job markets, housing, and school choices, which may in turn increase the “numbers of recent immigrant families struggling in segregated communities with inadequate services, substandard schools, insufficient bilingual education services, limited access to gainful employment, intolerance and alienation” (Rhodes, 2005, p. 4).

Many immigrant students and their families experience discrimination, racism, segregation, hate crimes, hostile environments, and anti-immigrant sentiments that isolate them from their mainstream peers and further marginalize them. Immigrant students are likely to have fewer resources and lower expectations and to suffer from discrimination against their cultures, languages, and identities. The discrimination, racism, and segregation can deprive immigrant students from reaching their full potential and hinder their academic and personal growth (Garcia & Szalacha, 2004; Hartlep, 2013; Lee & Zhou, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999).

Many immigrant students’ families come from poverty situations. Many families settle in segregated urban areas of deep poverty or in rural farming communities. As Jean Rhodes (2005) noted,

> These neighborhoods are often plagued with violence, gang activity, and drug trade, and their schools are often segregated, overcrowded, and poorly funded. Children raised in circumstances of socio-economic deprivation are vulnerable to a range of difficulties, including anxiety, depression, and delinquency. (p. 2)

The socioeconomic deprivation combined with exclusion, marginalization, segregation, discrimination, and racism leads to inequitable access to quality health care and education, which can lead to poor health, poor diet, destructive behaviors, school failure, and eventually racial/ethnic stratification (Shields & Behrman, 2004).

Immigrant students may have endured war-torn countries, political asylum, refugee camps, and financial turmoil. The disruptions of schooling, trauma of war, political persecution, economic deprivation, unemployment, and separation from their families following immigration or natural disasters, such as hurricanes Rita and Katrina in 2005, perpetuate multiple forms of displacement—physical, academic, sociopolitical, economic, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic. Their experience of displacement results in nightmares and violent memories that haunt immigrant students as they struggle to live their life in strange schools and societies.

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression**

There are many forms of inquiry and modes of expression that may be used to examine and represent immigrant students’ experience of language, culture, identity, and power as curriculum such as auto/biographical research (He, 2003), cross-cultural narrative inquiry (He, 2003; Schlein & Chan, 2013), autoethnography (Anzuldua, 1987), ethnography (Lee, 1996; Li, 2002; Toohy, 2000; Valdés, 1996, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999), life history research (Hones & Cha, 1999), memoir (Chiang, 2011; Hoffman, 1989; Rosay, 2007; Santiago, 1993), multicultural narrative inquiry (Phillion, 2002), oral history (Ling, 2007), narrative inquiry (Carger, 1996, 2009; Chan, 2007, 2010; Schlein & Chan, 2013), narrative accounts (Igoa, 1995), stories, poems, and
vignettes (Cisneros, 1994), portraiture (Chamoiseau, 1994), personal-passionate-participatory inquiry (He & Phillion, 2008), critical race methodology (Parker, Deyhle, & Villenas, 1999), counterstorytelling (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), critical race narrative inquiry (Gutiérrez-Jones, 2001), desire-based research (Tuck, 2009), critical literacy research (Luke et al., 2007), indigenous/decolonizing methodologies (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999/2005), and indigenous storywork (Archibald, 2008).

These forms of inquiry and modes of expression focus on an in-depth understanding of diverse experiences of individuals, groups, families, and communities. Much of the work in these areas has been done by women, and many of them are ethnographers and critical ethnographers while some are narrative inquirers or counterstorytellers. Many are from the same ethnic backgrounds as their participants, are fluent in their languages, and advocate for equal opportunities for immigrant students on behalf of their parents and communities. Many of these forms of inquiry and modes of expression, such as ethnography and multicultural and cross-cultural narrative inquiry, examine the complex intersections of language, culture, identity, and power that influence and are influenced by immigrant students’ experience of curriculum. For instance, Chris Liska Carger (1996, 2009), in her long-term narrative inquiry, documented tensions experienced when school practices and policies did not meet the special education needs of a Mexican American student. Carger’s work highlighted interconnections among language, culture, identity, and power and reveals difficulties immigrant parents may encounter as they navigate the school curriculum without English language proficiency, literacy skills, or cultural knowledge of the education system to advocate for their children. This work is an example of “life-based literary narrative” (Phillion & He, 2004) that highlights immigrant students’ experience of language, culture, identity, and power as curriculum.

Elaine Chan’s (Ross & Chan, 2008; Schlein & Chan, 2010) long-term program of studies focused on examining immigrant students’ experiences of the intersections of culture, language, identity, and power in their schools and neighborhoods. This work illustrates ways in which immigrant families’ limited English proficiency and cultural knowledge of schooling in the mainstream society hindered their power to advocate for equal educational opportunities for their children.

Guofang Li’s (2005) ethnographic study addresses challenges of negotiating curriculum in a community where immigrant Asian populations have surpassed nonimmigrant populations in size. Despite hard-earned socioeconomic success, the immigrants still struggle to achieve a political voice in the community. Tensions stemming from battles of literacy and schooling between teachers and immigrant parents illustrate ways in which the intersections among literacy, culture, race, and social class impact upon the curricular experiences of immigrant students. Discordant cultural perceptions and beliefs create a “culturally contested pedagogy” where immigrant students live in between two worlds.

The forms of inquiry and modes of expression listed in this section encourage the study of complex experience of marginalized and underrepresented groups and individuals, such as immigrant students, played out in contested cultural, linguistic, and sociopolitical milieus. These inquiries highlight the importance of consideration for immigrant students’ experience of language, culture, identity, and power as a starting point for establishing practices and policies to inspire immigrant students to reach their full potential. These inquirers argue that although culturally sensitive policies provide guidelines for school-based curriculum and practices with immigrant students of diverse backgrounds, it is essential for educators, administrators, and other education stakeholders to consider the specific details of immigrant students’ academic and home circumstances within larger ethnic, cultural, or linguistic communities. Understanding the intersections of language, culture, identity, and power is the key to moving from theory to pedagogical practice and policy making when designing and implementing curriculum for immigrant students.

Immigrant students bring language, cultural, and ethnic diversity to North American schools, but their linguistic and cultural knowledge continues to be overlooked or misrepresented in school. The absence of their experiences and perspectives from school curriculum, policy making, and research literature is in stark contrast to their presence in schools and societies. We have found that the ethnic and cultural diversity within immigrant groups is often obscured in mainstream scholarship. For example, the model
minority myth, which stereotypes Asian American and Asian Canadian students as high-achieving students with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed at all levels of education (Hartlep, 2013, 2014; Lee, 1994), masks struggles and difficulties Asian immigrant students face. In this way, immigrant students are double-marginalized; they live between two worlds, not “home cultural” enough to repatriate yet not North American enough to integrate. They do not fit in the mainstream discourse, nor do they fit in marginalized minority discourse. Furthermore, anti-immigrant initiatives perpetrate resentment and hostility from members of the majority as well as other minority groups.

The complex nature of the experience that immigrant students and their families bring to schools calls for further development of forms of inquiry and modes of expression that not only recognize diverse perspectives but also draw upon differences as a resource for interpreting their experience to inform education policy and practice. While we have made significant strides toward recognizing the complexity of issues underlying tensions between and among members of diverse racial, ethnic, language, religious, cultural, and socioeconomic groups, there remains much we do not know about how to better meet the academic and social needs of our increasingly diverse school communities.

We hope that scholars, educators, researchers, journalists, artists, and community activists will come together to bring issues of concern about immigrant students to the forefront of educational discussions in the public sphere. We urge them to speak out about their concerns about the education of their children and that of other people’s children. We hope they will join forces with other ethnic, cultural, and linguistic groups and immigrant and minority activists with shared concerns, to develop strategies to enact educational and social change that fosters equity, equality, freedom, and social justice. These joint efforts embody possibilities, create hopes and dreams, and invent spaces where immigrant children and children of other disenfranchised individuals and groups might live more robustly, equitably, and peacefully together in an increasingly changing and diversifying world.

References and Further Readings


Learning From and With Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

Valerie Kinloch
Ohio State University

It’s who we are. It’s like telling me I gotta take off my culture and identity when I leave my hood and go to a place that don’t care about me. Like schools. How can I leave me and my Black English home? I’m nobody’s traitor.

—Phillip, youth participant; as quoted in Kinloch, 2010, p. 104

Far too many culturally and linguistically diverse K–12 students in schools, particularly in the United States, are asked by teachers, administrators, and other educational representatives to “take off [their] culture and identity” before crossing the threshold of the school building. This request is not an invitation into learning within the context of schools. Instead, it is a request for students to leave their cultural and linguistic identities—informed by familial, geographical, social, political, and literacy-rich out-of-school experiences—on the other side of the school doors. Even now in this 21st century, countless students who are culturally and linguistically diverse are being disadvantaged within educational contexts that purport to theorize difference and teach for social justice, on the one hand, and to affirm the sociocultural lives and linguistic identities of historically marginalized students, on the other hand. Not being recognized for their cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1990), or their rich language, literacy, cultural, and community experiences, can negatively impact how culturally and linguistically diverse students learn and participate inside schools. And still, it is important that culturally and linguistically diverse students are not simply affirmed within the context of schools, but that they are centered and represented in the curricula in positive, critical, and insightful ways.

What does it mean for culturally and linguistically diverse students to be centered in schools and in curricula? How do we do this centering in ways that address the various historical and contemporary issues that have long relegated linguistically and culturally diverse students to the margins? Why are the language rights and cultural experiences of diverse students still being contested in educational theory and practice? How can such students, as Phillip describes above, be “who we are” in schools when they feel as if that’s “a place that don’t care about [us]?” These questions are important to consider, particularly during this current climate of increased assaults on diversity—as marked, for instance, by the resurgence of English-only policies across the nation,
antibilingual education programs, resistance to immigration reform, and bans on ethnic studies and multicultural curricula. In addition to these assaults are negative assumptions about the academic achievement and linguistic competencies of diverse students in relation to monolingual, monocultural expectations operating within U.S. schools. Thus, it is important for teachers, teacher educators, administrators, educational researchers, and policy makers to better account for the experiences—the languages, identities, lived conditions, and subjectivities—of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

**Contemporary Concerns**

For the purposes of this chapter, culturally and linguistically diverse students are students from historically marginalized ethnic and racial minority groups—including, but not limited to, African American, Latino/a, Asian American, America Indian, and Pacific Islander American students—when their primary language is not the “mainstream,” middle-class English that dominates the discourse of U.S. schooling. And because their languages and cultures do not dominate discourses of schooling, many teachers and teacher educators contemplate a variety of concerns regarding how to effectively teach culturally and linguistically diverse students. From determining ways to expand their repertoire of teaching strategies, to utilizing culturally responsive forms of instruction, to understanding students’ linguistic, cognitive, social, and emotional development, teachers and teacher educators are constantly working to locate ways to center culturally and linguistically diverse students in schools and in the curricula (McCarty & Zepeda, 1995). While many teachers and teacher educators understand that all students bring funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2001) with them to schools, some find it difficult to incorporate this knowledge into both their classroom practices and pedagogic stances. Therefore, it is not surprising that some teachers and teacher educators ask: How does one critically, purposefully center culturally and linguistically diverse students in the curricula? In so doing, what are specific instructional approaches and classroom activities that effectively build on students’ backgrounds in order to do this work?

Administrators are faced with the important task of creating and sustaining positive, welcoming school environments that support the academic achievement of all students. According to a report published in 2011 by the Alliance for Excellent Education, more than 1.3 million students attending high schools in the United States drop out each year, with a disproportionate number of these students identifying as culturally and linguistically diverse youths. Additionally, a 2011 report from the National Center for Education Statistics shows “that the median income of persons ages 18 through 67 who had not completed high school was roughly $25,000 in 2009” (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). These reports highlight the reality that “a significant segment of the population will remain entrenched in poverty while on a global scale the competitiveness of the American labor force will continue to lag behind” (American Psychological Association, 2012). In light of these reports, administrators are faced with important challenges.

One pressing challenge is that administrators need to increase their collaborations with teachers, education support professionals, parents, community organizations, and district leaders to dismantle racist policies that undermine the cultural and linguistic traditions of diverse students. In this work, administrators are critiquing assumptions about who linguistically and culturally diverse students are, who their parents and extended networks are, and what their accumulated out-of-school knowledge reveals about their academic skills and critical literacies. In doing this work, more and more administrators are asking: How can schools better serve the needs of (and better center in the curricula) culturally and linguistically diverse students by collaborating with students, teachers, parents, community groups, and district leaders?

Additionally, there are many educational researchers who investigate larger connections between theoretical discussions and classroom praxis regarding the schooling experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Some of these researchers are invested in understanding how critical pedagogy (Shor, 1992), for example, which is an approach to education that utilizes democratic strategies in teaching and learning to address oppressive structures, can help center the lived conditions of diverse students not just within schools and curricula but also within
educational systems. Educational researchers are more than aware of national mandates including those required by the No Child Left Behind Act and movements to standardize the curricula through initiatives such as the Common Core State Standards. In their awareness, they continue to ask questions about equity, power, and social justice as they critique the many ways dominant narratives about academic achievement do not account for the cultural and linguistic diversity of such students (Haddix & Kinloch, 2013). It should not come as a shock that many educational researchers wonder: In what ways can culturally and linguistically diverse students—and their voices, perspectives, and identities—be centered in conversations about theory and praxis in school and community contexts?

As teachers, teacher educators, administrators, and educational researchers are asking questions about centering culturally and linguistically diverse students in schools and in curricula, policy makers must also heed the call. Policy makers are asking direct questions about preparing students to compete in a global marketplace, about technological advancements, about having assessments aligned with international benchmark standards from high-performing nations, and about how to create, maintain, and sustain prosperous, innovative economies. Their concern with global competitiveness, however, requires that they not only focus on quantitative factors (e.g., test scores, grades, student academic standing) but also focus on qualitative measures (e.g., who students are, where students live, the cultural and linguistic identities of students, and how students learn in a variety of ways). Policy makers must question the meanings of diversity and difference, paying attention to how students, especially culturally and linguistically diverse students, are being academically and socially prepared inside schools. Many policy makers are beginning to ask: If being globally competitive is important, then how can linguistic and cultural diversities take center stage in the schooling experiences of all students?

In schools and communities across the nation, many culturally and linguistically diverse students find themselves in situations where their identities are called into question, where they are marginalized because of how they sound and how they look, and because of the stereotypes others attach to them. The passage by Phillip that opens this chapter says it best: Too many culturally and linguistically diverse students do not think schools are caring places, and too many culturally and linguistically diverse students are made to feel as if they cannot bring their cultures, identities, and languages into schools. Students do not enter schools as empty vessels, for they bring a wealth of literacy, language, and community practices with them. Yet the dominant discourses, or codes of power, that schools operate under tell a different story about culturally and linguistically diverse students—it is a story of deficits, of underachievement, and of disengagement. To center diverse students in schools and in curricula, and to move away from deficit-oriented framings to assets-based, culturally sustaining perspectives, culturally and linguistically diverse students must be invited to contemplate important questions: How do you feel about your schooling experiences and how do feel when you are at school? Would you want schools to center aspects of your linguistic, cultural, and community experiences in the curricula? If so, then how? If not, then why? What suggestions would you offer your teachers and administrators about how to teach (or how not to teach) culturally and linguistically diverse students? What steps do you think teachers, teacher educators, administrators, researchers, and community partners should take to ensure that schools are safe, welcoming, and inviting learning places for culturally and linguistically diverse students?

Clearly, there are a lot of contemporary concerns regarding how and why to center culturally and linguistically diverse students in schools and in curricula. Everyone has a role to take in this work as questions are asked about how and what students are taught, how and what students are learning, how students are collaborating with others, and how all students learn to enhance their critical capacities with regard to difference and diversity. This is important work, given the ever-increasing linguistic, cultural, and racial diversities of U.S. classrooms and communities.

**Context of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students**

There are many historical, political, and educational events that have impacted how culturally and linguistically diverse students are viewed in society, schools, and curricula. Historically, we live in a nation where
people have been marginalized and disenfranchised because of who they are (culturally, socioeconomically, in terms of sexual orientation), how they look (racially and ethnically), and how they talk (linguistically). While many people believe we live in a postracial society where everyone has the right to certain freedoms and liberties, our history tells us otherwise. One need only take a close look at particular historical events to understand how culturally and linguistically diverse people have been othered or how they have been negatively and unfairly treated in society and schools.

For example, on December 1, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks, who at the time was a seamstress at a department store, refused to follow the law of the land—to give up her bus seat to a White male passenger. Her refusal to move resulted in her arrest, which incited an already growing social revolution against racial segregation, one that involved a lot of young protestors seeking educational, political, and social justice. Eight years later in 1963 in Birmingham, Alabama, nearly 2,000 elementary, junior high, and high school students participated in a civil rights protest sponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. After walking out of school to protest segregation and discriminatory practices in the state, students were firehosed and arrested. Also in the 1960s, the Chicano movement—an extension of the 1940s Mexican American civil rights movement—gained momentum in high schools and universities across the United States. The movement sought to debunk popular myths about Mexican Americans’ history, culture, and language in favor of more accurate representations. Students participated in school walkouts, critiqued the poor quality of academic instruction they were receiving, and protested the defunding of Chicano courses. These historical events and many others—including the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Poor People’s Campaign in 1967, the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1964, and the Lau v. Nichols civil rights case in 1974—all contributed to changing the U.S. political landscape by calling attention to the rights of racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse people.

These historical events were also political by nature and paved the way for the emergence of many educational policies. Take, for instance, the open admissions policy in the 1970s at the City University of New York (CUNY; see Shaughnessy, 1979). Guaranteeing that CUNY would admit any student who graduated from a high school in New York, this policy was implemented as a way to reduce discriminatory admission practices and address social inequality, particularly involving first-generation culturally and linguistically diverse students. After more than 30 years, university officials at CUNY ended its open admissions policy. They did away with their explicit focus on remedial education and, instead, they turned to standardized test scores to determine who would be admitted into their undergraduate programs. What was initially a policy designed to support the matriculation of culturally, linguistically, and racially diverse students into 4-year colleges has now been replaced by selective admissions criteria. For many culturally and linguistically diverse students, this just creates additional educational roadblocks.

Culturally and linguistically diverse students have also been at the center of specific educational debates and decisions such as the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 (which was repealed and replaced by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001), the Students’ Right to Their Own Language resolution (1974), the Ann Arbor Black English Case (1979), the Oakland Ebonics debate (1996), The Heritage Language Initiative, and Proposition 227 in California, as well as other ongoing English-only movements across the nation. Taken together, these national debates point to a continued need to better support culturally and linguistically diverse students in maintaining their heritage and home languages and cultural practices and accessing academic conventions and discourses. Additionally, these national debates point to our responsibility to provide academic and social opportunities to culturally and linguistically diverse students inside schools and throughout society. They also speak to the need for, and the significance of, equitable policies that will ensure that such opportunities for the academic and social success of these students are provided.

### Theory of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

How can we understand the important role that students’ cultural and linguistic diversities play inside schools and in society? And in what ways can we
equitably and justly frame such diversities in our curricula? Members of the general public, to include teachers, teacher educators, administrators, researchers, policy makers, community leaders, and others, have long debated ways to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students in schools. There is a rich legacy of research (Haugen, 1953; Hornberger, 1998) that has theorized the significance of attending to the cultural, linguistic, and racial identities of diverse students in ways that rely on assets-based and not deficit-oriented perspectives. Additionally, there have been countless professional forums (e.g., American Educational Research Association, Modern Language Association, National Association of Bilingual Education, National Association of Multicultural Education, National Communication Association, National Council of Teachers of English) in which issues of students’ language diversities and cultural identities have taken center stage. Even with the abundance of research and forums, issues with how to best teach and center in the curricula culturally and linguistically diverse students remain widely debated.

Different theories have been used to understand how culturally and linguistically diverse students learn and how teachers can best work with them. Sociocultural (Vygotsky, 1978) and ecological perspectives (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) of learning have stressed that how people learn is highly influenced by their interactions with other people and within a variety of environments. What this means is that attention needs to be placed on how students, especially culturally and linguistically diverse students, interact with other people inside schools and inside their home environments. Sociocultural perspectives are grounded in the idea that literacy events and practices are not neutral; therefore, context and culture play major roles in how students acquire literacy. In relation to language and literacy research, sociocultural perspectives also emphasize dialogue, given that how people participate in events is shaped by historical, cultural, and social factors. On the other hand, ecological perspectives take into account the complex ecosystems or networks and environments in which people learn, interact, collaborate, and communicate. The ecology of language (Haugen, 1953), then, focuses on how language and context intersect or, to say it differently, how multilingualism, bilingualism, and biliteracy overlap with the daily cultural, political, and economic environments of people.

Theoretically, sociocultural perspectives involve an intentional focus on how language and social interaction contribute to learning, development, and education. There is an explicit attention to how the acquisition and use of language connect to the development of thinking and how these connections are influenced by dialogic, or social and communicative, engagements. In other words, there are undeniable connections between language and meaning because, for sociocultural theorists, language is a social construct (Gumperz, 1982; Halliday, 1978) and its meanings are created in the reciprocal relationship between speaker and hearer, talker and listener, author and reader. As a social construct, language is then taken up in context—with other people, within and across social environments, and in relation to power and power dynamics. It is safe to say that sociocultural perspectives place emphasis on how literacy gets practiced within cultural and social contexts. As contexts shift, scholars who hold sociocultural perspectives rely on one or more of the following theoretical approaches to understand language and literacy: (a) literacy as a social practice (Street, 1984), where literacy is viewed ideologically and contextually as a set of practices connected to larger power and cultural structures; (b) critical literacies (Freire, 2001), where emphasis is on power, identity, consciousness, and agency as these all connect to literacies of the word and of the world; and (c) multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000), which places focus on the everyday, real-world settings where people practice literacy, the multiple forms of communication people use, the increasing presence of linguistic and cultural diversities, and the operating power relationships that influence literacy, learning, and communication. Scholars who utilize sociocultural perspectives in their work with culturally and linguistically diverse students understand the value of students’ various identities, languages, and cultures, especially in their schooling experiences.

In addition to sociocultural perspectives, there are other theories that are equally important to consider. For example, studies that rely on an ecological approach examine human actions, behaviors, and interactions within the world, as these things are connected to the environment and its ecosystems. To add a focus on language and literacy into this approach is to claim that people should acquire skills and competencies by which they come to read the world, including the environment and environmental issues,
schools and communities, and other human and natural systems. This approach also means that people critically engage in both questioning and generating knowledge by focusing on what people know and need to know and by considering the variety of ways people come to learn. This perspective establishes a strong link between the environment and language. Thus, language ecology is understood as “the study of interactions between any given language and its environment” (Haugen, 1972, p. 325), particularly so because it contains sociological elements—the interactions people have with and within society—as well as psychological factors—the ways people use and interact with a variety of languages and language systems.

A close examination of ecological theories of language, then, in direct relation to multilingual contexts involving culturally and linguistically diverse people, takes us to the scholarship of Hornberger (1998). She utilizes an ecological approach to theorize meanings of language evolution, language environment, and language endangerment as these pertain to multilingualism and to multilingual language policies within ecosystems that are cultural, sociopolitical, and economic environments. Hornberger’s (2003) use of an ecological approach connects to how and why she relies on biliteracy as a theoretical framework, which she defines as “any and all instances in which communication occurs in two (or more) languages in or around writing” (p. 35). Scholarship in anthropology, policy, and sociolinguistics, as Hornberger shows, is important to use in theorizing the role of language in the educational processes of culturally and linguistically diverse students and adults across educational, political, social, and economic contexts.

Both ecological and sociocultural theories provide a foundation on which to discuss culturally and linguistically diverse students in schools, in curricula, and in society. These theories also connect to other important critical perspectives such as subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999), equity pedagogy (Banks & Banks, 1995), and critical race theory and counternarratives (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Collectively, these perspectives all examine issues of power, context, identity, and patterns of achievement with regard to culturally and linguistically diverse students.

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression**

**Forms of Inquiry About Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students**

There are many different forms of inquiry that have been used in learning from and with culturally and linguistically diverse students and that connect to the theoretical positions described above. Moll et al. (2001) argue for a “funds of knowledge” approach, which refers “to the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being” (p. 133). In this approach, teachers and teacher educators take on different roles—that of learner, observer, and/or ethnographer—as they learn about their students’ lives, families, and communities. What teachers learn about their students in out-of-school contexts should, in turn, enrich how they incorporate specific aspects of their students’ cultural, communal, linguistic, and cognitive resources inside classrooms and in curricula.

A “funds of knowledge” form of inquiry also encourages teachers to utilize culturally responsive—or relevant—forms of instruction as they learn from and with culturally and linguistically diverse students. This form of inquiry utilizes the cultural knowledge, frames of reference, and out-of-school experiences of diverse students as a way to facilitate their academic learning and achievement. Students see themselves in the curricula and they are encouraged to make larger connections between who they are and what they are being taught. This form of inquiry relates to the practice of cultural modeling (Lee, 2007), in which students’ cultural funds of knowledge and engagement with familiar discourses (e.g., African American language, Spanish, hip-hop and popular culture) are purposefully linked to disciplinary constructs and academic content (e.g., concepts, topics, processes, procedures). When cultural modeling and culturally responsive forms of instruction are used in learning with and from culturally and linguistically diverse students, then students become active participants in their schooling experiences, they see themselves in what they are being taught, and they come to question—alongside their teachers and peers—the structures that support and do not support their academic success. These forms
of inquiry make available opportunities for teaching, learning, and research with culturally and linguistically diverse students that are critically conscious and culturally sustaining, on the one hand, and that center student knowledge, identity, and funds of knowledge in the curricula, on the other hand.

**Modes of Expression About Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students**

A variety of modes of expression about what it means to learn from and with culturally and linguistically diverse students are illustrated in published studies in language, literacy, and composition research. For example, Dillard (1973) examined the legitimacy of African American language as a lingua franca that has a lot of influence on how culturally and linguistically diverse students acquire academic forms of English. Smitherman (1986) focused on the oral tradition of African American language and the failed educational initiatives that were designed to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students during the 1970s. Years after their individual studies, Balester (1993) studied the writing and language practices of eight African American college students who frequently utilized at least two voices throughout their college experiences—academic English and African American language. García and Kleifgen (2010) discussed how current educational policies directed at linguistically diverse students fail to account for the language, literacy, and home practices of emergent bilingual students, which is yet another way of perpetuating inequities in the schooling experiences of linguistically and culturally diverse students. There is also Orellana and Eksner’s (2006) study, located within the cultural modeling framework, of the language practices and social positions of bilingual immigrant youths in the United States and Germany. The latter study demonstrates how language mediation and contestation contribute to the ways diverse students express themselves and leverage their language skills, linguistic codes, and metacognitive awareness as they work toward increased academic literacy.

These studies are heavily influenced by how language is represented orally, in print, and during interactions people have with other people. Equally important to note is that these influences are revealed in narrative work, through storytelling, in popular cultural forms, through aesthetic experiences, community engagements, multimodal and digital productions, and through other forms of linguistic, communicative expressions. Additional examples of work that builds on these influences and modes are Zentella’s (1997) *Growing Up Bilingual: Puerto Rican Children in New York*, Valenzuela’s (1999) *Subtractive Schooling: U.S.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring*, Alim and Baugh’s (2007) *Talkin’ Black Talk: Language, Education, and Social Change*, Bartlett and García’s (2011) *Additive Schooling in Subtractive Times: Bilingual Education and Dominican Immigrant Youth in the Heights*, and Paris’s (2011) *Language Across Difference: Ethnicity, Communication, and Youth Identities in Changing Urban Schools*. In these accounts, seeing culturally and linguistically diverse students as agents of change, as contributors of community and school knowledge, and as linguistic intellectual beings reveals ways for teachers, teacher educators, administrators, researchers, policy makers, and others to learn from and work with such students in schools, in the curricula, and in society.

**Conclusion**

Returning to the passage by Phillip that opens this chapter and connects it to the contexts, theories, forms of inquiry, and modes of expression involving culturally and linguistically diverse students points to important lessons. One lesson relates to how we must include culturally and linguistically diverse students in schools in authentic ways that do not simply affirm their existences, but that center their lives, identities, and truths in pedagogical practices. This centering is not exclusive to how we reshape pedagogical practices; it also includes refiguring the spaces of classrooms and the environments of schools. Another lesson relates to how curricula must reflect a variety of linguistic and cultural realities and lived conditions in ways that are critical and that take an assets-based approach to teaching and learning. Also, we must implement educational practices and policies that affect all students, especially culturally and linguistically diverse students. This might include inviting students, their families, and
members of their communities into conversations about language, identity, culture, and achievement. In these ways, we can all learn from and with culturally and linguistically diverse students.

References and Further Readings


Metaphors of mirrors, windows, and doors have a long association with multicultural children’s literature. Children’s books can serve as mirror reflections of readers’ identities and lived experiences. They also can function as windows into other people’s cultural circumstances through characters’ eyes and experiences. Through the readers’ imagination, the window can become “a sliding glass door” that allows the reader to be part of the world created by the texts’ words and/or images, expanding the readers’ view of society (Bishop, 1990). Literature can transform readers’ lives because of its potential to affirm and diversify their social experience.

These metaphors call attention to who is represented, underrepresented, misrepresented, and invisible in multicultural children’s literature. Multicultural children’s books, which can generally be defined as texts that feature underrepresented groups’ lived experiences, offer counternarratives to the pervasive White, middle-class, monolingual storylines. However, one book cannot represent a cultural experience because there is diversity within and among cultural groups, and just because a book is deemed multicultural does not mean its words and images are immune to stereotypes and dominant worldviews. Although multicultural children’s literature brings readers up close to experiences of cultural groups, often this literature does not render the power relations experienced among these groups. Readers have to attend to not just what to read but also how to read because the meaning in these texts is largely made by how readers engage with them. Reclaiming the metaphors of mirrors, windows, and doors beyond the text and reader recontextualizes this interaction within a broader context.

Children’s books are cultural products shaped by the ideologies and publishing practices of the time in which they were produced. Texts as mirrors magnify how society is organized. As windows, they offer a panoramic view of how power is imbued in the words and images. The metaphor of children’s literature as doors serves as an entry point to examine how power can be reconstructed. These reclaimed metaphors of multicultural children’s literature can guide the reading of the power relations of class, race, gender, and language and create a site for readers to become conscious of how texts position them and construct their world. Many sociopolitical and historical factors have shaped multicultural children’s literature.
Historical and Sociopolitical Contexts of Multicultural Children’s Literature

Multicultural children’s books and texts that represent African American, Native American, Latino/a American, and Asian American experiences are rooted in U.S. power relations, the civil rights movement, and the emergence of multicultural education. This literary category was a response to racist sociopolitical and publishing practices that contributed to the underrepresentation, misrepresentation, and invisibility of people of color in the United States. People of color were nearly invisible in children’s literature prior to the 1960s. When they were represented in texts, they were backdrops for storylines or props for White protagonists.

The United Negro Improvement Association’s call for primary source materials in 1920s was the first formal demand in the United States for culturally diverse literature to enrich school curricula and nurture racial pride in African American children. African American librarians Augusta Baker, Virginia Lacy Jones, and Charlemae Rollins marshaled attention to these conditions too. By 1940 a dialogue among social justice activists, educators, and school administrators gained momentum about the importance of multicultural literature in education.

The Supreme Court desegregation ruling in Brown v. Board of Education in 1954 was one factor that compelled mainstream publishing houses to reconsider their use of ethnic stereotypes in children’s literature. African Americans were recruited to join the field of publishing as authors, illustrators, and editors. Nancy Larrick’s (1965/1995) 3-year empirical study summoned national attention to how publishers’ racist practices of underrepresentation and misrepresentation were raising American children with “gentle doses of racism.” Multicultural children’s literature as a literary and pedagogical category developed out of these conditions.

Along with the African American community, underserved groups such as Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans placed pressure on schools for representation in the curriculum and school communities. It was during this time that a culturally rich collection of books and curricula was produced. During the late 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, several organizations, small presses, and awards were founded to promote representation and recognition of marginalized cultural groups in children’s literature.

In 1967, the Council on Interracial Books for Children was founded by a culturally diverse group of writers, librarians, teachers, and parents to advocate for antiracist children’s literature and educational materials and to create a forum for the sociopolitical analysis of children’s books. In the mid-1970s, the council expanded its mission to include the interrogation of sexism, homophobia, ableism, ageism, classism, and linguicism. Toward the end of the 1970s, this organization published books on Native American stereotypes, human and antihuman values in children’s books, and guidelines for selecting bias-free textbooks and storybooks.

Many other national organizations formed during the 1970s and 1980s to promote awareness about underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities in curriculum materials and children’s literature. The Japanese American Curriculum Project focused on Asian American children’s books; the REFORMA group of the American Library Association insisted on authentic literature by Latina/o authors; and the Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) at the University of Wisconsin–Madison documented the number of books published by and about African Americans. In 1994, the CCBC added Asian Pacific/Asian Pacific Americans, American Indians, and Latinos/as to its list. It publishes an annual volume, CCBC Choices, which lists publishing statistics and annotates noteworthy multicultural children’s books according to themes and genres. Oyate, a Native organization that focuses on the portrayal of Indigenous peoples in the present and the past, was launched in 1987. Its website offers text analyses of selected books, a list of books to avoid, announcements of teacher workshops, and in-house publications that analyze Native experiences in children’s literature (Seale & Slapin, 2005; Slapin & Seale, 2006).

During this time, several new small publishers opened for business to produce culturally specific books (see Botelho & Rudman, 2009, for a list of small presses). As of 2013, Lee & Low Books claimed to be the largest children’s book publisher in the United States specializing in multicultural literature, after acquiring Children’s Book Press and several other multicultural imprints. The materials available from these new publishers diversified storylines with protagonists of color.
Several new annual awards emerged during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s to recognize authors and illustrators of color (see Botelho & Rudman, 2009, for a list of culturally specific book awards). For example, the Coretta Scott King Award pays tribute to authors and illustrators of African descent whose work promotes Martin Luther King Jr.’s commitments to peace and world brotherhood. The Pura Belpré Award, honoring the first Latina librarian in the New York Public Library, commends Latino/a writers and illustrators whose books affirm the Latino cultural experience. In the meantime, writers and illustrators of color were acknowledged for their work through mainstream awards such as the Caldecott Honor award and the Newbery Medal.

Despite the periodic publishing increases during the past 30 years, race still has a stronghold on children’s book publishing. Many cultural groups are still underrepresented in children’s books. For example, although Latinos/as represent approximately 17% of the U.S. population in 2013, the largest ethnic group in the United States, information compiled by the CCBC indicates that out of 3,200 books it received and reviewed in 2013, only 57 books had significant Latino themes and 48 books were by Latino/a writers and/or illustrators. CCBC’s compilation of publishing statistics since 1994 (CCBC, n.d.) shows that multicultural children’s literature, which it defines as literature by and/or about people of color, has never exceeded 10% of children’s books available for purchase. The publishing industry’s increasing concentration in the hands of eight multinational corporations (Hade & Edmondson, 2003; Taxel & Ward, 2000) further compounds this trend (see Taxel, 2011, for a historical overview of these publishing practices). While René Saldaña Jr. (2014) argued that educators need to be “proactive” and “look and look and look” for multicultural children’s books because they do exist, Walter Dean Myers (2014) appealed to the field, “There is work to be done.”

Multiple Theories, Definitions, and Discourses of Multicultural Children’s Literature

The scholarship of multicultural children’s literature primarily focuses on its definition, representation of diverse cultural groups, and pedagogical considerations across grade levels. The term multicultural children’s literature came into widespread use in the late 1980s, after The Horn Book Guide began using it as a literary category, along with the categories of Afro-American and Black. Multicultural literature gained wider acceptance because of scholarly (i.e., publishing of books and journal articles and conference presentations), pedagogical (i.e., developments in multicultural education and whole-language practices), and publishing (i.e., editing, book reviewing) activities. As Mingshui Cai (1998) maintained, central to the debate of what is multicultural children’s literature is “how many cultures are included.” How teachers and researchers define culture shapes how multicultural children’s literature is considered.

Culture as “a web of meaning” (Geertz, 1973) encoded in its symbolic forms such as language and literature foregrounds how culture is the product of social activity of its members as they try to make sense of their world. Culture is sociopolitically and historically constructed, and not biologically determined. Power relations exist at its center. Static and bounded notions of culture essentialize cultural groups by reducing them to attributes associated with their identities. A complex definition of culture offers tools to deconstruct how multicultural children’s literature has been defined.

Cai (1998) identified three principal definitions in the research of multicultural literature: (1) “people of color,” (2) “multiple + culture = multiculturalism,” and (3) “all literature is multicultural.” Cai’s literature review is an excellent resource to trouble these definitions and reconsider the binaries, discourses, and issues circulating among them.

Many scholars of children’s literature (Bishop, 1992; Cai & Bishop, 1994) have argued that educators must focus on historically underrepresented communities such as African Americans, Native Americans, Latino Americans, and Asian Americans. Rudine Sims Bishop (1992) theorized three categories of multicultural literature: culturally specific, generically American, and culturally neutral, all reflecting the social position of the main characters. In an effort to reconcile the tension between pedagogical and literary approaches to multicultural literature, Cai and Bishop (1994) offered three additional classifications—world literature, cross-cultural literature, and parallel culture literature. World literature,
which makes up a small percentage of multicultural children’s literature, focuses on folktales and fiction produced by underrepresented groups outside the United States and other Western countries. Cross-cultural literature, which Cai and Bishop have argued is the most predominant type of multicultural children’s literature, describes the interrelationships among cultures and/or is written from an author from a culture other than the one described. Cross-cultural literature often foregrounds the gaps between the authors’ perspectives and the cultures they render. Parallel literature is literature about a culture written by an author from that culture; authors from parallel groups are considered most qualified to represent their cultures’ shared experiences.

Some scholars (Rochman, 1993; Schwartz, 1995; Shannon, 1994) have cautioned against definitions that reduce multiculturalism to race. The public debate between Patrick Shannon and Bishop is noteworthy. According to Shannon (1994), such classifications disassociate White teachers and students from multicultural issues, as if they are not implicated. He argued that all books “demonstrate the complexity of multiculturalism.” Bishop (1994) responded, “Multiculturalism has been equated with racial issues . . . because . . . America is, and has been for centuries, a racialized society. . . . our cultures, have evolved out of the conditions under which we have lived” (p. 7). African American presence in children’s literature is palpable.

Race and ethnicity are social constructions and central to any discussion about literature; however, they are limited perspectives by themselves because power relations based on race and ethnicity work with class, gender, and language. In many ways multicultural literature as literature about people of color other than the one described can be analyzed alongside race as well as how power is enacted in language use (discourses; Foucault, 1972). Class alongside race allows for the analysis of the nuanced dimensions of race.

Multicultural literature often foregrounds the gaps between the authors’ perspectives and the cultures they render. Parallel literature is literature about a culture written by an author from that culture; authors from parallel groups are considered most qualified to represent their cultures’ shared experiences.

Some scholars (Rochman, 1993; Schwartz, 1995; Shannon, 1994) have cautioned against definitions that reduce multiculturalism to race. The public debate between Patrick Shannon and Bishop is noteworthy. According to Shannon (1994), such classifications disassociate White teachers and students from multicultural issues, as if they are not implicated. He argued that all books “demonstrate the complexity of multiculturalism.” Bishop (1994) responded, “Multiculturalism has been equated with racial issues . . . because . . . America is, and has been for centuries, a racialized society. . . . our cultures, have evolved out of the conditions under which we have lived” (p. 7). African American presence in children’s literature is palpable.

Race and ethnicity are social constructions and central to any discussion about literature; however, they are limited perspectives by themselves because power relations based on race and ethnicity work with class, gender, and language. In many ways multicultural literature as literature about people of color other than the one described can be analyzed alongside race as well as how power is enacted in language use (discourses; Foucault, 1972). Class alongside race allows for the analysis of the nuanced dimensions of race.

The other is defined as people who are different linguistically, culturally, and/or racially from the dominant White American culture. The discourse of otherness implies that identity is fixed and unified, unfolding over time with a stable core. Stuart Hall’s (1996) definition of cultural identity challenges the “superficial or artificially imposed selves,” which a people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” and recasts it as a “process of becoming rather than being” (pp. 3–4). Implicit in otherness is that culture is bounded and coherent and independent from other sociohistorical influences, not questioning the root causes of race relations.

The issues of cultural authenticity and insider/outsider authors are intertwined in the discourse of otherness. Insider artists are assumed to bring readers closer to the authentic, pure culture, which is an essentialist view of culture and veils the fact that texts are products of histories, power relations, and discourses. However, the cultural membership of the author cannot be discounted: Insider authors can offer nuanced portrayals of the characters’ use of language and power in the text. They can also misrepresent cultural experience. Cai (1995) maintained that the debate is not necessarily about the social location of artists and their work, but it is more about “the relationship between imagination and experience.” Story Matters: The Complexity of Cultural Authenticity in Children’s Literature (Fox & Short, 2003) further considers this debate.

Self-esteem is another discourse of multicultural children’s literature. Just like otherness, the discourse of self-esteem assumes a fixed, unified, and stable self. It implies there is an inherent link between underrepresented cultural status and low self-esteem. This discourse isolates readers from historical, social, and discursive factors. Readers cannot distance themselves from the subjectivities of the main characters to analyze the subject positions (possibilities for being in the world) offered by the texts (Nikolajeva, 2010; Stephens, 1992).

Several scholars (Corliss, 1998; Rochman, 1993; Yokota, 1993) have advocated for an expansive
definition of *multicultural children’s literature* that focuses on the “multiple.” Some have added European American literature to the list (Corliss, 1998) and have called for a focus on “any distinct cultural group” (Yokota, 1993). Yokota later rescinded her definition and argued for a focus on “multiethnic literature” to highlight the shared sociopolitical, economic, and cultural experiences of ethnic groups. Cai (1998) warned that these definitions might “dilute or deconstruct” the sociopolitical factors that gave rise to multicultural children’s literature. For Cai, multicultural children’s literature delineates the social line between the dominant culture and underrepresented communities.

While these expanded definitions include more cultural groups and acknowledge that all groups originate from historical and sociopolitical associations and disassociations, they still fall victim to dualisms of power, simplifying social relations and dismissing individuals’ involvement in the maintenance and circulation of power.

Shannon (1994) maintained that all people have multiple social memberships, and perhaps these identities can link people across social lines. Cai (1998) argued against this position because the sociopolitical basis for the creation of multicultural literature is undermined. Examining how all literature is culturally coded and the multiple identities of characters and readers, as well as embracing a complex understanding of power relations, rejects that the dominant culture is the single source of power. All literature that is multicultural acknowledges the complexities of culture and power relations.

The study of children’s literature must question which cultures are represented and how they are depicted. As Hall (1996) argued, “Identities are . . . constituted within not outside representation” (p. 4). It is only when cultural groups’ stories are represented that these groups can then begin to negotiate their identities. The production and pedagogy of multicultural children’s literature has generated silences and rendered some cultural experiences invisible.

The unwritten can be just as important as what is written (Derrida, 1980). The literary category of multicultural children’s literature distracts readers from focusing on the silence of class (Dixon, 1977; Krips, 1993; Wojcik-Andrews, 1993) and how it works with race. It is easier to focus on culture as bounded, fixed, and stable because it is something we agree we all possess.

Alongside the scholarship of multicultural children’s literature, many scholars of children’s literature argued for reading children’s literature critically and multiculturally. The Council on Interracial Books for Children (1976) questioned the source of ideologies of race, class, gender, and age imbedded in children’s books and maintained that texts for children were not just produced by individuals but represented society as a whole. Several scholars of children’s literature have advocated for reading children’s literature against race, class, and gender ideologies, so readers can become aware of how these systems of power work in society (Botelho & Rudman, 2009; Ching, 2005; Hade, 1997; Harris, 1999; Harris & Willis, 2003; Nodelman & Reimer, 2003; Schwartz, 1995; Yenika-Agbaw, 1997). Critical literacies scholars (Vasquez, 2010) have offered many analytical practices for engaging with children’s literature and argue for bringing multiple histories, cultures, and power together.

### Practices of Inquiry

Simply integrating multicultural children’s literature into the curriculum does not in itself address power and reconstruct school literacy practices. This restructuring requires rethinking which texts we use and how we use them in the teaching of author, genre, and ethnic studies in the classroom. I offer some caveats for reconsidering these teaching practices so they go beyond stretching readers’ cultural imagination to reading that fosters historical and sociopolitical imagination.

Author study begins with sustained inquiry into the authors and their texts and culminates with the young readers knowing and drawing on the authors’ writing craft. The main goal is to restore the humanity of the author by making visible the writing process and creating opportunities for apprenticing with “real-life” writers. However, focusing solely on the author is adhering to the notion that an individual is the source of meaning in books. The author is tied to institutional discursive practices that shape text production (Foucault, 1984). Analyzing the authors’ language use helps to determine the discourses deployed in their texts.

Genre-based study is another way to study children’s literature. The interaction between textual features and reading practices shapes and constrains the
meaning-making process. Genres shape readers’ expectations of texts, so making them visible can help readers engage with books critically. All children’s books are hybrid genres: There is no pure genre.

Author and genre studies can inform ethnic-based inquiries. Many scholars (e.g., Ada, 1990/2003; Bishop, 2007; Ching & Pataray-Ching, 2003; Harris, 1992, 1997; Seale & Slapin, 2005) have explored text collections based on specific ethnic groups. These multiethnic text collections could be clustered by author or genre and then read against secondary sources that offer historical and sociopolitical information to recontextualize the books.

Critical multicultural analytical practices (Botelho & Rudman, 2009; e.g., point of view, social processes among the characters, story ending, genre(s), and sociopolitical and historical contexts) offer tools to examine how the textuality of books constructs culture and race-, class-, gender-, and language-based power relations in ethnic-, genre-, and author-based inquiries. Building on reader response practices that draw on readers’ prior knowledge of cultural themes and genres creates spaces for critical engagement with these texts (Cai, 2008) where readers deconstruct and reconstruct their understandings and read within, between, among, and beyond texts.

**Modes of Representation**

Digital technologies offer multicultural children’s literature some affordances and constraints. A variety of digital texts (e.g., books, magazines, films, photographs, newspaper articles, video clips, music, visual arts) related to the multicultural stories can contextualize and reify the cultural experiences in these books. These additional texts can offer more information about the author, culture, arts, history, and/or geography associated with the children’s book. However, teachers need to support students in the analysis of these digital texts because they are socially constructed too: Many decisions were made in their production.

Digital tools have made their way to children’s book publishing. Some texts are available in video and audio formats. Audio books offer young readers access to stories and languages that might be beyond their linguistic and reading experiences. Some e-books insert video clips and sound, reshaping readers’ experiences with texts. Multilingual dictionaries can help readers interpret dual-language texts or texts laced with other languages. Readers and researchers alike need to ask how the composition, perspective, animation, sound, and color shape how stories get told and cultures get rendered. Recent scholarship on multimodalities and children’s literature (Peterson, Booth, & Jupiter, 2009; Serafini, 2014) can offer some guidance.

Digital technologies are contributing to the synergistic marketing of children’s literature with multiple products like toys, clothes, films, television shows, stage performances, translations, websites, blogs, and video games, demanding literacy practices beyond reading words in print. Branding book characters blurs the line between reading and consumerism (Sekeres, 2009). While these texts are pushing the boundaries of children’s literature, teachers and students need to consider when these products conflate entertainment and advertisement (see CCBC, n.d., as a resource).

Multicultural children’s books can inspire child readers to create their own texts. Multimodal text making in response to multicultural stories, poetry, biographies, and the like will allow children to be text and cultural producers in creating local literature that represents new aesthetics, media, genres, and cultural themes. Text production increases children’s awareness of how texts are constructed and what modes communicate. These texts become re/construction sites as child authors and artists negotiate their identities and experiences as well as expand their repertoire of reading practices.

The metaphors of mirrors, windows, and doors shape how readers think about and engage with multicultural children’s literature. Multicultural children’s literature as curriculum creates many purposeful and meaningful opportunities to explore historical and sociopolitical contexts. Issues of race, class, gender, and language are cultural themes in a growing number of books. An alignment with a more complex view of culture will challenge fixed and bounded understandings of culture, identity, and power and repositions readers as researchers and creators of language, literature, and culture. Readers can reconsider how cultural experience and social organization are represented in children’s literature and reimagine “local democracies” (Botelho, 2008) through text analyses, storyline revisions, and innovations in form.
References and Further Readings

Learning From/With Multicultural Children’s Literature


Website

Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood: http://www.commercialfreechildhood.org/
Students and (Dis)Ability

Mara Sapon-Shevin
Syracuse University

Delineating this topic—the education of students who are identified as being “disabled” or having a “disability”—is challenging even as we attempt to define the issue. How we think about and talk about disability affects not only our understanding of the labeled individual but also our responses and interactions with that person.

Traditional ways of talking about students with disabilities often equate the person with the disability. “He is deaf.” “She is mentally retarded.” The medical model views disability as a disease, a condition, or an affliction, and thus responses center around “treatments” and “cures.” If we view disability as something “within” the person, something problematic that causes difficulty, then our orientation will be toward “fixing” or “remediating” the difference. This orientation is often referred to as “the medical model.” This orientation renders the person with a disability as a “patient” who requires the ministrations of a professional who is skilled in addressing that particular condition. Relationships between the “professional” and the “patient” are likely to be hierarchical and unidirectional and will likely pay little attention to the hopes, desires, opinions, and agency of the person who is seen as requiring remediation.

This is problematic for many reasons and has been challenged by the disability community as well as those who advocate for more person-centered approaches to education. If we view disability as an identity, which is similar to race, class, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, then it has clear implications for acknowledging that people identified as “disabled” also have other identities. We must consider intersectionality and how various identities lead both to different histories and experiences and to different levels of discrimination and power. A White, wealthy, Christian, heterosexual male student with a disability will likely not share the same life experiences as a poor, Latina, lesbian young woman with a disability, even though, at some level, they are both read as “disabled.”

More radically, a disability studies perspective would urge us to embrace the position that “disability” is, in fact, a social construction, a product of the interaction between a particular human body with a specific set of characteristics and a host of social, political, geographic, and economic contexts. This further problematizes the idea that there are, in fact, “disabled people” and illuminates the need for an analysis that is more structural, political, and nuanced.

Looking at the interactions between individuals labeled as “disabled” and the environment in which they live will direct us to examine what about the environment is “disabling” to an individual and, therefore, might be addressed. If, for example, a person with a hearing impairment is only able to communicate through sign language, then an environment in which almost no one else uses sign language will result in the isolation of that person and the limitation of their interactions. If, however, all students are taught sign language, then signing becomes one of the possible forms of communication and the person with a hearing impairment may still have a physical condition that affects their hearing, but they will not be “disabled,” that is, unable to do things within his or her environment. The educational solutions for a student who relies on a wheelchair to move around can either be viewed as “getting him to walk” or as a need for more physical accessibility and massive attitudinal changes about what it means (and does not mean) to be a person who has limited mobility.

How disabilities are viewed has powerful ethical ramifications as well. The eugenics movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries was an attempt to improve the human gene pool by systematically eliminating people with disabilities through sterilization, neglect, and even outright murder. As prenatal testing increases in frequency and popularity, many children with disabilities are aborted before they are born, and, thus, there are fewer children with certain disabilities (Down syndrome, for example) in schools. Attitudes toward those children have also changed and there are those who are less (rather than more) accepting because they perceive that parents made a choice to have this child and, therefore, that it is not incumbent on professionals to make accommodations.

Contemporary Concerns

Language and Labeling

One of the most powerful shifts within the disability area has been the advocacy for what is called “people-first language.” In order to make it clear that we are discussing full, complete people rather than reducing individuals to their disability label, the call is to talk about “the boy with cerebral palsy” or the “student with a hearing loss” rather than the “CP kid” or the “deaf girl.” The goal of people-first language is to acknowledge the multiple-identities people have (e.g., the boy with cerebral palsy is also an African American, Baptist, from Alabama, and a stamp collector) and cannot be summed up by a single label, particularly one that makes the disability the “master identity.”

Some disability activists, however, reject people-first language because they feel it denies the salience of the disability in their lives. Jim Sinclair, a disability activist, said, “I am not a person with autism. I am an autistic person.” He said that his autism is an essential feature of himself as a person and central to how he sees himself (1993).

Beyond language, however, an important principle is that all people who are labeled “disabled” are not members of a cohesive, homogeneous group. Believing that we know everything about someone because we know something about them (they use a wheelchair, they have difficulty speaking, they are unable to see) leads to stereotyping, prejudice, erroneous assumptions, and limitations; these problems are all a function of those who view, discuss, plan for, or attempt to communicate about or for the person who has the “disability” rather than honoring that person’s voice—even if that person is unable to speak in typical ways. A slogan within the disability rights community is “If you’ve met one person with autism... You’ve met one person with autism.” Another says, “Nothing about us without us.”

Similarly, some communities have claimed or reclaimed labels that were previously viewed as pejorative and now use them as empowering identifiers, for example, talking about “crip power” and “Deaf culture.” Another change has been the insistence that people once labeled “normal” and thus not needing to be named also specifically identify themselves as having specific characteristics; for example, the word neurotypical is now promoted as a way of illustrating that people who are neurologically “atypical” are different—but not deviant.

Overrepresentation

It is well established that students of color are significantly overrepresented among those labeled as “disabled” and that White, hegemonic understandings of “normality” lead to lower expectations and
inferior education for those with less power and privilege. While White students of privilege who are underperforming are more likely to be labeled “learning disabled,” Black students with lower performance are more likely to be labeled “mentally retarded”; the education provided to those with such disparate labels is not equitable (Blanchett, 2010; Erevelles, Kanga, & Middleton, 2006; Ferri & Connor, 2005; Sleeter, 2010). Shelley D. Zion and Wanda Blanchett (2011) argued that the inclusive education movement has not resulted in the anticipated outcomes of inclusion of African American students in or with general education students or classes because it failed to look at intersections of ability/disability with race, class, culture, and language and it also did not adequately address issues of racism, White privilege, White dominance, and social class dominance. They also cite Shafik Asante (n.d.) who troubled even the language of “inclusion” because

“inclusion” means inviting those who have been historically locked out to “come in.” This well-intentioned meaning must be strengthened. A weakness of this definition is evident. Who has the authority or right to “invite” others in? And how did the “inviters” get in? Finally, who is doing the excluding? . . . The act of inclusion means fighting against exclusion and all of the social diseases exclusion gives birth to. (n.p.)

Educational Issues

 Debates continue about what constitutes the best or appropriate education of persons with “disabilities.” Historically, people with disabilities were completely unserved, often warehoused in institutions. Then came the development of special education services, often delivered in segregated facilities such as schools for the blind/deaf and those labeled as “mentally retarded.” Beginning with the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public Law 94–142), there was increased attention given to providing education for students with disabilities in more integrated settings. The original term mainstreaming was used to refer to the provision of education within what was called the “least restrictive environment.” This term, however, was problematic as it rested on someone else’s judgment (rarely the person with the disability) about what constituted reasonable accommodations and what was “least restrictive.” This meant that a student with disabilities was returned to a traditional classroom when he or she was judged able to learn and make progress there, putting the responsibility to change and adapt on the student. Little attention was placed on creating classrooms and schools that were structured inclusively.

The term mainstreaming was largely replaced by the term inclusive education or the goal of full inclusion. A model of inclusion implies that classroom organization, curriculum, and instruction of the general education classroom should be designed in order to meet the needs of a wide range of students. No one should have to “earn” their “right” to be educated in an inclusive environment; rather, the belief is that all students have the right to be educated with their chronological peers in their neighborhood school or the school they would typically attend if they did not have a label. Inclusion must also, however, be contrasted with “dumping,” in which students are placed in typical classrooms with no preparation or training for their teachers and without a system of ongoing support and resources. The term partial inclusion is also problematic ideologically and logistically; to be a full member of a community implies that you are really “there” the majority of the time and that your learning needs are met within the context of the classroom community.

Inclusive education refers to a way of structuring educational services so that all students (regardless of labels or putative disabilities) are educated together in a shared community. Inclusive education is not only an administrative arrangement but also an ideological and philosophical commitment to a vision of schools and societies that are diverse and nonexclusive; as such, inclusive education can be viewed as a civil rights issue, akin to ending racial segregation, gender segregation, or discrimination, for example, against people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered. Initially, the term inclusive education described the inclusion of student with disabilities in general education classrooms, but this term can also now address providing education in ways that recognize, honor, and respond to differences in race, class, gender, ethnicity, religion, language, sexual orientation, and family configuration. All students have multiple identities (Joshua may have cerebral palsy, but he is also from a Spanish-speaking, single-parent family), and all those identities intersect and
interact; an inclusive classroom must be responsive to all student characteristics.

Inclusive education can also be contrasted with seeking to provide a range of placement options known as a “continuum of services;” which can include anything from “full inclusion” to “full exclusion” from the typical classroom. Offering a continuum of services often leads to the continuing exclusion of many students with disabilities. Because there are “choices” about where a student will be placed, there is little impetus for systemic, structural change, and decisions about placement are often based on limited, prejudicial assumptions about what students are capable of. In addition, administrators are likely to fill all available placement options, interfering with the development of a unified, comprehensive structure. Much like the phrase “If you build it, they will come;” one might posit that in terms of special education, “If you have a program, you will fill it.”

One of the key concepts of inclusion is that students with disabilities should be represented in any classroom in “natural proportions.” That is, if children with disabilities represent 10% of the overall student population, no classroom or school should have more than 10% of their students to be children with such challenges. Inclusion policies in particular schools, however, often preclude this configuration. Because administrators look for schools, classrooms, and teachers who will be welcoming and whose curricular and pedagogical practices support diversity and inclusion, students with disabilities are often overrepresented in particular classrooms or schools. Unfortunately, in many schools, only certain classrooms are labeled as “inclusive”—that is, “This is our inclusive third grade.” Although the range of differences present in any particular classroom will certainly vary, all classrooms are inevitably heterogeneous; the difference is between classrooms that explicitly name and address student differences and those that attempt to make the differences invisible and ask professionals to teach in some standard way while pretending to be responsive.

Inclusive education has implications for each of the following: (1) classroom organization and climate, (2) curriculum, (3) pedagogy, (4) staffing and service provision, and (5) teacher education. All of these are part of the broad notion of curriculum studies and curriculum work.

Classroom Organization and Climate

In order for inclusive education to be successful, extensive consideration must be given to the ways in which the classroom and school climate are welcoming of all students and their families. Issues of voice and representation become paramount if the school is truly to be a community in which all members participate and see themselves recognized and valued. How we talk about differences, using people-first language, for example (“Cathy has cerebral palsy” rather than “Cathy suffers from cerebral palsy” or “Cathy is our CP student”), are critical to creating a learning environment in which differences are acknowledged and addressed. Just as the concept of “color blindness” has been rejected as a goal or a possibility in multicultural education, the idea that good inclusion is invisible (i.e., you cannot tell who the kids with disabilities are) must be replaced with the goal of meeting students’ needs without either minimizing or stigmatizing the characteristics that occasion adaptations and modifications. Careful attention must also be paid to issues of bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Active programs to combat racism, homophobia, religious oppression, and disability oppression are essential to creating welcoming environments for all students and families. Simply being in the classroom is no guarantee that a student with a disability is accepted, included, or has meaningful relationships with others or an education that is appropriate.

Curriculum

An inclusive curriculum is one that names and values diversity of many kinds. What is taught in an inclusive classroom must be broad and closely connected to the goal of having all students become “global citizens” who are knowledgeable about all aspects of diversity and also committed to defending a positive approach to diversity against those who would narrow or distort the stories and perspectives that are presented. In the same way that comprehensive multicultural education seeks to transformative rather than additive (Banks, 2003), inclusive education demands that students be knowledgeable about differences related to race, class, gender, ethnicity, religion, language, sexual orientation, and so on, and also possess skills to interrupt and challenge oppressive behavior and practices.
Pedagogy

Within an inclusive classroom, the ways in which children are taught should include extensive differentiated instruction (not tracking), recognition of multiple intelligences (Armstrong, 2009; Gardner, 2011), and commitment to exploring multiple modes of presenting, exploring, and assessing student knowledge and performance. It is widely recognized that rigid, lockstep curriculum is incompatible with thinking inclusively and flexibly about a wide variety of learners. Many structures and ways of framing instruction have been developed and refined that make schooling more accessible to a broader range of learners. The concept of universal design, for example, asks that instruction be designed from the onset to be available to all, rather than retrofitting the curriculum and pedagogy after the fact. Cooperative learning, when designed to actively include all learners, can be used in order to allow for all students to participate (perhaps in different ways) while still working toward a shared goal. Peer teaching and peer support are also key components of inclusive education, recognizing that peers can offer one another essential teaching and emotional support while also strengthening the classroom community (Janney & Smell, 2006).

Another important concept is that of “presuming competence” for students with disabilities. Rather than assuming that students cannot or will not learn or that they cannot benefit from exposure to rich, diverse learning experiences, it is important—when we are not sure what a student is learning or is capable of—to err on the side of assuming that the student is competent and is learning. Presuming competence posits that it is far better to make the error of exposing a student to rich, intensive education when we are not sure exactly what they are learning than to fail to teach such a student when the student could, in fact, have benefited immensely from excellent teaching and wide exposure. For example, we allow all students to participate in extracurricular activities rather than choosing a “select choir,” and we assume that all students would learn something from a field trip even if their level of participation is different.

Staffing and Service Provision

Inclusive education demands an end to segregated staffing patterns as well, that is, certain teachers exclusively designated as “special education teachers” who serve students with labels and others identified as “regular education teachers” who serve students without labels. The vast proliferation of students without formal labels who are still “high-needs” due to economic, language, and emotional challenges makes it imperative that teachers have a skill set that crosses traditional boundaries. The term role release applies to the need for particular teaching and therapy skills to be available to and practiced by a broader range of educators and staff members. Models of co-teaching, in which teachers with different backgrounds, certifications, and expertise share responsibility for a heterogeneous group of learners, are important to the success of inclusive education. Paraprofessionals also play an important role in inclusive classrooms, although it is critical that these aides or assistants not limit their interactions and support to students with designated disabilities, as this tends to perpetuate student segregation. The phenomenon of the “Velcro aide” who sticks tightly to a particular student is problematic and must be replaced with shared responsibility by all professionals for all students.

Teacher Education

Preparing teachers for inclusive education entails disrupting typical patterns of preparing teachers for either special education or regular education and moving beyond even dual programs or double majors to programs that are specifically designed to prepare teachers for inclusive settings. Syracuse University developed the first teacher education program to prepare teachers for inclusive classrooms in the early 1990s; now such programs are far more common throughout the country. Teachers who are prepared for inclusive teaching must have skills in designing inclusive curriculum, implementing differentiated instruction, promoting inclusive classroom communities, teaching about differences, working with parents, collaborating with other educational professionals, and being active advocates for inclusive educational practices. Most importantly, those prepared as inclusive teachers both expect and welcome the heterogeneity of their classrooms and have the skills to create and teach within inclusive environments. They do not assume that diversity will be a “problem” to be eliminated but embrace differences as enriching the classroom environment and providing opportunities to teach about equity, voice, fairness, and social justice.
Challenges to Inclusive Education for Students With Disabilities

Challenges to inclusive education include ideological, political, and structural ones. There are still those who are not comfortable with creating classrooms that include all children within a common framework. They worry that the needs of children with disabilities cannot be met within the context of general education; they believe that the education of “typical” children will be negatively influenced by the presence and inclusion of children with disabilities, and they believe that the current models of segregated special education are acceptable and/or optimal. Those who defend special education argue that special education instruction is individualized and that this cannot happen in the regular classroom. Opponents of inclusion refer to it as a “one size fits all” model and believe that both typical students and students with disabilities are denied an appropriate education under this model.

Other opponents of inclusive education argue that students with disabilities will not be safe in the regular school environment and will be victims of harassment, bullying, and exclusion. Other objections include the fact that most teachers have not been prepared to teach to a wide range of differences in the classroom and will not be accepting of inclusive education.

All these objections to inclusive education stem from an inability to imagine, actualize, or advocate for classrooms and schools that are organized and supported differently. It is certainly true that many schools are structured rigidly, with a narrow curriculum, limited pedagogy, and unimaginative and overburdened teachers who are poorly supported. These, however, are problems that go beyond inclusive education and are simply highlighted more dramatically when the range of student learners is purposefully and explicitly more heterogeneous. Making schools better for students whose needs are more obviously divergent can occasion improvements for all students. Research supports that good inclusive settings that include adequate and ongoing support for teachers, a broad curriculum, creative and differentiated teaching strategies, parental involvement, and careful attention to school climate and community are optimal learning environments for all students.

Unfortunately, the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the increase of high-stakes testing and regimentation have seriously and negatively impacted the implementation of inclusive education. Models that reward teachers based on the performance of their students (often in competitive ways) dissuade teachers and schools from including students who may require additional time, skills, and resources in order to be successful. The current emphasis on high-stakes testing and the development of scripted, rigid curricula certainly makes it more difficult for teachers to be creative and innovative in meeting the needs of students. In addition, the development and proliferation of private and charter schools that are able to exclude children with disabilities by establishing rigid entrance criteria and/or by discouraging parents of children with disabilities from enrolling their children make inclusive education very difficult.

Ethical issues related to power and privilege also arise “when individuals who are members of marginalized or oppressed groups are systematically targeted for behavior management plans; typically members of dominant groups make decisions about what constitutes ‘deviant’ or ‘unacceptable’ behavior and set about to change the behavior” (Sapon-Shevin, 2015). Often students with disabilities have been subjected to abusive behavior management strategies that are implemented with little understanding of the nature of the child’s disability and his or her ability to control various behaviors.

APRAIS (The Alliance to Prevent Restraint, Aversive Interventions and Seclusion) details the use of these strategies, including electric shock, force-feeding, and odor therapy using ammonia or other noxious fumes, in schools, treatment programs, and residential facilities. The disability advocacy organization TASH issued a forceful statement against the use of aversive techniques to control the behavior of people with disabilities, calling it abuse that would not be condoned if it was imposed on the elderly, “nondisabled” children, prisoners, or even animals.

Theory

As stated earlier, a disability studies lens pushes against conventional understandings of “normality”
and schooling and challenges us to critique the ways in which such rigidities maintain various powers and privileges in place. Susan Baglieri and colleagues (2011) challenged the discourse of “inclusion” as well, because of the failure to include a wide range of diversities in the analysis and the lack of analysis of broader issues of social justice and cultural transformation. Inclusive education cannot be viewed as a different form of “special education” or as an alternative “delivery system” because that leaves in place traditional notions of who is “normal” and who is “deviant.”

The field of disability studies has also been critiqued for its shift toward identity politics, which articulates issues of oppression as personal experiences rather than societal structures. And, even labeling the approach “disability studies” limits its reach and impact since it often fails to examine the ways in which other oppressions are played out in society and the need for shared analysis and advocacy (Sapon-Shevin, 2014). Marleen C. Pugach, Linda P. Blanton, and Lani Florian (2012) asked: “How can we work together to advance a more complete vision of diversity, one that does not merely attach ‘disability’ to a long list of social markers of identity?” (p. 235).

Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression

Because a medical model of disability prevailed for so long, typical forms of inquiry involved research paradigms in which “normal” or “able-bodied” people studied and/or experimented on people who were “other.” There are numerous studies that purport to explain or describe people with disabilities and/or contrast their behavior, needs, and issues with those of “normal people.” The disability movement, and the increasing numbers of people who define themselves as disability activists, has resulted in new modes of understanding disability and disability issues. These include autobiography, films, participant observation, and other forms of naturalistic inquiry.

There is increasing recognition that the people best able to describe what it is like to be “disabled” or to be labeled “disabled” are those who have had that experience themselves. We need to honor the voices of those who have experienced prejudice, discrimination, ill-treatment, and limited expectations. The articulation of their own experiences and their insistence on their rights to be full participants in the world provide us with important insight into how to end disability oppression at personal and societal levels (Ferri, 2011).

Simi Linton is the author of Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity (1998) and of a memoir titled My Body Politic (2007). Linton, who uses a wheelchair, has consistently challenged images of people with disabilities as powerless victims, asexual beings, and observers rather than active participants in their own lives and in the arts. Lynn Manning, the author of a one-man show titled “Weights,” explores the complexities of life as an African American man who is blind. Not only does he move us away from “hero narratives” about people with disabilities, but he also exposes our assumptions and prejudices about people perceived as “other” (Ferri, 2008). Jonathan Mooney (2008) in his book The Short Bus: A Journey Beyond Normal reenacted his experiences as a student labeled “dyslexic and profoundly learning disabled” to illustrate the ways in which students in special education experience prejudice and discrimination. And a stunning video by Amanda Baggs titled “In My Language” shares her personal narrative of autism—the first part in her “native language” of humming and movement and then a translation into “standard English” that she types and has it read by another person. Stereotypes about what it means to have autism crumble in the face of her brilliance and her challenges to viewers to enhance their listening skills rather than change her “voice.”

Only when students with disabilities are viewed as full human beings, respected for their own desires and enabled to access their voices and power, will we be able to create schools as sites of inclusion and equity. This struggle must be connected to other efforts to engage in cultural transformation rooted in social justice and an embracing response to difference.
References and Further Readings


In the past 30 years, educational policy has been dramatically transformed in the United States through the language and culture of business and the military. Terms such as accountability, standards, performance, efficient delivery, and alignment have been invoked to justify a particular view of teaching and learning. In this now dominant view, knowledge is treated as a consumable good produced by “experts” housed within educational corporations, delivered by teachers, and consumed by students. The principal concern within this perspective is the practical question of the delivery and enforcement of curriculum as a quantifiable set of “skills” and “facts.” This has given birth to a new corporate managerial and audit culture where big data collection, performance metrics, and high-stakes standardized testing become the measures of educational efficacy as well as the basis of mega-profits. At stake here are crucial questions concerning the economic interests and ideological assumptions undergirding the new official curriculum and how it constructs the value and agency of students.

Curriculum as a Humanizing and Dehumanizing Force

In 1968, Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire described the curricular approaches that are dominant today as “banking education” where knowledge is treated as cash to be deposited in the bank (the student). Freire observed that banking education dehumanizes educational experience and oppresses students by treating them as passive objects to be acted upon. In contrast, Freire argued that education should create the conditions for humanization, which involves treating students as creative subjects capable of making and remaking the social world with others. For Freire, curriculum must be contextually rooted and begin with students’ experiences of being oppressed—that is, their experience of being treated as objects rather than as subjects. Problem-posing pedagogy, or what Freire referred to as praxis, involves theorizing the oppressive forces that dehumanize one’s understanding of experience. Such problem posing ideally becomes the basis for critical
consciousness and collective action to transform the objective social conditions that produce the subjective experience of oppression.

Freire’s view emphasized the dialogue-based nature of teaching, learning, and curriculum. Banking education, Freire said, tends to deny dialogue in favor of monologue or one-way narrative. We are, Freire told us, suffering from narration sickness. In Freire’s view, the purpose of education is to enable people to become more fully human, more fully able to act to change their world with others. This includes being free of oppression and exploitation, which also means being free from dehumanizing and objectifying others, acting as an oppressor. Current policy trends view the purpose of education as allowing students opportunities to compete against others for increasingly scarce educational and economic resources within the existing set of economic, social, and political arrangements. The dominant ideology of the day, neoliberalism, regularly reminds everyone that there is no alternative to the market and so the purpose of education is to prepare students to serve that system. From Freire’s view, the current economic system is based on a small number of people dehumanizing and objectifying the rest in order to amass wealth and maintain social and political power.

The dominant approach to curriculum today, with its emphasis on measurement, efficiency, competition, accountability, standardization, big data, and high-stakes testing, is designed to delink knowledge from broader social, political, and economic realities and to delink knowledge from the lived experiences of students. There is a politics to cleaving curriculum from the social conditions of its making and from disagreements over its meaning. Official knowledge within this schema is positioned as universally valuable and politically neutral. Yet, concealed in this process is how individuals with particular cultural values and class positions select official knowledge. Thus critical questions about the politics of curriculum are denied. These questions include: What are the values, assumptions, and ideologies embedded within the curriculum and those that select and determine official knowledge in schools? How does the curriculum and official knowledge represent or relate to economic and political interests? How does the official curriculum imagine the intellectual and creative capacities of students? It is to these critical questions about the politics of curriculum that we now turn.

### Cultural Politics of Curriculum

A leading figure in cultural studies, Stuart Hall, has examined the ways knowledge, culture, and hence curriculum are always subject to social and political struggles over meanings, or cultural politics. Hall (1997) explained that knowledge is something that emerges through cultural exchange, albeit in unequal ways. For Hall, meanings are never just a result of individual interpretation and never strictly determined by authorial intent. Rather, meanings are constructed through interpretive practices in communities of meaning making. Knowledge is meaningful as a result of cultural convention, yet meanings can be resignified. Signs and symbols, representations, narratives, and curricula have preferred meanings, but the preferred meaning does not guarantee the meaning for each individual. There are broader public discourses, or sets of meanings, that partially determine the way a cultural work is interpreted. The way that claims to truth are provisionally established is through rational argumentation with evidence. Knowledge, culture, and curriculum in this view are dynamic and in play rather than static. Hall’s view is largely shared in education by Henry Giroux, who has developed critical pedagogy through a similar way of thinking about knowledge, language, and culture. Giroux’s work (2011) has emphasized that a central goal of educational practice ought to be to help students develop as critical citizens capable of theorizing and acting to meaningfully engage and change the world. Within the constructivist view, the role of the teacher as a cultural producer matters greatly and carries significant responsibility. The teacher has the ethical and political choice of what to teach and how to teach. This means that teachers need the theoretical and practical tools for interpreting knowledge, and the values assumptions and ideologies underpinning it, and for theorizing their own pedagogical practices. It is precisely this control, autonomy, and theoretical tools that the dominant educational reforms seek to limit and restrict, as discussed in the remainder of this section.

Giroux and Hall’s constructivist position is counter to that of cultural conservatives who fought the culture wars in the 1980s. In the United States, cultural
conservatives such as E. D. Hirsch and William Bennett claimed that there is a body or canon of the best and brightest knowledge (which happens to largely reflect the values and views and ruling groups) that students need to master. For these cultural conservatives, the mastery of allegedly the best knowledge is more important than the critical investigation of how knowledge relates to social interests or relations of power. Hirsch has succeeded in getting his Core Knowledge project integrated into the for-profit company K12 Inc., which runs cyber-charter schools and sells homeschooling curriculum to parents opting out of the public system. As of 2014, K12 Inc. was the single largest company managing public schools for profit measured by number of students. The cultural conservative view sees knowledge and curriculum as elite and rarified and sees students as needing to disregard their own experiences as well as ignore the question of how this rarified knowledge has some relationship to the world they live in. Consequently, this view treats students as empty vessels to be filled. The knowledge they receive is supposed to function as a kind of currency allowing, first, academic promotion and, then, access to jobs and money. Cultural conservatives comprehend education for citizenship through the register of submission to political and cultural authority—an assumption that learning the canon allows for inclusion into existing institutions. This is not a view of education for collective self-governance.

Hall’s view is also counter to that of most liberals. Despite valuing critical thinking as problem-solving skills and largely embracing multiculturalism’s affirmation of inclusion of historically marginalized cultural groups, liberals have refused to treat culture and knowledge and curriculum as reflective of differential relations of class and cultural power and authority. Prominent liberals such as Linda Darling-Hammond (2010) and Diane Ravitch (2010) declared the end to the culture wars and curriculum wars of the 1980s and 1990s and called for this vague and undefined thing called a “strong curriculum” that is supposed to be beyond politics. Because liberals largely reject seeing knowledge, culture, and curriculum as subject to struggle among different class interests and cultural groups with unique histories, they embrace a transmission-based view of curriculum that subscribes to the idea that efficacy of delivery is a primary aim of educational reform. Some of the most prominent framing expressions of educational reform, such as achievement gap, depend on this denial of the cultural politics of the curriculum. In the case of the achievement gap, racial and ethnic difference and inequality are identified, but only as a means to demand that all groups be subject to the same curriculum enforced through standardized testing.

Since the early 2000s, policies such as those included in President George W. Bush’s No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and President Obama’s Race to the Top program have largely affirmed and entrenched the liberal, conservative, transmission-based view of curriculum in the United States by emphasizing student testing. Under NCLB, schools that failed to increase their standardized test scores could be threatened with the consequence of unproven market-based reforms such as charter school conversion or turnaround. Since standardized test scores largely correspond to family income and class status, this punishes poor students and schools and rewards rich ones under guise of objectivity and neutrality. It is crucial to mention here that the reasons standardized tests reflect class status is not because wealthy and powerful people are smarter or better at learning. It is because they are in a position to determine what knowledge and whose knowledge matters as universal value. They are in control of the processes that make the tests and that determine what points of view can count as official and valid. The tests thus reward what Pierre Bourdieu called cultural capital—socially valued knowledge, tastes, and dispositions that are generated through complex class processes. Cultural capital begins in the home and is reinforced in school. Bourdieu’s larger point about cultural capital was to show that the way class structures remain intact and are reproduced is not only by the transmission of financial capital but also through the transmission of culture, which generates and distributes social rewards, privileges, disadvantages, and advantages. Bourdieu’s formulation specifically sought to counter the human capital model that sees education as economic investment and presumes a level meritocratic playing field among actors.

**Curriculum and the Culture of Positivism**

Contemporary educational reform trends in the United States share the liberal and conservative accommodationist and transmission-based perspectives. Whether it is the CCSS (Common Core State Standards), the
Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, edTPA (student teaching assessment system), or InTASC (Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium), the newest standards-based and outcome-based reforms share a number of overlapping values and assumptions that continue a legacy of positivist ideology and scientific management approaches to schooling. Positivist ideology positions knowledge as a collection of facts, deemphasizing the theoretical assumptions and social significance behind the selection and framing of facts. Scientific management seeks to maximize social efficiency by breaking down human behavior into quantifiable units of action and representation that can then be standardized and measured. Today this legacy includes the denigration of educational theory and a related inflated emphasis on practicalism—a static conception of subject-based “content knowledge” and an active denial of the political and ethical dimensions of teaching and learning.

Some of the dominant reforms suggest a potential break with more direct instrumental models of curriculum. For example, the CCSS emphasize critical thinking skills and analysis of text. The InTASC standards even emphasize the importance of context and cultural background for teachers in order to reach and understand their students. The CCSS seemingly expands teacher autonomy but demands that teachers meet “outcomes” measured by standardized tests. However, while some standards emphasize critical thinking in the form of problem solving, they deny critical thinking as understood through critical theory—that is, comprehending knowledge in relation to power, politics, ethics, and history. While the InTASC standards emphasize the value of context and student culture, they are rooted in an ideology of efficient delivery and measurement of knowledge, not in the interest of reconstructing knowledge or comprehending how knowledge might form the basis for students to have social and political agency. To put it more simply, the most fundamental task of learning is to ask “why?” The standards are oriented toward framing out of consideration key “why?” questions such as: Why do some people and not others claim that this knowledge matters? Why are certain assumptions and ideas considered unacceptable to breach? Why does the knowledge on the tests offer no way to theorize and intervene in broader social issues and public problems?

Despite the rhetoric of critical thinking within the new CCSS, the overarching emphasis on standardized testing as the ultimate measure of educational value represents an instrumental positivist approach to teaching and learning in which tested knowledge is decontextualized from the experiences of students and teachers and delinked from the broader social import and context of knowledge. Positivist ideology treats knowledge as a collection of facts that are disconnected from matters of interpretation as well as from the interests, social positions, and values of those who promote particular interpretations and claims to truth. The testing trend focuses educational practice on so-called outcomes rather than on educational process. It embraces a transmission-based model of pedagogy and curriculum in which knowledge is likened to units of commodity to be delivered, consumed, and regurgitated back on the test. Such an assumption shuts down debate, dialogue, curiosity, and creativity while making efficacy of delivery the primary focus of teaching and learning. The trends of NCLB and Race to the Top, with their outputs-based view of knowledge and tendency to shut down interpretation, debate, and creativity, position and construct students as tested objects rather than as educated humans or critical citizens.

Beyond the individual student experience of an intellectually deadening and psychologically anxiety-producing culture of competition and testing, there are also larger ethical and political implications inherent within this approach to knowledge. There is a thinly veiled politics to the positivism of high-stakes testing. The tests obscure the interests and power of those pushing standardized knowledge while promoting a false neutrality and objectivity that is consecrated through the seeming objective scientific reality of numbers. The denial of how knowledge relates to social and individual values, interests, and experiences renders knowledge meaningful only for its abstract institutional capacity to be like economic currency or points in a game. Knowledge in this approach to teaching and learning is alienated from the social world and yet repurposed to become meaningful only for what it can gain the learner in a system of extrinsic rewards (such as grades or points) and eventually jobs and cash and consumer goods. Put differently, what grounds the universalism of knowledge is neither its meaning to students’ lives nor its meaning in the social world.
The alleged universal value of knowledge on standardized tests is grounded by its abstract exchange value as currency, first in educational settings and then in economic markets. Indeed as Theodor Adorno (2000) pointed out, the allure of positivism is its promise of certainty and its propensity to value only that which can be numerically quantified. In a social world that appears increasingly abstract and where everything is for sale, the value of knowledge appears only in terms of its exchangeability for personal economic advantage.

Standardized testing, standardization of curriculum, and so-called performance-based teaching decontextualize and recontextualize knowledge as a kind of currency, voided of its social import other than as something with potential economic value. Evacuated from learning are noncommodified and noninstrumental values and meanings as well as the role of knowledge in producing possibilities for the imagination and agency of students. The value of knowledge is thus made into an abstraction, into exchange value. Standardized testing and curriculum, thus, foster ways of thinking that devalue crucial questions concerning school knowledge and curriculum. What values and assumptions undergird claims to truth? What are the social positions and class and cultural interests represented by official knowledge? What kinds of questions are possible to ask? It has become increasingly common for scholars to situate and make sense of these questions in relation to the dominant ideological framework of neoliberalism. We now move to situate the resurgence of positivism and scientific management in curriculum within neoliberalism. Specifically, we want to highlight the intersections of privatization, commodification, and curriculum in relation to escalating forms of inequality and social control.

**Neoliberalism and the Broader Context of Curriculum**

A wide range of scholars in the social sciences and the humanities have used the concept of *neoliberalism* to describe a number of economic, social, and political transformations over the last 30 years, including educational transformations. The origins of neoliberalism are often located in the early 1980s with the resurgence of neoclassical economics and the decline of Keynesian rationalities under Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom. Simply put, *neoliberalism* can be defined as an economic, ideological, and political project that takes the market and the commodity form as the essence of democracy and seeks to expand the power of corporate and financial elites while diminishing the social aims of the state (Harvey, 2005). Neoliberalism thus rejects Keynesian orientations dominant in the post–World War II period that sought to use the power of the state to regulate capitalism and promote economic growth and social welfare through public investment and robust social provision. In contrast, in neoliberal discourse, the state is to be internally regulated by the market and instrumental cost–benefit calculations. This entails subordinating all aspects of governance to economic imperatives and corporate management. In turn, public spheres such as health care, public education, student loans, transportation, and imprisonment are privatized and converted into sites of profit making. Neoliberalism has simultaneously prefigured the development of a vast *managerial and audit culture* rooted in market-based and corporate technical rationalities that seek to optimize institutional efficiency and profit opportunities through measurement-based performance metrics, evaluations, numerical targets, and competitive accountability schemas. The neoliberal state is thus a *market bureaucracy* that functions to create the optimal conditions for capitalism through deregulation, cuts to social services, corporate management, and the construction of markets where they previously did not exist via privatization and speculative financial arrangements (Saltman, 2012). Within this milieu, citizens are charged to minimize their own individual risk by maximizing their own private economic interests within competitive market relations and consumer lifestyle and identity distinctions. Thus, as Wendy Brown (2005) has argued, the ideal neoliberal citizen is a passive and hierarchically oriented subject “who strategizes . . . among various social, political, and economic options, not one who strives with others to alter or organize these options” (p. 43).

**Privatization and Market Management**

Under neoliberalism, public schools are imagined as enterprises that need to be managed as businesses
that compete against one another for students and resources. In this schema, public schools are transferred over to corporate management, while school systems are converted into a marketplace where parents are charged with “shopping” around for seats. The strategic devaluing of the public sector presents business opportunities to institute reforms that enable the transfer of public resources such as schools from the public trust to private interests. For instance, in the wake of hurricane Katrina, corporate reformers presented the storm as a “golden opportunity” to privatize the historically neglected New Orleans Public Schools (Saltman, 2007). As of 2014, 90% of New Orleans youth attended charter schools run largely by corporate educational management companies. There are numerous projects across North American cities such as New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Houston, and many others that have seized on decades of neglect in order to privatize segments of public education alongside various other public entities representing a stark imbalance between public and private wealth and power.

Privatization has dovetailed with the development of systems of market management that have sought to redefine the curriculum. The new corporate management culture is sometimes referred to as the “new managerialism” or, even in slightly more Orwellian terms, as total quality management. It works to legitimize itself largely through appeals to efficiency and through promises of less regulation, greater accountability and flexibility, and an end to the bureaucratic inefficiencies of the Keynesian welfare state. Within the context of school organization and curriculum, the new managerialism has led to the proliferation of measurement and outcomes-based practices such as standardized curriculum, scripted lessons, high-stakes testing, and value-added assessments. These efforts to “teacher proof” the curriculum through scripted programs designed by corporations and contracted to districts, and through value-added strategies that hold teachers accountable directly for student test scores, are held up as objective and supposedly progressive responses to longstanding educational failures. Additionally, holding teachers responsible for outcomes such as meeting test score benchmarks would appear on the surface to promote professional conduct, raise expectations, and ensure accountability. However, neoliberal managerial cultures in education do not lessen regulatory authority and bureaucracy but vastly extend its scope through new systems of surveillance, audit, measurement, and accountability that reduce curriculum to a set of anti-intellectual and individualized procedural skills that tend to sap the imaginative horizons and the cooperative power of learning.

The Business of the New Education Reforms

Beyond treating knowledge and students as commodities in a symbolic sense, knowledge, curriculum, and students are being transformed into commodities in an increasingly privatized and profit-driven system of public education. The leaders of the neoliberal reform movement include venture philanthropists, Wall Street financiers, hedge fund managers, opportunistic politicians, and corporate CEOs. This alliance has used the altruistic language of educational reform and equity to garner widespread support for the cause of educational privatization. They have also used bare-knuckle politics and corporate lobbying to push states to enact legislation based on think-tank advocacy with nonexistent or dubious research that has worked to erode commitments to traditional public schools while funneling billions of public dollars into the hands of software and online learning companies, educational management organizations and charter school operators, consulting and curriculum businesses, and for-profit testing, tutoring, and test preparation service corporations. Thus, while educational budgets are being slashed in the name of austerity, public money that would be going directly to schools is instead being redirected to corporate vendors mainly for expanding privatized commercial management, for-profit commercial curriculum contracts, for-profit commercial online charter school ventures, and for-profit commercial standardized testing services. Goldman Sachs and Merrill Lynch have each jumped into for-profit education alongside major hedge funds and wealth management groups, all clamoring for a piece of the $600 billion spent each year on K–12 public schools. In the K–12 online learning market alone, revenues were projected to increase by 43% between 2010 and 2015 as states are being coerced into lifting the cap on cyber charter schools, allowing public money that would be going to public schools to instead go to deregulated corporate online learning mills (Fang, 2011).
Enclosing and Punishing Educational Subjects

Importantly, contemporary educational reforms and curricula need to be understood as attempting to call into being an idealized human subject of education. This is a subject who largely identifies as a consuming economic actor in a competitive and fragmented environment. It is also a subject that is made morally culpable for his or her own well-being and security regardless of the social and economic circumstances. The ideal subject of neoliberal education is one who makes rationally calculated choices in an educational market in order to acquire scarce educational resources and out hustle his or her rivals for credentials in an increasingly transient and precarious employment structure. The ideal subject of neoliberal education is one who successfully manages his or her own individual risk by viewing curriculum, knowledge, and education as economic instrumentalities rather than a social force for democratic possibility.

The United States has one of the highest rates of child poverty of any advanced nation. Slipping into poverty even for a brief period of time has been shown to impede the educational, health, and social development of young people. Furthermore, the United States maintains the worst record of advanced nations in providing health and human services to communities, women with children, and early childhood education while maintaining shameful inequalities in educational investment with a 10-to-1 funding ratio between poor and rich districts in some parts of the country (Darling-Hammond, 2010). This inequity in school funding reinforces a highly unequal and racially segregated system. Thus rather than work to improve the overall quality of public education within universal norms and a sense of social and collective responsibility, neoliberal systems privatize social problems and responsibility for educational development. They do so by encouraging school choice arrangements and educational markets that position families as consumers and schools as commercial entities that are required to compete over students and scarce resources. Child poverty, homelessness, home and neighborhood instability, and racism are viewed as private problems, while low educational performance is blamed on supposedly incompetent teachers and their unions. Instead of attempting to address the structural class disparities and social disadvantages that have been proven to shape educational outcomes in struggling schools through social investment and cooperation with communities and educators, neoliberal reforms favor “get tough” disciplinary systems of control designed to hold schools, teachers, and students “accountable” for test scores while becoming increasingly unaccountable to the public interest and opening up the system for privatization. Such disciplinary measures mirror the excessive investments in the military–security–industrial complex in the United States as well as a turn to mass incarceration as a key state strategy for managing dispossessed and criminalized populations made redundant in a context of global labor surpluses and the dismantling of the social welfare state (Wacquant, 2009). This expansion of security measures finds a corollary shift in school organization, particularly in those schools that serve disadvantaged and marginalized communities in the United States, from a rehabilitative posture to a zero-tolerance culture of warehousing and control of surplus youth marked by a proliferation of surveillance cameras, lockdown procedures, police in schools, and the reliance on prescriptive forms of punishment contributing to a “school-to-prison” pipeline (Means, 2013).

We have argued here that dominant trends in educational policy and curriculum have mirrored a neoliberal ethos of markets, competition, and standardization. One of the consequences of these trends is that students themselves are increasingly conceived and treated as commodities. Here students are positioned largely as receptacles for knowledge under the resurgent forms of positivist banking education. They are taught that knowledge should be valued as a monetary currency as opposed to a social value with emancipatory potential for critical understanding and democratization of human experience. We have suggested that current trends in educational policy expand the ideologies of neoliberalism, positivism, and scientific management and hence the financial pillaging of the public schools while eroding public schools as sites for teachers and students to develop critical pedagogical practices and public projects.

However, as we argue in our book Toward a New Common School Movement, the time is ripe for imagining a reinvigorated and truly public form of schooling (De Lissovoy, Means, & Saltman, 2014).
Such a public school renewal begins with the assumption that schooling fosters the conditions for human freedom and equality. It approaches curriculum and knowledge by presuming that they are contested and that disputes over the meaning and interpretations of knowledge are interwoven with historically infused material struggles. The aim of schooling in this view is that knowledge and curriculum ought to be rooted in specific social contexts and histories and yet draw on multiple intellectual traditions in order to create the conditions for students to develop critical consciousness aimed at transformative projects to expand the commons or the society’s shared knowledge and information, space, and labor. A new common school movement works against the enclosure and privatization of freely shared knowledge and social labor. It affirms that there are aspects of the commons that can never be enclosed and privatized, such as care and imagination, while working to make the common labor in all institutions serve common benefit rather than individualized gain. Such fidelity to the commons orients our educational and pedagogical commitments within what Freire (2001) described as the “universal human ethic” where “the critical word, the humanist philosophy, the commitment to solidarity, the prophetic denunciation of the negation of men and women, and the proclamation of a world worthy of human habitation become the instruments of change and transformation” (p. 115).

References and Further Readings

Learning for Creative, Associated, Joyful, and Worthwhile Living

JASON GOUŁAH
DePaul University

MING FANG HE
Georgia Southern University

The chapter focuses on what Confucius (551–479 BCE) referred to as “the great learning,” or learning for creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living, expressed across time in the East, the West, and in between. As a topic of curriculum studies, learning for creative, associated, joyful, and “worthwhile” (Schubert, 2009b) living is education in its true etymological sense. It is the process of drawing out the inherent capacities of being human—wisdom, compassion, courage, creativity, and joy—as the goal of education itself. Philosophers and practitioners of the great learning assert these capacities emerge fully when human beings, as individuals, are engaged in dialogic interaction with others in humanity, nature, and cosmos, what John Dewey viewed as associated learning. This idea of learning for creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living applies both in and outside the context of schooling and counters the dominant practice of schooling as the transmission of dehumanized, decontextualized, and standardized information measured with oppressive, degrading, and militant high-stakes testing, competition, commodification, and accountability.

Learning for creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living originated in the works of Confucius, particularly The Great Learning (Daxue; Ames & Rosemont, 1998), one of the key Chinese classics called the Four Books. It has continued in the East in the philosophy and practice of such thinkers as Tu Weiming (1940–) and Tao Xingzhi (1891–1946) in China; Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) and Mohandas Gandhi (1869–1948) in India; Ki Hajar Dewantara (1889–1959) in Indonesia; and Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944), Josei Toda (1900–1958), and, most currently, Daisaku Ikeda (1928–) in Japan. It is also present in the West in the philosophy and practice of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827) in Switzerland; Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841) and Friedrich Fröebel (1782–1852) in Germany; N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783–1872) in Denmark; Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) in France; Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910), Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975), and Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) in Russia; Francis W. Parker (1837–1902), John Dewey (1859–1952), and Jane Addams (1860–1935) in the United States; Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947) in England and the United States; Maria Montessori
(1870–1952) and Loris Malaguzzi (1920–1994) in Italy; and Paulo Freire (1921–1997) in Brazil, among others. The educational ideas of these thinkers co-specify one another and cohere into what Jason Goulah has called an “East–West ecology of ideas” (2010b, p. 270), an “East–West confluence of thought” (2010c, p. 82), and an “East–West ecology of education” (2010a, p. 42) as the font for fully human living. Daisaku Ikeda, whose lifetime educational philosophy and practice both embody and explore this chronotopic dialogue of ideas, called it a “symphony of thought” (Ikeda & Gu, 2012, p. 311).

Ming Fang He (2013) considered these great thinkers’ shared perspectives of the great learning as an “East–West epistemological convergence of humanism” (p. 61) that is “the common heritage of humanity” (UNESCO, 2009). She asserted this convergence must, therefore, “become the epistemological foundation that influences 21st century educational policy, practice, and research” (He, 2013, p. 61). She recognized that these shared perspectives of the great learning are illuminated in five main themes in the works of Confucius, Dewey, and Makiguchi: human–nature interconnection, self-cultivation, value creation, associated living, and joy of learning/happiness of living (p. 61). These five themes are essential to all advocates of learning for creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living. For Confucius, such learning meant “to engage oneself in a ceaseless, unending process of creative self-transformation, both as a communal act and as a dialogical response to Heaven . . . [which] involves four inseparable dimensions—self, community, nature, and the transcendent” (Tu, 2010, p. 122).

Therefore, humans are in the midst of nature, while nature embeds human flourishing within “a series of concentric circles: self, family, community, society, nation, world, and cosmos . . . for the full meaning of humanity is anthropocentric rather than anthropo-centric” (Tu, 1998, p. 17). The major purpose of learning is to achieve the unity of heaven and humanity (tianren heyi). It is in this anthropocosmic spirit that we obtain the mutual responsiveness “between self and community, human species and nature, and humanity and Heaven” (p. 17) “where peace prevails, order abounds, harmony sustains, and the individual thrives in communions” (He, 2013, p. 62).

Francis W. Parker (1889/1908) and John Dewey (1902/1990) similarly advocated for engaging nature and the community as a means of inspiring fully human learning. Parker and Dewey’s ideas emerged as the American progressive education movement that continues to be researched and practiced around the world. For Parker and Dewey, as for Confucius, such human–nature interaction extended beyond the natural environment to include the social community. Dewey asserted that the school should be “a genuine form of active community life” (1902/1990, p. 14) and “a miniature community, an embryonic society” (p. 18) where “free individuals” with shared interests and a common faith work together to realize their utmost potentialities toward the common good and to “contribute to the liberation of enrichment of [their] lives” (Dewey in Archambault, 1964, p. 12) and the lives of others. By connecting school to daily living, Dewey emphasized the importance of educating individuals to improve their social capacities and lead a more fully democratic life.

In the Japanese context, as another example, Makiguchi’s Jinsei chirigaku (The Geography of Human Life, 1903; see Makiguchi, 1981–1988, vols. 1 and 2) posited a two-way vector of influence between humans and their environment, arguing that human beings give meaning to the physical environment and, in turn, develop through that meaning making. Makiguchi’s ideas in human geography not only aligned with those of Confucius, Parker, and Dewey but also drew on Herbart and Pestalozzi’s educational philosophies and anticipated the current scholarship on spatial theories of education (Gulson & Symes, 2007). The Geography of Human Life outlined two important contributions from Makiguchi. First, it introduced Makiguchi’s notion of jindoteki kyoso, or “humanitarian competition,” as a necessary alternative to harmful political, economic, and militaristic competition. Humanitarian competition is rooted in an ethic of associated interaction and seeks mutual benefit for the self and other. Second, it introduced Makiguchi’s notion of a three-tiered identity operating equally, simultaneously, and interdependently at local, national, and international levels (even though students may never physically leave their local communities).

Makiguchi expanded these ideas in his most characteristic work, Soka kyoikugaku taikei (The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy, 1930–1934; see Makiguchi, 1981–1988, vols. 5 and 6), a four-volume...
work that asserted that the goal of life, and therefore of education, is students’ happiness. This is similar to Nel Noddings’s (2004) consideration in Happiness and Education. Makiguchi was an elementary school teacher and principal who developed value-creating pedagogy based on his own classroom experiences and curriculum theorizing. He believed students become authentically happy and contributive citizens by leading value-creative lives and that the purpose of education is to foster their ability to create values of aesthetic beauty, individual gain, and social good. The aesthetic and the social as means of human becoming and just citizenship echo themes present in Dewey’s Art as Experience (1934) and Maxine Greene’s (1995) Releasing the Imagination. Makiguchi advocated his pedagogy in reaction to Japan’s wartime policies of extreme militaristic education and was consequently arrested and imprisoned as a thought criminal in 1943. He died in prison in 1944.

Daisaku Ikeda’s Soka Education (2010) provides a contemporary explication and application of Makiguchi’s ideas of education for happiness through value creation, as well as Ikeda’s own contributions to learning for creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living. Ikeda founded a network of 14 Soka schools, including kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools, a women’s college, and two universities across Asia and the Americas based on Makiguchi’s ideas. Ikeda has added a primary importance on dialogue as a means of value-creative becoming, as well as a central focus on education for global citizenship, which builds on Makiguchi’s notion of a three-tiered identity (Goulah, 2013). For Ikeda (2010), global citizenship is defined by the following:

1) The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living; 2) The courage not to fear or deny difference, but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures and to grow from encounters with them; 3) The compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one’s immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places. (pp. 112–113)

Ikeda’s focus on dialogic becoming as a means of learning for creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living resonates with that of Paulo Freire (2002) in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, among his other works, and of Mikhail Bakhtin in his corpus (Holquist, 2002). Ikeda’s perspective of education for global citizenship as the great learning resonates with cosmopolitanism as education illuminated in key works from Immanuel Kant (2006) to Martha Nussbaum (1997) and David Hansen (2011). Their works also relate to ideas of Confucius, Parker, and Dewey on global citizenship practiced dialogically in local communities.

Transcending time, space, language, culture, and context, this East–West learning for creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living, however, is quickly being eroded in the wake of contemporary educational mandates. Borne from corporate and political greed, such mandates not only purportedly respond to but also exacerbate contemporary concerns. Hopefully, these concerns create public spaces for reimaginings (Greene, 1995; Lake, 2013) of the great learning, particularly in the West.

**Contemporary Concerns and Contexts**

The world is more interdependent and globalized than ever before. The sweeping forces of neoliberal globalization—competition, acquisitiveness, and commodification—perpetuate a moral poverty in the wake of what Tu (2000) called values of “contract, market, choice, competition, efficiency, flexibility, productivity, and accountability” (p. 215). While creative advances in digital technology that compress time and space interconnect us across language, culture, and social class, they detrimentally divide us into solitary and solipsistic spaces of selfies, online gaming, and cyberbullying (Rosen, 2012). In education, online degree programs have proliferated, encouraging students to earn degrees without ever engaging others in person; this reimagines the very nature of education (McCluskey & Winter, 2012). Today’s youth spend less time outdoors, are increasingly obese, and possess underdeveloped interpersonal communication skills (Bindley, 2011; Rosen, 2012). They suffer increased diagnoses of mental illness, including depression, and learning difficulties that are increasingly treated with prescribed and recreational drugs rather than through engagement in the great learning, as evidenced in the tension between Elizabeth Wurtzel’s Prozac Nation (1994) and Lou Marinoff’s Plato, Not Prozac (1999). In the United States, there is an increased culture of education as enforcement (Saltman & Gabbard, 2011),
which contributes to and results from violence and mass shootings in schools and communities by minors and young adults. All of these concerns illustrate a lack of creativity for authentically associated and joyful living and call on educational policy and practice to cultivate love’s knowledge (Nussbaum, 1995), love, justice, and education (Schubert, 2009a), and an ethic of care (Noddings, 2005).

Contemporary concerns continue to manifest in racial discrimination, disparity, disenfranchisement, and discord, causing William Watkins (2005) and others to advocate for a learning for creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living rooted squarely in Black protest thought. The contemporary globalized world has also resulted in increased transborder flows of migrants (documented and undocumented) who reshape demographics racially, ethnically, socioculturally, and linguistically. In the U.S. context, for example, this has resulted in Latinos becoming the largest minority population and Spanish becoming a dominant, if marginalized, language. The Asian population has likewise dramatically increased, further altering the U.S. linguistic and cultural landscape. Numerous scholars have thus reinvigorated Addams’s (1897) work with non–English-speaking immigrant students, as well as her advocacy for schools to respect, value, and use students’ languages and cultures to educate them toward social justice and self-actualization (e.g., Nieto, 2013).

The current moment is also marked by extreme climate change and environmental dislocation, which are heightened by unbridled consumption, increased (trans)national flows, and a concomitant relocation to urban centers from rural and suburban areas (Agyeman, Bullard, & Evans, 2003). Rebecca Martusewicz, Jeff Edmundson, and John Lupinacci (2014) thus called for an ecojustice perspective to recapture learning for ecologically creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living. Edmund O’Sullivan (1999) engaged this global concern as the source of fundamental educational reform toward a sustainable “Ecozoic era” that is driven by East–West, North–South perspectives of a new cosmology, quality of life, ecological selfhood, and spirituality.

To address these contemporary concerns, local, state, and national governments in the United States (and elsewhere) have legislated neoliberal market ideology for education, increasingly privatizing and standardizing education by opening more charter schools, closing more neighborhood public schools, and systematizing intra- and inter-school tracking (Ravitch, 2013). Education policy makers—who often lack teaching experience or professional preparation in education—have increasingly cut the arts, physical education, and foreign language to make room for aggressively tested courses (Darling-Hammond, 2010). At the university level, colleges of education grounded in learning for creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living are cast as retrograde by governments that sanction private organizations to train and license teachers with little real preparation (Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nemser, McIntyre, & Demers, 2008; Weiner & Compton, 2008). Fully online degree programs in all areas of education have also expanded into teacher credentialing. In the United States, greater weight is placed on high-stakes standardized tests that value cutthroat competition and equate sameness with fairness (Hursh, 2008). This system of aggressive testing and cutthroat competition has become increasingly exported globally in a heightened “race” to the top that purportedly, if oxymoronically, leaves no child behind. In reality, it has stifled creativity and limits authentic association and joyful living envisioned in the great learning.

Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression

Learning for creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living has been examined through philosophical inquiry and comparative analysis. It is expressed dialogically, bilingually, and biculturally. Philosophical inquiry is one of the most prominent forms of inquiry in this area of curriculum studies. Advanced by scholars from a variety of disciplines such as philosophical foundations of education and curriculum studies, philosophical inquiry is theoretical and conceptual in nature. It critically explicates thinkers’ texts historically and in terms of cultural relevance and political and policy implications. Examples include Weiming’s Tu (1979) Humanity and Self-Cultivation; William Schubert’s (2009a) Love, Justice, and Education; Jim Garrison’s (1997) Dewey and Eros; Daniel Tröhler’s (2013) Pestalozzi and the Educationalization of the World; and Barbara Thayer-Bacon’s (2013) Democracies Always in the Making, which explores the relevance of learning for
creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living that is illuminated in the work of Montessori, Jacques Rancière, and others.

Comparative analysis, such as the aforementioned work by Goulah (2010b, 2010c) and He (2013), considers learning for creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living by discursively analyzing and comparing texts from progenitors in the East, West, and in between. Examples of other scholarship in this area include Goulah’s (2009) and Hatano’s (2009) comparative analyses of Makiguchi and Bakhtin; Sharma’s (19/2002) comparison of Makiguchi and Gandhi’s relevance in the 21st century; Betz’s (1992) and Fleury’s (2011) respective examinations of Dewey and Freire; Rule’s (2011) treatment of Bakhtin and Freire; and Grange’s (2004) John Dewey, Confucius, and Global Philosophy. David Hansen’s (2007) Ethical Visions of Education is another instance of such inquiry, which provides portraits of Dewey, Tagore, Freire, Makiguchi, Addams, Rudolf Steiner, W. E. B. DuBois, Tao Xingzhi, and Albert Schweitzer, who fostered learning for creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living in their respective times and contexts. Read collectively, these portraits illuminate the universality of the great learning. This work also contextualizes such learning in the modern context, attempting to solve problems that teachers face, namely, how to help children grow and learn as world citizens in an increasingly diversified and complex cosmos.

There is also what might be called dialogic comparative analysis, or the act of engaging in and publishing dialogues on the great learning, as a form of both inquiry and expression. Ikeda’s over 70 published dialogues with philosophers in education, culture, politics, religion, and peacebuilding are a prime example. For Ikeda, this dialogic comparative inquiry is rooted in his extensive dialogue with British historian Arnold Toynbee published in English as Choose Life (Toynbee & Ikeda, 1976). Ikeda’s recent dialogues on learning for creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living include his dialogue with Dewey scholars Jim Garrison and Larry Hickman on the relevance of Makiguchi and Dewey in the 21st century (Ikeda, Garrison, & Hickman, 2014); his dialogue with Danish educator Hans Henningsen of the Askov Højskole, or Askov Schools, inspired by the work of N. F. S. Grundtvig, Shaping the Future: The Sacred Task of Education, A Friendly Conversation—Denmark and Japan (Henningsen & Ikeda, 2009); and his dialogue with Confucius scholar Tu Weiming in Civilization of Dialogue: On the Hope-Filled Philosophy of Peace (Ikeda & Tu, 2007).

Paulo Freire’s dialogues such as A Pedagogy for Liberation: Dialogues on Transforming Education (Shor & Freire, 1987) and We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change (Horton & Freire, 1990) are other examples of this form of inquiry and expression, as is Zygmunt Bauman and Keith Tester’s (2001) Conversations With Zygmunt Bauman. As a method of inquiry and expression, dialogic comparative analysis, of course, draws on Plato’s dialogic convention to explore and express the great learning for fully human living. It has also inspired imagined dialogues to examine and address contemporary concerns and contexts relative to learning for creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living. Lake’s (2013) A Curriculum of Imagination in an Era of Standardization: An Imaginative Dialogue with Maxine Greene and Paulo Freire is an example of this.

Bilingual–bicultural analysis and expression is also particularly relevant to this area of curriculum studies. Such analysis explicates culturally and geographically specific approaches outside the West, for the West. It centers on ideas and practices often inaccessible to the Anglophone community, making these available (and relevant) for consideration and contextualization in Western contexts. Examples include Cross-Cultural Studies in Curriculum (Eppert & Wang, 2007) and the Handbook of Asian Education (Zhao et al., 2011). This work also explores learning for creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living negotiated across geographic borders, as well as across borders of language, politics, social culture, and identity. It often uses the author’s own voice and experiences as a vehicle to explicate similar experiences by students in the global(ized) context. Ming Fang He’s A River Forever Flowing: Cross-Cultural Lives and Identities in the Multicultural Landscape (2003) and Exile Pedagogy: Teaching and Living In-Between (2010) are two examples of this bilingual–bicultural expression. Kumaravadivelu’s Cultural Globalization and Language Education (2007) is another example. Highlighting the author’s multiple identities in between India and the United States, it traces learning for
associated and worthwhile living in a globalized, cross-linguistic context as a process of “cultural realism.” Yet another example is Awad Ibrahim’s The Rhizome of Blackness: A Critical Ethnography of Hip-Hop Culture, Language, Identity, and the Politics of Becoming (2014), which explores the author’s chosen and externally prescribed identities of Blackness, as well as those of Francophone continental African youth in Canada.

Bilingual–bicultural analysis of learning for creative, associated, and worthwhile living, of course, also highlights its often necessarily bilingual expression. In Why Translation Matters (2010), Edith Grossman asserted that writers have to be translated into English to be considered for the Nobel Prize. This sentiment is not lost in education. What non-Western, non-English ideas get translated, that is, valorized, and how they become understood, applied, and, often, reshaped—“transculturated,” as Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz (1947/1995) called it—in the process of cross-border practice is the focus of this inquiry and expression. Many thinkers’ iterations of learning for creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living would not be known or practiced outside their native languages and cultures without bilingual–bicultural translation; and indeed there are others who have pioneered expressions of this learning whose ideas have not yet been translated for Western, Anglophone audiences. Indeed, the lists in both categories are too long to enumerate here. The imperative of bilingual–bicultural analysis and expression, however, belies the lack of coursework in schools of education in this area, particularly as it relates to Eastern cultures and languages.

As the current educational confusion (Dewey, 1931), led by the neoliberal turn manifested in the globalized “values of contract, market, choice, competition, efficiency, flexibility, productivity, and accountability” (Tu, 2000, p. 215), is manifest in schools in the form of cutthroat competition versus associated living, commodification and consumption versus value creation, standardization versus imagination, and separation from versus connection with nature and cosmos (He, 2013, p. 62; also Goulah, 2009, 2010b, 2010c; Schubert, 2009a), there is a demand for us to cultivate a landscape of the great learning (Confucius) that commits to shared interests of diverse individuals and groups and a high level of human potential for creative, harmonious, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living as learning (Garrison, Hickman, & Ikeda, 2014) for all in an increasingly diversified, complicated, and contested world.

References and Further Readings


The Great Learning • 299

Tsunesaburo] (10 Vols.). Tokyo, Japan: Daisan Bunmei.


PART IV

MILIEU AS CURRICULUM
Introducing Part IV: Milieu as Curriculum

*Milieu* or environment, broadly speaking as illustrated in the next paragraph, is an important dimension or commonplace of curriculum; however, it cannot be comprehended in any full sense without perceiving its interrelationship with and dependence upon the three other commonplaces (subject matter, learners or students, and teachers) along with the need to continuously rebalance the relationship among these four commonplaces in the deliberations of policy makers and educators. Thus, those involved in any educational situation must ask: How do any aspect of milieu and any dimension of subject matter influence one another? How do milieu and teachers influence one another? How does the milieu have mutual influence with the students? Moreover, how does any aspect of milieu in any given situation influence other aspects of milieu in that setting? It is necessary, too, to realize that answers to these questions and others that flow from them are never final but always in the making.

The term *milieu* is multidimensional and deserves clarification. Schwab (1973) characterized it as exceedingly broad, deep, and plural:

Milieus include the school and classroom in which learning and teaching are supposed to occur. What are likely to be children’s relations to one another? Will the classroom group overlap the play or neighborhood group or any other group in which the children function? . . . What structure of authority . . . will characterize the relations of teachers to one another. . . ? In what ways are these relations of adults in the school likely to affect the relations of teachers to students or to what and how the teachers are likely to teach? Relevant milieus will also include the family, the community, the particular groupings of religious, class, or ethnic genus. What aspirations, styles of life, attitudes toward education, and ethical standards characterize these parents and . . . affect the children. . . ? These milieus suggest others. What are the relations of this community to other communities? . . . What are the conditions, dominant preoccupations, and cultural climate of the whole polity and its social classes, insofar as these may affect the careers, the probable fate, and ego identity of the children whom we want to teach? (Westbury & Wilkof, 1978, pp. 366–367)

With this as precursor, it makes sense to strive to understand a host of milieus; therefore, chapters that follow provide background on milieus in many diverse realms of human life: historical, biographical or documentary, policy, parental and familial, technological, moral and spiritual, gendered and sexual, womanist/feminist, socio-economic, corporate-military-governmental, youth cultural, deschooling or unschooling, alternative schooling, geographical, browning, ecological, international-transnational-counternational-global, and multicultural-multiracial-multilingual. We urge you to look at the interactive consequences of each of these milieus on one another.

Reference

THE NEGLECTED HISTORICAL MILIEU

WILLIAM H. WATKINS

University of Illinois at Chicago

Constructing any essay on the “historical milieu” of curriculum is a daunting task. Where do we start? Where do we end? What gets included? Who gets included? What viewpoint(s) or theoretical model(s) get embraced? How do complex and layered issues get woven, integrated, and articulated? Can causal claims, assertions, and generalizations be made? How can critically understanding historical milieu provide enhanced perspective for dealing with the flow of issues regarding teachers, students, and subject matter (Schwab, 1969)? How do we include perspectives and contributions that have been previously excluded?

The focus of this chapter is to introduce and explore salient issues shaping the historical milieu of curriculum with a particular emphasis on neglected perspectives on African American or Black education and curriculum. While my focus is the American national context from 1619 onward, it should be noted that much of the world, notably Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, and parts of Europe, have experienced imperial, colonial, and unequal education. The Black American model has been connected to other subaltern people over time.

Education and curriculum are contested spaces. The ever-present battles of ideas, politics, economics, ethnicity, and culture shape schooling. In a world of hegemonic and unequal power, education, as a function of the state, is inevitably tied to privilege.

In the milieu of power, education for control confronts education for liberation.

Beyond the dialectic of contestation, I note the role of traditions. Social phenomena draw from our collective inheritance and selected traditions. Here I offer examples that illustrate this notion. Through interpretation of selected scholarship from earlier periods, I show that Black education has a milieu in the larger world of education and curriculum as a story of colonization and resistance. It is a necessary and neglected part of the ongoing saga of contestation in education.

Before the Greeks: A Glimpse of Education and Curriculum in Kemet

Historian and educational psychologist Asa Hilliard devoted much of his life to the study of Kemetic (Egyptian) civilization. Kemet was an early, perhaps original, source of civil society, high culture, commerce, advanced education, and piety. Going beyond the physical evidence found in fossils, carvings, paintings, and pottery, Hilliard delved into ancient literature and sacred texts and noted research, indicating that Kemet was ascendant 10,000 years before Christ.

Hilliard (1995) provided “a chronological summary of the great dynasties that succeeded one another in
Kemetic history. Seeking out the origins of high culture and advanced education, he draws from ancient texts, the *Mdw Ntr* (or hieroglyphics)” (Watkins, 2008). He writes of the great Temple of Luxor in Egypt's Nile Valley as a “most select of places.” It was here that priest-professors educated large numbers of students. Citing the research of Isaac Myer (1900), Hilliard surveyed earlier dynasties, discovering that these civilizations engaged teaching the “mysteries.” Faculty taught about “heaven” (astronomy and astrology), “land” (geography), “depth” (geology), “secret words” (philosophy and theology), and “pharaoh” (law and communication). The *Mdw Ntr* documents the existence of knowledge transmission. Hilliard posited that Kemetic education was important as it integrated the spiritual with the material as a paradigm for pedagogy and curriculum. Hilliard’s lectures and writings repeatedly returned to this notion as he finds it useful in rebuilding the culture and knowledge base of Africans, especially in the United States. He described the Greek and Roman invasions and defeat of Kemetic civilization:

It took years of calculated struggle for the Romans to destroy Kemetic education. These struggles were initiated by rulers with such edicts as those issued by Theodosius, 380 A.D. and Justinian, 527 A.D. They had to burn down African temples or universities, and destroy or tame the priest-professors to annihilate the leadership of KMT [Kemet]. Kemetic religion and education were led by a priesthood that was not Roman. Emperors from Constantine onward did not want foreign leaders as competition, especially for the minds of the people. Christianity became a state religion with a native Roman leadership. (1995, p. 125)

Kemetic scholar Jacob Carruthers (1995, 1999) suggested that we search beyond the great Koranic universities to those of ancient Egypt. Here we will find different kinds of education. One component was clearly directed to vocation and practical skills, such as brick masonry, carpentry, mining, and shoemaking. Beyond skills education, Kemet provided the phonetic alphabet, a numbering, counting, and mathematical system, written drama, novels and stories, spirituality, medicine, architecture, history, science, and art. Kemet, argued Carruthers (1999), provided the foundation of all learning. He highlighted their formal education featuring reading and writing:

This type of education may be called scribal education. It was through scribal education that the civilization produced its priests, civil administrators, physicians, artists, scientists, astronomers, and architects. It is through the scribes that we learn of the great black civilization of antiquity. (1999, p. 257)

Carruthers described the process of education in ancient Egypt as a “family model.” The father was obligated to pass on moral guidance to the children. The objective of successful teaching was good speech. Many pharaohs of the Kemetic dynasties were concerned about education as it helped refine human balance. Good speech recurs as a theme of the pharaohs in pedagogy and curriculum, the accomplishment and possession of the truly educated person, the “manifestation of Man’s unique nature” (Carruthers, 1999, p. 258). Good speech provides balance because the heart and mind give direction to the tongue. The tongue directs the action of the body. Our words are our deeds. Carruthers called our attention to *Instruction of Ptahhotep*, “the oldest textbook on pedagogy” (p. 276).

**Good Speech** consisted not merely of proper pronunciation, enunciation, grammar, syntax, and so forth. It included these, but more significantly good speech was wise speech, ethical speech, profound speech. (p. 276)

Carruthers’s repudiation of today’s educational system is thorough. The European intellectual assault has diminished Africa to irrelevance. He asserted that the current curriculum is driving Black people “mad.” Only by Africanizing the curriculum can we begin to stand knowledge on its feet and begin the process of making Black people whole again.

**Foundations of Western Classical Education: The Greeks and the Romans**

The Greeks and the Romans helped set the stage for Black education. Building on Kemetic traditions, the Greeks thought extensively about ideas and the role of education in social organization. Early Greek society, before Christ, is heralded in Western civilization as the originator and standard bearer of organized and intentioned education. The Romans provided lessons in conquest and the intellectual-legal subjugation of slaves. Both empires institutionalized and refined concepts of inequality and privilege in learning, contributing to the foundation of today’s Western curriculum.

Greece moved from an oral to a written tradition hundreds of years before Christ. Homer’s *Iliad* and
The Odyssey reveal much about the evolving Greek culture. Homer wrote of valiant ancestors reclaiming territory via warfare and cunning. Mythology became the accepted religion, glorifying superhumans. Paradigmatic values came to be discerned over time: The “good society” was joined with concepts of harmony and balance; democracy and loyalty to the state provided early versions of patriotism; evolving cultural features of itinerant pedagogues provided antecedents of nonschool education—a building block for Black accommodationist education. Gerald L. Gutek (1995) connected characteristics of Athenian and Spartan education to societal values of the emergent school curriculum.

Spartan boys were taught to endure pain and deprivation without complaint. Intellectual content was minimized and only the rudiments of reading and writing were taught. (p. 26)

The Athenians viewed humans as rational inhabitants of an orderly universe. Democracy emerged as an important social pillar. Gutek (1995) argued that the Sophists, paid teachers, helped develop the economic order. They hailed individualism as they helped move traditional morality away from courage. The great Greek philosophers expanded the social philosophy, which evolved as a kind of curriculum. Socrates explored universal principles of truth, beauty, and justice. He opined that our reason for being was moral excellence.

Goverance in Rome evolved from the isolated city-state of the Greeks into a centralized state and eventually empire. Class divisions were pronounced between the patrician elite and the low-status plebian classes. Law, language, and ritual, which built upon some aspects of earlier cultures, were important societal organizers. Existing models of philosophy, literature, and rhetoric became Latinized (Schubert, 1986), offering a building block to Roman education:

Public support of arts and sciences brought public schools, which led to government control of teaching. Eventually, (300-500 A.D.) the curriculum became effectually separated from life. Only technical education remained connected to real-world activities. (p. 58)

Gutek also supported that general description:

It was the function of education to transmit these traditions to the young. Through participation in the rituals of society, the young Roman learned to respect the body of valued traditions—or *mos maioru*, the ways of the ancestors—that was the cultural core of Roman life. (p. 58)

Cicero, Plutarch, and Quintilian became Rome’s best-known educators. Much like Kemetic scholars, Cicero advocated oratory as central to the curriculum. The orator embraced the liberal arts and humanities rooted in human experience, exhibited rationality, and was committed to the public good that could be pursued through poetry, history, and language. The orator should have knowledge of ethics, psychology, military science, medicine, natural science, geography, and astronomy. History, philosophy, and law remained at the core. The orator was seen as a teacher-leader who should embrace a practical, not a speculative or abstract, philosophy. He must be persuasive, artful, and witty. Cicero’s concept of oratory is best described as _humanitas_, or all that is worthy in a person.

Quintilian’s oratorical tradition was committed to traditional Roman values of family, duty, and nation. He embraced a stage theory in human development that assumed young children are governed by impulsive satisfaction and older children should learn by experience, which should include reading, writing, and—in the teenage years—exploration of liberal arts, music, geometry, astronomy, and gymnastics. Quintilian’s model supported skilled speaking rooted in personal excellence. Slaves were not to be educated in Roman society; rather, they were considered noncitizens. The denial of education to slaves occurred many times throughout history, especially both in the American colonies and the United States. The contrasts between the Kemetic and the Greco-Roman models of learning are at the heart of the polemics involving Afrocentric versus Eurocentric models of education. Both models contributed to concepts of social organization and both contributed to the dynamics of intentioned knowledge transmission via organized schooling. As the Western world moved through medievalism and the Renaissance, these early exemplars provided the building blocks for application of knowledge to social organization.

**Black Education: Early Days to “Freedom”**

James D. Anderson (1988) described how legal Black education unfolded in the South from 1860 to 1935. According to Anderson, the conflict between
free labor and the repressive labor system of the post–Civil War South shaped decades of Black education and curriculum debates. Before their legal freedom, Blacks founded underground schools. As the slaveocracy fell apart, abolitionists, missionary societies, and benevolent Whites lent support to efforts to educate Blacks. The Freedmen’s Bureau determined that by the mid-1860s, the formative period for ex-slaves’ education, there were 500 Black schools. There was soon disagreement over the curriculum: Southern Black leaders saw the need for a classical and liberal curriculum that would promote literacy, uplift, and socialization, but stability in the new South was the goal for Northern philanthropists and social engineers.

Anderson (1988) explained the early development of Black education and curriculum, including the development of the Hampton model of industrial education. Hampton Institute founder and leader, Samuel Armstrong, brought to the task of developing this model his background as the son of missionaries, military experience with Black soldiers, and understanding of the political economy of the new South. The Hampton curriculum (Anderson, 1988; Watkins, 2001) included vocational training along with Bible study, lessons in practical morals, citizenship training, and character building. Students were taught respect for property and contracts, table manners, cleanliness, and work habits. In the Hampton social studies curriculum, the plight of Blacks was described as natural and their advancement was deemed to be best accomplished by social responsibility. As Watkins (2010) noted,

These concepts were packaged as the uplift and development of the race. Accommodationism meant Blacks must fit into the social order, not try to disrupt it. The Hampton idea evolved as a merger of pedagogy and accommodationist social philosophy. The curriculum was, in effect, ideology.

Armstrong, Hampton, and the accommodationist philosophy are at the center of the story of Black education. The unequal and colonial model established by the Greeks and Romans was now incarnate in the modern world.

The Black Giants: Irony of the Nadir

The defeat of Reconstruction dashed the hopes of many for resolving the thorny issues of equality, democracy, civility, and education for Blacks. The bitter and brutal whip of the Ku Klux Klan offered a new “democracy.” Brutality and chaos became the norm. As the 19th century gave way to the 20th, lynching became the sport and picnic of far too many people. Historian Rayford Logan articulated the term nadir pointing to the depth of the issue. The historical dialectics of the time found that the most intense repression begat a new opposition wrought by an emergent Black intelligentsia. Blacks were seeking upward mobility and breaking through, and the new Black intelligentsia would leave a permanent imprint on the United States of the 20th century. They represent the striving of a people, sometimes enslaved, to be free in every way, especially mentally. The Black educational giants are a product of their times. Perhaps their most prominent exemplar was W. E. B. Du Bois, who was simultaneously dubbed sociologist, historian, educator, and political scientist and is the first of three exemplary Black giants whose influence on curriculum in education is described in this chapter.

W. E. B. Du Bois

Du Bois (1868–1963) was among the most influential public intellectuals of the 20th century. A pioneer of the civil rights movement, Du Bois dedicated his life to the battles to end colonialism, exploitation, and racism worldwide, and as an advocate for advanced education. Experiencing many changes in the nation’s political history, he was a voice for generations of African Americans seeking social justice. Owing to his achievements, voluminous writings, and worldly recognition, many have chronicled Du Bois’s life and work: Manning Marable (1986), Eugene Provenzo (2002), Herbert Apthecker (1971), and Derrick Alridge (2008).

The Educational Thought of W.E.B. Du Bois: An Intellectual History is highly recommended. After receiving a PhD from Harvard University and spending 2 years as a professor of Greek and Latin at Wilberforce University (1894–1896), Du Bois moved to University of Pennsylvania to conduct a research project in Philadelphia, which resulted in The Philadelphia Negro (1899), the first major study of American empirical sociology. The study represented his relentless quest to expose the race problem as one of ignorance. Personally interviewing several thousand residents, Du Bois documented the struggles of poor Black people with deteriorated housing, inadequate health care, disease, and violence. Crime and
poverty, Du Bois argued in this work, were manifestations of institutional and structural racism. In what many consider Du Bois’s greatest work, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), he wrote, “The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line” (p. 54). This book provided a philosophical framework by which Du Bois addressed the problem of race and the distressing realities of Black life in America. Within its pages, he challenged the prominent Black leader, Booker T. Washington. Du Bois firmly opposed Washington’s policies of accommodation, calling instead for more social agitation to break the bonds of racial oppression. Du Bois’s focus was on not how much education was adequate but rather what kind. Intelligence must be “spread.” He lamented that while Blacks were moving forward in institutions of higher learning, they were not receiving the liberal education he hoped for, that is, the training for social participation and power. The notion of training recurs in Du Bois’s writings. While every person possessed native intelligence, Du Bois believed that intellect had to be harnessed and structured. Learning must be intentional. People must be introduced to concepts of history, government, economics, and culture. The brutal treatment of African Americans required that intense education take place to connect the dots between Africa, slavery, Reconstruction, and the unfolding of the future (Provenzo, 2002).

Beyond academic training, Du Bois was concerned that slavery and discrimination had thrust Blacks into pariah or outcast status. Far too many Blacks were involved in crime and hustling. Thus education in civility, morals, and character was provided. This was not a deficit argument, but rather a function of the powerlessness and oppression. Du Bois was furious at suggestions that Blacks were not ready for education. He denounced the scientific racists and eugenicists for their hereditarian stance. Blacks, he argued, were ready to take their place in the new social order. Du Bois critiqued unequal funding, the lack of input from Blacks in policy making, and the appeal to Southern convention (Provenzo, 2002). This period found Du Bois refining his views on Pan-Africanism and Marxian socialism (see 1935, 1939, 1940, and 1945). In 1940 he created *Phylon*, a journal of social science.

**Anna Julia Cooper**

Another of the Black giants who influenced curriculum in education was Anna Julia Cooper, born 1858 in North Carolina to a slave mother and White master. At a young age, Cooper attended St. Augustine’s Normal School, founded to train teachers and ministers for service among ex-slaves, where she married George Cooper, a Bahamas-born Greek instructor. In 1881 Cooper entered Oberlin College, graduating in 1884. After teaching briefly at Wilberforce, Cooper returned to St. Augustine’s in 1885. In 1887, she received a master’s degree in mathematics from Oberlin, then moved to Washington, D.C., and became principal of Washington Colored High School in 1902. Over time, she taught mathematics, Greek, Latin, literature, and language in high school and college. As an intellectual, early feminist/womanist, critic, master teacher, philosopher, and devout Christian, Cooper was known for her outstanding intellect, exactness, and persuasive oratorical ability. Her experiences with racism and sexism most likely stimulated her to challenge prevailing patriarchal exclusionary practices. She referred to herself as “Black” at a time when the coinage for African Americans was “Negro.” She always noted that the domination and oppression of women was exercised by both Black and White men and encouraged women to expose and attack injustice wherever it existed. Cooper published *A Voice From the South* (1892), a collection of essays focusing on Black women’s issues at that time. *Voice* posited that the uplift of the race rests with the Black woman. She uttered the now-famous passage, “Only the BLACK WOMAN can say ‘when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole Negro race enters with me.’” (p. 63). She opined that Black women were a moral center uniquely situated to provide leadership and action. Black women’s intellect and leadership capabilities must be developed through formal education. In 1914, at the age of 56, Cooper began doctoral study at Columbia University, later transferring to the Sorbonne. In her 1924 dissertation, she explored attitudes of the French on slavery and politics. At the age of 65, Cooper became the fourth Black woman in American history to earn a doctorate of philosophy and the first African American woman born a slave to do a doctoral defense at the Sorbonne.

Always connecting praxis to her scholarship, she helped organize the Colored Woman’s League (1892); founded the Colored Women’s Young Women’s
Eager to see the world, Woodson secured a position as general superintendent of education in Manila working for the U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs, where he taught English, health, and agriculture, and then traveled to Asia, North Africa, and Europe, spending a semester at the Sorbonne studying French. Graduate studies officials at University of Chicago would not recognize his Berea degree, forcing Woodson to earn a bachelor’s degree at University of Chicago, which he received in 1907. With two degrees from University of Chicago, he enrolled in the doctoral program at Harvard and was the first African American of slave ancestry and only the second African American, after Du Bois, to receive a PhD from Harvard.

In 1915 Woodson and associates established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH), later changed to the Association for the Study of Afro American Life and History. They wanted the organization, founded as an historical society to exclusively research Black America, to be ideologically and politically independent. In 1916 the association established the Journal of Negro History.

Philosophically, Woodson wanted to free Black history from White intellectual bias, by presenting Blacks as active participants in history. He wanted both Black and White people to be exposed to the hidden contributions of Blacks and advocated for Negro history in school curriculum. He valued the thinking of historian James Harvey Robinson on a “new history” that serves social change.

Financing ASNLH proved difficult and Woodson raised funds from White corporate philanthropists. Accusations of “radicalism” forced him to declare loyalty to American capitalism. As he struggled to support ASNLH and himself, Woodson became principal of the Armstrong Manual Training School in Washington, D.C., in 1918, then dean of the School of Liberal Arts at Howard University, and finally dean at West Virginia Collegiate Institute. In 1922 he began to devote himself full time to ASNLH, research, and writing. His prominence grew as he wrote newspaper editorials and made regular contributions to the Marcus Garvey organization’s Negro World. His books on Negro churches, orators, history, and perspectives derived from crisis were given book-length treatments, which constituted an alternative curriculum for the education of many African Americans.
In 1926 Woodson and his association announced Negro History Week, a special commemoration of the birthdays of Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, and Abraham Lincoln, as well as a celebration of the achievements of Blacks throughout history. Fifty years later, the celebration was expanded to become Black History Month.

In 1933 Woodson published his most celebrated work, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, which critiqued the established school curriculum as grounded in racism and Eurocentric thought and leading to the colonial subordination of African people in the United States. Woodson described his view of the damaging effect of existing schooling on the Black psyche in the passage, “When you control a man’s thinking, you do not have to worry about his actions. . . . He will find his proper place and will stay in it” (p. xiii). This type of education would not allow Black people to achieve unity and racial advancement.

Woodson founded the *Negro History Bulletin* in 1937 to reach beyond the audience of the *Journal of Negro History*. The *Bulletin*, directed at schools and young people, was low-priced and used accessible language. Each issue was sold for $1 though it cost $2 to produce it. Woodson’s commitment to make Black history accessible to elementary and secondary school students led him to write books for school children accompanied by study guides, chapter questions, and recommended projects (Woodson, 1928a, 1928b, 1935, 1939). Throughout the 1940s, the widely respected Woodson worked tirelessly to popularize Black history, maintain the ASNHL, and continue publication efforts. He was honored with the prestigious Spingarn Medal from the NAACP along with several honorary degrees. He died in 1950, and in 1984 the U.S. Postal Service honored him with a memorial stamp.

**First-Time Tragedy, Second-Time Farce**

Exploring the past is an empty exercise if we do not learn lessons applicable to the future. Historical analysis must be connected to social analysis. As educational and curriculum theorists and practitioners, we must ask questions and make arguments lest we stumble blindly into the future. The neglected legacy of Black (Kemetic and African American) educational history can provide valuable perspective for analyzing today’s myriad social issues that stem from globalization and privatization of the public.

Public education, a function of the state, is increasingly influenced by hegemonic forces. Ideological contestation for state power is fierce. The global economy stands on a fragile foundation, as political struggle for control and domination spreads instability. The escalating challenges of education join war, human displacement, and destruction, impacting all peoples of the world. Over 150 years of corporate wealth accumulation has created an extreme pyramid. Knowledge management is the objective of the gatekeepers, while knowledge attainment and distribution is demanded by the excluded. Politics is the concentrated expression of economics. Shifts in the power structure and political framework have accompanied the economic changes and neoliberalism, or the belief in free markets and minimal governmental intervention has become the dominant theory of governance. The political parties become indistinguishable in the neoliberal state, in which the government limits its provision of social services and protects the new pyramided economic structure, champions private property, and disrupts opposition. The politics of exclusion have replaced the protection of the public and the individual.

There is a major assault on public education (Watkins, 2012) cloaked by discourses on choice, crisis, school failure, the achievement gap, racist practices, funding inequities, teacher preparation, leadership, and organizational issues. Public education is being downsized and disinvested. New initiatives make funding for public education contingent on states holding teachers and schools accountable for achievement. Privatizers of education need a quantitative measure suitable to public scrutiny in standardized tests that connect school achievement to profitability. The public can easily understand shuttering unprofitable enterprises. Declarations of failing, poor-performing, and underachieving schools and ill-suited teachers are now a part of our daily discourse. Universal public education is under threat. Plutocrats want a new educational system to help them dominate the globalized world economy.

Beneath the rhetoric of educational reform is a gross transfer of wealth to the private sector. There’s no question that public education fails tens of millions of disadvantaged students—especially Black and Brown students in urban areas and millions of
students in rural areas. However, the fact is that unless and until there is a qualitative improvement in the desperate social conditions surrounding low-achieving schools, there will continue to be huge gaps in achievement. The decimation, standardization, routinization, militarization, and privatization of public education are now fact. Haunted by ghosts of generations of “savage inequalities” (Kozol, 1992), the defense of public education is inextricably connected to democracy, justice, humanity, and civilization.

References and Further Readings


The biographical and documentary milieu represents a significant yet still-emerging genre of inquiry in the field of curriculum studies. While students, teachers, and professors in curriculum studies devote much attention to conceptualizing curriculum theory and researching educational policy and its influence upon educational studies and practices, the biographical and documentary milieu offers educators an opportunity to better understand the process by which theory and policy develop, situating a fluidity of ideas within their historical and conceptual context. By ascertaining context—the lives of educators and the transformative evolution of ideas as depicted in documents—these forms of inquiry offer insights for better understanding the fundamental concepts, beliefs, and practices that provide the foundations and commonplaces for the field of curriculum studies.

Context of Biographical Inquiry and Modes of Expression

In curriculum studies, biographical research typically focuses on the life of an individual who is involved in the field of education and more specifically in the field of curriculum (Garraty, 1957; Oates, 1986). Life history writing, oral history, memoir, autobiography, and life narrative are among the other research methodologies that are often associated with the term biography (Eakin, 2004; Josselson & Lieblich, 1993; Roberts, 2002). These forms of inquiry, while also focusing upon the nature of the individual, are somewhat different in their research orientation and are often situated primarily within social science research traditions. Biographical research, in contrast, is typically aligned more with the humanities—the fields of English, cultural studies, and history—where the researcher focuses on the process of writing as much as on the written.

Theoretical Perspectives of Biographical Research

Five basic modes of biographical research exist in curriculum studies: the scholarly chronicle, intellectual biography, life history writing, memoir biography, and narrative biography. Works based on these orientations may appear as articles, vignettes, chapters, monographs, or full-length books. While each orientation has its advantages in presenting a biographical subject, a biographer may move from one genre to another during the research process as the biography’s intent and purpose become more clearly defined. As lives of their subjects are being
researched, biographers also are examining their own interpretive voices.

The scholarly chronicle depicts an individual life and represents the most fundamental and prevalent type of biographical research in curriculum studies. In this approach, the subject’s story is typically told in chronological order, detailing the subject’s significant acts and giving precedence to the quest plot, or stages in the subject’s life pattern. While this research orientation is often considered synonymous with biography, the scholarly chronicle is quite different from other types of biographical inquiry. While appreciated by the general reader for its clear, categorical, researched, biographers also are examining their own interpretive voices.

The scholarly chronicle depicts an individual life and represents the most fundamental and prevalent type of biographical research in curriculum studies. In this approach, the subject’s story is typically told in chronological order, detailing the subject’s significant acts and giving precedence to the quest plot, or stages in the subject’s life pattern. While this research orientation is often considered synonymous with biography, the scholarly chronicle is quite different from other types of biographical inquiry. While appreciated by the general reader for its clear, categorical, Dragnet approach (a “just the facts” style of writing), at times this approach is criticized in scholarly circles for what can become a pedantic and seemingly faux-objective style of narration that places too much emphasis upon fact and perceived truth rather than interpretation. Yet, scholarly chronicles may display the finest interpretive characteristics of biographical research, including if not requiring an engaging writing style as a way to fend off a clear yet plodding account. Jay Martin’s The Education of John Dewey (2002) represents the strength of this research style, offering great insights into Dewey’s beliefs and motives as influenced by life experiences, presented to the reader in a fluid, chronological, and engaging literary style.

Intellectual biography dismisses the importance of a chronological structure and instead focuses on ideas, basing the narrative on a conceptual analysis of the subject’s motives and beliefs. Those who write intellectual biography do not avoid interpretation but rather recognize and accept the need for analysis. They have overcome the qualitative research “angst of interpretation” and avoid what Carl Rollyson (2005) has referred to as “biographical apologia,” works based on interviews and filled with description but with no interpretation of motives and feelings. Intellectual biographers overcome the intrusive nature of inquiry through care, self-reflection, and insight. John Dewey and American Democracy by Robert Westbrook (1991) represents this type of biographical portrayal.

Life history writing, or the narrative study of lives, follows the social science research traditions of oral history and narrative discourse and, in particular, theoretical constructs from sociology and psychology. Along with the biographical quest story of the subject’s life, life history writers deal with issues of generalizability, social interaction—social structure, and reliability and validity, resulting in case study paradigms. In the field of education and curriculum studies, life history studies have been particularly important in the area of teacher education with studies of teachers’ lives and the experience of first-year teachers (Bullough, 2008; Goodson, 2008).

Memoir biography is a relatively new genre in the field of curriculum studies and is distinct from autobiography and memoir. In this genre, the narrative brings forward the biographer’s motives for portraying the biographical subject along with the reflections and insights on the life of the subject. The writer’s interpretative narrative is presented along with the depiction of the biographical subject. The story of the subject’s life is told in relation to that of the biographer, and the telling of the story influences how the reader relates to the subject. Philip Jackson’s John Dewey and the Philosopher’s Task (2002), in what the author describes as a concatenation of Dewey’s thoughts, represents one example of this approach. At times memoir biography has also been described as “artobiography” as a way to feature the aesthetic dimensions of the research query.

Narrative biography conveys the story of an individual’s life primarily as defined by the subject in relation to the reader. While the biographer selects facts and recognizes that certain interpretations are more significant than others, this genre neither gives a comprehensive account of the subject’s entire life nor attempts to present the ultimate interpretation of the biographical figure. Although narrative biographers are aware of their emotions and reactions to the subject, the significance of the biography is constructed in relation to the anticipated needs and interests of the reader. Alan Ryan’s John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism (1995) represents this type of biographical research.

Listing a complete set of biographical types is impossible due to the continual development of new forms, both content-oriented and process-oriented. Feminist biography (Alpern, Antler, Perry, & Scobie, 1992; Ascher, DeSalvo, & Ruddick, 1984; Wagner-Martin, 1994) and Black biography (Backscheider, 1997) are among the content-related types of biography that emphasize identity and the restoration of the
“invisible” subject. Other configurations of biographical inquiry are constantly emerging as researchers redefine fact with fiction and center upon the life of an individual and/or document, for example, William Schubert’s Love, Justice and Education: John Dewey and the Utopians (2009).

In the past, some research orientations were defined as “interpretive biography” and added greatly to the developing field of educational biography; however, this descriptor is somewhat of a misnomer for 21st-century research since all biography has become viewed, in some form, as interpretive. Biography continues to have a well-developed yet evolving relationship to autobiography, memoir, and narrative research in education (Denzin, 1989; Epstein, 1991; Rollyson, 2008). Even with the popularity of biographical inquiry and the growing interest in prosopography (group biography), there remains little consensus on terminology. For example, although the term auto/biography is used by some qualitative researchers, biography and autobiography are far more different than conveyed by any solidus or slash.

Contemporary Concerns and Issues in Biographical Inquiry

Fine distinctions cannot always be drawn among the different styles of qualitative research used in curriculum studies. Yet, the ways in which the biographer depicts the biographical subject and approaches research materials—documents, interview transcripts, and material culture—can clarify distinctions in the research methodology. The interpretive issues of biographical inquiry help biographical researchers define themselves and their craft as contrasted to other research milieus that also devote attention to the life of an individual (Kridel, 1998). Less significant to the biographer are the defining methodological topics of the ethnographer and oral historian, such as insider–outsider relationships, interviewee sense of trust, and triangulation.

Some interpretive issues for the educational biographer who works in the area of curriculum studies include:

Establishing the biographer’s voice. As Paul Murray Kendall (1965) noted, biographers must draw from the coldness of documents the warmth of a life being lived. Good biographers are cautious where they tread and are well aware that little objectivity exists in their portraits of subjects. Yet, their efforts are constantly under self-scrutiny during the researching and writing process. Their voice and perspective emerges, drawn from documents, facts, psychological evidence, and feeling for their subjects, and done so with constant self-reflection and a degree of self-accusation as they pose questions about their own motives and the motives of their biographical subjects. Sensitive biographers are able to create a sense that their figures are speaking in their own voices; yet, researchers are well aware of their subjectiveness and their interpretive perspectives.

Portraying the biographical subject’s character rather than merely describing a life. Few readers are satisfied with “just the facts,” and biographers accept a responsibility of moving through speculative and inferential ground in their quest to portray the character (or an aspect) of their subjects or, if dismissing any notion of “an original identity” and unified “essential self,” then presenting the different dimensions and motives of individuals. In many respects, ascertaining the nature of character may be considered a fundamental interpretive research act in writing biography; however, this search is recognized by biographers as dangerous and an area where some fear to tread. Leon Edel, in an allusion to Henry James’s work The Figure in the Carpet, has popularized this interpretive quest as seeking “the figure under the carpet” (Edel, 1959). Edel calls on the biographer to discover, in the telling of a life, the subject’s “private mythology” by developing an ability to recognize “the reverse of a tapestry”—to understand events and behaviors that took place as well as those activities and gestures that could have occurred but did not.

Defining the parameters of research “accuracy.” This issue is perhaps even more complicated for curricularists to determine in light of the field’s contested views of the significance of facts and the construction of truth and in recognition of contemporary autobiographical narratives where impressions of events do not necessarily coincide with the narrative accounts. While the biographer’s speculation and interpretation can never be bound, Kendall (1965) approached accuracy in a different manner: Biography, in fact, serves to display one’s imagination limited by truth, and facts serve to inspire interpretive
revelation. Edel underscored this same point by noting that biographers imagine not fact but form and structure. Thus, the concepts of accuracy do not bind the researcher but, rather, provide opportunities to expand the forms of truth.

Determining the biographer’s relation to and fascination with the subject. For both the researcher and the reader, this issue is most apparent in memoir biography, but all forms of biographical inquiry require self-conscious articulation of what draws the researcher to the subject (Secrest, 2007). In essence, biographers are conscious and constantly assessing their own relation to their subjects. One of the more basic interpretive risks is when biographers become influenced by their fascination with the subject so that the researcher’s admiration and identification with the individual overwhelms any sense of empathy and understanding. The fear is not a biographer’s loss of objectivity; such a state never (or rarely) truly exists. Yet, fascination with the subject must be recognized and set aside in what could be construed as a “willing suspension of blind or misguided fascination.” Biographers accept a type of relationship where they know their subjects in special ways and balance love with reason and fascination with fairness.

Context of Documentary Inquiry and Modes of Expression

Documentary research, serving as both a complement to and extension of biographical inquiry, takes on different meanings in the field of curriculum studies. In one sense, documentary research becomes synonymous with archival research and addresses issues related to the role and use of documents and public and private records. In another sense, documentary research produces artifacts and material culture through artistic representation, moving and still imagery, and sound recordings. Brian Schultz, former chair of the American Educational Research Association’s Biographical and Documentary Research Special Interest Group, has noted that many researchers in the field of curriculum studies see documentary inquiry as the art and science of producing the documentation itself and a form of aesthetic, arts-based inquiry. Thus, the act of “doing documentary research” becomes the production of written accounts, photography, moving image, and recordings of phenomena in the social world. While the biographer attends to content and form, the documentarian blends inquiry and aesthetics to present imagery of the individual.

Documentary Forms as Archival Inquiry

The documentary milieu as a form of archival inquiry seems most pronounced in the area of history, with many curriculum historians working extensively with primary documents. Ironically, within the tradition of the social sciences and the field of qualitative research, with its emphasis upon generating data through various means of inquiry, the use of extant documents from the past and present seems somewhat overshadowed. Yet, the field of sociology maintains a longstanding and popular tradition of documentary inquiry and, with continual evolution of hybrid and virtual documentary sources from the Internet and email, this form of data, evidence, and documentation will become more commonplace as qualitative and quantitative researchers recognize that they must appraise and ascertain the provenance of information (McCulloch, 2004). From this perspective, material culture takes the form of documentation, falling into basic categories of personal, public, and official documents (Hill, 1993). Personal documents include correspondence, journals, autobiographical writings, and memoir. Public documents typically comprise published and publicly presented documents including newspapers, magazines, flyers, books, etc. Official documentation includes administrative documents representing agencies and organizations.

Documentary Forms as Aesthetic Interpretation

In another of its forms, documentary research couples dissonant paradigms of managing and ascertaining documentary evidence, as conceived in the traditional social sciences, with creating and formulating aesthetic presentations, as conceived from the arts and humanities. Fundamental documentary perspectives include modes of representation (images, diaries, publications, sound recordings, monuments and memorials, etc.) and modes of engagement as a creative enterprise of presentation, that is, the aesthetic presentation of documentary radio, film, and
photography (Nichols, 2001). The aesthetics of documentary studies brings attention to the modes of narration (documentary as a form of storytelling) and the protocols of subjectivities (the alignment of different perspectives and interpretations as part of the documentary items; Austin & de Jong, 2008).

### Theoretical Perspectives of Documentary Research

With the use of primary and secondary materials, the researcher must assess and analyze the documents themselves before extracting content. Appraising documents typically includes four criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning (Scott, 2006). Authenticity addresses whether the materials are genuine or of questionable origin, and whether their production is original and reliable and has not been subsequently altered. If the document has been transformed, through textual editing, marginals, or other means, the researcher seeks to clearly identify those alterations. Authenticity is typically viewed as the most fundamental criterion for all documentary research in education since the confirmation of authorship, place, and date are typically determined before any researcher continues working with the document. Once determined that the document is “genuine and of unquestionable origin,” the material becomes “valid” as an artifact, although its content may still be questionable or subsequently found to be “incorrect.”

While a narrative account or any form of qualitative data may be original and genuine—authentic—the content may still be distorted in some manner. Thus, a second criterion in appraising materials is determining credibility and whether the document’s information is honest and accurate. Such a rendering was much easier before our postmodern era and the recognition of constructed truths. At times, classroom descriptions and narratives suggest that the author may not have been in a position to formulate a faithful explanation or that the description was intentionally made to alter the record for dubious motives or unintentionally made merely by witlessness or inexperience. All accounts become biased in some manner, and the documentary researcher is constantly ascertaining motives similar to the biographer as a way to detect distortion of the material.

A third criterion, representativeness, seeks to determine whether the document is typical of such accounts—perhaps described as “reliable”—and whether the material represents a collection of produced materials rather than an idiosyncratic portrayal. A document’s representativeness may be distorted with the passing of time as the survival rate of certain materials becomes greater since the items may have been viewed as less valuable and, thus, stored away, rarely seen after their point of origination, and thus preserved. The acquisitions process—archival staff members “weeding” the collection (eliminating what are considered nonessential items)—may also distort provenance and representativeness. Similarly, some important documents do not survive because their great significance caused them to become used and worn and, subsequently, discarded while less important documents survive because they are so little used. Matters of generalizability and reliability are constantly hovering above documentary researchers as they examine materials and decide what items should be drawn upon in their work. Interestingly, John Scott (2006) recognized that determining whether documents are fully authentic, credible, and representative may never be able to be confirmed by the researcher; thus, he reverses the process and asks whether the materials may be deemed as inauthentic, noncredible, or unrepresentative. This has led to a perspective described as “methodological distrust” where researchers take a general approach of questioning all materials and demanding that documents must prove own authenticity, credibility, and representativeness before being used.

A final criterion—meaning—represents the textual analysis of the document and whether the evidence is clear and comprehensible. Coupled with this semiotic and intertextual examination is whether the document’s content is appropriately situated within its historical context; this is ascertained, in part, by the method in which meaning is constructed and perceived by its originally intended audience. While these four criteria are fundamental, Gary McCulloch (2004) underscored a fifth criterion of document analysis: theorization—the anticipated theoretical, hermeneutic framework for interpreting the material. Such theoretical perspectives are commonplace for those in the field of curriculum studies. Documentary research, however, underscores an important dimension to theorization and the construction of meaning.
of a document: the reconstruction of a text’s meaning as it moves from author to audience. Scott (2006) noted the transition of intended content (the author’s intended meaning), the received content (meaning as constructed by the reader/perceiver), and internal meaning (transactional understandings arrived from the intended and received meanings).

Related analysis and assessment of documents occurs as materials are ascertained as being public or private, primary or secondary (noting that a primary source need not be the sole original document; primary materials are first-hand documents), and whether the researcher has direct-proximate contact (being able to examine the original or primary document) or indirect-mediate access (viewing only a facsimile or scanned e-version).

Contemporary Concerns and Issues in Documentary Inquiry

While the criteria for assessing materials remains foundational for all forms of documentary research, interpretive issues arise that serve to determine the use of documents. Among the numerous issues are those addressing copyright and archival access, ascertaining the archival significance of documents, and determining the ethics of documentation. These topics remain crucial for documentary researchers and biographers and are markedly different from issues that arise in other forms of qualitative research.

Copyright and archival access may well prove most cumbersome to documentary researchers (Hill, 1993). When researchers seek access to materials at an archival repository, the collection may be unavailable for examination (closed) or its usage may be restricted in specified ways; for example, control over the reproduction of unpublished materials would not permit the contents to be quoted. Thus, just because a researcher may be able to examine documents, the use of that information may be controlled and, if so, the researcher typically signs release forms that specify restrictions and guidelines for fair use, privacy, and literary rights. Ironically, as the archival world has become more litigious in recent years, in contrast, our web-based society has become more of a “sampling” generation, duplicating whatever is on the Internet. This has allowed some researchers not to recognize the implications of fair use and copyright; yet, for the documentary researcher, few issues have become more important or more complex.

While the details of fair use and copyright will always mystify scholars, archivists, and librarians, certain basic distinctions can be made as a way to assist and guide the researcher. Fair use clauses pertain to a researcher’s right to draw upon the content of documents, on a limited basis, in order to advance scholarship. In contrast, copyright consists primarily as legal protection of documents produced by an individual and, typically, addresses matters pertaining to their commercial value. Thus, documentary researchers may gain access to primary documents and draw upon content to advance scholarship through the concept of fair use; however, if researchers proceed to duplicate and disseminate information from documents, thereby possibly reducing the commercial value of the materials, then they may be violating copyright.

Copyright law often becomes unclear and indistinct and, at times, is ultimately determined through litigation. Issues are further complicated for the documentary researcher by the differentiation between copyright and property rights. Archives serve to preserve documents in their collections where they establish guidelines for usage and safety of the materials; yet, they may not “own” the items nor hold copyright protection. By definition, the institution may maintain property rights but the repository may not have been given copyright release from the owner/originator of the materials. And, in fact, donors typically do not hold copyright control of all contents in their professional collections. For example, many archival papers of curriculum leaders include correspondence from colleagues. These letters are copyrighted by definition by the author. However, those letters received from others fall within property rights control of the possessor; yet, when donated to an archives, copyright of the contents of those received letters remains with the author. Thus, a documentary researcher working with the William H. Schubert Curriculum Studies Collection, housed at Georgia Southern University, may draw upon and quote the contents of letters by Schubert that are contained in the collection. However, letters sent to Schubert by colleagues that are
held in the collection may be read but, officially, may not be quoted and presented publicly without the author’s permission. Thus, while the archival institution may permit the documentary researcher to examine the materials, the repository may not have the right to grant permission for public use, that is, the dissemination of quoted and/or reproduced material.

Another issue in documentary research pertains to ascertaining the significance of materials and information. This concern represents an eternal quest of documentary researchers since, with the passing of time, the most mundane item can conceivably become profound and revelatory due to different settings and context. Researchers develop an uncanny knack for sensing connections among documents—concomitant knowledge—where significance arises not from a particular fact but from a larger gestalt. This issue pertains not only to working with documents but also in terms of what will ultimately appear in the final work. All researchers know that not every documented point can be included in their research; judgments must be made in terms of what to include. Thus, the documentary researcher is engaged in the quest to locate documents but also must develop the ability to cope with the archival clutter while engaged in the chase to locate the significance of documents. In addition to what can be included in one’s research narrative is the issue of what should be included. Documentary researchers (and biographical researchers) are constantly making a series of difficult ethical judgments concerning whether certain known information, drawn from private documents, should be presented to the public.

Recognizing these inherent and necessary ethical judgments that must be made by the researcher becomes another important issue of concern within the documentary milieu (Eakin, 2004). Many researchers believe that their work may include any personal detail—characteristics, sexuality, questionable and/or immoral behavior, beliefs—since such information engenders insights for the reader. Documentary researchers and biographers hold great power as they decide whether they should introduce private facts about one’s life, information that has often been concealed and would not be known otherwise without their intervention. Public knowledge of an individual’s personal feelings—rivalries with other academics, objectionable feelings or language used in private conversation, fears as confessed in personal correspondence—add to the reader’s understanding of curriculum decisions and policies. Further, unpublished drafts of policy documents and obscure conceptual positions and stances taken early in one’s career offer insight into understanding the field of curriculum studies; however, documentary researchers must decide whether such partially completed statements should be presented publicly. Biographical and documentary researchers believe their role is to portray their subjects but also to guard their figures from unnecessary speculation and conjecture, and, for this reason, certain topics may not be introduced since they do not further the intent of the biographical and documentary portrayal.

Conclusion

Biographical and documentary research has developed into a thriving and unique milieu in curriculum studies, and its concerns and issues have led to a greater understanding of the field’s commonplaces. Yet, while many educational researchers may write about individuals, their work does not necessarily represent this biographical milieu, and, similarly, while all researchers use some type of document in their work, they may not be engaged in the documentary research milieu. Biographical and documentary research is guided and defined by its unique research concerns and issues.

As a milieu in curriculum studies, biographical and documentary research offers great insights for educational policy makers, curriculum leaders, teachers, and students into the intellectual process of conceptualizing curriculum theory and establishing educational policy. This research milieu also offers a form of profound professional development since biography permits curricularists to reexamine their lives and careers and to inspire comparison. The biographical and documentary milieu transcends boundaries so that the researcher may present the universal in a single human life. This is when the sweeping gestures of biographical and documentary research, the power and force of the narrative, enter the field of curriculum studies with great promise and power.
References and Further Readings


In To Dwell With a Boundless Heart (1998), David W. Jardine encourages us to see curriculum not as discrete subject matters or what goes on inside the classrooms but as an integrated ecological whole. This ecological whole is built on the idea of curriculum as an interrelated, generative, and ongoing domain, full of rich interpretations of and dialogues with the social, historical, and political world. Indeed, it is not difficult to find signs of powerful influences of the major social events and political debates—both national and global—on curriculum and policy making. For example, the Sputnik crisis and Cold War science paranoia spurred the United States to adopt the National Defense Education Act and revamp its science curriculum; the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s witnessed the emergence of race as a central issue in curricular discourse; the immigration debates made their way to the controversies of bilingual and multicultural education policy. Even though these are not formally educational events, especially curriculum events, they have never been far removed from the everyday realities of the classroom. Thus, the ecological insight might be a basis for considering that curriculum, at least in part, is the policy milieu. Thinking about curriculum as policy milieu highlights the deeply political character of curriculum as the sensitive barometer of social and political events; it also highlights curriculum as the process open to debates, negotiations, and renewals, the process by which pedagogical actors—students, teachers, parents, administrators—are governed and govern themselves (Kirst & Walker, 1971).

Contemporary Concerns About Curriculum and the Policy Milieu

What comes to mind when we think about curriculum policies? We think about a variety of macro-, meso-, and micro-level mandates such as learning standards (e.g., the Common Core State Standards), language policy, teacher licensing, teacher evaluation, school certification and accreditation, standardized testing, ability grouping, and school uniforms, to name a few. Where does policy come from? Does the policy milieu pertain only to the meeting rooms of local boards of education, district and system administrators, national think tanks, and transnational entities such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development? Who decides and who benefits? Should curriculum policy development be
exclusively the prerogative of policy elites and corporate interests—the Carnegie Foundation and Pearson come to mind as two of the biggest players in education policy—or should it engage education researchers and professors as well as the students, parents, PK–12 teachers, and the general public? If the students themselves are part of the curricula (see Chapter 29, “Students as Curriculum,” this volume), should they also play a role in the process of policy development? Are teachers and students simply the passive recipients of curriculum policies, or are they also mediators of policy outcomes by actively interpreting, negotiating, and reshaping the contents and meanings of the curricula? How do competing values regarding what to teach/learn and how to teach/learn manifest in concrete everyday policy “plays” in the classroom? How do we account for the policy–practice gap, as well as the unintended consequences of policies?

In practice, curriculum is a conflict-ridden policy milieu, contested by different agendas, interests, and priorities. For instance, teachers often feel defeated by the enormous pressure levied on them: “If the school fails, if the students do not perform to the testing standards, we are the one to blame. Year in and year out, we are burnt out.” The demand for increased teacher autonomy, however, butt heads with the powerful standardizing movement that links higher test scores with the revival of U.S. human capital and the economy. Students also lament that their favorite arts programs disappear with budget cuts. Given the worrisome performance of U.S. students on some international tests, policy makers have focused on more “relevant” subjects such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, to the detriment of the arts and humanities. While influential groups such as accrediting associations, testing agencies, and venture philanthropists exert a standardizing influence on curriculum, voices from (but not limited to) immigrants; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities; religious groups; and teachers’ unions call for destandardized curricular spaces to allow cultural, religious, sexual, and professional pluralism to flourish. We have no reason to assume that policies travel to the classroom undistorted, or that what appears in the textbook has not been impacted by political agendas or reflected in what is actually taught in the classroom. The everyday curricular activities are precisely the “milieu” in which competing policy parameters intersect and the policy–practice gaps are continually being produced and negotiated.

Importantly, curriculum as policy milieu is not limited to the realms of early, middle, and secondary education. Postsecondary venues such as colleges, universities, and professional training institutions are also sites of contention regarding contemporary curricular concerns. For example, when marketing plans impact program development in teacher education institutions, the long reach of corporate influence on the curriculum is felt at the university policy table as much as it is in the public school classroom. Although it would be easy to regard such manifestations of curriculum as an effect of policy, it is not that simple. In an attempt to remain solvent, colleges of education have turned to outside marketing firms to assist in student recruitment and retention. Market research then reveals what administrators and on-the-ground teachers are socialized to believe is important regarding teaching and learning, but despite their own misgivings, individuals and institutions are compelled to comply. These perceptions, which are fueled by the interests and agendas outlined previously in this chapter and reinforced by the popular media, are translated into needs and knowledge gaps by marketing firms. These so-called needs and knowledge gaps then manifest as policy as colleges develop professional programming that is responsive to these manufactured shortcomings and manifest as curriculum in programs that are revamped or newly created to remediate and address these supposed gaps.

In addition, curriculum as policy milieu is an expanding field with emerging research paradigms informed by national circumstances and global comparisons. For instance, the long-standing racial tensions in the United States inflamed by the 2014 shooting of Black male Michael Brown have invited curricular scholars to reflect on educational interventions in the injurious racial divides in the American schools and society. Moreover, the international testing regime Programme for International Student Assessment stimulates the adoption of performance-based assessments and the governing of educational space by numbers across the globe. It also spurs comparisons of different countries’ curricular policies and the country-specific social and political issues that complicate their formulation and implementation (Meyer & Benavot, 2013).
Context of Curriculum and the Policy Milieu

Instead of parsing out “context” as local, national, and global—as these levels are as much hierarchically as horizontally linked—we think of context as a triangle of sites, players, and stakeholders that are caught up in complex power relations. We consider players and stakeholders as part of the context, as they exert varying degrees of political leverage upon curriculum change, regardless of whether such leverage is translated into the official policies. Take for example the Occupy Movement that began in 2011. Building on the worldwide outcry against economic and social inequality, many U.S. educators mobilized social media, youth organizations, and grassroots activists to deliberate an Occupy curriculum and prevent public education from serving the 1% at the expense of the 99% of the society (see Occupy Education, 2012). Here the context of curriculum involves not only the sites and events of the movements but also interactive players and stakeholders and their competing agendas, including the Obama administration, state and federal departments of education, powerful philanthropists such as Bill Gates, corporate education contractors, school reform lobbyists, teachers, parents, and youth themselves. The policy milieu is coterminous with the broad context of social, political, and economic struggles that reverberate in classrooms and are integral to the way we make sense of curricula.

Beyond the national boundaries, we see the global convergence of policy rhetoric in different societies, cultures, and geographical locations. The ideals of freedom, choice, equality, and child-centeredness have pervaded educational reforms across the globe such that it is almost impossible to think about a national curriculum that does not follow, or at least attempt to follow, these ideals. Without neglecting local idiosyncrasies in the enactment of world-level policy frameworks (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Carney, Rappleye, & Šilova, 2012), we acknowledge that the intricate intertwining of national imageries in the global horizon suggests that the milieu of curriculum policy is always-already transnational. On the other end of the scale, the milieu of curriculum policy can be individual and microcosmic. Students and teachers bring funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) from their cultural, linguistic, and economic backgrounds. The understandings and practices from such microcosmic contexts significantly mediate how curriculum is interpreted and enacted in the school.

Theory of the Policy Milieu

Curriculum as policy milieu engages continual theoretical debates, first of all, over what to teach, how to teach, and who the child should be. These are not self-explanatory questions; scholars and educators of various stripes have attempted their answers from different standpoints, mobilizing elements of tradition, community, science, and individual judgment. An early landmark in this debate is Spencer’s Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical (1861), which posed the question “What knowledge is of most worth?” It argues for expanded curricular offerings in lower schools to include practical subjects such as home economics, agriculture, driver training, sex education, and industrial arts. Genevan philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) in his Émile, or on Education (1762) expressed his curricular ideal not in terms of particular techniques of imparting knowledge but in fostering developmentally appropriate education for pupils’ natural growth, self-governing, and moral cultivation. Influential educational philosophers such as A. S. Neill (1960), John Dewey (1902), and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (Pinloche, 1901) left their marks on the history of progressive education by advocating for an organic curriculum process based on children’s emergent interests, needs, and relationships.

Such historical efforts in defining the curriculum, though not strictly expressed in the language of policy, form the value basis and philosophical foundations of contemporary curriculum discourses and practices. Should curricula impart useful, practical skills for life outside the school or should schools cultivate sociability, humanness, compassion, and dispositions for a civilized communal life? Should schools aim for developing critical minds or malleable citizens of the society? Policy responses to what students need to learn, what counts for quality education, and what elements constitute desirable citizens are not a field of consensus; notions of what constitutes a “good” education for students from particular populations and demographics are often mediated by
where one situates on the political, social, and economic spectrum. Similarly, different curriculum ideologies and guidelines flourish in a wide spectrum of schools in the United States that includes charter schools, magnet schools, private faith-based schools, Montessori schools, and international schools, to name only a few.

Curriculum as and in the policy milieu also engages continual theoretical debates over the role of culture in teaching other people’s children (Delpit, 1995), that is, immigrants, ethnic minorities, and students of color. In an effort to understand why immigrants and students of color experience continuous difficulties in schools, the lens of cultural discontinuity is invoked to explain the gap between students’ home culture and that of the school. On the one hand is the cultural deficit model. This model holds that students who do not come from the White, middle-class mainstream experience a cultural mismatch between what is taught, practiced, and valued at home and at school. Family and community linguistic, cultural, and value systems are considered deficits that impede students’ successful acculturation of the educative norms. Policy responses following this model tend to locate the problems at home, tacitly blaming the victims and attempting to better integrate students into the pedagogical mainstream.

Contrary to the cultural deficit model is the cultural competence model. Scholars have called attention to the different but positive values of the reality, history, and perspectives of students’ home culture as integral to their academic competence. Thus, the curriculum policy of culturally relevant pedagogy emphasizes the funds of knowledge students bring to the classroom and the importance of channeling them in academically meaningful ways (Gay, 2010; Gonzalez et al., 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

While the cultural deficit model is criticized for overlooking the history of educational struggles within African American and immigrant communities (Perry, 1993), theories of cultural and social capital lend further insights into how dominant curriculum policies often reproduce, if not exacerbate, the existing inequality. In Unequal Childhoods, sociologist Annette Lareau (2011) explored the differences in parenting styles between White and Black families and argued that such differences, related to class distinctions, influence the children’s performances in and out of school. Specifically, the concerted cultivation model pertains to middle-class parents who consciously structure children’s after-school time and engage them in critical thinking and concerted learning activities. On the other hand, the natural growth model is the type of childrearing often practiced by working-class parents who are more preoccupied with immediate livelihood concerns, less involved in the structure of the child’s afterschool activities, and more inclined toward letting children initiate free play. Lareau’s work sheds lights on how different childrearing styles align or misalign with curriculum expectations to perpetuate educational (dis)advantages and inequality.

The significance of poverty and privilege cannot be underestimated when considering the manifestation and impact of curriculum as policy milieu. Jean Anyon’s (1980) seminal study on the relationship of the curriculum to educational expectations and maintenance of unequal social and economic structures, as well as her subsequent follow-up (1981) on social class and school knowledge, illustrate how theories of social and cultural reproduction, politics and policy, and the economy are key to understanding how our social assumptions and expectations impact how we enact the processes of schooling, education, pedagogy, and the curriculum. Anyon’s studies are also illustrative as to how such assumptions manifest into policy and practice.

In addition, curriculum as policy milieu also engages a wide range of theoretical debates concerning gender, race, sexuality, language, identity, place, and history. Multicultural, multilingual, postcolonial, anti-imperialist, feminist, and critical poststructural theories reject the value-free curricular orientation and focus on the production of inequality and subordination in curricular policies and practices. In short, the kind of theoretical assumptions at play significantly impact how curriculum policies are conceived, implemented, and interpreted. As such, the same policy may take different meanings when considered from different theoretical lenses. In a similar vein as Anyon, Patricia Hinchey (2008) reminded us that our personal contexts have much to do with how we interpret what is good, necessary, and right in terms of deciding what policies, practices, and curricula are “best” for “all kids,” and that what might be reasonable in one’s own vision might not be so for other people’s children (Delpit, 1995). The notion that policy may look and feel very different depending
on the social, political, theoretical, or moral lens employed to interpret such policy is illustrated every day in the news and social media.

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression**

Multiple forms of inquiry have been used to study curriculum as policy milieu, including philosophical, sociological, anthropological, historical, autobiographical, and increasingly comparative inquiry of the international curriculum policy contexts. More often than not, scholarly works use eclectic modes of representation, reflecting the multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary character of curriculum as policy milieu.

The philosophical mode of inquiry is illustrated by educators and theorists who were active during the progressive era or influenced the thinking of that period, including Dewey, Neill, Rousseau, and Maria Montessori. While philosophers are concerned about the purpose of curriculum, empirical modes of inquiry explore how curriculum ideologies intersect with broader sociopolitical parameters—such as class, gender, race, sexuality, immigration—to impact the daily pedagogical lives of teachers, students, and families. Examples of sociological and anthropological inquiry include Mary Metz’s study of disparate experiences in American high schools (1989), Lareau’s study of unequal childhoods among families of different class and racial backgrounds (2011), Stacey Lee’s study of Asian immigrant students’ academic pursuits in American schools (1994), and Lisa Delpit’s study of cultural conflicts in the classroom (1995). Such inquiries also often entail historical accounts of curriculum policies and how such policies reflect, transmit, and reproduce cultural stereotypes and privileges.

The efforts to understand curriculum as autobiographical texts, initiated by pioneers such as William Pinar and Madeleine Grumet in the 1970s and later elaborated by curriculum scholars such as Janet Miller, F. Michael Connelly and D. Jean Clandinin, William Schubert, and William Ayers, have also become a major contemporary curriculum discourse (see Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995/2008). The (auto)biographical approach examines the existential dimensions of how curriculum policy is embodied in life histories, memories, and imaginations. Also noteworthy is that the story-like presentation in Jonathan Kozol’s highly readable *Savage Inequalities* (1991), among other of his best-sellers, highlights a mode of inquiry with which curricular scholars act as public intellectuals to chronicle the frontlines of educational struggles with a language of compassion and sympathy.

We cannot sufficiently understand curriculum and the policy milieu in the absence of policy analysis. Policy analysis is a multimodal and cross-disciplinary enterprise that employs sophisticated methods of inquiry (Heineman, Bluhm, Peterson, & Kearny, 2002). In the time since the policy sciences were first introduced by Harold Lasswell in 1951, a strange contradiction has presented itself: Despite the increasing complexity of the world’s problems and the fact that the majority of governmental and non-profit agencies have explicit policy analysis and evaluation functions, policy scholars lament that policy analysis has not produced a meaningful impact on policy makers and that policy analysts have remained distant from the realm of policy making (deLeon & Vogenbeck, 2007; Heineman et al., 2002). This contradiction is all too evident in the educational and curricular realms; although significant sites of educational *policy work* and *analysis* exist in this milieu—for example, the National Education Policy Center, and Chicagoland Researchers and Advocates for Transformative Education (CREATE)—policy decisions are, as discussed previously in this chapter, more likely to be influenced by corporate (Pearson), philanthropic (Gates Foundation), or political players than those with a direct knowledge of and relationship to curriculum or education scholarship. It is important to remember that in a similar way as the face of policy makers and policy influencers has changed, so has the face of those who study and analyze policy. A quick Internet search reveals that policy “centers” that focus on educational issues are everywhere; universities from Research 1 to Research “None” provide institutional homes to a variety of policy groups, and organizations from across the social and political, private and public spectra fund policy work. But what do these entities do? What is the function (or would that be consequence?) of the multitude of white papers, policy briefs, research endeavors, and pointed critiques? The “truths” that emanate from these entities are often believable and contradictory. To that end,
do they make a contribution or complicate the conversation? In our information-rich society, whatever is made public is fair game for framing the conversation. French philosopher Jacques Ellul (1965) argued that those with the most access to information are also the most susceptible to propaganda. Truth becomes what is consumed, that “truth” frames the conversation, that conversation functions as the knowledge that we have been socialized to accept and, as a consequence, becomes the fodder for policy making and reform.

Curriculum as and within the policy milieu is expressed in a wide variety of modalities by a multitude of players, interests, and stakeholders inside and outside the disciplinary knowledge base. As the composition of policy influencers becomes more public and more diverse, as the number of individuals and entities that seek to impact (if not steward) policy increases, and as the cadre of stakeholders who feel empowered to respond to policy and reform measures grows, the range of possible manifestations of curriculum policy widens. The divergent policy perspectives that are expressed daily in Facebook groups such as “America Doesn’t Want Texas’ Textbooks!,” “Lace to the Top,” “Badass Association of Teachers,” “ReclaimAERA,” and “Teachers’ Letters to Bill Gates” provide a sense of hopefulness that stakeholders on the receiving end of policy initiatives (teachers, parents, students, academics, etc.) can begin to make a contribution to the larger conversation, if not actualize such perspectives into on-the-ground advocacy and activism. Similarly, prolific blogs and bloggers such as Diane Ravitch, @thechalkface, teacherken, and EduShyster, to name just a few, do much to demystify the milieu for the lay community and provoke action. In Chicago, CReATE brings together education researchers to both analyze existing policy as well as to “work collectively to conduct, review, and distribute studies in order to promote public learning and dialogue about education issues” (CReATE, n.d.).

Curriculum as Cause and Effect

What do we mean when we talk about curriculum and the policy milieu? The Oxford English Dictionary would have us understand policy as “public practice” and milieu as “social surroundings.” The Latin root for the word curriculum—the “race course”—seems a fitting symbol for the contested and political nature of curriculum. Seeing curriculum as policy milieu rather than merely the effect of policies compels us to bear witness to the entanglement of pedagogical lives in the complicated ecology. It also redirects our attention to the policy “play” in the day-to-day and keeps our curricular work open to debates and deliberations.

We cannot, however, downplay the degree to which curriculum in numerous manifestations is impacted by policy. Nor can we ignore that curriculum has the capacity to influence and create policy in a multitude of ways. The enactment of curriculum in classrooms, schools, and outside entities not only informs policies that are created and passed but also pushes against those that are developed without input from the immediate stakeholders. This complicatedness related to policy as both action and response creates for an often contested and debated space.

Policies provide important standards and touchstones to whatever context in which a given policy is enacted. Again, the impact that noneducationally related partisan think tanks, corporate entities, and philanthropic agencies and individuals currently have in policy-making circles and on the policy-making process is the subject of conversation in society at large as much as within the disciplinary realms of education and curriculum studies more specifically. As discussed previously, that this work is being influenced (some would argue corrupted) by interests that are often only loosely, if at all, connected to centers of practice and expertise can and does have grave consequences for stakeholders at all levels. The questions of who makes policy, what interests policy serves, and why policy is made must be asked alongside the questions of who should make policy. Should curriculum policy be the domain of educational experts? And if so, how is “expert” defined—and by whom? Is expertise claimed or earned? Are the “experts” the university researchers, policy center fellows, on-the-ground educators, or families and communities? Or, given the nature of contemporary society, does the realm of policy making and implementation belong to those with the loudest voices and the most capital? This is enormously significant; when the work of policy research and policy making is done outside of the conceptual and disciplinary spheres of expertise for which the policy is being made, the potential increases that it does less to serve the public good than to serve the needs of those in power.
References and Further Readings


How do parents and families influence a child’s education? Do they work with the school and teachers, or do they get out of the way? Should they become a part of their local school’s daily operations? If so, how? Are certain families considered a detriment to a child’s educational progress? Or, does a school’s success depend upon how well they include parents and families? Family members are immediate caretakers, which stereotypically signifies mother, father, and child, but family can include many other participants that are invested in a child’s education and general well-being. A child’s daily caregiver may be a paid nanny or a retired grandparent. For instance, children may spend part of their time in the home of one parent and the rest of the time with another. There may be neighbors, aunts, siblings, or family friends who take part in raising a child. In fact, the definition of families becomes more complex with the awareness of single parents, gay parents, homeless children, paid caretakers, and so on. Therefore, the parental and familial milieu does not encompass any one type of family. As the definition of family evolves and progresses so does the definition of family involvement. Although family involvement can still involve bake sales, PTA meetings, and visits for career day, it may also involve sharing major school decisions, full-time parent volunteers for translation or teacher support, or even a family center for adult classes. Some would argue that family involvement is not just something that we should do; it is something that we must do for students to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally (Bauer & Shea, 2003; Henderson, Johnson, Mapp, & Davies, 2007). If parental and community involvement is indeed a necessity, it is essential that we understand how it works, how it fails, and how it will evolve.

Schools exist within communities, the definition of which carries a geographic significance, but with the changing landscape of school boundaries and attendance barriers, the neighborhood surrounding a school may or may not represent the students who attend the school. In some areas of the United States, especially in suburban districts, school boundaries are defined by the town in which the student lives. In rural districts, where more and more smaller towns are closing their schools and sending children to schools that consolidate students from several towns, the school and the home may in fact be very far away from each other. Furthermore, the rise of the school choice movement means that attendance in urban schools may be defined by a lottery, rather than an address. What then defines a community in
The Parental, Familial, and Communal Milieu

–

327

school administrators, or are they only invited in by appointment or when a child is “in trouble?” Are parents a part of the school building only during designated parent–teacher meetings, or are they consistently present in the daily operations as volunteers and tutors? How much parent involvement does a school need to help students succeed? When we imagine parent involvement, we think of parent teacher associations or parent teacher organizations, but what are other models or possibilities for access and inclusion? Some argue that more multidimensional and multifaceted parent–school–community partnerships support more academic success for students (Epstein, 2008). However, the school–community connectivity depends much on the willingness of school personnel and parents. Both parents and teachers want more involvement, but often the current structures and programs do not support the diversity of student and community needs. How can parents and teachers communicate in a way that supports student success? How can the school integrate the community to support a child’s overall well-being?

It should be accepted practice that if a parent has a child attending a school, the parent’s voice should matter. However, this practice varies widely according to parents, schools, and communities. Do parents and community want to have a say? How much involvement should be encouraged? Do families, students, teachers, and schools agree on this? How do these groups communicate with each other? How do linguistic differences increase or decrease the level of support for involvement? Does the culture in some schools of security and protection by metal detectors and even armed teachers create an unwelcoming environment for parents and community, or does it help parents feel their children are safe? If community members pay more in taxes, do they have a stronger voice? How do nonparent community members matter? How do or can parent organizations and/or community activists influence school decisions?

Contemporary Concerns About Parents and Community as Curriculum

Contemporary concerns regarding the community and familial milieu include access, school climate and culture, educational policy, and community organizing. Who has access to a school building? Which parents are considered welcome and for what purpose? Do schools exist as community oases or as fortresses? Parental and familial access to schools and children’s education typically depends upon the level of marginalization of and/or inclusion in the school culture. For instance, does a school have an open-door policy for parents to visit classrooms or school administrators, or are they only invited in by appointment or when a child is “in trouble?” Are parents a part of the school building only during designated parent–teacher meetings, or are they consistently present in the daily operations as volunteers and tutors? How much parent involvement does a school need to help students succeed? When we imagine parent involvement, we think of parent teacher associations or parent teacher organizations, but what are other models or possibilities for access and inclusion? Some argue that more multidimensional and multifaceted parent–school–community partnerships support more academic success for students (Epstein, 2008). However, the school–community connectivity depends much on the willingness of school personnel and parents. Both parents and teachers want more involvement, but often the current structures and programs do not support the diversity of student and community needs. How can parents and teachers communicate in a way that supports student success? How can the school integrate the community to support a child’s overall well-being?

If both parents and school personnel want more involvement, what barriers exist to challenge the creation of stronger partnerships? Some argue that teachers are not effectively trained to support parent and community involvement. With intense focus on curriculum, assessment, and lesson planning, rarely in teacher education programs is there effective focus on parent and community involvement, a subject often found as the last chapter in teacher education textbooks. There is also concern when the cultural background of the teacher significantly differs from the cultural background of the community and families. Given the ever-growing diversity of students and the changing demographics due to migration, researchers argue that there needs to be a better understanding about the link between home, school, and community (Li, 2005). Growing linguistic diversity also renews the call for appropriate programs for multilingual children who work to support their academic and lifelong success (Soto, 1997).

How does policy affect parent and community inclusion or exclusion? Although policy makers recognize the importance of family and community, in practice, there is limited action. Parent and community involvement often becomes less significant than teacher training, school funding, and test scores. Numerous educational policies address family and
community inclusion. The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, for instance, includes a section on parent involvement that asks schools to create programs “based on current research” and that is “geared toward lowering barriers to greater participation by parents in school planning, review, and improvement experienced” (No Child Left Behind, 2001, p. 182). Urban districts often include offices dedicated to community and family involvement, and suburban districts may have staff whose job it is to work with parents and reach out to the community. However, as municipal, state, and federal policy makers and legislators shrink access to public services such as libraries, hospitals, community mental health services, and schools, community members are becoming more aware of systemic barriers to their involvement in school issues. Despite policy, however, even small-scale programs are considered costly and cumbersome, making them less likely to be implemented or enforced.

When schools offer limited parent involvement, some communities work from the outside through grassroots campaigns or community-based organizations to get into schools and contribute to school knowledge. In some urban communities, for instance, parents connect through a community-based organization to create programs that support community integration. Or, if policies and practices consistently practice exclusion, parents and communities may organize campaigns or activist groups to try to change policy or political leaders.

Context of Parents and Community as Curriculum

Contexts such as socioeconomics, politics, geography, culture, language, and ethnicity all influence the interconnectivity of home, community, and school. Given the current political economy of the country, do traditional models of involvement still work? For whom? How are the changing landscapes of the economy, especially school funding, affecting how parents and community are involved in their local schools? As revenues and resources formerly directed toward school budgets are rapidly dwindling, communities that are not economically or politically resourced are often disenfranchised in myriad ways. In urban communities, the neighborhood schools are often heavily populated by low-income students whose parents may not have the traditional social, cultural, or political capital to have a presence in schools and influence school decisions. Social capital theory, as James Coleman (1994) describes, provides an essential lens for understanding how the communities’ and students’ assets are perceived relative to how an oppressed community’s status matches up with, or fails to match up with, the dominant middle-class culture of schooling. Some communities may no longer be invested in local public schools as traditional school attendance and districts are altered by the presence of charter schools and the closing of neighborhood schools so that school communities are less defined by neighborhoods and instead by attendance.

Cultural, linguistic, and ethnic contexts also influence the relationships among home, school, and community. Diverse communities can encourage diverse programming, but cultural and linguistic identities of certain communities are considered to be detrimental to children’s education, creating a deficit model and the need for children to be “saved” instead having community knowledge (Hong, 2011; Valenzuela, 1999). Schools that seek to exist as a community anchor may create programs that emphasize community integration, designing support mechanisms that address challenges, such as GED classes, ESL classes, or parenting classes. However, some researchers focus on the increased need to examine how teachers can integrate the culture and language of their students by using the capital that parents and communities offer (Delpit, 2006). They argue that the cultures and languages of children traditionally in poverty are pathologized and that a trend toward ostracizing the community negatively impacts children’s attitude toward school, their self-esteem, and their trust in adults (Thompson, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999). Ultimately, current research findings from scholars (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) support more inclusivity of students’ culture and language and integration of the community and family as curricular assets to educational systems.

Theory of Parents and Community as Curriculum

Although there is mostly agreement that parent and community involvement in schools is a good thing
for students, and can help them to be successful, there is much controversy in how that involvement should happen. Part of this controversy can be explained through theories of human capital. Specifically, economic, cultural, and political capital all matter in how communities and parents are involved in education. The three types of capital, as defined by Pierre Bourdieu (1986), all shape the way parents and community are involved with education: social, economic, and cultural.

The social capital of a family defines the way in which family and community are connected to a larger network of people and resources. For instance, if a parent is actively involved with a parent advisory board with the school, he or she is networked with parents, teachers, and school officials, all of whom may offer more resources to help the parent support the child. In fact, theorists argue that the social capital of the community, family, and child are directly connected to student success (see Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). How parents are connected to the larger community can determine the resources that are available to the student. Furthermore, how school cultures value students and community can affect the social capital of the community members. In Subtractive Schooling, Angela Valenzuela (1999) argued that schools that engage in “subtractive” schooling rather than “additive” schooling essentially drain the potential social capital of students, communities, and families. Additive schooling entails “the maintenance of community, which includes improving home-school relationships” (p. 270), whereas subtractive schooling ignores the culture, language, and values of the students’ backgrounds. However, there have been immense changes to how parents and communities are involved with schools and so social capital is dependent on school and community.

Whose social capital matters is also contested: Too often in the mainstream media as well as in education reform narratives, parents, particularly mothers, are cast as lacking in the kinds of knowledge and skills to parent adequately or to prepare their children for school (Cook & Fine, 1995). Patricia Hills Collins’s articulation of “othermothering” (1991) asks us to instead read against the grain and to listen to and respect the tradition of community mothering or othermothering as a tradition of womanist and Black feminist parenting as well as teaching.

Beyond social capital, economic capital and education matters for families and communities in a variety of ways. Economic capital refers to the family and community’s monetary resources including money, property, and materials. Clearly, wealthier suburban districts will have more families with economic capital than struggling, underfunded urban and rural districts. Cultural capital, however, refers to nonfinancial assets and may be dependent on community and school values and demographics. As described by Pierre Bourdieu (1986), cultural capital includes the symbolic assets of a culture that are privileged, and how well a person or group can engage the cultural capital of the dominant culture will determine social and academic achievement or reify structural inequalities.

According to Norman González et al. (2005), the concept of funds of knowledge is of paramount importance for teachers to develop an understanding of home and community knowledge in their pedagogy. How home knowledge is reflected in classroom practice is essential for student success, and, therefore, the classroom can act as an extension of the home and the home can extend the classroom. Families have deeply informed knowledges of how their children learn that teachers often are unfamiliar with but can be used in the classroom communication and practice. Home knowledges, including indigenous, cultural and linguistic practices, are often ignored in teacher preparation, which lead to curriculum and teaching practices based on the disappearing and othering of these knowledges. Therefore, according to funds of knowledge theory (González et al., 2005), the cultural capital of community and school can be redefined and transformed to reflect the talents, values, and resources of a community instead of viewing them in a deficit model. The knowledge that family and community can offer can support a student’s success and self-esteem.

Cultural capital takes on special significance when teachers and other school personnel are unfamiliar with the culture and background of their students. This situation is particularly true in lower-income school districts where there is often a mismatch between the cultural capital of the school personnel and the community of students. Gail Thompson (2003) argued in What African American Parents Want Educators to Know that for there to be success in urban, low-income neighborhoods with
large numbers of African American students, parents and community members must be involved for teachers to understand the students’ culture and, therefore, their learning contexts, language, and habits of mind. Guofang Li (2005) discussed a similar issue in her research of the contested space between mainstream schooling and Asian immigrant families when she suggested that the true multicultural education means changing not only what we teach but also how we teach it.

Beyond theories of capital, theories of feminism—especially Black, Latina, and “motherwork” feminism—are important concepts to think about when analyzing the parental and community milieu. Given that women comprise 76% of the teaching workforce (NCES, 2013), as teachers and the primary participants in children’s education, what role does feminism play in understanding how teachers are educated? Is parent and community involvement also “maternal work” since mothers are often the activists in their children’s education? Black feminism, especially as explained by Collins (2000) and bell hooks (1984), suggests that motherhood is an essential part of feminism and mothers as caregivers, community activists, and teachers. In fact, Sofía Villenas (2005) researched the work of Latina mothers’ experiences negotiating their identities and their families’ education after arriving in the United States. Villenas found that mothers act as culture-keepers as well as teachers of resistance especially in child relationships. The shared characteristics between the work of mothering and teaching, especially in the early and young child classroom, include caring and maternalism (Noddings, 1984; Ruddick, 1989) and relationality (Grumet, 1988) upon which othermothering is based. Collins described othermothering as a collective, community mothering, built on respect and imbricated with social activism:

Such power is transformative in that Black women’s relationship with children and other vulnerable community members is not intended to dominate or control. Rather, it’s purpose is to bring people along . . . to “uplift the race” so that vulnerable members of the community will be able to attain the self-reliance and independence essential to resistance. (p. 132)

It is in the context of these relationships, the intent to empower, and through storytelling and narrative that children learn about social justice, community activism, and moral responsibility that can translate into the classroom and community as well.

Social capital, funds of knowledge, and Black and Chicana feminist theory all offer theoretical lenses for researchers exploring the family and community milieu but because much of the groundwork is situational and dependent on the culture, values, and populations of the people involved, it is important to contemplate how the research is presented and, in many cases, how the stories are told. Local knowledge and local realities are critical components of contextualizing any theorizing of parents and community as curriculum. Maureen Gillette, a professor and dean of education, wrote of the successful teacher preparation program Grow Your Own Teachers Illinois (Skinner, Garreton, & Schultz, 2011) and the structures of this project requiring researchers and community members to acknowledge each other’s perspectives and positionalities. Gillette stated that without “deep collaboration” and “exploring and mining the expertise of other members; learning about and acknowledging the social, political, economic, and bureaucratic landscape of each partner,” the project would have undermined its goals (p. 151).

**Forms of Inquiry About Parents and Community as Curriculum**

Quantitative studies often present data of what works and what doesn’t, but because of the multilayered complexities of parent and community involvement, inquiry often takes more qualitative, more experiential, and more innovative forms. Qualitative forms may include critical race narrative, counternarrative, oral history, oral narrative research, memoir, ethnography, and indigenous methodologies. In the 20th century, voices of those who have been oppressed have challenged the dominant modes of intellectual inquiry. Unveiling these voices and perspectives has transformed modes of inquiry and analysis (see Tuhhiwai Smith, 2001). Why do other forms of investigating and representing family and community attract researchers? In quantitative inquiry, research questions are posed and interpreted by the researcher; in many kinds of qualitative inquiry, the researcher’s perspectives allow for more space and more flexibility to hear the voices and feel the experiences of parents, families, and communities.
Critical race theory, for example, is a form of inquiry that emphasizes participants’ experiences of their roles or lack of access to participate, which compels researchers to look into the counternarratives of students, family, and community members. Daniel Solórzano and Tara Yosso’s (2002) five essential elements of critical race methodology provide a methodological framework: racism and race intersecting with other aspects of identity such as a gender, age, speech markers; challenging notions of race neutrality and scientific objectivity; seeing and using inquiry for critical change; foregrounding experiences of the marginalized; and analyzing race and other forms of subordination through interdisciplinary and historically contextualized inquiry (pp. 25–27). Further, researchers engaging the voices and experiences of marginalized people, such as parents and community members, may reject the privileging of “big data” quantitative inquiry over “critical race quantitative intersectionality” (Covarrubias & Velez, 2013, p. 270). Critical race quantitative intersectionality uses both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, including more authentic and race-conscious analysis of the kinds of research questions asked, along with their cultural meanings and contexts. Critical race theory can also engage many forms of inquiry including counterstorytelling (Delgado & Stephanie, 2001, p. 30). The intersections of qualitative and quantitative research approaches can meaningfully contextualize research questions, research process, and research findings.

Narrative inquiry, often represented as “stories,” is an important part of how participation is documented so that multiple views are represented and considered, including those of teachers, students, parents, administrators, and other school community members. Narrative inquiry establishes equity in whose experiences are foregrounded when researching the parental, familial, and communal milieu. Researchers such as JoAnn Phillion, Ming Fang He, and Michael Connelly (2005) all rely on narrative inquiry to explore the experiences of those who have not previously been heard in some traditional research. Narrative inquiry often includes participatory and co-created forms of inquiry, engaging the meanings of familial and cultural milieu in education rather than imposing traditional questions and categories of understanding. Participatory inquiry is respectful of the relational nature of experience and understanding as well as affirming of insider perspectives and the empowerment of insider voices in the process.

Given that “home knowledge” is an important aspect in understanding the possible shared space between school and community, how can we understand that knowledges are embedded in the cultural and political circumstances of families and community members? Indigenous studies offer another form of inquiry for researchers to explore. For instance, Bagele Chilisa (2012) offered substantial indigenous methodology including participatory, appreciative, transformative, and healing research to explore indigenous communities, understand indigenous knowledges, and demonstrate how decolonization of methodology could be moved from theory to practice. The depth of inquiry incorporating Chilisa’s recommendations results in research that disrupts the dominant mainstream paradigms that often undervalue indigenous knowledge. Renaming indigenous research methods as “storywork,” Jo-Ann Archibald (2008) connected research methodology to traditional basketry, weaving together values such as mutuality, reverence, and spirit into a research vessel that is both container as well as liminal space, allowing for multiple perspectives and voices that together offer a more holistic cultural text.

How can indigenous and everyday views assist us in creating curriculum based on and grounded in community? While dominant paradigms of research focus on the particular, the observed, in separation from other cultural factors, indigenous research embraces holism and multiple perspectives. The scientific concept of validity often found in quantitative studies differs from indigenous and everyday epistemologies and ethical considerations. Offering a paradigmatic shift in the ethics of inquiry, Margaret Kovach (2009) described the concerns indigenous researchers have in the creation of vulnerability of indigenous knowledges when researchers from the outside take “home knowledge” back to the university-based research community. Researchers within indigenous frameworks of scholarship also must allow for some loss of control in the research journey, including grounding the work in relational aspects of sharing the story. Space and community are also important elements in understanding indigenous knowledge, for places hold and communicate identities, “echoes of generations” (p. 61), and other
noncognitive, holistic ways of knowing. The comprehensive care seen in qualitative studies such as these will offer far-reaching methods of inquiry for researchers who explore relationships between schools and communities.

**Modes of Expression About Parents and Communities as Curriculum**

To what extent and how are families and communities represented or disappeared from our contemporary curricula? How can the histories, strengths, and concerns of families and communities be engaged as curricula? Do schools create models of practice that focus on parent involvement—that is, limited and school-driven—or engagement such as partnering with family and community members’ histories, language, cultures, and concerns?

In several approaches to community as part of the curriculum, for example, Reggio Emilia schools and the educational practices of Maria Montessori, decisions about the role of schools emerged from parental and community dialogue and consensus. In rebuilding war-torn villages in Italy, for example, the communities chose to focus on revitalizing the education of their greatest assets—their children. Following the principles of Loris Malaguzzi (1993), these rural communities developed child-driven schools, incorporating theories and values focused on unfoldment, child-directed learning and relationships. Montessori’s Casa dei Bambini, or Children’s House, opening in 1907, was conceived to give poor mothers the ability to find work and to provide “a vital organic connection between education and society” (Gutek, 2004, p. 15). Casa dei Bambini, however, was not simply a daycare but embraced modern methods of teaching that included careful awareness of responding to children’s “sensitive periods”; curriculum was not based on an adult idea of what should be but on what stages of development the child demonstrated. The building itself was intentionally in the community served, close to the families and called a “school-home.” Montessori’s goals included betterment of the community through the Children’s House, through the provision of social services to all members of the community (p. 15).

Harlem Children’s Zone Promise Academy and the Promise Neighborhoods program represent a wrap-around model of school and social services as well as parent education. As with Reggio Emilia schools and Montessori’s House of Children, this approach is respectful of parents as children’s first teachers and offers assistance to struggling families who typically might have access to fewer resources. Community-based organizations have also historically provided education and services grounded in the local needs and challenges of families and communities. The work of settlement houses such as Hull House initiated in Chicago by Jane Addams can be seen as pioneering and continuing in the work of many contemporary community-based organizations, including hometown associations, civic group efforts, tribal leagues, and community centers. Informal and formal curriculum emerges from the focus of these organizations based typically on community assets and needs, for example, cultural identities, public health initiatives, food justice, housing, and citizenship and civic engagement.

The transformation of schools into community centers represents embracing, within formal school structures, the work that is often done in community-based organizations. In this case, the work of community-based organizations can be more deeply connected to the community; the school becomes the intersection of personal and public spaces. Issues addressed in community-based organizations become part of the dialogue about culture and curriculum of the school and change the nature of school to an intergenerational and more organic social space (Carger, 1996; Hong, 2011). The Mississippi Freedom Schools of the civil rights movement show the political and educational power of grounding curriculum in community concerns (McAdam, 1990). Classrooms, with the presence and assistance of students, family members, and community members, become transformed to be more relational and more culturally responsive spaces.

How can our policies and programs support the inclusion of families and communities as curriculum? Modes of expression of curriculum that are reflective of and comprehensible to multilingual/multicultural children and families often are not available and programs such as English immersion subtract from the linguistic and cultural assets of the child and family. Political policies that attempt to eliminate cultural and historical education of particular ethnic groups affect not only the students but also their relationship with communities. Valenzuela’s (1999) analysis of the experience of Chicano students...
in high school shows the pervasive and demoralizing effects of “subtractive schooling” and how the structures of academic success jeopardize the resiliency of both students and teachers of color. Expressing cultural knowledge through the use of native languages and cultural history adds to the integrity of school curriculum and its responsiveness to the community.

How can we better understand and support the common interests of students, families, and communities as curriculum? The contemporary parent-initiated activism focused on school issues marks a grassroots movement to transform the traditional containment of schools and the barriers constructed among students, families, teachers, and communities. Soo Hong (2011) and Andrea Dyrness (2011) both offered descriptions of these changes in school structures. Dyrness showed how mothers, as experts, influenced school curriculum in Oakland to include peace-making, equity issues in their community and collective forms of resistance. Concha Delgado-Gaiton (2001) also offered a substantial guide for understanding how families must understand themselves as a community before they can influence schools. The Chicago Grassroots Curriculum Project, which builds on students collaborating with elders in the community to create curriculum, describes its work as focused on:

Chicago’s land, housing and community histories including: First Nations peoples, speculation, housing racism, labor battles, local resistance, culture, and other community realities over a two hundred and forty (240) year period. This curriculum, being a grassroots writing and editing effort, seeks your input—especially for the purpose of studying and contributing to this mostly unknown history. (Miglietta, Lopez, Stovall, & Williams, 2012, p. viii)

These local projects serve as guideposts for rethinking curriculum as organically located in place-based critical community inquiry.

Understanding the fluid network of schools, parents, and community necessitates researching myriad dimensions from both the inside and outside. Involving parents and community in the daily classroom as well as the structure of the school is essential for student success, but for authentic partnerships to emerge, there must be organic and equitable relationships among all groups. Communities and families are also experts in education; they hold the cultural, linguistic, and familial knowledge that students bring to school every day. Their knowledge can shape and inform relevant and inclusive curriculum. However, parent and community expertise and knowledge are not typically documented, requested, or included in school curriculum. While educational leaders and teachers speak of the importance of community engagement, this engagement too often is designed to make parents and community members feel as if they are being included when in fact the gesture falls short of authentic partnership and certainly fails to structuralize “deep collaboration” in curriculum building. Until the kinds of efforts seen in Oakland and with Grow Your Own Teachers Illinois and the Chicago Grassroots Curriculum Task Force are realized broadly, schools will continue to marginalize students, families, and communities and perpetuate the social construction of inequity in education.

References and Further Readings


The Technological Milieu

Chun Lai  
University of Hong Kong

Jing Lei  
Syracuse University

No matter whether curriculum is defined as the content, the learning experiences, the products that students actively construct out of their interaction with the world, or the process of questioning and searching for new and complex insights into the world, it is intricately intertwined with technology. On the one hand, technology is part and parcel of the curriculum, comprising critical learning contents and experiences and shaping the construction and questing process. On the other hand, curriculum defines the roles technology could play in learners’ educational experience.

The Interaction Between Technology and Curriculum

Technology is a critical component of the curriculum in the 21st century and shapes curriculum and instruction. And at the same time, subtopics of the curriculum (content, tool, and context) define the roles of technology in the curriculum.

Technology as Curriculum

Technology as Content

The 21st century is a constantly changing era with exponential expansion of information and revolution of knowledge, a globalized era where the communications revolution brings about “the death of distance” (Cairncross, 2001) and a constructive era where various digital tools enable everyone to create and participate. Trilling and Fadel (2009) identified three sets of essential skills in the 21st century. The first set is made up of learning and innovation skills that engage people in critical thinking and problem solving, communication and collaboration, and creation and innovation. The second set of skills is comprised of digital literacy skills that enable people to be “info-savvy, media-fluent, tech-tuned” (p. 61). The third set includes career and life skills that highlight productivity and accountability, leadership and responsibility, flexibility and adaptability, social and cross-cultural skills, and initiative and self-direction. The intersection of these three skill
sets is the capacity to use technology to engage in self-directed lifelong learning. This view of lifelong learning with technology is also shared by Collins and Halverson (2009), who argued that “we are now entering the lifelong learning era of education, having experienced the apprenticeship and schooling eras” (p. 5), and that the core education issue in this lifelong-learning era is how to support people to learn on their own with technologies, that is, to choose appropriate tools, environment, and technologies for learning. Thus, it is crucial to equip students with the knowledge and skills to use technology effectively for self-directed learning. A natural question follows: What do students need to know to effectively use technology for self-directed learning?

Over the years, the definition of technological literacy has been broadened immensely, evolving from a purely technical-procedural construct into a complex construct made up of critical consumption, skillful creation, and mindful application. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Technological and Engineering Literacy Framework 2014 summarized the different approaches to technological literacy in three major interconnected areas. In the first area—technology and society—the framework says that students are expected to develop the understanding and ability to analyze the relationship between technology and society. In the second area—design and systems—students are expected to demonstrate a broad understanding of the working mechanisms behind technological systems and the ability to troubleshoot technological problems. In the third area—information and communication technology (ICT)—students are expected to develop the ability to “make fluent use of digital technologies and media in creative and innovative ways” (National Assessment Governing Board, 2013, p. 1.9). Thus, technological literacy is a multidimensional concept that defines the various aspects of knowledge and skills people need in order to function in the digital world.

When focusing on the knowledge and skills students need in order to use technology effectively for learning, three major categories are highlighted in the NAEP Technological and Engineering Literacy Framework. One category includes the ability to communicate effectively and work collaboratively in a technology-enriched environment to construct and exchange ideas and solutions, the ability to utilize the most appropriate media creation tools to construct ideas and facilitate the exchange of ideas and interaction and sensitivity toward the values and points of view behind media messages. Another category includes the ability to formulate questions, formulate efficient search strategies, evaluate credibility of information and data sources, find relevant and useful information, and use multiple technological tools to organize, synthesize, and present information and data. The third category refers to the ability “to select and use the appropriate tools, to use those tools to complete tasks effectively and productively, and to apply current knowledge about technology to learn how to use new technologies as they become available” (National Assessment Governing Board, 2013, p. 2.44). These three categories correspond nicely with Trilling and Fadel’s (2009) classification of media literacy, information literacy, and ICT literacy and encompass technical-procedural, cognitive, metacognitive, attitudinal, and socioemotional dimensions. Thus, current societal and technological developments demand technological literacies to develop learners who better meet the societal demands of the 21st century.

**Technology as Tool**

Technology serves as a tool to assist the traditional curriculum and as a medium to enable new forms of curriculum. Technology has been used to support various aspects of traditional curriculum. First of all, it enriches and expands instructional materials through enabling the incorporation of authentic learning materials and enhancing the presentation of content ideas. Second, it enables innovative student-centered learning experiences that free students from confined walls of classrooms through inquiry-based learning and collaborative knowledge construction with peers and experts from different parts of the world. Third, it facilitates the instructional process through providing in-time feedback to the teachers and enhancing the interactivity of the instruction via assistive technologies. Finally, it supports authentic assessments and better documentation of student learning. Thus, technology provides instructional tools to help with the effective and efficient implementation of face-to-face curriculum.

Technology also provides platforms to enable various forms of digital curriculum such as multimedia courseware, distance learning, massive open online
courses, and game-based learning. These digital curricula spur and facilitate the revolution of education into the “lifelong learning era” (Collins & Halverson, 2009, p. 23). Collins and Halverson argue that in the lifelong learning era, the responsibilities of education shift to the individuals; the focus of the curriculum content reorients toward generic skills and learning to learn; the pedagogy becomes more interaction-oriented; assessments become more embedded in the learning process; and the learning cultures become more mixed-age. The roles of teachers and students are redefined in such curricula, and a different set of dispositions and skills are demanded of teachers and students. When technology is used as the major or sole medium to deliver the curriculum, it becomes necessary to structure the learning contents in a user-friendly fashion and to facilitate learners’ interaction with technology and with each other.

**Technology as Context**

Learners are simultaneously involved in different contexts and actively exert agencies to create and draw on learning opportunities within and across these contexts to meet their learning needs (Barron, 2006). Technology brings new potentials to facilitate agency development. For one thing, technology proffers important learning contexts with unique configurations of physical, social, and discursive resources that enable the construction of learning experiences to enrich or even revolutionize the curriculum. Technology also provides potential to bridge learning experiences across different learning contexts, by shaping the current education revolution toward greater recognition of the value of the interdependence and synergy of formal and informal or nonformal learning experiences (Colley, Hodkinson, & Malcolm, 2003; Collins & Halverson, 2010).

Technology helps to move curriculum closer to the participative and social nature of learning. First, technology enhances the participative nature of curriculum. Technology supports learners to construct and represent understanding in tangible forms (e.g., programming, modeling, and hypothesis-testing tools). It engages learners in reflections and discussions to share the knowledge construction process and enhance understanding (e.g., computer-supported collaborative learning). And it enables learners to exercise collaborative problem solving and decision making in learning contexts that simulate realistic contexts (e.g., simulation games). Thus, technology enables participative curriculum, making education more experience-based. Second, technology strengthens social learning (Brown & Adler, 2008). Technology enables social construction of knowledge through discussions and interactions around problems. A professional development project by the Carnegie Foundation provides a telling example: The teachers access a gallery of successful teaching and learning cases, use web-based tools to create and upload their own examples that represent their enhanced understanding of teaching from studying the successful cases and their own experience, and then engage in continuous discussions around their own cases to co-construct understanding of effective teaching and learning. Technology also creates opportunities for learners to engage in interactions with the expert communities (e.g., collaborative projects between students and experts in different parts of the world) and with the public communities (e.g., share course work on public blogs).

Technology facilitates the personalization of curriculum by empowering the creation of learner-generated contexts, where learners generate, select, and appropriate the resources around them to create learning ecologies that meet their individual learning needs (Luckin, 2010). Technology contributes to this process through allowing learner access to a richer collection of resources and through serving as the “more abled partner” to facilitate learners’ meaning making with the resources around them (e.g., mobile assistants). Also, technology moves the locus of control to the learners wherein they produce and share learning materials more conveniently and efficiently. Technology facilitates more student-centered pedagogies and changes the instruction from didactic to interactive (Collins & Halverson, 2010). In this way, curriculum is no longer solely controlled by teachers, academics, designers, and policy makers, but rather is in the hands of the learners themselves. Greater learner involvement in curriculum design makes the curriculum more personally relevant and culturally responsive.

Technology also facilitates the integration of learners’ experiences across different settings. Technology could help merge the boundaries between formal and informal learning and create more synergy in students’ learning experience across different settings. In this way, curriculum no longer suffers from a piecemeal approach, and learners’ meaning making out of the
curriculum is more coherent. In effect, researchers and policy makers are advocating “bridging youth’s formal and informal learning with participatory media as a major objective facing future education research and practice” (Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009, p. 248). Facer and Sandford (2009) pushed this line of thinking further by suggesting technology-enhanced “curriculum for networked learning” where technology facilitates the formation of social networks that connect and negotiate relationships among learning for educational, social, and civic purposes.

Enhanced student agency and involvement in curriculum design mediated by technology are challenging our current conceptualization of curriculum design and delivery. Innovative curriculum enabled by technology focuses less on what subject matter content to master and more on the learning experiences and social interaction in which the content is situated. For instance, Brown and Adler (2008) coined the term learning 2.0 to highlight social learning supported by technology. They encouraged educators to reconceptualize curriculum design from the traditional “supply-push mode” (p. 30), where an inventory of core knowledge is predetermined and delivered to the learners through innovative pedagogies, to the “demand-pull approach” (p. 30). In the “demand-pull mode,” based on their passion and needs, learners are given access to a rich collection of learning communities (a combination of physical and virtual communities) around a practice, and learning emerges through their participation in the communities, collateral learning, and reflection.

As technology not only serves as a context to facilitate curriculum realization and coherence but also functions as a force that challenges conceptualizations of curriculum design.

**Interaction Between Technology and the Key Components of Curriculum**

As part of the curriculum, technology interacts with the other key components of curriculum such as the human players and other subject matters.

**The Role of Technology and Teachers**

One critical curriculum design issue involves the roles of different players in the curriculum. Technology and teachers are both important enablers of learning (Luckin, 2010), and how to determine the role of each in the curriculum depends on a critical analysis of each’s strength in the specific area of study. Technology does excel in certain curricular aspects, including providing motivating means to improve students’ acquisition of basic skills and content knowledge; operating in environments where humans cannot; providing a great wealth of resources; enhancing student voice and autonomy in the curriculum; supporting differentiated curriculum; and strengthening various instructional approaches. However, technology is weak in supporting the social aspects of curriculum such as collaboration and social interaction among students and with teachers, value acquisition, and thinking development. Thus, what roles technology and teachers should play in an instructional context need to be determined by a careful evaluation and mapping of their respective pedagogical strengths and the specific instructional purposes under consideration.

Even when an instructional step is predominantly mediated by technology, teachers still play a critical role in streamlining, scaffolding, and maximizing the learning experience (Kim & Hannafin, 2011). Prior to a technology-enhanced learning experience, teachers prepare students technically, emotionally, culturally, and metacognitively for the prerequisite operational and learning competencies in the experience. During the technology-enhanced learning experience, teachers need to play the role of “problem solvers, context analysts, coaches, and evaluators” (Kim & Hannafin, 2011, p. 413). And after the technology-enhanced learning experience, teachers play the critical role of highlighting, synthesizing, and extending the learning from the experience.

**The Interaction of Technology and Other Subject Matters**

Should we teach digital literacy as an independent subject matter and in a content-independent, pedagogical-free fashion, or should we integrate digital literacy into the instruction of other subject matters? Major technological literacy frameworks such as the ICT literacy framework of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2005), the NAEP Technological and Engineering Literacy Framework 2014, and the American Association of School Librarians’ Standards.
for the 21st-Century Learner in Action (2008) have recommended integrating technological literacy training into the core subjects. For instance, Standards for the 21st-Century Learner in Action (2008) states that training technological literacy in content areas makes “the learning of skills more meaningful and important” (p. 7). Despite these frameworks’ stance on integrative training, they may or less treat technological literacy as a set of generic skills and transferable across different disciplines.

At the same time, more and more researchers are highlighting the content-specificity of technology use for learning. Grafstein (2002) pointed out that although there are generic skills and concepts related to information literacy that are transferable across disciplines—such as analytical reasoning, critical thinking, learning to learn, and information retrieval—some information literacy skills are discipline-specific such as discipline-specific inquiry, problem solving, and evaluation skills. Researchers further observe that possessing a core set of basic technological skills does not necessarily translate into the knowledge and sophisticated skills required for employing technology-based tools strategically to optimize learning experiences for learning different types of content (Kirkwood & Price, 2005). Take communication with others as an example. Students may be equipped with the generic knowledge and skills of using various online communication tools and selecting appropriate tools for different purposes. However, they may not know that when selecting communication tools for foreign language learning, they need to attend to the different affordances of audio-based and text-based communication tools for language learning (e.g., text-based chatting may enhance their attention to linguistic forms) and the different learning opportunities offered by the people they choose to speak to (e.g., talking to language exchange partners may enhance their attention to linguistic forms). They may not know that when selecting communication tools for science study, they need to attend to whether the communication tools allow for presenting information in multiple ways and sharing information to stimulate and facilitate in-depth discussions. Thus, an integrative approach that demands collaboration between the librarians and the discipline teachers and adopts a discipline-specific way to technological literacy development is essential.

**Contextual Factors Around the Interaction**

Although technology and curriculum are intricately connected, their interaction is under the influence of various sociological, cultural, and pedagogical factors. Next, we discuss some factors at the societal, policy, and pedagogical level that shape the interaction between technology and curriculum and explore some issues that are critical to the healthy relationship of the two.

**Forces That Shape the Interaction Between Technology and Curriculum**

Culture, in terms of core cultural assumptions and value systems and norms, is the fundamental force that shapes human identity, purpose, and ways of thinking. One outcome from studies of culture and technology is that cultural differences can lead to differences in technology adoption, the use of technology, and the outcomes thereof (Leidner & Kayworth, 2006). Technology is not culturally neutral. Cultures vary in their receptivity to technology, and technology carries different connotations in different cultures. The same technology may be perceived to carry different social connotations to people in different cultures and thus is responded to differently by people from different cultures. Researchers have found that students’ perceptions of and attitudes toward computers in education are shaped by their national cultural characteristics. The espoused educational values and norms may also affect the interaction between technology and curriculum. Consequently, technologies may be selected and used differently in different cultures to support educational norms and conventions. Furthermore, not only national cultural characteristics but also individuals’ espoused cultural values may affect the interaction between technology and curriculum at the level of learner-generated learning contexts. Thus, culture plays an important role in shaping the direction and strength of the interaction between technology and curriculum.

The sociological realities within and across nations also influence the impact of technology on curriculum. One much-researched sociological phenomenon is the digital divide. **Digital divide** refers to the inequality in the access to, use of, and knowledge
To construct effective technology-enhanced learning experiences for their students, teachers need to know how to select a particular technology to serve or create a particular pedagogy for a particular instructional content or need—a set of knowledge and skill labeled TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) by Mishra and Koehler (2006). According to Mishra and Koehler, technologies are not pedagogically neutral and different technologies have different affordances and constraints for teaching. Thus, teachers need to understand the affordances and constraints of different technologies, which technologies are best suited to address different content ideas in their domains, how technology shapes the representations of the content ideas, how content decisions define the types of technologies, ways in which the technologies can be used, knowledge of how to look beyond the common use of technologies to creatively reconfigure pedagogical use of technology to advance their particular group of students’ learning, and how to strike a dynamic equilibrium among content, pedagogy, technology, and teaching contexts.

Constructing an appropriate technology-enhanced learning experience is not sufficient in bringing about positive learning outcomes as expected, and providing appropriate scaffolding to the learners in the learning process is critical. Teachers need to be aware of what different scaffolding mechanisms need to be built prior to, during, and after students’ engagement with the technology-enhanced learning experience and make conscious scaffolding plans. Prior to the activity, teachers need to prepare students sufficiently on the relevant technical skills and the unique culture and conventions of social behavior and interactions in the technological platform, align students’ learning beliefs and expectancies with the activity, and alert students on the relevant metacognitive and cognitive skills they could use to maximize the learning. During the activity, teachers are expected to know when to intervene and how to intervene in respect to the pedagogical purpose of the activity and different needs of students. After the activity, teacher scaffolding needs to focus on highlighting the learning derived from the experience through additional activities around students’ interaction with the technological platform and guided reflections on the experience.

Teachers can encourage and support students to go beyond in-class learning experiences and actively

of information and communication technologies across groups due to political, educational, sociocultural, socioeconomic, and individual characteristics (Norris, 2001). The digital divide affects the impact of technology on curriculum through two channels. One is that the difference in the amount of digital access leads to unbalanced distribution of educational resources and opportunities. The other is that the quality of learners’ educational experience is greatly affected by the quality of the digital information to which they have access and their ability to make good use of digital technologies and information. In addition to the consumption gap, the production gap, that is, the difference in learners’ use of technologies to create new content and to participate in online communities, also affects learners’ educational opportunities and experiences. In the arena of education, the influence of the digital divide originates not only in individual students’ and their families’ situations but also in their teachers’ access and competencies.

Furthermore, the educational technology plans at the national and local government and school level influence the interaction between technology and curriculum. The technology plans influence technological infrastructure, school stakeholders’ expectations on the use of technology, professional development opportunities, and the setup of school support and monitoring systems, all of which inevitably shape how technology interacts with curriculum in a particular instructional context.

Contemporary Concerns

The societal factors just discussed affect the scope and nature of the interaction between technology and curriculum. However, to facilitate positive outcomes from the interaction, two issues are critical: teachers’ capacities and skills and students’ capacities and skills.

Expected Teachers’ Capacities

To safeguard the quality of the interaction between technology and curriculum, teachers need to be able to (a) construct effective technology-enhanced learning experiences for their students, (b) scaffold students’ learning processes during such activities, and (c) encourage and support students to actively utilize technologies to construct their ecology of learning.
utilize technologies to construct their own ecology of learning, that is, a configuration of learning experiences in many dimensions of life. To do this, teachers need to have the awareness and abilities to deliberately provide opportunities for students to extend learning beyond the classroom and to bridge students’ in-class and out-of-class learning experiences at different phases of curriculum design and implementation.

**Expected Students’ Capacities**

To facilitate positive learning outcomes from the interaction between technology and curriculum, learners need three capacities: (a) the capacity to engage effectively with technology to maximize learning, (b) the capacity to select and appropriate technologies effectively to create technology-enhanced learning experience, and (c) the capacity to appropriate and balance technology with other resources to create ecologies of learning that fit their learning needs. These three levels of capacities involve an increasingly complex set of knowledge and skills.

The basic level concerns students’ abilities to use technology effectively. At this level, students need to be equipped not only with the general digital literacies and/or information on the technological resources available but also more importantly with the metacognitive knowledge and skills about the contextualized pedagogical application of various technologies and an awareness of the psychological and social factors involved. In other words, students need to identify with the pedagogical purpose and benefits of the technology-enhanced learning experience; be aware of the particular features in the technology platform that could fit a particular learning purpose and know how to use the features effectively; be conscious of the cognitive and metacognitive strategies they could utilize to maximize the pedagogical advantage of the platform; know how to overcome the possible social and emotional barriers that might occur during the interaction; and understand how to connect the particular technology-enhanced learning experience with the other relevant instructional events to construct their knowledge and understanding of the issue. In all, learners should be equipped with the pedagogical content knowledge to make informed decisions on language learning technology and strategy selection.

The second level concerns students’ abilities to engage in self-directed use of technology for learning. This level requires not only the basic understanding and skills in effective use of a given technology-enhanced learning experience but also the attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to engage in self-directed learning experience (Garrison, 1997). According to Garrison, the willingness to engage in self-directed learning is determined by both the entering motivation and the maintenance of intention. Learners’ entering motivation for self-directed learning behaviors is determined by their interest in particular learning goals (i.e., whether the learning goal meets personal needs and personal preferences) and their evaluation of whether the goals are achievable (i.e., whether they perceive themselves as possessing the relevant knowledge and ability and whether they perceive there exist institutional, ideological, and socioeconomic resources or barriers). A flexible mindset to deal with the uncertainties and complexities in interaction with technology and a mindset to pursue open-ended learning activities out of personal interests instead of restricting informal learning activities to school assignments facilitate the willingness to use technology for self-directed learning. Garrison also conceptualized that the knowledge and skill base for self-directed learning involves the abilities to enact learning goals and manage learning resources and the competencies to monitor learning strategies and process. In the context of self-directed use of technology for learning, students’ capacities to navigate the technology landscape—namely, a critical awareness of digital choices and actions (Selwyn, 2011)—and their abilities to critically evaluate the respective pedagogical advantages of different technologies and to match the technology with the targeted pedagogical purposes are critical.

The third level concerns students’ abilities to utilize technology and various resources around them to construct an ecology of resources that meet their learning needs (Barron, 2006; Luckin, 2010). At this level, students need to be aware of the technological and other human and physical resources around them, understand the pedagogical advantages of different resources available to them, and know how to orchestrate various resources available to them to create an ecology of language learning that could meet their learning needs at different learning stages and contexts.
Research Inquiries Into Interaction Between Curriculum and Technology

Given that technology interacts with curriculum at the content, tool, and context levels, the research inquiries into the nature of this interaction need to address issues at these three levels. At the content level, research inquiries may focus on issues related to the design and implementation of technological literacy curriculum and various forms of digital curriculum. At the tool level, research inquiries may examine the pedagogical affordances and constraints of various technologies, the effects of technology-enhanced curriculum in different instructional settings and contextual configurations, and the knowledge and skills students and teachers need to possess to enhance the learning process. And at the context level, research inquiries may explore the combination of different technologies to create optimal technology-enhanced curriculum and the utilization of technological, human, and physical resources to create synergic learning experiences across different settings.

Current research inquiries at the intersection of technology and curriculum have mainly focused on the content and tool level. Research at the context level is starting to build up. Research studies have explored the design and implementation of digital curriculum, unraveled the pedagogical affordances and constraints of different technologies, and examined the efficacies of technologies under different instructional design and contextual backgrounds. Only recently do we witness increasing attention toward understanding the scaffolding mechanisms in the instructional process and the learner preparation/ training that are critical to safeguarding the favorable outcomes of technology-enhanced curriculum. Still fewer studies have examined how to utilize and coordinate advantages of relevant technologies to construct an enriched technology-enhanced learning experience for a particular instructional purpose. Thus, more research is needed along these directions. Moreover, research inquiries are needed that examine the respective advantages of technologies and other human and physical resources for a particular learning purpose. At all the three levels, learners are given greater responsibilities and autonomy in creating their learner-centric ecology of learning. Thus, it is necessary and important to make use of a variety of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method inquiries to explore how to promote learners’ self-directed use of technology for learning and to enhance learners’ capacities to parlay technology and other resources to construct effective ecologies of learning.

References and Further Readings


The late teacher and scholar David Purpel (2004) viewed the work of education through the prism of *tikkun olam*, a Hebrew phrase that literally means “repairing the world.” It was a view that influenced many generations of his students and his colleagues. Drawing on Jewish ethical and spiritual teaching, *tikkun olam* asserted that the work of human beings in this life was, preeminently, to heal a broken world and to repair lives that were degraded by unjust and oppressive social conditions. For Purpel so much else that passed for the practice and discourse of education was a distraction from our need to educate for the possibility of a more just, loving, compassionate, and peaceful world. For Purpel, it was a mistake to view curriculum as “content.” Rather, he believed that curriculum constitutes the entire social and moral milieu of a student’s experience. Education, he asserted, was a holistic process that should always speak to all of our being—to our minds, hearts, and spirit. He recognized early, in his writing about the “hidden curriculum,” that much of the most influential aspects of a young person’s educational experience occurred without conscious design or attention. Things like classroom seating, the importance of the clock, the authoritarian regulation of bodies, and the force of grading and evaluations became part of the world-taken-for-granted. Purpel argued passionately and eloquently that educators should see themselves as acting in a prophetic role. Here following the interpretation of Rabbi Abraham Heschel (1962) the prophet is someone who courageously alerts us to society’s inconsistent and contradictory moral behavior (claiming to believe one thing but doing the opposite) and insists on the need for a transformation in society and human behavior to move us to a more socially just and compassionate world. At the center of Purpel’s analysis was the way that schools reproduce inequality through the centrality of competition in our cultural practices. Through the ubiquity of competition, we rationalize and legitimate a world of division, hostility, suspicion, aggression, and the lack of human dignity for so many. Following Purpel we are called to create educational environments that—above all else—nurture a loving, compassionate, and just social order. Curriculum here is that environment that can best be a catalyst for the moral and spiritual transformation of human behavior.

**The Moral and Spiritual Milieu**

*Humanistic Alternatives to the Competitive Milieu*

H. Svi Shapiro

*University of North Carolina at Greensboro*
Market Power: Educating for Competition

The overwhelming power of competition to compel our attention and to stimulate our passions in the modern world is undeniable. International sporting competition is but one, if enormously visible, example of competition’s grip on human emotions and imagination. This is powerfully reinforced and daily legitimated by our experience of life in a capitalist or market-dominated society. Throughout our world the market is increasingly seen as the best way to organize the production and distribution of those goods and services upon which human life depends. More and more the market has come to be seen as the most efficient, innovative, and productive means through which societies can meet the expectations of a good life for their citizens (Judt, 2010). Certainly there can be little doubt of the extraordinary innovative power of capitalism; its historically unparalleled capacity to develop new technologies and products and make these available to billions of consumers throughout the world. Capitalist markets have transformed every aspect of human life from the production of food to our means of transportation; from the media of communication to the extraordinary development of medical technology. Yet despite its amazing power to materially transform lives and improve living conditions for so many, there is also a much darker side to the dominance of the marketplace as the engine that shapes our world. At its heart is the view that what sustains human activity and productivity is the will to compete—for more profit, more status, more influence, and more control. What drives capitalism is surely a dismal view of human motivation: the desire to beat out one’s competition in order to have more, appear superior, own more, and have more power. Capitalism, for all its extraordinary productivity, offers us a vision of human life that is endlessly driven by egotistical desire: the drive to fulfill one’s self-interest without concern for the wider social or communal consequences of what one does (Klein, 2008). The accumulation of profit, not human welfare, guides the markets’ calculus of decision making. Selfish aggrandizement of the few, not broadly distributed improvement of the lives of the many, has always been at the cold heart of capitalism’s system of organizing society. We can be in no doubt that the ethic of competition has left a grotesque and ethically insupportable world of huge disparities in the lives that human beings face. Whatever the praises sung by the supporters of the free or unregulated market, the evidence of human misery and deprivation confronts us on every side. The quiet violence of lives destroyed and blighted by the ethic of competition and the moral economy of greedy self-interest are there for all who care to look.

Educating Identity for Competition

The market economy produces a market society—a society in which our lives are increasingly shaped by the uncertainty and insecurity of harsh competition. It is not just access to medical care, mortgages, jobs, and education that are the result of our capacity to compete and succeed in the frighteningly precarious world that we now live in (Bauman, 2007). We have ourselves become saleable commodities that must compete with other commodified selves in order to prove our worth and value in the world. So-called reality TV provides us with a mirror to see the kind of competitive world that we have created. In these shows individuals fight to survive and win, to be hired for a job, find the perfect mate, to become rich, and so on. Of course, the popularity of reality TV is no accident. It is only a small step removed from what most people face in the real world. In the increasingly insecure and uncertain world of global capitalism, we feel more and more pressured to sell ourselves in order to survive. We are more and more urged to make ourselves “marketable,” to become masters of the game of what Erving Goffman (1959) years ago called “impression management.”

We need to ask what this hypercompetitive experience does to the emotional formation of young people. How does it shape their affective identity and the way they see themselves and others? In the first place it instills in them the belief that competing with others is simply the natural and expected way in which individuals relate to one another. Competing with others for recognition, achievement, affirmation, even love, comes to be seen as the fundamental, unalterable nature of human reality. The sooner one comes to terms with that and learns the rules of this game, the more successful one can expect to be both in school and in the world. What goes along with this
is a cynicism about any idea that the world can be radically different. The notion that the world could operate on the basis of care and compassion for others becomes an entirely unrealistic idea that only out-of-touch dreamers would entertain. Being practical and hardheaded means embracing the apparent fact that self-interest, and aggressively striving for one’s own individual success, is what maturity demands (Eisler, 2006).

Of course the ethos of competition, which is the powerful, if unspoken, curriculum of schooling, is the recipe for an enormous amount of personal stress. Indeed we are increasingly aware of just how much anxiety is stirred up in schools today as they become ever more deeply enmeshed in the culture of endless testing. Anxiety is, of course, a dreadful condition that produces a myriad of physical ailments and emotional suffering, including violent behavior both toward oneself as well as others. While causal connections are difficult to prove, it seems reasonable to suggest that there is some connection between high levels of suicide and depression among young people and the heightened pressures of schooling. At root this anxiety cannot be separated from heightened levels of fear of appearing inadequate, incompetent, or stupid in the eyes of others. The culture of school, with its relentless emphasis on invidiously comparing self with others, turns one’s neighbor into a threatening presence—someone who shines more brightly when your star dims. Of course much of the time the emotional consequences of all this exist below the surface of our daily interactions. Yet, it is not hard to remember the way young children put their hands over the pages of their notebooks to avoid the embarrassment of an inappropriate answer and subjection to the giggles and ridicule of their peers. This psychological violence left its enduring scars of shame and hypervigilance that are awakened again and again in the competitive environment of school and often, later, in other situations in our lives. The heavy emotional effects of learning to see the other as an actual or potential rival cannot be underestimated in the way it drills into us a sense of the adversarial and damaging nature of human relationships. One must always be on guard because we live in a world in which each is taught to maximize our advantage at the expense of the other (Lerner, 2006).

From Competition to Violence

How students behave toward one another may seem fairly unimportant in the bigger scheme of things. Nonetheless it points to a culture that is pervaded by suspicion, distrust, and resentment. There is the always-present feeling that someone is getting something (rewards, recognition, approval) that you are not receiving. And it is not hard to grasp how in certain circumstances such feelings can shift from words and attitudes toward more lethal forms of expression. The horror of gun violence on school and college campuses remains vivid in our minds. These terrible events cannot be separated from things like the easy availability of guns in our society, or our toxic notions of masculinity, or our violence-obsessed media culture. Yet here I want to emphasize the way that school violence is linked to a competitive culture. So many times violent outbursts come after a history of belittlement and marginalization. High schools in particular can be brutal experiences for students who are marked as misfits or failures in the culture of the school. The exclusion, ostracism, or shaming takes a serious toll on the emotional life of young people at this extraordinarily vulnerable developmental stage. And it can be no surprise that such treatment is the catalyst for an angry and sometimes rage-filled response. We learn from our first days in school that some will be rewarded, recognized, and lauded for who they are; others will feel the sting of low standing and, in some cases, their sheer invisibility as persons. Since school is ostensibly about academic learning and the mastery of skills, it is easy to miss the profound and lasting consequences of schools on our psyches and identities. While the former is often quickly forgotten by the end of the course or semester, the latter influence can stay with us for much of our lives.

The Dissatisfied Self

The culture of competition produces lives of gnawing dissatisfaction with who we are. Invidious comparison rules our lives. We are urged to constantly see ourselves in relationship to the success and achievement of others. School, advertising, and
Of course, enjoyment of, and desire for, competition is a powerful component of the human psyche. It undoubtedly provides, for millions of people, a hugely compelling, exciting, and joyful dimension of their lives. I am not advocating the end of sport or those other diversions that rest on pitting human beings against one another in tests of skill, athletic prowess, courage, or chance. My concern is not whether we have a culture in which competition plays a role, but whether we have a society—and a world—defined, organized, and shaped by the play of competitive relationships. In a parallel sense the issue is not whether we will have a market-based economy, but whether we will have a market-based society. Our challenge, I believe, is whether we can imagine a world that is not based on competitive relationships between human beings but, instead, is organized around the principles of a loving and caring community. Can we have a society, and most importantly schools, in which there is much less focus on winners and losers and much more emphasis on the ways we can cooperate with one another and act in a spirit of solidarity and partnership? Can we imagine a world that is not ordered in the manner of cutthroat national or ethnic self-interest and more around a shared sense of responsibility?

A pedagogy and curriculum concerned with *tikkun olam* must help students understand and challenge the pernicious story our culture tells about the way that competition is the best way to motivate human effort. It must encourage students to question the way the culture inculcates a distrust and suspicion of others and the ever-present anxiety that comes from the endless process of invidious comparison. It must develop the capacity to question the stories that shape our lives—stories that tell us that the supply of those things that signify our worth and value in the world is limited, and we have no choice but to battle our neighbors to get a share of recognition and well-being.

There is, however, much more to human behaviors and human nature than pure selfishness. We are certainly capable of insensitivity, cruelty, greed, and violence. We are also capable of sensitivity, caring, generosity, and empathy. Our capacity for caring is just as wired into us by evolution as our capacity for...
cruelty—perhaps even more so (Shapiro, 2010). When people grow up in cultures that do not model partnership or cooperative relations between people, they will believe that human nature is uncaring and violent. They will believe that the world is a predatory one in which the rule is either to dominate others or be dominated by them. In such a world others are seen as adversaries out to control or assert their superiority over us. The world is a dangerous and hostile place. Yet as Gandhi reminded us what is habitual can be unlearned. We can educate to challenge the myths of an unalterably hostile or adversarial world. We can undo the taken-for-granted assumptions about human nature. We can point to the complexity of human intentions and the way that human beings are not impelled by any one single motivation. We do exhibit loving, caring, and generous behaviors toward even strangers. We can contemplate how unbearable life would be without the loving care of others. We can look at societies such as those in the Scandinavian countries where competition and the ethic of the marketplace do not determine social policies to the degree they do in the United States and where, as a result, there is relatively little poverty, few people go homeless, there are strong supports for the unemployed or those unable to work, and there is universal access to health care. We can point to societies and cultures that actually do not make competition the lynchpin of their social and economic policies and instead prefer the values of social justice, compassion, and solidarity among citizens. We can also explore those traditional and native cultures where the organizing moral principles were cooperation, mutual support, and the sharing of material resources. Anthropology also provides us with examples of matriarchal societies where cooperation—not competition—is the dominant value (Eisler, 1988). Both the questions teachers pose and the examples we provide can challenge the assumptions about the inevitable and unalterable nature of competitive societies. Human beings are reflective and malleable beings who can choose their ways of life. We are not fated to always live as competitors and adversaries in a world in which self-interest must come first.

In the school and in the classroom we can go further than merely considering these issues theoretically. There are still schools that prefer cooperation to competition. While such schools do not eliminate all forms of competition and recognize the enjoyment of, for example, competitive sports, they place far more emphasis on students working together in helping ways, in group projects, in peer tutoring, and in community service, where the goals are sharing and giving rather hoarding and winning. There is no doubt that we learn most profoundly when we actually live something practically rather than merely hear about something. For that reason it is important that young people experience learning in situations that are free of grades and the pressure to be better than someone else (or the fear of being worse). When students come together without the sense that they are being compared, judged, and ranked, there is the real possibility that they can understand more fully and deeply the beauty and power of human beings who share their insights, creativity, and imagination. In these situations, young people can truly glimpse the possibility of a world where the human ascent occurs as a result of our common efforts and mutual responsibility, rather than the aggressive and self-interested acts of egoistic beings. In actually living as a community of caring and compassionate individuals, students come very much closer to seeing the ethical, social, and spiritual choice that confronts all of us in our divided and violence-torn world.

Working to Overcome Invisibility

The quest to transform the competitive milieu of educational institutions and the larger society means to challenge those things that limit or invalidate human dignity. In this sense curriculum of tikkun olam or repairing the world could resist and hopefully overcome the widespread culture of invisibility faced by so many human beings. To make visible and to more fully recognize all students, we acknowledge again Purpel’s (2004) insightful reminder that no education is, or can be, morally neutral. Education is always undergirded by human values and embodies a particular social, ethical, and spiritual worldview. So, the value of visibility needs to be embraced, and invisibility cannot be allowed to reign by intent or by default. All human lives deserve to be seen and treated in their full richness, beauty, and complexity. Education here means students understanding something about spiritual, ethical, and political traditions upon which our views of human dignity and worth
are built and the consequences of failing to live up to the deep significance of these traditions. This involves looking honestly at the way all of our religious traditions have affirmed the preciousness of every life while also providing justifications for intolerance, persecution, and even war. It means also looking at our most noble statements of human dignity and human rights such as the U.S. Constitution, the South African postapartheid constitution, or the United Nations Declarations of Human Rights, and appreciating the way each contributes to a strengthening of human dignity while also seeing how social, economic, and cultural reality falls far short of what they promise. And it means growing through curricular experiences that nourish the full range of our human capacities, including the spiritual and the aesthetic.

Equally important is for students to recognize in their own lives the way that being invisible or misrepresented is a painful and humiliating experience shared by us all. The classroom should offer a space where individuals are able to openly acknowledge and share how invisibility and misrecognition have affected and shaped their own lives. How have racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, prejudices toward others because of their language or dialect, religious preference, sexual orientation, disability, or ethnic and national origin caused suffering and pain in their lives? This is also a time to consider how social and institutional practices, such as those found in schools, create and maintain structures of invisibility and misrecognition (see Shapiro, 2006). How do institutions that are organized around differential rewarding of human efforts and ability contribute toward the violence of negative human labels? This is also a place for students to consider what kinds of changes would be needed if we are to build a society where all are visible in the fullness of their humanity. How would it affect what is taught in school? How would it influence who speaks in the classroom? And on what basis or criteria would we decide to reward individuals or figure our notions of success and ability.

One dimension of the dehumanization process that students in schools are intimately familiar with is that of the pervasive quantification of human activity. Just as in the broader market system, so in schools, everything that is considered significant must be turned into a measurable number. The origins of this “positivist” consciousness are complex but it includes both the system of capitalism with its concern for efficiency and profit, and in the scientific method with its focus on the empirical and the search for relationships between phenomena that are predictable and causal. What is clear is that contemporary schooling in almost every country is more and more dominated by quantifiable and demonstrable measures of “outcomes.” Students are deeply sensitive to the oppressive consequences of this process: the relentless and stressful focus on testing, education that is all about measuring individuals for their position in a hierarchy of success and failure, and the narrowing of the curriculum and what is considered educationally worthwhile. At some level all students experience the depersonalizing effects of this obsession with measurement and quantifiable outcomes (Kohn, 2004). Usually, however, its effects—however oppressive to the lives of students—do not become something that can be treated as the object of critical discussion. Yet here is a powerful vehicle through which individuals can, with the encouragement and insights of a critically minded teacher, see the way the full richness, passion, curiosity, and imagination of human beings is reduced to the flat homogeneity of a numerical value. Focusing on the positivist culture of schooling allows students to grasp what it means for people to be treated in ways that reduce their unique and incommensurable qualities to the bland sameness of a grade or other similar forms of limited assessment, and to understand how this facilitates the primary purpose of schools, which is to compare and rank students against one another. This is the quiet violence that compresses the wonder of human intelligence, creativity, and imagination to the stunted, but stressful, effects of a culture whose primary emphasis is on competition and measurable output.

In the end, the notion of curriculum that is framed by the moral and spiritual impulse of a prophetic pedagogy concerned with tikun olam means challenging an educational vision that is concerned only with test scores, jobs, and a corporate agenda (Giroux, 2007). It means seeing the classroom as the place where students are asked to think about the nature of living lives of purpose and meaning. Education today has the extraordinary obligation of offering an alternative path for finding meaning in these dangerous and critical times. There can be no greater responsibility today than educators’ role in helping individuals recognize the crisis of meaning that engulfs us while
encouraging something other than the seductions of war, militarism, blind patriotism, and dogmatic belief as the antidote to this crisis. We must affirm to our students the deep “ache” for meaning that besets so many of our lives and the futility of the obsessive consumerism that offers to fill our time and energy with endless distractions and superficial novelties. Educators can help reveal the nature and dimensions of this spiritual crisis. They can deconstruct for students the mechanisms of the market that get us to endlessly want more. They can point to the dangerous and destructive ways societies can respond, through the glorification of death and violence, when there is an absence of compelling meaning (Hedges, 2002). But most of all they can help suggest other, more inclusive, life-affirming and healing responses to our crisis that do not involve demonizing others, declaring or threatening others with war, and do not assume that we are always perfect or right in our judgments as a nation. Of course, this demands a very different understanding of why and how we educate—one that, as Purpel so eloquently argued, unabashedly linked education to moral and spiritual concerns. The classroom becomes a place in which young people are encouraged to pursue questions about the purpose and meaning of our lives. And these questions are set against the limits, shallowness, and ultimate emptiness of a consumer-driven life. Such an emphasis in our education must be contrasted with today’s limited focus on skills, competencies, and careers. The latter, of necessity, will form part of preparing young people for our complex and technologically developed world. But it cannot be allowed to constitute all of our schooling. Education must not be severed from its deeper task of nurturing among the young a thoughtful and sensitive humanity and the wisdom to discern authentically worthwhile lives (Greene, 2000). Educators, parents, and citizens cannot stand by while those whose sole interest is in making our kids malleable consumers hold so much power to shape the identities of the young. Nor can military careers monopolize our nation’s vision of selfless and public spirited service. Education’s task is to challenge the limited imagination for what might constitute a purposeful life beyond either the peddlers of merchandise or the state-sanctioned machinery of violence and destruction. It means seeing identity as something formed in and through our relations with others. It means to reflect on what it is to be human. And, finally, it means to question what are our responsibilities to those who share our world and how can each of us contribute to a world of greater justice, freedom, love, and compassion.

References and Further Readings

A queer frame is central to this chapter. Queerness offers the theoretical lens through which gender and sexuality, and more broadly notions of normalcy, are viewed and analyzed. Specifically, the writers assume queerness as a perspective that, as Cathy Cohen (1999) proposed, is anchored by a politics of radical social transformation. Our contribution is informed by Cohen’s (1997) critiques of queer activism that reinforces simple binaries such as between heterosexual and queer—and at the same time homogenizes identity—as well as by her vision of social change organizing based on points of marginality and nonnormativity—or understanding one’s relation to power. As Cohen notes, a transformative and inclusive concept of queer must be grounded on an intersectional analysis that takes into account the ways that multiple and interlocking systems of oppression interact to regulate and shape individual lives (see, e.g., Crenshaw, 1991). Suzanne Pharr and Susan Raymond’s (1988/1997) proposal that homophobia is a weapon of sexism also reminds us of the criticality of feminist perspectives. Building from these insights, we suggest that just as queer can’t be well considered without thinking intersectionally, we can’t understand the curriculum without also considering schools, labor conditions, the economy, and other contexts that work in tandem to affect the life chances of students and the teaching and learning possibilities of all school staff.

We use queer in multiple ways—as an adjective and as a noun that can, and here does, refer to all sexualities and gender identities that are outside and challenging of normative, binary categories. To this end we include Q with letters LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) and use the term as a replacement for the letters. Queer is a social category in constant formation and, thus, like all categories used to classify identity, is situated and contingent, inherently unstable and fluid, and potentially contested. We also invoke the radical form of queer as a verb or a stance that assumes and honors human complexities, disrupts dominant and hegemonic
forms of normativity, and demands action toward ending oppressive social systems that limit our gendered, sexual, and creative lives. In this way, *queer* as a verb destabilizes normativity and exposes processes by which identities such as “woman” or “homosexual” are constructed and naturalized. Gender and sexuality are discursively produced and shaped by networks of power (Foucault, 1978). Using *queer* in an analysis of power, we consider how gender and sexuality co-articulate and intersect with other axes of difference—such as race, class, ethnicity, citizenship status, native language, disability, age, religion, or housing status, for example—lines along which unequal power relations are exercised and material resources are allocated while also deconstructing the very categories such articulations of difference utilize.

**Contemporary Concerns**

In 2008, a 15-year-old boy named Lawrence “Larry” King was shot in the head and killed in his middle school computer lab by a classmate, Brandon McInerney, aged 14. Larry attended a weekly group for gay teens and enjoyed wearing makeup and high heels; Brandon was one of many youth and adults at Larry’s school who responded to his gender play with aggression. Larry defended himself by asserting his rights and with an edgy humor: He flirted with the boys who insulted him—“It’s fun to see them squirm”—and invited Brandon to be his Valentine. A couple of days later, Brandon brought a gun to school and used it.

King’s murder was followed by a concentrated and well-publicized wave of suicides committed over the next few years by gay-identified or gender-nonconforming youth as well as young people reportedly on the receiving end of homophobic or gender bullying. Gender bullying consists of repeated and targeted harassment involving gender and gender presentation, whereas homophobic bullying typically targets one’s sexuality or perceived sexuality. This tragic list includes, but not limited to, Jaheem Herrera, Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover, Phoebe Prince, Tyler Clementi, Seth Walsh, Asher Brown, Billy Lucas, Justin Aaberg, Raymond Chase, Zach Harrington, Meredith Rezak, Eric Mohat, Jeanine Blanchette, Chantal Dube, Brandon Bitner, Cody Barker, Corey Jackson, Aiyisha Hassan, Jamey Rodemeyer, Nicholas Kelo Jr., Alexander “AJ” Betts Jr., Carlos Vigil, Kenneth Weishuhn Jr., Phillip Parker, Eric James Borges, Jack Denton Reese, Jeffrey Fehr, Jacob Rogers, and Jadin Bell. Many of these suicides, like Larry’s murder, were preceded by intense sexuality- and gender-policing interpersonal violence and triggered a series of antibullying initiatives. In late 2010 writer Dan Savage started the online video campaign called the It Gets Better Project “in response to a number of [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender] students taking their own lives after being bullied in school,” as described on the project’s website. As of late 2014, the project had more than 50,000 contributions. This highly visible platform, with statements from President Obama, then–secretary of state Hillary Clinton, Rep. Nancy Pelosi, and a host of other politicians and celebrities, spotlighted antigay violence across the nation.

The high-profile media attention that centered select (often White and male) examples of antigay bullying also spurred state legislatures to act. States that already had school antibullying programs, including character education or legislation, broadened them. For example, in 2010, after Rutgers University freshman Tyler Clementi’s suicide, the New Jersey Legislature approved antibullying legislation that required teachers to report bullying to administrators, and school superintendents to report bullying to the State Board of Education. The legislation also allows the suspension or expulsion of students who commit acts of bullying.

While violence is indeed the landscape for many queer youth across the country, antibullying laws often focus on individual harm rather than on erasing the structural conditions that shape violence and addressing the climates and contexts that naturalize violence against LGBTQ lives. Across urban centers in the United States, young people, including LGBTQ students, experience a range of forms of structural violence, including targeted police harassment and military recruitment, the continual fear of deportation and the force of the state in determining access to educational opportunities for undocumented students, the everyday violence of poverty, and the lack of institutional support in schools for marginalized students in the form of resources, rights, or representation.
Obscured through the focus on interpersonal violence targeted at LGBTQ lives and the state response of criminalizing individual perpetrators is also the wider landscape of educational reforms, often disconnected from an LGBTQ analysis, that nonetheless make schools and communities increasingly precarious for many, particularly LGBTQ staff and students. Public education is being restructured. Chicago closed 49 public schools in predominantly Black neighborhoods in 2013. Charter schools proliferate despite scant evidence demonstrating their students’ achievement gains. Teachers, a White and feminized labor pool, are also increasingly deprofessionalized and under attack. Teacher effectiveness is measured by their “value added” or their effect on students’ scores on high-stakes standardized tests. Increasingly teachers are working in “right to work states,” and as startlingly visible in the 2010 documentary Waiting for Superman, teachers’ unions are depicted as evil forces that do not care about the lives of young people. The constellation of these reforms—often identified as neoliberal, emphasizing the free market and privatization of public resources, including schools—creates unstable communities, shifts full-time school personnel into “just in time” precarious workers, and ensures that schools are sites where organizing and working for justice is detrimental to one’s employment status. These reforms ensure that LGBTQ students and staff are less protected, more vulnerable, and in poor positions to advocate for any student who might be LGBTQ. In charter and other schools, for example, where teachers, aides, and other school personnel are employed “at will” and can be terminated at any time, for almost any reason, student vulnerability may be exacerbated.

Relatedly, queer and other nonnormative lives, including the lives of the disabled, transgendered, feminist, and those who are resistant to oppressive social structures, have been rarely present in formal curricula (see, e.g., Loewen, 2007; Rofes, 2005). Attempts to bring those who are marginalized to the center have been rebuffed by school boards and state governments, as, for example, with the 1990s “Children of the Rainbow” curriculum in New York City, which included the suggestion that lesbians and gay men be referenced within a multicultural curriculum, and Arizona’s 2012 banning of ethnic studies from its high schools. As schools shift from tenurable and tenured positions to precarious and contingent forms of employment, fewer educators may be willing to risk their jobs by including unsanctioned content in their classrooms and courses.

We write into this moment as our current queer milieu. An unprecedented interest in LGBTQ lives in schools spurred by the high-profile media coverage of select youth suicides has prompted an investment in antibullying legislation. The media coverage of the suicides and the legislative response have served to mask the sources of punishing heteronormativity in schools and communities, and to distract educators and others from identifying and addressing structural conditions that foster interpersonal forms of violence. Public education is undergoing significant structural reforms that are often not named as relevant in an analysis of LGBTQ “issues” in schooling, yet these conditions impact LGBTQ lives in critical ways.

Context

Acts of interpersonal and structural heteronormativity and transphobia, of course, are neither new nor surprising. Just as misogyny and White supremacy also shape the institution of schooling, heteronormativity—or the structures and systems “that legitimize and privilege heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships as fundamental and ‘natural’ within society” (Cohen, 2005, p. 24)—is pervasive in most institutions, including schools. Fear of the queer, or all the meanings and associations attached to nonheteronormativity, leads schools to suppress teachers and creates cultures that facilitate harm toward gender-nonconforming and nonheteronormative youth. Transphobic and homophobic cultures are persistent and largely still normalized and formative of what happens within school spaces, from the girl/boy line-up regimens of early years to the heavily policed boundaries of “proper” school attire. The curriculum of schooling—including what is present, formal, and sanctioned; what is “null” or simply not included; and what is willfully suppressed—serves social-norming functions.

As with all of education, the history of curriculum is contested ground, with the normalizing and subjugating goals of traditional forms resisted by a wide range of curriculum studies orientations—including social reconstruction; feminist critique and gender analysis; reconceptualization; critical perspectives,
Theory

The contemporary surge of support for select lesbian and gay lives places pressures on those of us working for queer justice in school and other contexts to critically examine and reevaluate our goals and tactics. For example, scholarship in queer theory that locates sexuality in practices of citizenship, statehood, and nationalism points to the demand for assimilation as a retraction of rights and, more importantly, as an acquiescence to deeply problematic constructions of the state. Queer theorists use the term *homonationalism* to refer to the inclusion of certain nonheterosexual bodies and practices that do not challenge dominant ideologies of White supremacy, capitalism, or imperialism (Puar, 2007). Homonationalism is also used to signify how “gay rights” can function as a shield and a form of legitimation. Pro-gay policies are used to distract audiences from identifying fundamental human rights violations and to signify a state as modern or cosmopolitan. Homonationalism suggests that if you support the military or engage in marriage, home ownership, two-parent families, and monogamy, and “cover” other potentially disquieting forms of difference and maintain alignment with normal life, you are worthy of incorporation into the state and might be eligible for some social protections and benefits. Or, a charter school might be lauded because of the inclusion of sexual orientation in an antidiscrimination policy or for having a Gay Pride Day celebration, yet, under the regime of privatization, the workers at that school do not make a living wage or have rights to due process. Questions about the assimilative tendencies of social movements are far from novel, and LGBTQ activists in school would benefit from a closer examination of interrelated social movements that have faced similar tensions.

More broadly, a queer lens asks us to question what counts as normal life. In the *Queer Art of Failure*, cultural studies critic Judith “Jack” Halberstam (2011) works to dislodge the pervasive progress narrative central to contemporary understandings of U.S. life. Beyond attempting to dispose of the binary “success/failure,” Halberstam argues to inhabit and to explore failure, as we have attempted here.

Under certain circumstances, failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world. (p. 2)

It isn’t hard to see what the trouble with success might be for Halberstam and for queers or others whose bodies and life paths are incompatible with *normal life*. For many queers, *failing* at what normative culture has marked as success seems not only more...
attractive and promising but also the only possible path, anyway. That is, meeting norms is a near impossibility—no one is entirely successful at being normative—which is how norms operate as such powerful disciplining mechanisms. Living the norms, whether through agreeing to marriage or overlooking poor workplace practices to maintain the fiction of unity-in-identity, has tangible benefits and also costs. Queer theorizing’s ability to call into question normal life destabilizes the ways these arrangements of power—ability and labor—delimit and legitimatize specific forms of embodiment, communication, and cognition as normal and natural.

The relationship between bodies and the state in the United States is rooted in notions of egalitarianism and liberalism—that we are all protected under the law equally—which has proven throughout history not to apply equally to people labeled as “other” through categories of indigeneity, gender, ability, and race; these groups, often through the categories applied to them, have been subjected to varying degrees of surveillance, poverty, exploitation, and violence sanctioned by the state. While egalitarianism and liberalism assume that the state and its legal apparatus are neutral and benevolent (Spade, 2011), queers, indigenous people, women, trans people, people with disabilities, people of color, and immigrants fail at meeting dominant forms of normativity. One’s relation to the state and its law hinges on dominant constructions of normativity and practices of delineation, which requires marking some bodies and identities as illegible and others as legitimate. In creating the categories of ability and disability, knowledge and practices construct norms of “healthy” bodies and minds; in creating the categories of hetero and homo, a fluid range of practices are defined, delineated, and presumed to be stable and identifiable; in creating the categories of male and female, biological sex is positioned as essential rather than socially constructed, and so on. Processes of constructing difference produce subjects marked by such difference as outside the norm.

At stake in this are queer lives and queer forms of knowing and experience. Queer bodies are, always and already, abnormal and abject because of the normative values and means by which society, the state, schools, and other institutions and discourses construct, discipline, and privilege bodies that are useful for its ends (i.e., those bodies that can help in social reproduction to maintain the status quo). For those bodies and identities that fall outside of dominant social norms and that fail to produce or reproduce laborers and the authority of the state, life is subject to increased scrutiny, vulnerability, and abuse. But within such vulnerability, there is an ideological space to rethink success and failure, which thus can push us to rethink classroom and pedagogical practices by challenging the status quo and by deconstructing and dismantling dominant forms of power.

In Cruising Utopia, José Muñoz (2009) wrote that “queerness is that thing that lets us feel that this world is not enough, that indeed something is missing” (p. 1). In the next section, we describe some recent ways queerness has sparked new political imaginings and practices.

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression**

This moment is ripe with creative forms of queer possibilities that fiercely gesture toward other futures. We actively claim, as part of LGBTQ movements for social justice, our own localized work in schools and communities, particularly struggles against racialized police violence, movements for free postsecondary education, and mobilizations against military recruitment and toward the end of permanent war economy of the United States. We offer the following examples, not as exemplars or models, but of projects and creative engagements that we weave into our teaching and learning that offer innovative and unpredictable ways of thinking about how to enable queer lives in schools and communities to flourish.

The Caucus of Rank and File Educators (CORE), a coalition within the Chicago Teachers Union that successfully pressed the union to take action on issues such as school closings, recognizes that good working conditions for teachers translates into safer classrooms for LGBTQ staff, students, and communities. Its fierce work against the privatization of schools and the depprofessionalization of teachers offers a great example of intervention that may not on the surface look like a queer practice. Yet, in our landscape of corporate-driven education reform, CORE’s organizing pushes back on the message of education as business normal. CORE successfully argues not only that good working conditions for
teachers are good learning conditions for students but also that decisions about assessment, curriculum, and teacher effectiveness are best made not by for-profit textbook companies but communities of engaged teachers. With proactive research; intentional coalition building with parent, youth, and community organizations; and creative use of media, CORE is revitalizing labor movements. Its queer emphasis on imagination, hope, and artful action as resistance to the norms that are rendering schools unsafe for students and workers is energizing.

Combining art, direct action, and organizing (including the Undocuabus Tour), Julio Salgado’s Undocuqueer Project exemplifies queer expression designed to create the world we need. A self-described “artivist,” Salgado is a part of the undocumented movement in the United States that has rejected legislation (notably the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act—DREAM—which as of late 2014 has failed to pass Congress) that would require young people to accept the state’s criminalization of their elders/parents in order to potentially achieve their own pathway to legalization. As an out queer feminist artist, Salgado produces radical images that have supported immigration organizing and gender and sexual self-determination. He chronicles his community in an online comic/zine Liberty for All.

Through humor and social commentary on the absurd, video artists Chris Vargas and Greg Youmans present a situation comedy about a cis/trans gay odd couple caught between liberal LGB and radical queer and trans politics. In their web-based sitcom Falling in Love With Chris and Greg, Vargas and Youmans explore LGBTQ issues such as gay marriage, varying structures of relationships, gender transitioning, transgender pregnancy, body issues, and homonormativity. Offering critique on homonormative engagements with the state such as gay marriage as a means to access rights and privileges, Vargas and Youmans help us reenvision queer politics that do not reproduce the status quo, queer futures and community that do not rest on marginalization, and queer failure as a source of knowledge and power. Their brilliantly accessible video series not only showcases one entry into a wide world of DIY queer media production available through free online platforms but also provides other examples of LGBTQ lives in context.

Sins Invalid is a performance project that integrates issues of disability and sexuality in the production of art that critiques normalizing processes that center White able-bodied and mentally able middle-class heterosexual male subjectivities as the norm. Committed to social and economic justice for all persons with disabilities, Sins Invalid and its performances offer narratives and analysis moving from identity politics and individual legal rights to collective claims for human rights, liberation, and beauty. The work of Sins Invalid pushes us to think intersectionally about disability issues in society, pleasure, and identity as sites for learning and reflection and the connection between queer failure and creative resistance of dominant forms of normativity.

Focusing on gender and sexuality, NYQueer is a working group of the larger collective NYCoRE (New York Collective of Radical Educators). NYQueer aims to make resources available for teachers and schools to address homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism in their communities, as well as to create safe inclusive spaces for all students, teachers, and families. Working to support schools in creating environments that embrace diverse forms of self-expression and identity and that foster LGBTQ youth’s growth and learning, NYQueer brings together school officials, teachers, and community organizers to critically engage issues of gender and sexuality in education.

Finally, we are always happy to read and recommend Radical Teacher, described on its website as “a socialist, feminist, and anti-racist journal on the theory and practice of teaching.” The journal, which recently moved to an open access, online-only format, addresses the scope of concerns relevant to improving our educational lives and communities; recent issues, for example, explore Teaching Inside Carceral Institutions (No. 95), Occupy and Education (No. 96), and Hip Hop and Critical Pedagogy (No. 97), and pressing related topics are also presented through the journal’s Facebook group and blog.

These examples, and the many others we don’t yet know about and have only started to dream up, are the future that we are creating together. They, and we, are the queer milieu.
References and Further Readings

Cohen, C. (1999). What is this movement doing to my politics? Social Text 61, 17(4), 111–118.


Websites

Caucus of Rank and File Educators (CORE): http://www.coreteachers.org/
Chicago Teachers Union: http://www.ctunet.com/
Falling in Love With Chris and Greg: http://fallinginlovewithchrisandgreg.com/

It Gets Better Project: http://www.itgetsbetter.org/pages/about-it-gets-better-project/
Julio Salgado’s Undocuqueer Project: http://juliosalgado83.tumblr.com/
NYQueer: http://www.nycore.org/projects/nyqueer/
Radical Teacher: http://radicalteacher.library.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/radicalteacher
Sins Invalid: http://www.sinsinvalid.org/
The sociohistorical and cultural contexts within which Black women and other women of color live their lives and the ways of understanding the world they develop in response to these contexts constitute the womanist/Black feminist milieu. The terms womanist and Black feminist refer to standpoint perspectives that highlight the unique epistemologies, or ways of understanding the world, that Black women and other women of color use to interpret their lived experiences. Womanist and Black feminist epistemologies presuppose the historical and present-day marginalization of women of color and the devaluation of their culturally derived forms of knowledge (Collins, 2000; Williams, 2001). Theoretical perspectives based on womanist and Black feminist epistemologies are social justice-oriented and privilege the ways of knowing that Black women and other women of color use to survive and resist oppression (Collins, 2000).

The constituent elements of the womanist/Black feminist milieu are most creatively articulated by Alice Walker (1983) in her book *In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens: Womanist Prose*. Walker noted that a womanist is “a black feminist or feminist of color” (p. xi) who engages in behavior that is outrageous, courageous, and willful, and who wants “to know more and in greater depth than is considered ‘good’ for one” (p. xi). A womanist loves women (sexually or nonsexually), appreciates women’s culture, and demonstrates commitment to the survival and wholeness of all people. A womanist loves music, the moon, the Spirit, food and roundness, and struggle. Walker emphasized the importance of self-love by noting that a womanist “loves herself. Regardless” (p. xii). Walker’s definition ends with a famous analogy in which she compared Womanism and feminism: “Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender” (p. xii).

Implicitly womanist and Black Feminist epistemologies uphold the importance of self-love, culturally derived knowledge construction, and audacious and courageous behavior oriented toward the goals of healing and wholeness for all people. Walker’s pairing of womanism with the color purple and feminism with the color lavender is significant. The similarity between the colors purple and lavender illustrate the commonality of gender oppression shared by womanists and feminists; however, Walker’s designation of the color purple for womanism also suggests important differences between womanists and their feminist counterparts. Womanism’s deeper hue, in comparison to the color lavender, reflects additional contexts of race and class that are also common sources of oppression for women of color (Collins, 2000; Davis, 1981; hooks, 1981, 1984).

Although writing that espoused a Black feminist epistemology was being circulated prior to the publication of *In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens*, Walker’s creative crystallization of Black feminist ideas and her coining of the term *womanist* provided
an easily accessible framework for womanist thought and activism that inspired many women of color; evidence of this inspiration is found in the continued adoption, appropriation, and transformation of the term womanist by individuals seeking to name, survive, and transcend the interconnected sources of oppression that shape their lives. Walker’s definition uses the terms womanist, Black feminist, and feminist of color interchangeably; following Walker’s example, many individuals who engage in womanist and Black feminist scholarship and activism also use these terms interchangeably (see, e.g., Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Collins, 2001).

There are some scholars, however, who contend that significant differences exist between the terms womanism and Black feminism. For some, the term Black feminist is problematic because of its necessary association with feminism, a movement that many Black women have critiqued for its racism, lack of relevance for Black women, and lack of serious attention given to issues experienced by women of color (Collins, 1996; Davis, 1981; Giddings, 2006; hooks, 1981, 1984, 1989; Hudson-Weems, 2004). Some individuals view the term womanist as more reflective of a transnational and multicultural agenda of women’s empowerment (Collins, 1996; Jain & Turner, 2012), while others argue that womanist philosophy, particularly when applied to religious and ethical studies, is heteronormative and homophobic (Coleman, 2006). Still others take issue with the term womanist, arguing that its lack of focus on motherhood and family-centeredness are not reflective of authentic African culture and traditions (Hudson-Weems, 2004; Oyewumi, 2004).

As these differing views make clear, womanism and Black feminism are complex and contested terms that resist simple definitions. In this chapter, the terms womanist and Black feminist are used interchangeably to facilitate a general discussion of the womanist/Black feminist milieu and its contributions to education and curriculum studies; however, in order to gain greater understanding of the breadth and scope of womanist and Black feminist epistemologies, scholarship, and activism, sustained reading on the diverse viewpoints associated with these topics is required.

This chapter highlights the significance of the womanist/Black feminist milieu for contemporary curriculum theorizing, development, implementation, or enactment. I first discuss how the womanist/Black feminist milieu can be approached and understood as a curriculum topic. I then discuss the ways in which womanist and Black feminist epistemologies impact contemporary curriculum issues and concerns. The sociohistorical and cultural context within which womanist and Black feminist epistemologies developed is presented. Germinal works in womanist and Black feminist thought that articulate the womanist/Black feminist milieu are highlighted with emphasis on womanist and Black feminist work that has influenced educational scholarship, curriculum theorizing, and activism. Theories supportive of the womanist/Black feminist milieu are addressed, followed by an exploration of selected forms of curriculum inquiry and modes of expression that have been engaged through womanist and Black feminist perspectives to illuminate the impact of these modes of inquiry on curriculum policy and practice.

Curriculum Topic

Despite the promises and possibilities for emancipatory praxis (i.e., reflection on oppressive and dehumanizing educational contexts and deliberate action to alter those contexts) inherent in much curriculum scholarship, the curriculum field remains predominantly White. Whiteness in curriculum studies is maintained in large part by continued acts of racism and colonization that repeatedly “absorb, silence, and replace the non-white other, perpetuating white supremacy and settlerhood” (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013). Actions aimed at identifying hegemonic curricular practices and reclaiming curricular spaces for marginalized and/or historically underrepresented groups can be understood as methods of browning the curriculum (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2006).

The womanist/Black feminist milieu contributes to the browning of curriculum studies by illuminating the ways in which contexts of race/ethnicity, gender, and other identity constructs influence all aspects of curriculum policy and practice. Additionally, work for social justice engaged by individuals embracing womanist and/or Black feminist epistemologies strengthens the field of curriculum studies through introduction of culturally derived forms of knowledge that influence how curriculum is understood and
enacted. The insertion of womanist and Black feminist epistemologies in curriculum studies challenges the presumed normalcy and neutrality of existing forms of curriculum theorizing, development, and implementation; in so doing, these epistemologies offer innovative approaches to curriculum policy and practice. These innovations are reflective of contemporary curriculum concerns, which will be discussed in the following section.

Contemporary Concerns

In the field of education in general and in curriculum studies, evidence of a womanist/Black feminist milieu manifests itself through the introduction of new ways of understanding curriculum, innovative ways of understanding and interacting with students, and new ways of thinking about curriculum and pedagogy.

New Ways of Understanding Curriculum

While understanding curriculum as racial and gender texts has been widely recognized in contemporary curriculum discourse (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995), womanist and Black feminist epistemologies have extended these approaches to curriculum discourse by highlighting the usefulness of the experiences of Black women and other women of color as topics of curriculum theorizing and by presenting the scholarship and activism of women of color as sources of curriculum study. For example, Baszile's (2006) reflections on ways in which she referred to as the "ontoepestemological in-between" (p. 198) or her sociospatial location as a Black woman working for social justice within a predominantly White institution necessitated that she use her scholarship and teaching as forms of struggle. As another example, Paul's (2001) text, *Life, Culture, and Education on the Academic Plantation*, provides an insider's view of the often hostile treatment women faculty of color experience within the academy. Finally, Hill's (2010) examination of the leadership and pedagogy of Black women educators highlights exemplary aspects of curriculum practice engaged by the Black women in her study. In each of these examples, the study of Black women's experiences and the unique ways in which they develop and implement curriculum and scholarship demonstrate the complexity of Black women's lives and the value of understanding Black women and their scholarship and activism as topics of curriculum study.

New Ways of Understanding and Interacting With Students

Much of the scholarship framed by womanist and/or Black feminist epistemologies focuses on pedagogical issues and highlights new ways of understanding and interacting with students. Some of these works challenge taken-for-granted assumptions of teacher authority over students when the teachers are women of color and the students are predominantly White (Henry, 1993; Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005). Other scholarship in this area uses womanist and/or Black feminist epistemologies to encourage students to engage in educational transformation. For example, Cozart and Gordon (2006) tackle the issue of the relevance of social foundations courses for teacher education students; they model womanist principles of caring for their students and encourage the students to reimagine connections between acts of caring and educational transformation.

New Ways of Thinking About Curriculum and Pedagogy

The infusion of womanist and Black feminist epistemologies in the field of education encourages new ways of thinking about curricular and pedagogical issues. Some ways the womanist/Black feminist milieu manifests itself in the field of education include the introduction of innovative pedagogical practices and the challenging of hegemonic educational notions, theories, and practices. For example, Brock (2011) deconstructed cultural practices of verbal insults commonly referred to as "the dozens" (p. 379) in order to engage students in critical thinking about taken-for-granted cultural practices. As another example, Guillory (2010) supported the inclusion of rap, with its positive, negative, and contradictory representations, into the official curricula of public schools, arguing that such curricula would teach important lessons about public pedagogy. Other work in this area exhibits innovativeness by challenging the presumed neutrality of foundational concepts...
such as caring in education (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Roseboro & Ross, 2009).

Context

The development of the womanist/Black feminist milieu began to take shape in the nexus of the civil rights and women’s rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s, though its origins can be traced back to the courageous acts of resistance accomplished by Black women during U.S. slavery.

In 1974, the Combahee River Collective, a group of self-identified Black feminists from Boston (named after Harriet Tubman’s successful destruction of Confederate supplies along the Combahee River near Beaufort, South Carolina), began meeting to identify and articulate their specific politics, separate from the politics of the women’s movement, which they felt were becoming increasingly racist and exclusionary (Combahee River Collective, 1977/1983). Giddings (2006) also noted the alienation a majority of Black women increasingly perceived toward the women’s movement and the chauvinism Black women experienced from Black males within the civil rights movement and particularly within the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

Black women and other historically marginalized groups developed social thought with the purpose of challenging oppression (Collins, 2000). It is perhaps not difficult to imagine, then, how contexts of racial, gender, class, and other forms of oppression experienced by Black women and other women of color encouraged the development of womanist and Black feminist epistemologies. Participation in acts of resistance to slavery and various liberation movements including the antislavery movement, the women’s suffrage movement, the civil rights and Black liberation movements, and the women’s movement honed the activist skills of women of color, yet also indicated the need for politics that specifically addressed the ways in which contexts of race, gender, sexuality, and class interacted to influence their lives.

While some women of color engaged in the necessary work of educating men of color and White women on issues of sexism and racism, others redirected efforts toward building a uniquely Black feminist movement. Audre Lorde (1984) argued for the importance of an exclusive focus on women of color rather than oppressive diversionary tactics that compel women of color to convert White men or White feminist women.

Women of today are still being called upon to stretch across the gap of male ignorance to educate men as to our existence and our needs. This is an old and primary tool of oppressors to keep the oppressed occupied with the master’s concerns. Now we hear that it is the task of women of Color to educate white women—in the face of tremendous resistance—as to our existence, our differences, our relative roles in our joint survival. This is a diversion of energies and a tragic repetition of racist patriarchal thought. (p. 113)

Spurred by the impetus to develop and implement their own politics during the 1970s and 1980s, groups such as the Combahee River Collective, the National Black Feminist Organization, and Black Women Organized for Action began meeting for emotional support, consciousness raising, and information dissemination (Combahee River Collective, 1983; Hull & Smith, 1982). With the initiation of the National Conference on Third World Women and Violence, Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, and the development of women’s studies programs for Black women and other women of color, an environment in which women of color could organize, research their histories, articulate and disseminate their politics, and engage activism was formed (Combahee River Collective, 1983; Hull & Smith, 1982; Smith, 2000).

Though Alice Walker’s definition of womanism was being appropriated by women of color soon after its introduction, contributions to womanist writing were slower to develop, reflecting a “tendency of womanism to be approached and expressed intuitively rather than analytically” (Phillips, 2006, p. xxi). In her introduction to The Womanist Reader, Phillips (2006) chronicled the rise and relative demise of womanism in academic realms (except for religious studies, where it continues to flourish) and the increasing popularity of womanist thought and activism outside academic arenas. The increasing popularity of womanism is due, in large part, to its universal, humanistic nature. Phillips argued that anyone of any culture, ethnicity, or gender can be a womanist, as long as she or he is aligned with the goals of wholeness and healing for all humanity.
Emphasizing the universal orientation of womanism, she wrote:

To be a womanist, one must identify one’s cultural roots and experience oneself as a cultural or ethnic being rather than a racial being, but one must also be able to see oneself and one’s people as part of a larger global body defined by common humanness. Such identification preserves valuable streams of difference for the benefit of all humanity, while simultaneously detaching these streams of difference from particular bodies or identities. From this ground, people can begin the process of struggling for commonweal at the successive levels of community as defined by the womanist—from one’s own group, to all humanity, to livingkind, to Earth, to the universe, to all the realms of creation. (pp. xxvi–xxxvii)

Within the contexts discussed above, Black feminist theorizing (and later womanist theorizing) emerged; theories of the womanist/Black feminist milieu are discussed in the following section.

Theories of the Womanist/Black Feminist Milieu

Patricia Hill Collins’s (2001) book Black Feminist Thought is arguably the most comprehensive theoretical detailing of Black feminist thought. A major theme of this book is that the historical and contemporary suppression of Black women’s ideas is integral to maintaining Black women’s social, economic, and political oppression. Illuminating and learning from the suppressed ideas of Black women is a major tool for empowerment (Collins, 2000). Consistent with this theme, much of Black Feminist Thought builds upon the writing and activism of historical and contemporary Black women who consistently engage “a process of self-conscious struggle on behalf of Black women” (p. 15). Collins’s major contributions to the womanist/Black feminist milieu include (a) an emphasis on reclaiming Black women’s ideas as discussed earlier, and (b) a classification system for identifying and developing strategies of resistance to micro- and macro-level structures of power that oppress Black women.

The matrix of domination is Collins’s heuristic model for understanding the relationships of power that affect Black women within given social contexts. Matrices of domination are organized through four interconnected domains of power (i.e., structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal); each plays a specific role in maintaining the domination of Black women and other oppressed groups. The structural domain organizes social institutions such as schools and media, while the disciplinary domain manages oppression through surveillance and the enforcement of policies, laws, and regulations (Collins, 2000). The hegemonic domain justifies practices occurring within the structural and disciplinary domains through ideology, culture, and their subsequent influence on individual consciousness and the interpersonal domain involves everyday acts of individual behavior (Collins, 2000).

Collins argues that controlling images, or hegemonic negative representations of Black women, are perpetuated in society to justify the socioeconomic and political oppression of Black women. Through safe spaces or sites where Black women can cultivate definitions of self that contradict controlling images, Black women engage in dialogical processes of individual and group critical consciousness to resist oppression and work for social change (Collins, 2000). As individuals develop critical consciousness, their relationship to structures of oppression within the matrix of domination changes; as individual Black women who are critically conscious engage in dialogue with other Black women, their ideas continually reshape the contours of Black feminist thought for social justice. Collins (2000) describes this as a dialogical process of individual and group consciousness in relation to social change.

Clenora Hudson-Weems introduced the concept of Africana womanist theory in the late 1980s (Phillips, 2006). In her book Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves, Hudson-Weems argued for the inappropriateness of feminism, Black feminism, African feminism, and Alice Walker’s womanism as theoretical models for women of African descent and their struggles against oppression. Hudson-Weems (2004) claimed that feminism (and Black feminism by association), developed by White women and endorsing White values and epistemologies, contradicts the goals and values of Africana women. Similarly, Hudson-Weems (1993/2006) suggested that Alice Walker’s concept of womanism, with its focus on individuality and women’s relationships with each other (as opposed to Black women’s relationships with their male counterparts), holds little distinction from feminism and, as a result, is also an
inappropriate framework for women of African descent. Instead, she offered Africana womanism, a theoretical model based on African culture, philosophy, and epistemology that privileges issues of race over gender and emphasizes family-centeredness and cooperative activism with Africana men against oppression. Emphasizing the distinctiveness of Africana womanism, she wrote:

Neither an outgrowth nor an addendum to feminism, Africana Womanism is not Black feminism, African feminism, or Walker’s Womanism that some Africana women have come to embrace. Africana Womanism is an ideology created and designed for all women of African descent. It is grounded in African culture, and therefore, it necessarily focuses on the unique experiences, struggles, needs, and desires of African women. (p. 48)

In her book, Hudson-Weems (2004) offered 18 traits of Africana women; some of these traits include family-centeredness, strength, cooperative struggle with Africana men for freedom, adaptability, mothering, nurturing, and male compatibility. The salience of racism as a primary source of oppression for women of African descent and the insistence that Africana women and men must struggle together against oppression are main features of Africana womanism.

Much of the work in womanist theory was developed by womanist theologians and ethicists in the field of religious studies who embraced the definition of womanist developed by Alice Walker based on her articulation that a womanist “loves the Spirit” (1983, p. xii). Like Black feminist and Africana womanist theory, womanist theory in religious studies utilizes the historical and contemporary work of Black women and other women of color as inspiration, guidance, and strategies of resisting oppression. In addition, womanist theological and ethical scholars also deconstruct racist, patriarchal, and sexist practices within religious and academic communities as well as canonical texts.

Womanist theorists take seriously the goal of healing and wholeness for all people and, toward this goal, produce scholarship on a wide range of topics including suffering and evil (Townes, 2002), womanist pedagogy (Canon, 2003), biblical hermeneutics (Williams, 2001), depression (Coleman, 2012), and third-wave womanism (Coleman, 2013). Germinal texts in womanist theorizing include Delores Williams’s (2001) *Sisters in the Wilderness*; Emilie Townes’s (2002) *A Troubling in My Soul*; Katie Cannon’s (2003) *Katie’s Canon*; Monica Coleman’s (2013) *Ain’t I a Womanist Too?* and her Third-Wave Womanist Religious Thought.

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression**

Within academia, there are unique challenges for scholars of color who strive to engage in educational research that is compatible with their spiritual and intellectual leanings (Dillard, 2006). The forms of inquiry and modes of expression by Black feminist and womanist scholars creatively respond to this challenge through the development of innovative inquiry that is theoretical (e.g., Baszile, 2006; Dillard, 2006; Guillory, 2011; Roseboro & Ross, 2009), empirical (e.g., Jain & Turner, 2012), or a combination of theoretical and pedagogical (e.g., Brock, 2005, 2011; Cozart & Gordon, 2006; Paul, 2001). Though representing only a sampling of the womanist and Black feminist scholarship that forms the contours of the womanist/Black feminist milieu, the following forms of inquiry nevertheless illustrate the creativity, epistemological diversity, and social justice focus of womanist and Black feminist inquiry.

Using a life history methodology, Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2005) interviewed Black women educators with social justice leanings to identify common themes related to their teaching practices indicative of a womanist epistemology. Each of the interviewed educators utilized wisdom from their foremothers and identified with historical Black women’s activism. Additionally, caring for students was a central component of each educator’s political activism. The salience of these womanist themes in the life histories of each Black woman educator demonstrates the usefulness of womanist perspective in illuminating the motivations and teaching practices of Black women educators. Importantly, Beauboeuf-Lafontant suggested that the womanist themes in her findings could be used to reinvigorate the current teaching force with critical thinking and social justice ethics. Thus, her work also connects to broader issues of curriculum policy and enactment through an offering of womanist ways of knowing to enhance the dispositions and teaching practices of in-service teachers.
Ross’s (2013) *The Politics of Politeness* explores the curricular significance of Southern space through historical analysis and self-reflection. Using Black feminism and critical race theory to connect historical processes of racial formation and cultural images of Southern ladies and mammies to contemporary processes of teacher education in the Deep South, her theorizing attempts to explain passive-aggressive responses of White pre-service teachers to the presence and curricula of women faculty of color engaging in social justice pedagogy. Using the metaphor of travel, Ross conceptualized her social justice pedagogy within a predominantly White institution as metaphorically trespassing on White space. She described tepid classroom engagement by pre-service teachers who responded to her attempts to elicit discussion around issues such as cultural and linguistic bias with amiable head nodding and silence. While Ross initially attributed these classroom interactions to students’ shyness and Southern politeness, she reinterpreted the student responses after receiving numerous course evaluations that attacked her personally and indicated strong displeasure with the course subject matter. In this text, seemingly benign manifestations of Southern politeness are theorized as strategic acts of resistance that punish trespass onto White space by putting Ross “in her place” as a Black woman in the South. By exploring the curricular implications of students’ passive-aggressive politeness and offering strategies to address these culturally rooted practices of resistance, Ross’s work reflects several Black feminist and womanist themes including the significance of history on present-day race/ethnic and gender relations, emphasis on survival and self-care for women of color, and a commitment to social justice.

Finally, Brock’s (2005) *Sista Talk: The Personal and the Pedagogical* is a creative blend of self-reflection, internal dialogue with the African goddess Oshun, and dialogue with eight Black women who were previously enrolled in one of two classes she taught: the African American Woman, and Racism and Sexism. There is much significance in Brock’s subtitle, *The Personal and the Pedagogical*; her research epitomizes connections between self and teaching. Throughout the text, she engaged in self-reflection to better understand herself in order to engage in “good teaching of Black women about Black women” (Brock, 2005, p. 131). In her critical action research project, Brock relied on several principles of Black feminist epistemology to guide her inquiry, including experiences as a criterion of meaning, an ethic of personal accountability, and the use of dialogue to assess knowledge claims (Collins, 2000). Her *sista talk*—or the dialogues she engaged in with her former students—embraced each of these principles as the women-constructed knowledge by discussing texts, reflecting on representations of Black women, and sharing their own lived experiences in further transformation.

**Future Work**

Womanist and Black feminist scholarship and activism have much to contribute to education in general and curriculum studies specifically. There is a need for the continued browning of curriculum studies (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2006), and scholarship within the womanist/Black feminist milieu can contribute much to this process. There is also a need to continually push theoretical and methodological boundaries in educational research to make room for social-cultural sensibilities of social justice–oriented scholars (Dillard, 2006). These forms of inquiry are illustrative of creative ways in which womanist and Black feminist scholarship and activism transcends epistemological, theoretical, and methodological boundaries. Future work within these areas will continue to contribute to these efforts.

### References and Further Readings


Hull, G. T., & Smith, B. (1982). Introduction: The politics of Black women’s studies. In G. Hull, P. Bell Scott, & B. Smith (Eds.), *All the women are White, all the Blacks are men, but some of us are brave: Black women’s studies* (pp. xvii–xxi). New York, NY: The Feminist Press.


Socioeconomic class is a deceptively simple sociological category, one that has ironically been described as an “inherently indescribable concept” (Conley, 2008, p. 367). Social class is often reduced to whether someone is rich or poor; these “folk conceptions of class” often highlight life trajectories related to education, occupation, and income. Certainly, how much money people have, how they earn their money, and what they do with their money are key elements to understanding what constitutes socioeconomic status. In this vein, Wright and Rogers (2010) identified a taxonomy of positions within a capitalist class structure based primarily upon education, money, and wealth: a small yet extremely rich corporate managerial class; an unstable middle class whose position is tied to training in technical skills for jobs with particular credentials; a large working class rapidly losing any former protections they may have had through unionization; a segment of this working class with little to no job security; and a thoroughly marginalized poor whose living conditions make it virtually impossible to acquire the skills and education needed for jobs that could potentially lift them out of poverty.

Though these more structural classifications are useful, class is more than one’s income, employee status, or wealth. It also incorporates how people experience their material realities (both absolute and relative) in a way that produces complex identities. Conventional class distinctions thus highlight the unequal possibilities that influence how people enact their identities and interact with the world. Even common descriptors of class status reveal such levels of nuance interlaced with judgments about moral character in connection with race and gender (e.g., “white trash,” “old money,” “nouveau riche,” “welfare queen,” “gold digger,” “highfalutin,” “uppity”). Class is thus both a description of the level to which one has access and control over shifting material goods and resources, as well as a performance of identity that one learns and constructs through unequal, unstable relationships with institutions and individuals.

Because schools are important sites of class contestation, inequality, and identity formation, the explicit and hidden curricula in their policies, structures, and practices and how families and educators operate within them are important units of analysis for educational research (Weis, 2008). Conversely, attention to educational policy, practice, context, and theory without a consideration of the class milieu presents an impartial picture at best of how and why
sense of ease balance fear and anxieties is now beginning to topple, as risks threaten to outweigh familiar securities” (pp. 2–3). Many scholars argue that the current social and economic instabilities are influencing the lives and self-understandings of young people from all social class groups in profound ways and changing how they, especially affluent youth, imagine their futures.

Context: Keeping Things Steady on Shifting Ground “Within Class”

Privileged young people are likely to remain at the top despite the shifts in the social and economic landscapes. As the divide between the haves and have-nots has expanded, those at the top of the economic spectrum have become wealthier in recent years. Wealthy individuals didn’t just weather the worst economic decline in decades better than everyone else; they emerged from the 2008 financial crisis with an increased net worth. The recovery era incomes of the wealthiest Americans have surged with high stock prices, rising home values, and increased corporate profits, while the incomes of everyone else are hindered by high unemployment and stagnant wages. Economic inequalities in the United States are at levels not seen since the Great Depression.

Against the backdrop of this class stratification, the explicit curriculum available to students in elite educational institutions continues to be substantively different from what is available to the large majority of U.S. students. These differences in the actual content that different kinds of schools deliver through courses are significant because they mean that students are being prepared to assume particular social roles (Lareau, 2003; Willis, 1981). As such, these curricular arrangements are not just significant in terms of what and how students learn but also in how they come to understand themselves as subjects. In particular, the curriculum at elite schools plays a significant role in the production of particular elite subjectivities (Gaztambide-Fernández & Howard, 2010), providing a stabilizing force within the shifting landscape of opportunity.

This widening wealth inequality manages to stay largely hidden or unquestioned given that the myth of meritocracy has such deep and extensive roots in
the United States. The belief in class mobility and a relatively even distribution of wealth is strong despite evidence to the contrary. Within this ideology, economic inequality (and the differential education available to people in different classes) is both underestimated and justified as the result of poor or good decisions individuals make over time. In contrast with race or gender, social class is presented as a choice and thus dismissed as a legitimate issue in debates about schools. For example, consultant profiteers such as Payne (1996) and educators advocating market-based reforms argue that a child’s economic circumstances are no excuse for low achievement and that a great teacher can overcome whatever the effects of poverty may be. In fact, class status and identity are a result of individuals’ struggles within a system built upon maintaining class advantage in ways that are deeply intertwined with race and gender, as well as other forms of identity (Grant & Sleeter, 1986).

Theory: “Late to Class” Shifting Attention to Elites

A terrible truth exists within every society throughout the world: Some benefit from privileged circumstances at the expense of others. In the United States, this is certainly the case where the advantages of a relative few are related to the predicaments of many. In fact, the consequences of the relationship between privilege and oppression can be seen in virtually all aspects of American life including in health care, where the differences in overall health and lifespan are widening despite all the advances in medicine; in education, where school success remains linked tightly to a student’s social class; and in the labor market, where the top 1% saw an average of around 200% increase in their net income over the past 30 years, while during the same time the net income of the bottom 20% stayed approximately the same (Gibson & Perot, 2011). These kinds of enduring inequalities make the United States the most stratified society in the industrialized world.

Americans often cloak these inequalities with a strong belief in meritocracy or what most simply refer to as the “American Dream”—the belief that anyone in this country can be successful, financially and otherwise, if they work hard enough. Mobility—that is, the movement of families and individuals up and down the economic ladder—is the promise that lies at the heart of this belief. Although there is some class fluidity in the United States and almost everyone in this country can point to at least one example where this is true, the reality is that social class is much less fluid than most people think. A 2005 poll found that the misconception that one could start out poor, work hard, and become rich was more common than it was 20 years before, during a period in which there was even more static distribution of income across the generations with fewer opportunities for advancement (New York Times Correspondents, 2005). Even more recently when—according to a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center—Americans have become increasingly aware of class divisions in the nation and believing there are strong conflicts between the rich and the poor, dominant attitudes and beliefs related to social class have remained largely unchanged (Morin, 2012). Even with increased awareness of class divisions and conflicts, then, people continue to believe that individuals became rich mainly because of their own hard work, ambition, or education.

Like most other industrialized nations, we rarely face the consequences of the relationship between privilege and oppression. And what are some of these consequences in the United States? In 2010, nearly 49 million people living in more than 17 million households (i.e., 14.5% of households in the country) were food-insecure, meaning they lacked access to adequate food, at least during certain times of the year (Coleman-Jensen, Nord, Andrews, & Carlson, 2011); and in 2013, approximately 610,000 people were homeless (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2014). Even when people have glimmers of awareness of these realities, poverty, homelessness, and hunger are seen as unfortunate but temporary and as natural consequences of bad choices made by the disadvantaged themselves.

Many in the United States believe those experiencing these inhumane conditions have brought their “predicament” upon themselves and their conditions will change only when they change. This belief not only ignores the pervasive nature of oppression but also plays a role in maintaining oppressive conditions.

Highlighting the persistent oppressive conditions in our society is certainly important but not enough for developing an adequate understanding of inequality.
In other words, we have to do more than just understand how oppression works. We must also turn our attention to the privileged side of the relationship that generates and sustains inequalities. If we are to understand this relationship (and, therefore, oppression), we must understand how privilege works and what role it plays in reproducing inequalities. We must understand the role played by those who benefit most from existing inequalities and how these inequalities are reproduced and justified by and through the daily practices of privileged individuals and groups.

In recent years, there has been a small yet important body of research on elite students and elite education that offers a more comprehensive exploration of the role privilege plays in creating and maintaining educational inequalities. This work has revealed the contours and consequences of privilege that shape students’ experiences and identities while offering an analysis of how privilege and elite class status are “transferred from one generation to the next through a range of mechanisms, [that] can be both hidden and visible, [are] experienced in both material and subjective terms, [are] related to the marginalization and oppression of others, and intersect with and [are] inflected by other categories of identification” (Gaztambide-Fernández & Howard, 2010, p. 198). While these recent advances in scholarship about elites and elite education represent a significant shift in how the social class influences on schooling are understood and explored, there is much ground yet to cover and important questions remain to be addressed about the role of privilege in reinforcing and regenerating class inequalities in the educational context. This work, however, is providing new methodological and theoretical frameworks for exploring class in the new economy.

Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression: The Need for New Frameworks “After Class”

Although disagreements arise in explaining school achievement disparities between low-income and high-income students, there is a fair amount of agreement in educational literature that there is a high correlation between student class status and school achievement and attainment. Consistently, research studies document the differences in school circumstances and outcomes between poor and affluent students. A variety of issues and questions relating to social class have been explored in this body of literature, such as achievement patterns, funding and resources, tracking, hidden curriculum, disadvantages of poor children as they enter formal schooling, the overrepresentation of poor students in special education, and the leveling of students’ aspirations (e.g., Anyon, 1980; Oakes, 2005). This extensive body of research has documented the various ways that schools reflect the social class divisions of the larger society fairly consistently through structures, practices, curriculum, and policies and the lived experiences of, and the interactions among, those within schools (e.g., Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976).

However, in the 1990s, it became apparently unfashionable in academic circles to talk about class, as if class no longer mattered and the historic concerns of many researchers and theorists had disappeared. As with other fields, this was evident in curriculum studies. As Wright (2000) noted in his thorough review and characterization of the field of curriculum theorizing, the topic of social class “has receded quite substantially in representation in curriculum theorizing (as it has in social theory in general)” and adds that encountering a scholarly piece on social class “is like finding a rare gem” (p. 7). In the past 15 years or so, the subject of social class has been infrequently addressed, even in passing, in articles and books, and at conferences and other professional gatherings. Why is social class essentially ignored in curriculum studies and other fields?

It is reasonable to assume that there are several reasons behind this lack of scholarship on social class since what gets studied is political and ideological and, as Brantlinger (2003) argued, is often “a product of influential groups’ intentions and is based on their desire to sustain their own personal interests” (p. 21). We argue that this lack of attention to social class is not simply a “gap” in curriculum studies but a product of scholars’ reluctance to engage theoretically and empirically with social class issues under the scalpel of their analysis—which may also include implicating themselves and their ways of knowing and doing along the way. Most explanations, however, suggest that past and present approaches to understanding social class need to be reconceived within newer theoretical perspectives.
and methodological approaches in order to revive conversations about, and explorations of, class.

With rising economic inequalities and increased uncertainties of the global economy, the time is ripe for working toward developing new explanatory frameworks and new ways to generate conversations about social class. A few scholars are engaging in efforts to provide such perspectives (e.g., Van Galen & Noblit, 2007). Noblit (2007), for example, argued, “Class has become déclassé in social analysis because it has had to take too much weight” (p. 343). He urged us to take the weight off class in considering the various forms of stratification. Noblit (2007), however, possibly, took too much weight off class in his argument that it must be “reaccomplished through other forms of difference” (p. 343). This position raises the question: How far can social class be reconstituted through other forms of difference before our analysis or discussion is really no longer about social class? Noblit’s argument rightly calls for the need for exploring the complicated intersections of different categories of identity; however, his analysis, as well as the analyses of others who have suggested the ways in which we reinvigorate the study of social class by redirecting our focus toward other forms of difference, falls short in acknowledging fully the distinct nature of social class. This approach for reconstituting social class could serve to encourage that which proponents attempt to address: class becoming even more déclassé in social analysis.

Others attempt to imagine newer theoretical perspectives by revisiting and reworking past theoretical frameworks but, in the end, have relied on the present and past too heavily to imagine something different from existing perspectives (Van Galen & Noblit, 2007). Even though newer theoretical perspectives must be situated in established ones, it is essential to acknowledge how limiting it is to break away from the past when heavily relying on that past in developing newer perspectives. We must not rely solely or even heavily on past perspectives in moving toward possibilities that are unforeseeable from those perspectives. In recent years, several scholars have called for theorizing class within newer frameworks, but have been less clear about how to engage in such theoretical efforts.

However, there are a few scholars mapping new theoretical and methodological terrain, emphasizing the continued need for interrogating class. Especially with scholars studying elites and elite education, contemporary theorizations of class are increasingly less concerned with class being a form of social and economic classification and more concerned with the ways class is experienced and forged, recognizing that class operates in many different ways and at several different levels. In particular, class has been increasingly reconceptualized as fundamentally about agency and affect (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2013). Even though human agency exists within the contradiction between people as social producers and as social products, meanings, in particular ideologies, that create and reinforce class structures and relations and, consequently, inequities are neither imposed nor stable. Individuals mediate class forces and have the capacity to transform meanings in order to interrupt the cultural processes that validate and support existing inequity-producing class structures and relations. With the agency to form meanings, class, therefore, is not something individuals are passively given or possess but instead something they actively co-construct and cultivate. Moreover, although everyone has the agency to form and develop particular meanings, the advantaging circumstances enjoyed by affluent individuals grant them a greater capacity than disadvantaged individuals to form their own meanings and also use those meanings in ways to protect their class interests.

Similarly, people’s forms of knowledge and understanding shape affective responses or emotions. Although most emotions are predominantly viewed as universal experiences and natural human phenomena, emotions are anything but natural or universal (Lutz, 1988). People may experience similar emotions; however, the individual implicates meanings for those emotions. However, emotions are more than individual responses, but instead are constituted relationally in sociocultural contexts. Emotions, Lutz (1988) contended, “can be viewed as cultural and interpersonal products of naming, justifying, and persuading by people in relationship to each other. Emotional meaning is then a social rather than an individual achievement—an emergent product of social life” (p. 5). As such, emotions orient individuals in space and time, as individuals develop felt attachments to particular categories and places. Ahmed (2004) argued, “What moves us, what makes us feel, is also that which holds us in place” (p. 11).
Emotions operate in the formation of places and subjects, thus creating a particular milieu for educational institutions and fostering identifications with the meanings, practices, and social and cultural particularities of those spaces. Class as affect provides a framework for understanding how students give meaning, affectively, to class forces at play within the schooling context.

In addition to these advancements in the theorization of class, collaborative, participatory, embodied, and arts-based research projects are forging new ways to study and understand social class dynamics that are shaping educational experiences. There are commitments strongly upheld in most of these projects: to examine an issue or problem collectively; to engage in reflection; to put data to use through individual and collective action; and to build alliances in planning, implementing, and disseminating research (Stoudt, Fox, & Fine, 2012). These commitments are maintained though a living dialectical process that impacts researchers, participants, and contexts in which they act. Conceptual, pedagogical, and research frameworks developed from these efforts are advancing understandings of social class and allowing people to contest class inequalities. Though this emerging body of work is opening up opportunities for individual and social transformation, we must, as Lather (2001) reminded us, “move toward and experience the promise that is unforeseeable from the perspective of our present conceptual frameworks” in the pursuit of “a future that must remain to come” (p. 192). Transformational work, it is worth noting, never ends.

References and Further Readings


This chapter explores how the contemporary corporate–military–governmental milieu impacts developments within U.S. K–12 schools and society. A critical examination of the contemporary corporate–military–governmental milieu is essential for becoming educated, empowered, and free in a Freirian sense (Freire, 1970) to understand the constitutive forces and structures responsible for breeding oppression and injustice in our daily affairs, as well as to recognize the urgency to become active in the struggle for building socially just schools, institutions, and relationships. Although politicians, government officials, and the corporate elite have supported and promulgated corporate and military imperatives in U.S. schools for about 2 centuries (e.g., schools across the United States in 1832 purchased McGuffey Readers from publishing houses; the National Defense Act of 1916 authorized high schools to hire military personnel as educators; and large-scale corporations made hundreds of thousands of dollars of test sales by the mid-1950s), there has been an exponential rise in corporate and military involvement in U.S. educational institutions over the past 25 years or so.

Many scholars pinpoint corporate and military ascendancy over schools and society to the changing face of capitalism (Hursh, 2011; McLaren, 2015; Saltman, 2003). Political, economic, and educational powerbrokers in industrial societies such as the United States and Canada have supported neoliberal ideologies espoused by pro-capital academics, such as Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek, for improving all segments of social life. Unfortunately, over the past 25 years, the support for “unregulated or free markets, the withering away of the state as government’s role in regulating businesses and funding social services are either eliminated or privatized, and encouraging individuals to become self-interested entrepreneurs” (Hursh, 2011, p. 35) has denigrated rather than improved the human condition. For instance, neoliberal capitalism is inextricably tied to creation of the prison-industrial complex, to a maldistribution of resources and income, to increased childhood poverty, to massive unemployment, and to educational inequalities along the lines of class and race.

It should be noted that support for free-market ideals as a basis for developing policies, practices, and initiatives in social institutions has functioned as propaganda for the state to cede power to corporate powerbrokers. For instance, in the United States, government officials have acted at the behest of the
corporations and facilitated the corporate takeover of such social domains as health care, transportation, postcatastrophe restoration (e.g., restoration work after Hurricane Sandy and Hurricane Katrina), parks, water, digital networks, and education. Furthermore, international organizations and Western governmental leaders have wielded their power when corporate control is threatened or when the very economic system that supports the exploitation of labor is challenged. For instance, this dynamic is witnessed in the U.S. government implementing the $700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) in 2008. TARP was designed to rescue financial institutions and as an economic system that promulgated an “industry wide scam that involved the mass sale of mismarked, fraudulent mortgage-backed securities” (Taibbi, 2011).

During this same period of time, the U.S. government and business leaders have supported militarism to compel global citizens to support neoliberal ideologies. For instance, U.S. corporate leaders and government officials have used advanced technology and military formations to extend neoliberal policies across the Middle East (Schwartz, 2011). U.S. military invasions in Iraq and Afghanistan provided the impetus for U.S. business leaders and government officials to rebuild these countries through neoliberal economic reforms (Schwartz, 2011).

Moreover, U.S. government’s continued support of militarism aids the corporate world’s desire to amass wealth, control labor power and resources, and concentrate power. The U.S. Department of Defense “manages a global real property portfolio that consists of more than 555,000 facilities . . . located on over 5,000 sites worldwide and covering over 28 million acres” (2012, p. 2). The United States maintains 666 military sites in foreign countries (p. 23). The U.S. military budget doubled from 1998 to 2008. Funding for the military was projected to account for approximately 17% of the total federal budget in fiscal 2014 and 57% of the discretionary budget, or the spending that lawmakers decide on each year in the appropriations process (NPP, 2013). The U.S. government has also supported corporations and backed military incursions by privatizing elements of warfare. Private military and security companies have been invested with the power to move “weapons and military equipment” as well as to provide “services for military operations recruiting former militaries as civilians to carry out passive or defensive security” (Gomez del Prado, 2014).

Military spending is also increasing across Western Europe, as new wars are being waged. Many of these wars are more “traditional,” such as the invasions and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. In these wars, certain nations (including the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Canada, Australia, and Italy) bombed and invaded sovereign countries to overthrow their governments. Yet many of these powers have also been involved in what we might call “proxy wars,” in which they placed limited numbers of military personnel on the ground and worked to support proxy forces. This was the script that was followed in the 2011 war on Libya. In that war, Belgium, France, Denmark, Italy, the United States, Norway, Qatar, Spain, and other states provided air and intelligence support, weapons and money, and justification for a grouping of rebels that ultimately—and thanks only to foreign intervention—overthrew the sovereign government of Libya.

In addition to external wars and military operations, we also have to take into account the internal militarization that takes place in countries such as the United States. A prime and recent example of this intensification is the U.S. support for militarizing police. There are numerous federal programs that supply local police departments with “excess” military-grade equipment such as assault weapons and surveillance cameras and training from the Department of Defense. As a result, local police and sheriff’s departments are now equipped with mine-resistant ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles. Military tanks accompany police on special weapons and tactics raids. The militarization of the police was on full display with the repression of the Ferguson (Missouri) protests in late 2014. Police officers rode in tanks, dressed in camouflage, and carried assault rifles replete with sniper scopes that were modeled on the M4 carbine assault rifle. They wore body armor and carried over half a dozen rounds of extra ammunition on their body. Looking at the images of these police officers, it was difficult for viewers to tell if they had been deployed in Ferguson or Mosul (Iraq).

The increased impact of commercial imperatives and military ideologies on daily affairs in the broader society has also shaped the nature of PK–12 schooling in the United States. According to Peter McLaren...
(2012), during the 1980s, U.S. government officials’ support of market-driven educational reforms went into “full swing” with the “voucher movement” supporting government-funded certificates permitting parents to send their child to the school of their choice (p. 40) and when business leaders made vouchers become “a reality” by running charter schools. Over the past 25 years, U.S. government officials have supported corporate CEOs’ desire to implement corporate policies and formations to allegedly “solve” problems impacting PK–12 schools. For example, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) mandated schools across the United States to institute high-stakes examinations and led many of them to adopt test preparation materials, which were produced by such corporate giants as McGraw-Hill and Pearson, to allegedly position teachers and students in “low performing schools to work harder” and increase student learning by “tying negative consequences (e.g., public exposure, external take over) to standardized” testing (Nichols, Glass, & Berliner, 2012, p. 1). Market-based reform is now reflected in almost every element in schooling, including financing school construction, managing day-to-day activities, training school personnel and educators, assessing student performance, developing school curricula, advertising products and selling services, and promulgating school policies by controlling school boards. Furthermore, the Obama administration instituted Race to the Top (RTT) in 2009, a $4.35-billion “competitive incentive program” designed to push more and more state officials to implement such market-driven reforms as charter schools, privatized teacher certification programs, high-stakes testing, and test-driven accountability (Carr & Porfilio, 2011).

U.S. government officials have also supported instituting militaristic formations alongside market-driven reform initiatives. For instance, the state has backed schools to engage in a billion-dollar market with the corporate world through the purchase of metal detectors, surveillance cameras, privatized security forces, and boot camp programs. The corporate world has touted these reforms as methods to stop violence and to make students responsible citizens. In reality, as Kenneth Saltman (2003) posited, militarized public schooling is another avenue to give power to the corporate world. It allows corporations to enact their vision of education, to amass wealth, and to strip educators’ professional autonomy and expertise for honing students’ ability to understand themselves in relationship to the world.

Militarized schooling also is designed to position students, particularly low-income students and students of color, to become dutiful citizens who are complicit in supporting the U.S. military and its agenda to globalize capitalism overseas. Since the passage of NCLB, military recruiters also have had access to primary and secondary school students. These schools can also be required to provide contact information for students if requested by the U.S. military. Students’ parents must opt out if they wish to be exempt from such requests. As of 2013, more than 500,000 students were enrolled in JROTC programs in 3,400 U.S. high schools (Jones, 2013), which are predominantly located in poor rural and urban communities, particularly in the South. Specifically targeting oppressed and economically disadvantaged students, these programs promise college tuition and other funding. For instance, a magnet, highly selective and competitive high school in Chicago had seven military recruiter visits and 150 from university recruiters. In juxtaposition, in a neighborhood school whose students were 80% Latino/a, the ratio was almost even: nine military recruiter visits and 10 visits from college recruiters (Reed, 2005).

U.S. students have been inculcated to embrace the U.S. military’s agenda, since there has been a constant influx of military personnel teaching in school and serving as school administrators. Military weaponry has also become part of the fabric of school life. For instance, school districts in San Diego and Los Angeles, California, received MRAP vehicles through the Department of Defense’s “Excess Property” program, also referred to as the 1033 Program. A letter sent to the Department of Defense by a coalition of community and legal groups—including the NAACP—discussed about two dozen school districts in eight states that received military surplus equipment from the program (NAACP, 2014). One school district in Florida purchased 28 M16 assault rifles through the program (Gartner, 2014).

**Contemporary Concerns**

One of the most remarkable achievements of the corporatization and militarization of education has
been the cleaving of politics and education. The nexus between education and politics has always been a central concern and debate for educators, educational theorists, researchers, and policy makers, dating back to Socrates and Plato. Yet contemporary discourse around education—and this is not just limited to the discourse pulsing through the corporate mass media, but includes teacher education programs, professional educational organizations, and academic publishing outlets—is predicated upon the very severance of education from the political.

Instead of political concerns over values, directions, goals, and purposes, educational debates are increasingly staged in a highly abstracted economic register. Gert Biesta (2006) documented problems with this succinctly, writing:

To think of education as an economic transaction not only misconstrues the role of the learner and educator in the educational relationship, it also results in a situation in which questions about the content and purpose of education become subject to the influences of the market instead of being the concern of professional judgment and democratic deliberation. (p. 31)

Thus, recent transformations in education have altered our very subjectivity. Instead of being educators who have knowledges, experiences, and critical ideas to bring to students, teachers are viewed as service providers, as technicians whose only job is to deliver content as efficiently as possible. On the other side of the educational relationship, students and parents are no longer conceived of as citizens who are connected to a public realm. Instead, they are positioned as consumers.

With the increasing emphasis on standardized testing and accountability mechanisms, the very act of teaching is under attack. Many teachers today have little agency when it comes to determining what their students should know, how they should learn it, and when they should engage the material. Instead, scripted curricula provide overly structured lesson plans with specific time allotments and even word-for-word phrasing for how to speak with students. One of the main problems with this, particularly as regards challenging the corporate–military–government milieu in education, is that critical teachers are either pushed out or fired. They are pushed out if they deviate too much from the script, which can result in their school being designated as “failing” or “subpar” test scores. Alternatively, they can be outright fired if they vocally or visibly speak out or otherwise contest the corporate privatization and militarization of schooling.

On the other hand, students are increasingly being seen as mere receptacles for information, knowledges, and skills. In this standardized atmosphere, there is no room for students to emerge as unique and singular beings (Biesta, 2006, 2009). In other words, students are not seen as active agents in the learning process or as individuals with distinct perspectives and knowledges to bring into the classroom and the learning experience.

School administration is also profoundly changed in this environment. Saltman (2010) wrote about the ways in which corporate and military logics have changed educational leadership. Looking at groups such as the Eli Broad Foundation, Saltman observed that educational leaders and administrators are now seen as CEOs. Further, in this context “military leadership is celebrated for its alleged link with corporate management—a focus on discipline, order, and enforcement of mandates through a hierarchy at every level of public schooling” (p. 81).

Taken together, these trends are of particular import at the moment because they are working to widen educational inequalities. Oppressed racial groups, the working class, and poor people are disproportionately affected by the militarization and privatization of education. This means that those who are in the most need of education are those who receive the worst education: scripted curricula, grueling standardized testing, test-polluted educators, surveillance, and discipline. This latest trend is particularly worrisome to many because of its contradiction of a democratic ethos. In 2013, the Civil Rights Project at the University of California, Los Angeles, released a report documenting the overuse of suspension in middle and high schools in the United States. Over two million students were suspended during the 2009–2010 school year, the vast majority of whom were suspended for minor infractions such as school dress code violations or disruptive behavior. Youth of color are suspended at a much higher rate than White students: Black students are suspended at a rate of 24.3%, while the rate for White students is 7.1% (Losen & Martinez, 2013). Not only, then, is the contemporary moment one of declining educational attainment, but it is also one of increasing educational
inequality that is exacerbating power differences along the lines of race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, and ability.

**Contexts**

War has become a seemingly permanent, all-encompassing phenomenon of the contemporary world (Vidal, 2002). As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2005) wrote, “War is becoming a general phenomenon, global and interminable” (p. 3). What this means is not only that there are currently dozens of wars raging on all continents with the exception of maybe Antarctica (although this will depend on our definition of war) but also that war has permeated all aspects of life. Consider, for example, the ways in which the language of war frames so many areas of our daily lives: Pat Benatar sings about love as a “battlefield”; football lexicon includes talk of “blitzing”; and some business ventures are referred to as “hostile takeovers”; when U.S. president Lyndon B. Johnson led an effort to reduce poverty, he called it a “war on poverty.” Indeed, it is difficult, if not impossible, to go through a day without encountering war either directly or indirectly through a representation.

Given this pervasiveness, education must necessarily exhibit some relationship to war and militarization. That education must engage with war is exacerbated by the fact that education has historically been tightly linked to the nation-state (Spring, 1972). Indeed, education, particularly since the rise of public education with capitalism, has most often been explicitly justified by its ability to produce particular types of citizens and workers for the state and its economy. Historically, one of the most effective ways that governments have legitimated collecting and spending tax revenue on education has been by linking public education to a more productive citizenry, and this includes citizens as workers but also as patriots. Indeed, this is in large part why so many schools begin their day with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

In order to understand the contemporary nexus of education and the state, military, and corporation, some historical context is needed. We can locate the contemporary state of war and militarization with the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885. At this conference, the world’s leading powers at the time (e.g., the United States, Britain, France, Portugal, and Germany) took the map of Africa and divided it among themselves. While the division of the world into colonies by imperialist powers had been going on for decades in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, this conference definitely marked the beginning of the age of imperialism. By 1911, all of Africa was colonized, with the main exception of Ethiopia. Liberia was technically independent, but it was in reality under the domination of the United States. With the world divided between the imperialist powers, wars were fought as inter-imperialist rivalries until the 1940s. World War I, for example, was most immediately triggered by a competition among Russia, Serbia, and Austrio-Hungary over which nation would control the Balkans. During the war, the United States, France, and Russia signed the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which was a proposal to divide the Ottoman Empire (which contained much of what is now referred to as the “Middle East”) in the case of the Empire’s defeat in the war.

By the end of World War II, however, the world scene was entirely different. Most of the imperialist powers—with the major exception of the United States—were devastated by the war. As a result, the former great powers such as Britain, France, and Germany were unable to maintain absolute dominance over their colonies. While the United States stepped up as the major imperialist power, many of the colonies began to be liberated in the period that followed World War II. Many of these newly liberated colonies chose to align not with their former colonizers but with the Soviet Union. Thus, the period from the end of World War II until roughly 1989–1991, when the Soviet Union was dissolved and overthrown, was characterized as the “Cold War.” This war was, of course, “cold” only in certain areas at certain times. But the main line of struggle was between imperialism and the Soviet Union. With the Soviet Union off the world stage, the United States began an aggressive attack to reassert control over large portions of the globe. Wars on Iraq, Yugoslavia, Panama, Afghanistan, Iraq again, Libya, and Syria were waged.

The imperialist club that was devastated in World War II and then severely weakened by the Soviet Union has successfully regrouped. This is the context in which the contemporary state of permanent war
must be viewed. It also provides an important corrective to the “antiterrorism” justification for so many wars. In other words, it is not the case that the United States invaded and occupied Iraq and Afghanistan to counter any terrorist operations. In fact, before the U.S. invasion, Iraq was a secular nation that would not tolerate any religious fundamentalist grouping operating in the territory. It can be argued that the U.S. war on that country and its support for reactionary rebels in Syria allowed for the growth of al Qaeda and its offspring—the Islamic State of the Levant—that is currently terrorizing so much of the Middle East.

Theory

One of the crucial theoretical tools for understanding the contemporary relationship among corporations, the military, and the government is neoliberalism. At first blush, the term neoliberalism refers to an ideology with a broad, evolving, and, at times, contradictory set of strategies and tactics that have been deployed in and by late industrial-capitalist societies beginning in the 1970s. Uniting these different strategies and tactics is a generalized push to bring everything under and, for that matter, beyond and including the sun under the rule and logic of the market (Ford, 2013). Whatever was once public must now become private. Neoliberalism is, then, as David Harvey (2005) wrote, “a theory of political economic practices proposing that human well-being can best be advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual liberty, unencumbered markets, and free trade” (p. 22).

This signals a retreat of government from the market in a particular sense. In the theory of neoliberalism, the government is supposed to be “hands-off” completely. However, this is only partially true. On the one hand, government regulations over businesses and corporations are reduced or eliminated. On the other hand, however, the government plays an enormously important role in setting up and enforcing the legal and property requirements of neoliberalism. One of the most relevant examples of this in the United States is the government’s role in opening up education to privatization. The beginning of the neoliberal agenda for education is generally located with the 1983 publication of A Nation at Risk by President Reagan’s National Commission on Excellence in Education. Blaming the economic recession of the late 1970s and early 1980s on public schools, this report embedded the goals and purposes of education within a nationalist framework of economic and technological productivity, called for “rigorous” standards and accountability mechanisms and technologies, and placed teachers in the crosshairs of reform efforts, among other things. All of this was done within the Cold War, arms-race crisis rhetoric:

Our nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. This report is concerned with only one of the many causes and dimensions of the problem, but it is the one that undergirds American prosperity, security, and civility. . . . The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and as a people. . . . If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 5)

The unnamed competitors in this report are not only the United States’ inter-imperialist rivals like Britain and Japan but also those such as the Soviet Union. The public school is situated as the cornerstone of the United States’ economic and social success, and this is directly linked to its military success. While this was only a report, it laid the groundwork for RTT, introduced by and passed under the Obama administration as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. RTT is a cash-prize contest that rewards states for falling into line with neoliberal education policies. Paul Carr and Brad Porfilio (2011) delineate several aspects of RTT that help facilitate the privatization of education, or the transfer of capital away from the public and into the hands of corporations and other private interests. First, the program expedites the expansion of charter schools by encouraging states to remove or raise caps on the percentage of charter schools that can operate in the state. Carr and Porfilio note, “New York State passed a law specifically to increase the amount of charter schools in the state, which gave them a better chance to net federal dollars” (p. 11). Charter schools, of course, allow corporations and wealthy individuals to capture federal and state moneys
destined for education through operating the school and exploiting the labor power of nonunionized and precarious teachers and staff. This is particularly true of “for-profit” charter schools, although “nonprofit” charter schools also run on similar logic. Increasingly, charter schools are joining with military and “national security” entities to create “homeland security” schools. One example of this is the collaboration between Innovative Schools and the Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security.

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression**

Many scholars have engaged in qualitative forms of research to understand how the U.S. government’s support of corporate and military formations in PK–12 schools have impacted teaching and learning, teacher and student identity formation, and the lived experience of those who have been impacted by the current schooling milieu. Qualitative researchers have also engaged in historical analysis to uncover why various social actors, including youth, educators, government officials, and community members, were complicit in supporting for-profit educational ventures and military practices to ameliorate educational outcomes for students. Some qualitative researchers have done formal ethnographic studies by immersing themselves within educational settings for extended periods of time so as to gain a mole’s eye view of how school officials, administrators, and educators become impacted by commercial and military imperatives, including high-stakes examinations, charter schools, military recruitment, scripted curricula, and computing software. Other scholars have reflected upon their lived experience through autoethnographic accounts so as to illustrate not only how they have been impacted by commercial and military schooling practices but also how they found cracks amid the status quo and successfully implemented social justice teaching practices, alternative policies, and alternative educational structures. Other scholars have engaged in quantitative research in order to interrogate the claims made by numerous U.S. politicians, government officials, and corporate leaders that corporate mandates a priori improve student achievement (Nichols et al., 2012).

Philosophical and theoretical inquiry involves rigorously throwing into question the most fundamental concepts, frameworks, and terms used to think about education. For example, Tyson Lewis (2013) has recently questioned the pervasiveness of potentiality in education. The notion that education is about realizing one’s potential is commonplace; it pervades educational rhetoric at all levels of society. Yet, Lewis argues that this insistence on potentiality actually serves to reproduce the current economic, social, and political order by fitting students into that order that is “obsessed with the measure of what someone can do in order to fulfill a particular role within the economy” (p. 8) instead of asking how students might resist that order or how students might be otherwise.

Postmodern theorists, who continually inquire why there are power differentials and injustices inside and outside of K–12 classrooms, have interrogated the claims made by the dominant powerbrokers and others who support military and corporate imperatives to improve education. For instance, these theorists have challenged numerous educational philanthropists’ and corporate leaders’ contentions that charter schools, high-stakes testing, and STEM education will improve the educational performance of students marginalized by social class and race. Other postmodernists have challenged the dominant narrative that conflates economic power with expertise when it comes to generating educational reforms. They have placed the voices of marginalized students, educators, and other community members at the center of academic discussion in order to illustrate that these social actors have a more profound understanding of how to eliminate educational inequalities as compared with those who wield the most power. In a democratic society, such voices have immense potential to influence the public’s understanding of educational issues as well as to create and implement policy and practices in K–12 schools.

**References and Further Readings**


Carr, P. R., & Porfilio, B. J. (2011). The Obama education files: Is there hope to stop the neoliberal


Youth can no longer be understood as a rigid set of developmental stages nor fully described by predetermined cultural scripts, such as age, race, class, gender, sexuality, and religion (e.g., Brown, 2011; Dimitriadis, 2007; Lesko & Talburt, 2012). To understand youth in their lived experiences, educators and researchers must accept the historically complex and oftentimes contradictory meanings that youth and youth culture evoke. This emergent field draws from an array of disciplines, including developmental psychology, sociology, cultural studies, as well as postcolonial, postmodernist, and poststructural thought (Cieslik & Simpson, 2013). It involves the examination of evolving identities, as they are caught within the imagination of adults and adulthood. Such impressions of youth are, therefore, intensely “elastic and polysemantic” (Dimitriadis, 2007, p. 3); they sit at the intersections of a hope for the future, the moral panic of failure, the pressures of the market, and the vulnerabilities associated with becoming in the world.

Thomas Popkewitz’s (2004) use of the term fabrication may be an important way to understand youth outside of the rigid constructs and stereotypes that oftentimes contain them. He argues that youth culture cannot be viewed as a fixed entity with a fundamental essence. In fact, any attempt to produce youth as a definitive group is one example of how human beings niche themselves into a system of classification. Fabrication, then, is the making of people through embodied categorization. It is the process by which human beings are differentiated according to labels and how these labels discursively play into the everyday lives of its people. When youth are imagined to be rebellious, overemotional, unruly, and narcissistic, these characteristics shape a discourse that marks them as distinct from children and adults. Portrayals of youth as dangerously seduced by peer pressure, or not yet endowed by the faculties of reason, set the stage for adult counterparts to act upon their fears and anxieties and intervene upon their lives in ways that may be repressive and deleterious to their sense of self.

Here, we revisit the youth cultural milieu in order to critically rupture regulatory practices that reduce youth into a static definition. We hope this enables educators and researchers working with youth to envision spaces within which to learn from and learn with youth. Thus, we identify key complexities and common misrepresentations of youth in order to suggest possible frames from which to study youth culture as lived experience within a shifting global context.
Contemporary Concerns

As Nancy Lesko (2001/2012) showed, understanding youth as a fabrication gives visibility to the rules and standards that order the subject of youth, as well as places it at the intersection of legal, educational, medical, and psychological problematizations and interventions. Issues such as weight, drug use, binge drinking, sexuality, and mental health have at various moments been worked into a crisis through an assemblage of media, policy, and medical reports. In addressing these anxieties, adults have forced youth into a perpetual state of distrust and surveillance through a slew of policies and programs, such as citizenship education, character education, and sex education, all aimed at defining, managing, and monitoring the kinds of attitudes, behaviors, and relationships determined to be acceptable for youth. However, according to Rob White and Johanna Wyn (2011), such programs actually say less about the nature of young people and more about the kinds of civic subjects that are privileged and reinforced by adults in society.

As argued by Noah Sobe (2012), one of the most persistent problems found in conceptions of youth is that they represent both a societal hope and a social danger. While youth are oftentimes maligned as peer-obsessed, irresponsible, and sexually compromising, they are at the same time contrastingly imagined as the future of humanity, charged with securing the nation’s future domestic and social prosperity. By announcing the need for youth to harness their enthusiasms to the task of nation building, Sobe (2012) pointed out that the youth body was first and foremost seen as a nationalized one used for the advancement of the state. These perceptions set the stage for a proliferation of policies and practices that aim to cultivate the kinds of dispositions youth need in order to ensure a strong and stable country.

Additionally, youth are shaped by school cultures and educational conditions that are increasingly being dominated by rigid content standards and high-stakes testing. With an overemphasis on individualization, meritocracy, global competition, and dominance, youth are emerging within a condition that forwards self-interest over community and care. This condition is particularly detrimental for those whose lives do not mirror the privileges of White, middle-class society. By nearly every statistical marker, youth who live in communities divested of resources and marginalized by race and ethnicity underperform their suburban wealthy counterparts in educational achievement. Societal factors such as lack of access to high-quality education, political disenfranchisement, and institutional, microaggressive, and direct racial discrimination become powerful forces that carry the potential to disempower otherwise motivated and talented youth. Such communities are frequently, and uniquely, undermined by policies and practices related to economic segregation, juvenile justice, stop-and-frisk, gang and street violence, police brutality, and the absence of college-going pathways and opportunities.

At the same time, youth are participating as active agents in new social landscapes created by global flow and advanced technology. In a world hinging on the posthuman realities of technological integration and dependency, new forms of expression, representation, authorship, and access are being met with adult concerns over privacy, appropriateness, and control. Cyberspace provides, for those who have access, a multidimensional world rife with participatory potential. For those shut out from such competencies, inequities in the new world order promise to concretize the haves from the have-nots. Yet, it is the presence of technology in the lives of new generations that has fueled national and international movements for human rights and freedoms. Youth, acting individually and in solidarity with others, are connected through a politically charged and socially aware global network. The Internet, and particularly social media such as Facebook and Twitter, connects youth with each other in organizing efforts that produce new forms of knowledge.

Context

G. Stanley Hall’s (1904) landmark two-volume thesis, Adolescence, alongside Charles Darwin’s Origin of Species and Herbert Spencer’s Social Statistics from the mid-1800s, was greatly influential in establishing theory that explained human development as beginning from savagery and progressively developing into more civilized stages. In his view, adolescence is a period of “storm and stress” that can be traced back through generational memory to a time marked by evolutionary turmoil and disruption. Such
recapitulation theories, as detailed in Lesko’s (2001/2012) Act Your Age!: A Cultural Construction of Adolescence, not only suggest that there is an absolute biological reality that positions adolescents as inferior and underdeveloped but also make empirical claims that support White superiority and male dominance as evolutionary end points.

At the turn of the 20th century, fascination with the factory model ushered in a significant shift toward a life connected to productive purpose and social efficiency. At this time, youth became a corporal site upon which to address the incredible changes arising from rapid industrialization. Scientific psychology became the dominant framework for identifying patterns of growth; thus, through developmental psychology youth became a stage between childhood and adulthood marked by physiological and social changes known as puberty. Framed as a distinct unitary group, youth were oftentimes assigned a qualitative script of development that reposes them as biologically erratic, unpredictable, hormonal, unruly, and irrational. This provided a powerful rationale for the surveillance and governance of the young body (Fendler, 2001). Such a reliance on developmental psychology continues to serve as a basis for methods of progressive efficiency that include not only delineations for normalcy, benchmarks for improvement, and strategies for intervention but also justification for punitive regulation, management, and intervention. In schools, efficient organization and the inscription of behaviorist objectives establish predetermined systems for assessing social, emotional, and academic growth, all of which is based on notions of the normal child.

Contrary to the dominant psychological belief that human behavior was driven by genetics or the existence of a “criminal personality,” sociologists who were part of the Chicago School began to study the formation of subcultural groups as a response determined by the cultural norms of circumstance and not as a symptom of psychological deficiency (Frith, 1984, p. 40). Classical ethnographic studies such as Frederic Thrasher’s The Gang: A Study of 1313 Gangs in Chicago; William Foote Whyte’s Street Corner Society; August B. Hollingshead’s Elmitown’s Youth; and Albert Cohen’s Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang demonstrate how “delinquent” gangs of young men emerged in direct response to the limited educational and employment opportunities in the deprived slum areas of 1940s and 1950s Chicago. The urban child, grown out of a socioeconomic condition awash with poverty and social disadvantage, was now explained through a structural-interactionism that forwarded a distinct pathology of poor communication skills, low motivation, and a lack of self-esteem produced by institutional and societal conditioning, not pathology or genetics.

Dramatic population and income growth post–World War II brought on spectacular developments in the youth market and its associated media. Commodification took center stage among U.S., British, and French social theorists who produced new interrelated systems of knowledge linked to shifting popular and mass culture. Increased educational opportunity spurred generational as well as geographical breaches between adult and youth subcultures with schools, not workplace or family, becoming central to the social lives of youth. Around the 1950s, Robert Lynd and Helen Lynd (1929/1959) asserted the school as more than just an academic center, but rather “a city within the city,” a space for an autonomous interclass culture of youth with language, symbols, and value systems distinct from those in wider society (p. 211). Compensatory schooling, the increase in leisure time, child labor laws, and economic growth spurred a kind of youth culture that found its home within the walls of the school, a micro-culture expressed by brotherhoods, parties, dances, fashion, and music.

Following the pioneering work of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the 1970s, subcultural theories began to dominate the study of youth. Drawing on the cultural Marxism of Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser, CCCS published its path-breaking account of working-class youth, Resistance Through Rituals (Hall & Jefferson, 1993/2006), in which it was argued that the collective sense of self-expression exhibited by youth was not only different from the dominant mainstream but also a legitimate form of resistance to hegemonic institutions found in British society. This study, together with post-Centre work of theorists such as Paul Willis (1977), Dick Hebdige (1979), and Angela McRobbie (1976), continues to remain highly influential to contemporary academic research, helping to lay theoretical groundwork for the study of popular culture as both a product of the
capitalist economy and a site for counterhegemonic response and resistance.

Popular culture, as inspired by cultural theorists (Hall, 1992, 1997/2003; McCarthy, 1998; Storey, 1997/2012) who are grounded in the work of critical and Marxist social theorists, is understood as a site of struggle among the forces of resistance by subordinate and dominant groups in society. It is not a static culture of the masses but rather a terrain of exchanges mediated through texts and practices. In his work, Henry Giroux (1996) examined the ways in which popular culture through media propels a negative image of youth as a fugitive culture reputed by mistrust, alienation, misogyny, and apathy. As a mode of cultural criticism and social action, Giroux, alongside many critical and hip hop pedagogues, forwards a pedagogy that interrogates popular film and music as a serious site of cultural knowledge making, discerning with youth the dangerous and damaging messages that impinge upon their embodied sense of self.

Theory

From its beginnings in developmental psychology through its sociological and subcultural uptake, and more currently expanded upon through postmodernism, the category of youth has been shaped by a wide range of theoretical moments. Since the 1990s, postmodern scholars began to critique any reliance on metanarratives by refusing to ascribe single meanings to popular culture phenomena and disrupting any satisfactory claim of its impact on society or individual identity. In postmodernism, a more general term that encompasses poststructuralism and deconstruction, there is no easily determined relationship between youth and youth culture, nor is there transparency in desire or language. In this theoretical shift, final meanings are impossible, reason cannot satisfactorily explain the world, notions of progress are ruptured, and difference in both radical and material become staunchly defended.

Within and among every society, youth participate in practices of cultural production and consumption, interpretation, and distribution. Contemporary studies of youth and commodification illustrate how cultural productions are influenced by sociocultural, mediated forms of style and representations that take place inside, outside, and between national boundaries. These studies show cultural practices to be fragmented and ephemeral, occurring within a shifting social terrain where global mainstreams and local substreams are rearticulated and reconstructed in complex and uneven ways. Because initial ethnographies of youth focused almost exclusively on males and whiteness, the lives of females, racial minorities, and LGBT youth became largely marginalized or absent. For example, early psychoanalysis or sociology, such as Hall’s (1904) famous volume *Adolescence*, first linked the subcategory of girls to a problematizing individuality, which was later explained as being shaped by institutional and social demands. Since then new areas of scholarship, such as girls studies, have come to light, tracing and identifying how gender is produced, consumed, and performed (Nayak & Kehily, 2008). Such frameworks bring together feminism, critical theory, and cultural studies in order to dismantle the regulation of the female-embodied self and to allow for spaces in which youth creatively express their experiences and aspirations.

With similar concerns over representation and regulation, new conceptualizations about how youth negotiate race, ethnicity, and immigrant lives ushered in an important attempt to reframe youth as powerful users of language and literacy and as vital participants in cultural communities ripe with knowledge and expertise (Valenzuela, 1999). In an effort to overturn youth marginalization, scholars, adopting the language of empowerment, liberation, and democracy, came to invoke a participatory turn in research methodology and a renewed commitment to social transformation and civic engagement in schools. Still, the complicated desire to lift the spirit of another is always entrenched in relations of power and authority, and the right of youth to not share their delicate and private stories and avoid the risk of exposure or the possibility of academic exploitation must be protected (Tuck & Yang, 2014). Conceptualization of youth agency and resistance came to dominate a scene once governed by the principles of psychology and development by the following: expanding locations and methods of research; challenging existing characterizations of youth; working against deviancy and social deficit models; examining the regulatory and reproductive roles of institutions like schools; and raising questions of
power in research relationships and representations (Fine, 1991).

Furthermore, feminist and race scholars extended the concept of commodification to analyze how specific elements of youth identities, such as race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, were mediated through the culture industry (Hall, 1997; hooks, 1995). Such scholars provided useful critiques of the commodification of youth culture by illustrating how art (Wallace & Dent, 1998), music (jagodzinski, 2013; McCarthy, Hudak, Miklaucic, & Saukko, 1999), and fashion (McRobbie, 1999) contributed to the fetishism of gender and multiculturalism. Popular media, including film, television, and advertising, are socializing agents that invent and construct individual and group identities for youth. However, assumptions about the potentially adverse impact of media on young people, particularly causal links between violent content and aggression, ignore viewer interpretation, discernment, and the ways young people make sense of media (Buckingham, 2007). More recently, media platforms such as the Internet are theorized as a space of self-making and place-making, serving as public arenas through which youth trace the intimate patterns of who they are within the larger participatory terrain. Sunaina Maira and Elisabeth Soep (2004) used the term global youthscape to describe a “site that is not just geographical or temporal, but also social and political as well, as ‘place’ that is bound up with questions of power and materiality” (p. 262). Within these hybrid cultural constellations, youth are not uncomplicated consumers; they are creative negotiators of the market (Frymer, Carlin, & Broughton, 2011), skeptics who refashion and redirect what they consume and witness.

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression**

Social science can be distinguished by its distinct forms of inquiry and related modes of expression. Social science concerned with youth culture covers a wide range of inquiries including studies that pay attention to ways in which youth sexuality is shaped by societal norms (Gilbert, 2007). Those studies document how youth in the shadow of adults rehearse, act out, and elaborate normative sex-gender relations. Other studies of youth culture pay attention to the complex ways that youth are shaped by adult and societal norms of race, class, gender, religion, and disability (e.g., Brown, 2011; Lipman, 2003; Raible & Irizarry, 2010). Most research on the youth cultural milieu can be understood through at least four distinct forms of inquiry: (1) historical, (2) phenomenological/ethnographic, (3) narrative/biographical, and (4) applied. Each of these forms of inquiry can be linked with a particular mode of expression.

**Historical inquiry** into the youth cultural milieu can be instructive for the past, present, and future of youth studies. In the United States and other Western societies, “historical studies show that the category of youth as we understand it today is a relatively recent phenomenon dating from the 18th century” (Cieslik & Simpson, 2013, p. 3). However, other historical studies date the concept of youth back to ancient Greece. For example, some 40 years ago, *Youth and History* by John Gillis (1974) offered a promising historical study into the youth cultural milieu that challenged readers to revisit youth and adolescence with a socioeconomic and historical lens. Anthony Brown (2011) demonstrated this form of inquiry by appropriating Popkewitz’s method called *Historicizing of Knowledge*. Brown (2011) explained how further “historicizing of knowledge as a method of analysis examines how trajectories of the past help to shape how ‘ideas and events of the present are constructed’” (p. 2047). With a particular type of historical inquiry, Brown was able to excavate common distortions from social science about youth from the 1930s to 1950s that portrayed young Black males as “absent and wandering,” and in the 1960s as “impotent and powerless.” In addition, he finds that social science of the 1980s largely depicts a misleading distortion of the Black male as a prototypical “absent father” who is psychologically powerless. This form of inquiry may be particularly useful for understanding youth cultural curricula as partially historical texts (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995).

**Phenomenological/ethnographic inquiry** involves “personal introspection and reflection long associated with curriculum studies as well as deep, empirical immersion in particular sites and settings” (Chapter 17, “Popular Culture as Subject Matter,” this volume). Ethnography was the key to the development of youth and youth culture as a subject of study. Paul Willis’s (1977) groundbreaking study of working-class boys who grew up to have working-class jobs emphasized...
the need to understand youth cultural locations as well as the specific economic, educational, and political contexts that make youth distinct from adults. As described by David Kirkland (2014), ethnography allowed “Willis to see (and reveal to others) the mechanisms of inequity, a system of inputs and outcomes that gets reproduced at various intersections of stagnant structural conditions and in the fluidity of human agency” (p. 182). This form of inquiry may be particularly useful for understanding youth cultural curricula as partially phenomenological/ethnographic texts (Pinar et al., 1995).

Narrative/biographical inquiry attempts to understand the way youth make meaning of their lives and how they express that meaning narratively. Evidence can be gathered from interviews, field notes, archival data, document analysis, intergenerational dialogues, photos, letters, and other artifacts. Since the advent of postmodernism, researchers have been increasingly interested in previously “hidden” histories, plural perspectives, and the intersections of multiple identities and contexts that can emerge from narrative inquiry. However, youth continue to be treated as a unified category whose ontological quality is given as the source of knowledge. They continue to be fragmented into subcultural groups such as “urban youth,” or generalized by contextual terms such as racial, gendered, sexual, or developmental. In addition, an increasing amount of social science research focuses on youth development “standards” and “norms” through making more efficient youth, curricula, and teachers and by the identification of value-added qualities to secure a one-size-fits-all approach to “high achievement.” It is in this type of neoliberalism that “biography came to occupy an important place in youth studies” (Cieslik & Simpson, 2013). The utility of a biographical approach to youth transitions lies in the insight that it can provide into the role of youth in the dynamic processes of their own transitions from youth to adulthood in their particular societal contexts (Henderson, Holland, McGrellis, Sharpe, & Thomson, 2007). This form of inquiry may be particularly useful for understanding youth cultural curricula as partially autobiographical/biographical texts (Kridel, 1998; Pinar et al., 1995).

Applied inquiry includes youth studies that reject the category of youth as simplistic and uncomplicated. They tend to highlight oppressive conditions within which youth are subjected and then document their forms of resistance. Applied inquiries into youth culture are not about the corralling of youth into distinct categories but rather challenging the production of youth altogether. Drawing from critical race, feminist, queer, disability, neo-Marxist, indigenous, and poststructural theory, “youth participatory action research” (yPAR) is a method of research that contests the structural and ideological violence placed on youth through demonizing public representations and stereotypes (Irizarry, 2009, p. 194; Irizarry & Brown, 2014, p. 80). These projects, launched in schools, communities, youth organizations, and prisons, address a wide range of issues and bring together an array of embodied experiences. Pepi Leistyna (2003) argued that the voices of youth must be recognized, heard, and critically engaged, no matter how theoretically insightful or weak. Yet, Soep (2012) cautioned researchers who in their desire to counter stereotypes of youth and youth delinquency sometimes leave readers with the impression that all forms of oppositionality can be interpreted as forms of critical social resistance. There is an error, says Pedro Noguera and Chiara Cannella (2006), when a reframing becomes a rationale for antisocial or destructive behavior rather than addressing conditions that bear down on young people. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2014) concur and further caution youth researchers that yPAR “is not immune to the fetish for pain narratives. It is a misconception that by simply building participation into a project—by increasing the number of people who collaborate in collecting the data—ethical issues of representation, voice, consumption, and voyeurism are resolved” (p. 230). This form of inquiry may be useful for examining youth cultural curricula as partially applied and participatory texts (Pinar et al., 1995).

Conclusion

Although scholarship on youth and youth culture has moved away from an approach that treats youth as either underdeveloped or victims in need of protection, there still remains a need to understand young people in ways that both honor their singularity without deterministically framing their life existences. YenYen Woo (as cited in Lesko & Talburt, 2001/2012) argued for an approach of coevalness, a way of understanding how adults occupy the same world as
youth, growing together rather than being explained by linearities that presuppose age. She called for recursive approaches that evaluate our own lives with respect to young people and cautions against theories that insist on concepts of staged and normal development. In a similar vein, Lesko and Susan Talburt encouraged reflection upon the social imaginations that adults construct by asking what are youth symbolic of and why do they invoke certain kinds of enchantment for their adult counterparts?

As youth move transnationally, more nuanced and complex theorization is replacing rigid constructs that distinguish absolutely between normal and deviant. New frames of conceptualizing and researching youth account for not only complexities of youth cultures but also the interstices within a time of revolutionary developments in communication technologies and the new social media. In the face of spatial reconfigurations and transnationalism, young people are developing modalities in emergent and newly imagined cultural spaces, marked by ever-changing representations, new sites for political engagement, and multiple senses of identification. Indeed, there is evidence suggesting strongly that contemporary youth are remapping traditional understandings of curriculum in new ways that challenge us not to mistake the curriculum map from the territories (Wynter, 2006) of the youth cultural milieu.

References and Further Readings

Brown, A. (2011). “Same old stories”: The Black male in social science and educational literature, 1930s to the present. Teachers College Record, 113(9), 2047–2079.


Deschooling, Homeschooling, and Unschooling in the Alternative School Milieu

Kristin D. Jones
Concordia University Chicago

Cynthia Cole Robinson
Purdue University Calumet

Kelly P. Vaughan
Purdue University Calumet

Schooling, a sacred cow of our modern culture, pervades our lives in countless ways. Those who choose a form of home education often feel dismissed or judged unfairly by their neighbors and the academy. We wish to clarify the wide range of reasons for and types of schooling alternatives, dispel derogatory generalizations, summarize critiques of home education, and celebrate the diverse alternatives in a democracy.

The impetus for these alternatives comes from many critiques of schooling, including schools teach obedience over criticism; schools neglect a child’s happiness; children deserve more freedom in their curricular choices; schools commodify learning; students become separated from their community, family, and nature; schools are dangerous, unjust, or culturally unresponsive; the current schooling atmosphere is one of standardization and testing; and the school does not reflect the values or culture of the home. Or as A. S. Neill (1960/1992) summarized, schooling offers “discipline from above, strenuous work, obedience without question, shortage of free time” (p. 49). Among the many alternatives to schooling, most fall into one (or more) of three categories: homeschooling, unschooling, and deschooling. By homeschooling, families typically refer to the replication of schooling practices in the home, that is, the parent becoming the teacher and the house replacing the school building. Homeschooling, though often grounded in religious practice, also occurs in secular or agnostic homes. A more recent phenomenon, unschooling, began with the criticisms
offered by John Holt beginning in the 1960s and 1970s (Holt & Ferenga, 2003); unschoolers claim that schooling ignores the ways children learn best and often hinders meaningful learning experiences. Unschoolers reject the structured learning of schooling, formal curricula, and testing; religion rarely plays a role in the decision to unschool. Finally, deschooling refers to a broader denunciation of the institutional life, a critique begun by Ivan Illich (1970/2004). Illich encourages others to build meaningful lives for themselves outside of institutions—including education, medicine, and transportation—while also looking beyond the commodification of learning in capitalism (see Illich, 1980). While homeschooling transplants the structure of schooling into the home, deschooling refers to an ideology and social critique and unschooling is an ideological reaction and a radical lifestyle shift.

While the term homeschooling is often used as an umbrella term for all of these alternatives, we are including homeschooling, unschooling, and deschooling as parts of a diverse home education movement. There are a variety of reasons that parents choose to be part of this movement, most of them pedagogical or ideological (see Van Galen in Knowles, Marlow, & Muchmore, 1992). In such alternatives, the terms pedagogy and pedagogues often replace teaching or schooling and teachers to offer a blending of theory and practice in the political act (or praxis) of striving to overcome problems of institutionalized education. Pedagogues often focus on following the needs, interests, and natural curiosities of the child while rejecting the rigidity and authoritative nature of public and many private schools. Pedagogues create educational opportunities with child-centered or negotiated curricula that utilize a variety of experiences and materials as the curriculum. Ideologues often focus upon a rejection of the public school curriculum, which they replace with a structured and formal curriculum that is more aligned with the family’s values. While the ideological home education movement is most often associated with religious conservatives, it can also apply to families that reject implicit and explicit messages within traditional schools that they believe reinforce notions of White supremacy, consumerism, or injustice. The latter group often seeks alternative education from that controlled by state or corporate (private wealth) sponsorship, because they hold that acceptance of such sponsorship supports interests of the power elite (Mills, 1956).

Contemporary Concerns About the Alternative Schooling Milieu

Although we can only estimate how many individuals choose home education, the National Center for Educational Statistics found that 1.5 million children in the United States were homeschooled in 2007, an increase from 1.1 million in 2003 (NCES, 2008). However, most state laws do not require registration or accountability for families engaged in home education. Families that choose alternatives for their children’s learning address myriad contemporary concerns. Geert Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions theory offers two societal cultural orientations—individualism and collectivism. In an individualistic society, they point out that the gaze is inward and thus focused on the person. Motivations, goals, and successes are defined by the needs and desires of the individual. In contrast, collectivistic societies place the greatest emphasis and value on the larger groups, for example, the community, family. The United States primarily exemplifies an individualistic society due to the capitalistic economic and political system and its emphasis on the individual. According to cultural dimensions theory, the United States is an individualistic society; hence, the use of this theory as a basis for the critique of alternative schooling presents an irony.

Jonathan Kozol (1972), who can be viewed as a collectivist, challenged alternatives such as Summerhill free schools (see Neill, 1960/1992) as escapist and individualistic. Summerhill, a free school still open in England, began as an alternative boarding school to give students freedom and curricular choice, allowing them to play and create or attend classes at will. Rather than truly addressing the needs of urban students, students of minority cultures, or students living in poverty, Kozol argued, a school of happiness off in the country avoids the realities of urban communities. Alternatives to public schools, Kozol argued, disregard basic educational needs of a diverse population and ignore the White privilege that allows for these alternatives.

However, as Illich (1980) and as Gustavo Esteva, Madhu Suri Prakash, and Dana Stuchul (see Hern,
Within this context, critics raise questions about who has the most power and economic and social capital to opt out of traditional public education. Critics also argue that efforts to create individual alternatives to public schooling can weaken the struggle to create high-quality, culturally responsive, democratic public school systems for all children.

It must also be noted that those outside the dominant culture may express greater hesitation to pursue alternatives to traditional education because despite the many problems with traditional education it is still understood to be a necessary step toward economic success (Kozol, 1972; Llewellyn, 1996). Lisa Delpit (1988) contended that there is a cultural knowledge—that is, “culture of power”—that is transmitted in mainstream (or dominant) schooling (p. 282). This cultural capital is needed for those from socioeconomically disadvantaged and disenfranchised groups to succeed. Delpit defined the “culture of power” as an implied system of values, beliefs, ways of acting and being that is the capital needed for social mobility. Those who lack knowledge of the culture of power are viewed as inferior and deficient in key ways. Therefore, home education could present particular challenges for these students, while traditional schools present educational quality issues.

Feminist scholars have also critiqued home education. They argue that the vast majority of parents responsible for home education are highly educated women. They put their family lives first, opting not to enter the workforce, which causes much debate among feminists, some of whom say it perpetuates sexism. They hold that it makes women dependent on their husbands to provide for the family; thus, they yield decision-making power. In this regard, it is seen as a return to the old patriarchal ideals that feminists worked to change. Conversely, some feminists argue that feminism is about choice and that...
Context of Schooling Alternatives

In order to understand alternatives to education, we must understand the social and historical context of both traditional and alternative schooling regarding religious freedom, cultural relevance, and the political purposes.

For millennia, humans have done the work of subsistence, entertained themselves, created beauty, and pondered the world around them, all without schooling. Curricular history begins before schooling, with ancient humans striving to live and learn (see Schubert, 1986). In times when schooling was reserved for an elite few, when magic and mythology permeated daily life, the learning of the masses took a much different shape than today’s school day. Scholars today are looking anew at historical learning experiences in daily life and subsistence work.

When we consider the context of schooling or alternative education in the United States, we must consider those who have been denied formal schooling or those for whom formal schooling was utilized as a means to diminish existing cultural traditions and knowledge. Due to slavery, African Americans were denied human status and thus access to formal schooling. While some slaves were taught aspects of formal schooling, for example, covertly learning to read and write, education of slaves consisted primarily of what is known today as the nonschool or outside curriculum (Schubert, 2010) meaning that which is learned from the home environment, peers, and community. For many Native American communities, schools were utilized as institutions of “decolonization,” which Joel Spring (2004a) defined as “the educational process of destroying a people’s culture and replacing it with a new culture” (p. 3). As Spring explained, the government subsidized missionary schooling for Native American children in the early 19th century focused on the acceptance of Christianity and the acquisition of literacy skills in the English language. Some Native American tribes worked with missionaries to create successful schools that taught literacy while respecting the culture of the students. However, beginning in the late 1860s, boarding schools that removed children from their homes and communities sought to replace the language and cultural tradition of Native American children (see Spring, 2004a, chapter 2).

Major themes in curricular debates today are relevance and purpose, which raises key questions. How does the curriculum that students learn help them to make meaning of their lives and the world around them? Is this knowledge and experiences what are needed for these students at this particular time in their lives and history? What is the purpose of formal schooling today? Should that purpose be the same for all? If so, are we succeeding at preparing students for that purpose? Unfortunately, official answers to such questions and the relevance of curriculum for African American students and other students of color remain similar to those in the slavery era in that there is a disconnection between the daily lives of said students and the content and education afforded them.

Hence, the history of schooling in the United States is by historical definition one of exclusion—of slave completely, and of the indigenous and impoverished, and of women and immigrants in major proportions. Horace Mann, an egalitarian, understood the disparity between the ideals on which the United States was founded and the realities of American life. Mann believed that formal schooling should be accessible to the poor and women. His support for African Americans (enslaved at the time) is less clear as he sought the support of slave owners.
to fund public schools. In the mid-1830s, his concept of a common school that would be supported by public tax dollars and attended by people regardless of ethnic, gender, class, and religious background began to be put into practice. The common school, started in the American North, was to address the changing economic, social, and political structures; prepare students for democratic living; and address perceived social deficits. Following the Civil War, there were efforts, led in part by African Americans, to expand universal education in the South; however, it would be many decades before universal public schooling was realized in the South (Anderson, 1988).

Schools were seen both as a tool of liberation and enlightenment; thus early proponents of the common school advocated for social justice causes such as abolition, women’s voting rights, and inclusive schooling. However, such was not the reality of the day. Schools remained exclusive institutions, and through much of the 19th century, a substantial proportion of the young learned via work outside of schools and schools were criticized for perpetrating social control and deculturalization (Spring, 2004a). Alternatives take root and thrive in beds of exclusion—ergo, the genesis of alternative schooling in America.

Curricular theorists have emphasized the importance of nonschool curricula and regarded it as an essential element to schooling. John Dewey (1916) believed that salient aspects of education occurred outside of school; hence, he was known as a pioneer of the field trip, viewing schools as guides for nonschool curriculum.

Carter G. Woodson (1933) suggested a best practices model for teaching practices for formal schooling, a culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) that would allow all students’ (especially African Americans) schooling to be aligned with their home and community environment. Like Dewey, he held that nonschool curriculum should be used to teach concepts within school. Soon, however, common school curricula were pushed toward standardization and measurement, and nonschool curricula began to be deemed less important or ignored.

During the progressive education movement, efforts to make education more relevant for children were occurring at the same time as early alternative education programs for adults were being developed and implemented. Yet it was not until the 1950s that today’s home education movements began to flourish. Home education initiatives were primarily pedagogical in nature, although proponents offered a progressive, and sometimes radical, critique of traditional schooling. In the mid-1950s, the voices of dissension rose against in-school curricula that neglected or negated students’ nonschool experiences or curricula. There was a movement back to the nonschool curriculum during the civil rights movement as students of color were taught by schools to be ashamed of their culture and daily lives either through teachers and/or peers degrading cultures of color overtly or by glorifying White culture. African American curricularists resurrected theorists such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Woodson, who called for a curriculum that reflected students’ lives outside of school with special focus on what was learned in the home and community. In the 1960s and 1970s, among civil rights and antiwar movements, alternative schooling movements in education flourished. Free schools, schools without walls, freedom schools, and community schools were all created to change pedagogical and/or political practices within schools. During this period, Illich advocated for deschooling of society, and reformers such as Holt and Herbert Kohl advocated for broader conceptions of education and a greater focus on the natural learning of the child. Critiques of public schools abounded and home education was characterized as a progressive movement tied to a radical critique of schooling and a commitment to child-centered learning (see Knowles et al., 1992).

In the last few decades, there has been a shift away from the progressive foundation of home education and an increasing popularity of home schooling among the religious right (see Knowles et al., 1992). The context of schooling in the United States carries a founding concept of religious freedom, and today’s instantiation reveals that many religious families have felt ignored and mocked in public life. In fact, during the formation of common schools in the United States, many Catholics rejected what they viewed as the Protestant influences in public education and in large numbers chose to create alternative institutions (see Tyack, 1976). Today, home education offers a solution, an Eden where families’ own religious values and teachings can flourish. Although in some cases this religious alternative may be a form
of resistance to scientific research (e.g., teaching creationism in place of evolution), it allows families to choose for themselves how and what they learn. Many of these families see schooling as secular indoctrination and do not see their worldview reflected in institutionalized public or private curricula.

In the political context of schooling alternatives, schooling became seen by some as a tool of globalization. Spring (2004b) revealed the hidden hegemonic forces behind charitable work in education, including that of nongovernmental organizations. We spread schooling much like missionaries sharing their Gospel, assuming that schooling is a human right rather than a modern construct. We do not question our sacred cows.

Within the social context of schooling alternatives, Esteva and Prakash (1998) discussed the importance of local culture and grassroots living as learning. In a clear challenge to globalization, their *grassroots postmodernism* calls us to slow our steps and appreciate local culture. In examples from indigenous communities, Esteva and Prakash shared how daily living becomes learning, how community outweighs consumerism, how grassroots efforts can fight corporations. These critiques lay the groundwork for communities who do not see their culture and/or language reflected in schooling, sharing radical alternatives based in indigenous culture, and the emerging movement of localization and deprofessionalization among moderns.

**Theory of Schooling Alternatives**

Just as there is much diversity in alternatives to learning, there are many diverse theories that pertain to alternative schooling. Dewey’s (1916) progressive philosophy of education states that the purpose of schooling is to prepare students to become citizens of democracy who could solve societal problems. Hence, classrooms should represent democratic society. Therefore, he advocates for taking students outside the classroom on field trips to experience the world as he views the nonschool curriculum as the primary curriculum and the in-school curriculum as an instrument to enhance and direct the knowledge gained from those experiences. Dewey’s progressive philosophy began an alternative view of education in Western thought, connecting experience to learning even in nonschool settings. The dichotomy of in-school versus nonschool curriculum creates a knowledge and learning disconnection. Today curriculum theorists aim to merge the two, creating learning experiences that speak to the whole life of the student. The intention is to yield students who are able to understand the world as an interconnected experience. The guiding principle among these philosophies is educating the holistic child for life.

Following the civil rights movement, consideration of the nonschool curriculum became key in response to school integration. Students of color were marginalized and scholars of African American curriculum revisited theory of Du Bois, Woodson, and others, recommending curricula inclusive of students’ lives outside of home and community culture. Mwalimu Shujaa (1994) argued that there is a substantial difference between “education” and “schooling” and that many African American children experience schooling that serves to “perpetuate and maintain the society’s existing power relations and institutional structures” (p. 15). Shujaa emphasized the need for independent schools and organizations “to ensure that African-centered cultural knowledge is systemically transmitted” to children (p. 32).

Also emerging from the civil rights movement is feminist inquiry. Feminist theory finds that traditional schooling indoctrinates the gender-specific socialization of girls and reinforces patriarchal structure, fails to address girls’ cognitive learning differences (Sadker & Sadker, 1994), fails to provide the needed attention or encouragement from teachers, and facilitates girls’ choices of traditional female coursework that leads to underpaying jobs.

In the 1970s, the reconceptualization movement in curriculum studies expanded the focus of inquiry from school-based curriculum to broader conceptualizations of education. The broad reconceptualized field seeks to understand the personal, political, and cultural experiences of schooling and society (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995; Schubert, 1986).

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression**

**Forms of Inquiry About Schooling Alternatives**

Curricularists use diverse methods of inquiry to study alternatives to schooling. They employ historical inquiry to understand critiques of contemporary
Alternative Schooling Milieu

Matt Hern’s Purple Thistle Center in Vancouver, a deschooling project, offers children a public space with shared tools, where they are also not limited to the views, culture, and language of home (Hern, 2008). Many homeschooling families also offer co-ops of parent-led optional classes for any students. Other public spaces might also be free schools (Kozol, 1972; Neill, 1960/1992). Some families, like Kozol, choose to explicitly teach curricula comparable to the local school district, that is, home education or schooling-at-home. Others, like Neill, choose child-directed constructivist approaches, that is, unschooling.

Families who choose alternatives to schooling express their choice in myriad modes. One common mode of expression, the rejection of schooling values, can become religious-based homeschooling on one hand or progressive unschooling on the other. Both reject the dominant discourse of schooling, but from very different angles. One religious homeschooling family rejects the lack of their religion in the schooling ideology, while another secular family might choose unschooling because they reject the structured learning and pervasive testing of schooling. This is not to say that all homeschoolers are religious or that all unschoolers are secular. Many unschooling parents object to the ideology of schooling; many homeschooling parents simply feel their children flourish more at home.

Alternatives to schooling can be progressive in nature, specifically paths that draw on the progressive philosophy of Dewey. Some progressive expressions use recent research on children’s learning and parenting. Often child-centered in nature, the progressive expressions revolutionize perspective on childhood, parenting, and learning. However, other modes of expression challenge this notion of progress, connecting it to globalization and hegemony over indigenous life. Esteva and Prakash (1998) connected schooling to the disappearance of indigenous life. This critique of progress leads to a mode of expression that is simply grassroots living and learning.

Modes of Expression About Schooling Alternatives

Rather than focus on diverse ways to express fruits of inquiry (stories, philosophical treatises, statistics, popular media articles, interviews, works of art, and more) that provide persuasion for or against alternative schools, we emphasize expression as actual projects. Thus, we look first at public spaces.

In alternatives to schooling, as in any area of a democratic society, there is much diversity. Disagreement
exists on how much a child should direct his or her own learning, how much of a curriculum should be universal, and which alternative best serves the needs of all students. While Illich encourages the deschooling and deinstitutionalization of society, we also have Kozol’s idea of free schools that address the needs of urban students with community-based and parent-based decisions about traditional curriculum. In all these approaches, from indigenous resistance to urban reforms, from unschooling explorers to religious homeschooling, we see citizens in a democracy making their own decisions about how to live their lives. Not one of these alternatives satisfies each citizen, but each citizen can choose what best satisfies him or her, and that, perhaps, is the beauty of the living-learning experience in a democracy.

References and Further Readings


Questions around curriculum often begin in the general, the abstract. Certainly, in these times, an educator’s first thoughts often turn to the mandates of the state or district or some new national framework of standards. These structures serve to reinforce the simple definition of curriculum as the “what” of the process of teaching and learning. However, one might notice that the conversation often quickly turns to the particulars of how that curriculum is translated into teaching or—as characterized by scholars such as Elliot Eisner, David Flinders, Patrick Slattery, and Karen Zumwalt—enacted. If one focuses on enactment in the study of curriculum, issues of context and the interpersonal become more important, and it might even be said that we need attention to the “where” of curriculum. Central to Joseph Schwab’s conception of curriculum work is the notion of milieu, the context in which curriculum takes place. Critical geography, a distinct yet varied subfield of geography, seeks to understand how the social construction of space and place interacts with and reinforces structures of power and personal and group identity. A critical geography of education tries to understand how the lived experiences of schools (i.e., students, teachers, and the larger community) are defined, constrained, and liberated by spatial relationships. To understand how critical approaches might take up the geographical engages such a complex set of issues that one rightly begins with definitions.

In traditional conceptions, the terms space and place are used interchangeably with little to no distinction. To geographers, however, the difference between the terms is the basis of their entire field of study. Geographers begin to think of space as the physical attributes of the world around us or, more theoretically, the spatial forces at work on people. While this is what most of us think of as geography—things like mountains, rivers, borders, and capitals—spatial

forces also include less tangible forces such as economics, politics, and culture. Geographers point out that something like a national border certainly represents the spatial but is man-made, can change over time, may have varying levels of importance, and ultimately means different things to different people. Space, therefore, can be both natural and man-made, with key characteristics within which humans interact with both constraints and possibilities.

Place, on the other hand, is a particular form of space—one in which people have imposed meaning onto particular locations or spatial characteristics. All people have places that hold special meaning to them for any variety of reasons, good or bad. Recent theoretical geographers, informed by parallel developments in Marxist, feminist, and poststructural social theory, have become interested in the processes involved in space becoming a place and what that might mean for the people involved. As these processes undoubtedly involve issues of power and identity and operate in simultaneous and complex ways, to take up this field of study requires some distinction; that distinction is known as critical geography.

Power, for critical geographers, is always a key component in spatial relations (after all, this is what makes them “critical”). For example, school spaces for young people are defined by restrictions and privileges. At certain times of the day students can only be in certain parts of the school property; simply being in a particular area can mean big trouble from adults. This shows how those that have power—in this case, teachers and administrators—can define the limits of where youth can and cannot go. This happens all the time in social relations. Furthermore, young people themselves engage in similar practices. A common example could be how seating patterns in a school cafeteria are divided up. Although there are usually no official rules as to who sits where, students typically think of certain areas as their own or, sometimes dangerously, clearly belonging to another group. Critical geographers would think about all the factors that come into play in the process of making those spatial divisions for students and then think about what those separations might mean in the development of their identities.

Identity—commonly expressed in the question, “Who am I?”—involves how people come to see themselves as individuals and as members of larger society. Critical geographers suggest that this process of identity formation always happens in spaces that both construct and limit possibilities and the places that already have been invested with meaning. A critical geography of education insists on including all the varying forces that act on young people, educators, and community members as they come to know themselves and their place in the world. Although most education scholars would suggest that the process of identity formation takes place in dramatic ways during the period of adolescence, most contemporary thinkers describe the process of identity as one that is continual, ever changing. This is to say that for critical geographers, place and space play a role in setting the limits for a person’s process of identity and simultaneously reflect and come to have meaning in the interaction with the identities of those young people. Some might suggest that the question of “Who am I?” needs to begin with the spatial twist of “Where am I?”

Taking up the geographies of schools can serve as a point to begin looking at youth and educators and their intersections with power and identity within a spatial frame. Beginning at the smallest scale, some scholars study the physical geography of classrooms themselves and map out how the teachers interact with students; how the students interact, or don’t, with each other; and how bodies are arranged and arrange themselves. Expanding the scale, other researchers study school buildings and architectural layouts to see if the experiences of students are in some way controlled by the physical nature of a school campus. Many of these thinkers, for example, suggest that racial segregation continues to happen in desegregated schools through the tracking of students through certain classes and, therefore, through certain parts of the building. Still other researchers offer an analysis of schools that begins with the unequal system of school funding based on property value and the taxes the states collect. How neighborhoods themselves are segregated and how resources spread out across school systems might be the basis of their study. Critical geography, interested in coming to understand human interaction in all its complexity, would insist on an analysis that includes all these scales at once.

While schools might be a place to start such study, they should not be the markers of where to stop. Many studies of youth and education tend to stop at the doorway of the school, failing to recognize how
young people both bring the world of their home and neighborhood into the school every day but also how events in the school day are carried outside the four walls of school buildings. Very often, youth culture is simply divided into studies of school experiences and studies of rebellion—or what some call “deviance.” A critical geographer thinks that division is too simple an explanation or even description of the lives of young people. Attention to the geographical milieu also insists that trying to understand students’ experiences in schools must include some understanding of the spaces and places that the students bring with them. In other words, we must know where kids are coming from.

Finally, some critical geographers suggest that if an individual or group enjoys some degree of power, they then must be able to have some control of space (Harvey, 2008). If this is true, then study of the spaces that are controlled by youth should become a part of our study of human geography. How students divide up the spaces of schools and neighborhoods shows how structures of power are at work within those groups and how the culture of those young people works. Assumptions about youth and what was once termed deviance no longer sufficiently explain the behaviors, cultures, or geographies of young people. Rather, critical geography offers another insight into the particular ways in which identity is formed as a process, how structures of power operate on young people, and how youth culture responds to the places in which it resides.

The Practical: Geography as Curriculum

References to community suggest a third body of experience which should be represented in the curriculum-making group: experience of the milieu in which the child’s learning will take place and in which its fruits will be brought to bear. The relevant milieus are manifold. (Schwab, 1978, p. 366)

It is the curriculum specialist who knows the concrete embodiments, the material objects, which are the indisputable constituents of a curriculum. (Schwab, 1978, pp. 368–369)

In spite of traditional geography’s tendency to present itself as scientific and objective, the idea that geography is neutral, value-free, or that there is an epistemological vantage point from which the world can be described objectively have all been widely refuted (Gregory, 1994; Harvey, 1989; Massey, 1994, 1996; Said, 1978; Willinsky, 1998). Many scholars suggest that geography is humanly constructed and that all forms of geography either reproduce or challenge particular knowledge, identity formations, and power relations (Thornton, 2003). Each interpretation of the world, Stephen Thornton added, carries a series of explicit, implicit, and null assumptions, values, and perspectives about what the world is and should be. Sandra Schmidt (2010) suggested remnants of colonial and imperial thinking still function within secondary school geography curriculum in ways that are difficult for critical educators to overcome, and William Gaudelli and Timothy Patterson (2013) critiqued the Advanced Placement Human Geography curriculum as serving to obscure spatial relations of power and privilege. Seen this way, geography is inherently political and pedagogical, which provokes such questions as: What world does geography education make possible and intelligible, to whom, how, to what ends, and with what consequences? How does it position those it engages to inter/act (or abstain from it) in the world, at what scales, with what purposes? Who, in current societal arrangements, has the power to “name” the world and thus determine its meaning? What power arrangements underlie the discourses made available in geography education? Who does or does not get privileged by them?

Critical geography begins with a reconsideration of the concepts of space and place. Critical geographers such as Derek Gregory, David Harvey, Henri Lefebvre, Doreen Massey, and Edward Soja have pointed out the conceptual flaw in not seeing these concepts as in relation and fluid. Soja (1980), for example, noted that space is commonly seen as “something physical and external to the social context . . . —its container—rather than a structure created by society” (p. 210). They suggest that the relations, processes, and mutually constitutive nature of the spatial milieu allow for a consideration of the ways in which meaning making and identity are entangled in a profoundly spatial context. The emphasis on the embodiment of power and ideology in spaces and places allows for new considerations of structure and agency in social theory, or, as David Gruenewald (2003) offered, the hope then is that space and place become “the focus of critical social
analysis” (p. 628). These positions then provide curriculum theorizing new openings as space and place are reexamined, an inquiry into what current understandings of them promote and inhibit and raise questions such as: How do we currently conceptualize space and place in our work and what are the implications of those conceptions? What do these conceptions help produce and/or mitigate among students, parents, teachers, and the community? How do they allow students to think, imagine, and be in the world as they negotiate a sense of place? In what ways are global, economic forces impacting the schools and communities in which we work and how do these shifts impact other conceptions of the role of the school in a participatory democracy?

Recognizing the role of language and social construction as well as the material in spatial relations requires an attention to ideological and cultural forces and their impact on the larger social world. The focus here is only on what a few inherently interconnected issues might mean for curriculum studies, by examining the ways in which discursive and material interact in both curriculum and pedagogy within the geographical milieu.

**Curriculum as Geography: A Spatial Turn**

So what then would it mean to think of curriculum as geography? The metaphors of mapping (cognitive and curricular) appear in the discourse quite frequently, but this “spatial turn” implies new ways of looking at schools, schooling, and the lived experience in education. Only recently (and rarely) has there been a recognition that, to understand the complexity of educative spaces, one needs a more open, fluid understanding of schools as spaces and places (see Buendia & Ares, 2006; Ellis, 2004; Helfenbein, 2010). Jan Nespor (1997) eloquently described the school as a “tangled web of practices” including contextual considerations as well as multiple, moving political agendas that all impact the people that interact with them (see also Tate, 2008). This type of analysis, however, requires an inquiry that takes into consideration multiple scales of relations and turns the analytic focus to the interaction among these forces. The geographies of school curriculum are most visible in the ways in which the subjects themselves are mapped, bordered, and defined. The disciplines largely define conceptions of school subjects, dating back from the turn of the century, although this dominance has been periodically questioned (see Kliebard, 2004). The curriculum, departments, and school design itself become mapped onto the school grounds and into the experiences of students. Interdisciplinary work, while valued in schools of education and theoretical exploration, still seems as something akin to a border-crossing. Indeed, one of the latest and most persuasive buzzwords in the field is “curriculum mapping,” and all levels of education employ this metaphor. Instead, critical geographers of curriculum might begin with the acknowledgment that maps are dangerous. Maps, and the borders they re/enforce, limit what is possible in situations, and “curriculum mapping” must be aware of this. Critical geographers of curriculum would also interrogate how power relations affect the creation of such maps and ask who benefits from those maps.

Although often not claiming critical geography, there is a scholarly record of growing attention to the special in educational research. A spatial approach can be seen in the areas of “politics of location” (Freire, 1970), classroom geographies, cultural studies approaches to education, as well as various ethnographies about specific schools and the lives of students and teachers. There are books that address geography as a subject, as in elementary education (Sobel, 1998); secondary social studies education (Kincheloe, 2001; Segall & Helfenbein, 2008); activism, advocacy, and social justice movements (Harvey, 1996; Soja, 2010); and education for social justice (Kenreich, 2013). Other books have taken on the notion of place, such as Joe Kincheloe and William Pinar’s *Curriculum as Social Psychoanalysis* (1991) and Peter McLaren’s *Life in Schools* (1993). Shared concerns with critical geography coincide with this work, for example, identity and power in relation to place. While coming from a different theoretical trajectory, the language of critical geographers is evoked in Hongyu Wang’s (2004) *The Call From the Stranger on a Journey Home*. One of today’s eminent scholars in curriculum theory, Pinar (2004), wrote, “public education is, by definition, a political, psycho-social, fundamentally intellectual reconstruction of self and society, a process in which educators occupy public and private spaces in between the academic disciplines and the
state (and problems) of mass culture, between intellectual development and social engagement, between erudition and everyday life” (p. 1).

It would seem that exploring critical geography as connected to these efforts may provide generative explication and new directions for the work to proceed. The complexities of these webs are formidable, but understanding the tensions, contradictions, competitions, and congregations within them is necessary to recognize myriad forces that influence students’ lives. Such understanding is vital to efforts aimed at creating new and positive possibilities for students, particularly in places where students are bound by constrictive fetters and oppressive snares that limit educational achievement in relation to the communities in which they live.

An example might illuminate the contemporary scene. The key curriculum question remains, although not untroubled, “What knowledge is of most worth?” (Pinar, 2004; Spencer, 1861), and, as schools cannot teach everything, the process of curriculum design is exclusionary by nature. But two seemingly contradictory forces are at work in contemporary urban school and curriculum reform: the global and the local. The global question focuses on a 21st-century economy and how students will enter the workforce. The rhetoric of the global revolves around new conditions of a globalized economy and how schools are “behind the curve.” Simultaneously, an increased rhetoric on teaching “urban kids” and, stated even more specifically, Black and Hispanic students, turns attention toward localized spaces and particular populations. Small schools, resurgence in vocational education, culturally relevant pedagogy, school choice, and charter schools are all offered as potential answers. But of course, curriculum reform with an ear to the global workplace and the particular needs of the local community presents challenges that must be addressed by the “yes, and” rather than the “either or.”

Critical geography, or the geography of the “yes, and,” insists on attention to both the global and the local, not only in the sense of assessing needs of the future citizens and workers of communities, but also in the critical understanding of present conditions in which students, teachers, and parents find themselves (see Helfenbein, 2010). The localized context of job opportunities, obstacles to academic achievement, and even school funding are in no way separate from the responses to global economic forces by multiple levels of government and business interests. Urban settings provide the most condensed site for analyses of these processes, and urban education reform exhibits all of the characteristics of changing spatial ordering and prioritization and the impact of demographic and socioeconomic shifts.

**Geography, Curriculum, and Globalization**

Increasingly, *globalization* as a term is being discussed in educational research settings, in many ways taken as a given that precludes careful examination. Attendant terms such as *neoliberalism* and *neoconservatism* are also bandied about in conversations and presentations at professional meetings. However, the implications—and for that matter, contested nature of all of these terms—rarely seem to enter into the analysis. For those interested in the geographical milieu and critical educational projects writ large, globalization and its attendant terms hold significant potential for research.

Taylor (2005), in talking about the theoretical possibilities opened up by critical geography in the field of composition studies, defined the role of critical educators as “ultimately about disorientation, reorientation, and a more useful psychogeographical mapping” (p. 4). This could also be suggested as a description of what teachers do every time they try to get students to think. But perhaps more interestingly, this descriptor of critical education follows precisely the nature of capital in the post–Cold War socioeconomic present. Globalization—or, compellingly in my view, Empire, as described by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000, 2004)—moves through the process of disorientation (or deterrioralization), reorientation (reterritorialization), and mapping. I ponder:

Globalization is the pulsing extension of the contradictory processes of capital throughout the spatial realm. By offering the descriptor “pulsing” I suggest that these forces extend and retract—what Lefebvre calls the “incessant to-and-fro”—in the hopes of new markets, the reinscription of old ones, and the extraction of markets where there once were none which becomes a point important to the connection to public education. Lefebvre (2003) argues that fundamentally these processes follow the broadly conceived characteristics
of urbanization. As these processes extend through the spatial, we see the urbanization of everything. (Helfenbein, 2011, p. 323)

Implications for thinking about the social milieu then in specifically spatial terms reside in the bedrock of research in critical curriculum studies: What knowledge is of most worth? Who gets to decide and what forces are at work in that decision? And how are the impacts of those decisions lived by those affected?

The spatial in all theorizing, and specifically in social education curriculum, requires that we speak to notions of space as a concept.

Space is a medium—and the changing way in which we understand, practice and live in terms of our space provides clues to how our capitalist world of nation-states is giving way to an unanticipated geopolitics—a new sense of our relation to our bodies, world and planets as a changing space of distance and difference. (Shields, 1999, p. 147)

Shields reinforced recent directions in geographic theory and recognizes that space is productive, the conduit for, and the product of social relations. This multifaceted characterization serves more than simply pointing out the complexity of any spatial analysis but also points to two important distinctions: (1) the subjectivity of our relationship to spaces, and (2) the lack of guarantee, or determinism, in the nature of both social and spatial production. Taking up these two distinctions and their subsequent objects of analysis (e.g., power, identity, positionality, the border, and, perhaps most importantly, a rethinking of the global and the local) provides the grounding for a curriculum study of the geographical milieu.

This chapter offers possible ways in which critical geography can inform the work of scholars in curriculum, cultural studies, and beyond. Beginning with defining contemporary theorizations of space, place, power, and identity relevant to curriculum studies, the intent was to show how diverse efforts in “taking space seriously” (Helfenbein & Taylor, 2009, p. 236) bring new and productive ways to understand the lived experience of schools and its relationship with the geographical milieu. Not only does this trajectory offer insight into geography as curriculum, but it also suggests thinking of curriculum as geography in the hopes of creating and opening up new understandings within the context of an increasingly globalized world.

References and Further Readings


2Pac,” “Lil Wayne,” and “Lil’ Kim” enter your classroom. They seem to be high on marijuana; are dressed in modern, hip attire; and are fashionably late to your classroom. As always, they like to sit in the back of the room talking, laying their heads down onto the desk, or “chilling” nonresponsively to the lessons taking place within your setting. Does this sound familiar? It should, as numerous studies have raised concern about the critical engagement, initiative, and performance of low-income minority students, particularly those attending urban schools. Absenteeism and dropout rates among low-income minority students, particularly those attending urban schools. Absenteeism and dropout rates among low-income minority students raise concerns about their attitudes toward curriculum and instruction. Many low-income urban minority youth appear to have no connection with or interest in schooling and the learning process (Shujja, 1996). Despite these challenges, there are a lot of positive benefits of having a 2Pac, Lil Wayne, and Lil’ Kim in a classroom when the curriculum is engaging. The use of a hip-hop culturally responsive pedagogy and curriculum helps involve and intellectually influence the academic engagement of “challenged” minority learners within a classroom (Emdin, 2010). The enactment of this effective, engaging, and responsive curriculum can address concerns about students with social-emotional issues or school-related problems. The “real” strengths of providing students with a hip-hop culturally values-driven (CVD) curriculum—a derivative of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy—is that it materializes success through engaging students’ investment with the classroom practice, addresses their attitudes toward the learning process, and builds relational capital among participants in the academic environment (Ali & Ryan, 2013), which is the focus of this chapter.
Contemporary Concerns and Contexts

Educators are no longer charged with implementing the proverbial “reading, writing, and arithmetic” pedagogy alone. American schools and classrooms have increasingly become sites for teachers to adopt multiple identities and expertise that extend beyond traditional content instruction to include “teaching” about concepts such as social justice, social responsibility, and social-emotional development. The latter concept is particularly salient as American classrooms are increasingly populated with diverse learners with diverse social-emotional needs, which impact student learning, engagement, and responsiveness.

Social-emotional development can be understood as a symbiotic relationship with self and other social beings. It is a set of competencies that focuses on the ability to (1) identify and understand one’s own feelings, (2) manage strong emotions and their expression in a constructive manner, (3) develop empathy for others, and (4) establish and maintain interpersonal relationships (Cooley-Strickland et al., 2009). Many teachers and schools are now charged with cultivating and disseminating “social skills” curriculum designed to complement traditional instruction with the hopes of developing students’ competencies in both academic subjects and pro-social responsiveness to other human beings. National initiatives such as the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) speak to the primacy of education from preschool through high school” (CASEL, 2014).

Despite teachers having a conceptual understanding of social-emotional development garnered in formal postsecondary education, many, particularly those who teach in urban, inner cities, lament how to best support students who need extensive social-emotional support. According to the Center for Public Education (n.d.), 5.7 million children aged 6 to 12 received special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the fall of 2008. More importantly, 7.2%, or over 400,000 American children, were diagnosed with an emotional disturbance. Under the IDEA, children with emotional disturbances include those who lack the ability to maintain interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers, display a persistent depressive mood, and/or are diagnosed with schizophrenia. While emotional disturbances manifest broadly across students, African Americans and males are overrepresented in receiving services in schools under this category. The implications for inner city teachers in large cities such as Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles are particularly noteworthy as these school districts are more likely to instruct and “label” African Americans, males in particular, as emotionally disturbed.

In addition to manifestations of social-emotional health, teachers are also privy to community factors that impact children’s social-emotional development. Community-based violence, in particular, may impact students’ ability to learn. In a path-breaking study on violence, Carl C. Bell and Esther J. Jenkins (1991) described three types of community-based violent experiences that impact Chicago youth: victimization, witnessing, and hearing. Victimization is a form of direct violence and includes deliberate acts intended to cause harm or death. Witnessing and hearing about violence can be considered a form of indirect violence with the former conceptualized as observing harmful interpersonal acts firsthand and the latter experienced aurally through hearsay, conversation, and even radio news programs. According to Julie L. Crouch and colleagues (2000), race is a strong predictor of children witnessing violence with 57% of the African American children witnessing violence compared to 50% of the Latinos and 34% of the Caucasians (Crouch et al., 2000). Furthermore, this trinity of community violent experiences can interfere with student learning and engagement and contribute to mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression, and substance abuse (Cooley-Strickland et al., 2009).

Although media found online can serve as classroom resources for educators and students, recent scholarship also suggests the plethora of media, particularly social media, consumed by students impacts their social, emotional (or social-emotional), and intellectual development (Buckingham, 2007). Youth and adolescents’ affinity for following friends and celebrities on social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter may lead to depression and anxiety (O’Keefe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). Frequent perusing of such sites in isolation distinguished by continuously viewing the lifestyles of peers and
celebrities may compromise feelings of self-esteem and generate feelings of self-doubt for some youth. Hypersexualized content of music videos, social media “posts,” and “sexting” can lead to premature sexual experiences and feelings of confusion and social withdrawal. Cyber-bullying, a form of peer-to-peer digital harassment, has been shown to increase student’s depression, anxiety, and even lead to suicide attempts (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010).

Thus, to support students formally diagnosed with emotional challenges, students undiagnosed yet still exhibiting emotional disturbances due to community violence, and students subconsciously impacted by incessant media consumption, schools and teachers must begin to summon innovative teaching practices. Given technology’s increasing influence on American children, using hip-hop as a form of pedagogy may support positive social-emotional development among youth to aid in classroom engagement, processing, and content mastery.

**Theoretical Perspectives for Developing a CVD Curriculum and Pedagogy**

What exactly is a curriculum and pedagogy that is CVD and how can it be used to empower a hip-hop perspective? Essentially a CVD model allows educators to listen to students’ needs, address those needs, and connect an educator to a student’s culture. Lessons within the classroom are tailored to support the community in a more meaningful way by adding students’ voices and cultural perspectives to the instructional narrative. This model of teaching allows the educator to learn who the students are and to relate the curriculum to their needs. What makes this an effective pedagogy is that it provides youth with more options within a learning environment. Applying a hip-hop perspective to this pedagogy empowers young people’s ability to navigate through a curriculum integrating their experiences and social observations within an educational community. In particular, the usage of a CVD model incorporating a hip-hop modality in a literacy or social studies class has the potential to increase minority students’ level of engagement, classroom dialogue, and intellectual participation within the academic setting. This learning model further provides minority youth a connecting bridge to school because youth are better able to transfer their experiences, values, and perspectives to academic learning outcomes (Gillborn & Ladson-Billings, 2009). According to researchers, a culturally relevant education model allows students to personalize their learning experiences while improving their perspective toward school (Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003). As a practice, when educators are able to construct a curriculum integrating hip-hop messaging, it presents meaning and value for young people. Students’ cultural language, view, and perspectives from hip-hop only strengthen literacy and social studies learning opportunities.

**Instructional Vibrancy**

When adopting a hip-hop culturally responsive pedagogy, the curriculum establishes an art-integrated practice because of the injection of creative auditory and visual stimuli into the academic setting. This helps connect students with the lessons being taught (Kitwana, 2002). There exists vibrancy and “elastic impression” on students to relate to what the teacher is doing in the classroom when hip-hop emerges as part of the study or educational lesson. Several studies by Marc Lamont Hill and Emery Petchauer (2014) reviewed classroom cultures that infused lyrics into their literacy assignments. Students not only evaluated the context and inferences used from the lyrics but also were able to deconstruct the narrative or message delivered by the artist. Educators applying this practice of connecting students to literacy eventually align the information to required text or readings.

For example, educators can infuse the East and West Coast lyrical hip-hop rivalries into the study of literature by comparing them to Beowulf’s boast poem of how this medieval epic hero victoriously defeated his adversary Grendel. 2Pac (1996) declared in his song “Hail Mary”:

I’m a ghost in these killin’ fields/Hail Mary catch me if I go, let’s go deep inside/The solitary mind of a madman who screams in the dark/Evil lurks, enemies, see me flee/Activate my hate, let it break, to the flame/Set trip, empty out my clip, never stop to aim.

It sounds similar to the message in Beowulf declaring:

Death is not easily escaped/Try it who will/But every living soul among the children of men dwelling upon
Bringing together these passages allows an instructor to compare and contrast 2Pac’s death premonitions with Beowulf’s epic battle eulogy (Hill & Petchauer, 2014).

The fact that 2Pac’s lyrics can be harnessed and used within the framework of a classroom environment supports the idea and notion that learning is reciprocal and both a traditional and modern fabric of the past. Instructionally relating and connecting 2Pac lyrics to Old English, Medieval literature, and ideas is intriguing enough to make supposedly challenged students relate to hip-hop machismo.

A hip-hop curriculum also provides teachers with the opportunity to utilize visual stimuli, which further promotes students’ engagement with instructional lessons. Some teachers within urban school environments have been using hip-hop videos as “instructional hooks” to empower students’ connection to their educational lessons (Smith, Jackson, Kitwana, & Pollard III, 2012). For instance, students in a class on world history can refer to Lil Wayne’s “God Bless Amerika” video to discuss how war and natural disasters are the leading factors causing refugee problems (Crawford, 2014). Teachers can convey to students that people with minimal disposable resources are more deeply impacted by global tragedies.

To more effectively explain the instructional perspective, educators can display hip-hop video imagery of New Orleans’ Lower Ninth Ward conditions in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Using Lil Wayne’s “God Bless Amerika” video would allow students to identify and explain the way poor African American Katrina victims were treated like refugees by their government similar to war refugees from Somalia or Serbia. The only difference is that Katrina victims encountered a disastrous flood from several levees collapsing, while civil war forced Somalian and Serbian people into destitute conditions.

When Lil Wayne (2013) said, “God bless Amerika, This so godless Amerika, I heard tomorrow ain’t promised today, And I’m smoking on them flowers, catch the bouquet,” while children in the video appear poor and hungry coming from deplorable housing conditions with an American flag draped as their landscape background, it communicates the notion that nobody cares about their suffering. When Lil Wayne raps that “Everybody wanna tell me what I need,” and the condition hardly improves, it forces people to either “live by the sword and die by the sword” or better yet smoke “weed” to mentally escape their living hell (Lil Wayne, 2013; Smith et al., 2012). Students residing in many poor urban communities completely identify and relate to this video’s message and as a result emphatically comprehend the lesson objective. Similar to Lil Wayne, students discover the reality that Lower Ninth Ward residents share with Somalian and Serbian refugees. Furthermore, students can visually see how people in the Lower Ninth Ward have a second-class citizenship status parallel to poor people living in a third-world country. Recall the day when the levees broke, leaving poor African Americans extremely vulnerable, and media outlets referred to these individuals as refugees (Horne, 2006). The hip-hop video lesson articulates for students their own experiences and challenges living within disadvantaged African American neighborhoods. A teacher’s instruction becomes transformative when students are able to connect or relate an exciting “hip” video’s imagery to lessons about world poverty and global disasters. This not only empowered students’ voice and “buy in” to learn about global causes and effects defining a refugee but also provided a visual window of inescapable opportunity to synthesize the teacher’s instructional motive or intent.

Literacy Skills

The effective use of a hip-hop pedagogy builds upon students’ vocabulary pedigree and literary skills. Some curriculums are now applying hip-hop lyrics to translate literary poetic devices such as allusion, alliteration, kenning, or metaphors to advance students’ comprehension of British English. When Romeo said to Juliet, “From forth the fatal loins of these two foes/A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life/Whose misadventure piteous overthrows/Doth with their death bury their parents;” it applied the poetic device of allusion comparable with Lupe’s vernacular expression that “Yeah, I am back up on the airwaves/Feeling like a Soldier and I ain’t talking where the Bears play/Flair, look how I Fred Astaire down the staircases/It’s finna be a hair-raising tortoise
versus hare race” (Lupe Fiasco, 2006; Shakespeare, 2014, p. 32). Many educators are applying hip-hop to teach poetry and classic literary works to engage students’ focus toward such lessons.

Hip-hop colloquial expressions or words have also been used to advance the literary culture of the United States (Emdin, 2010). It is ironic to find what was once thought of as “Black slang” is now an acceptable contemporary vernacular. Words like *flex*, *baggin*, *dope*, or *homie* are now exercised as everyday linguistic terminology to personify an object or express people’s emotions or attitude about something. Essentially the hip-hop art form has helped many Americans discover their cultural linguistic self. When language is expressed as an art form, it better connects students to lessons and enriches a curriculum’s objective (Delpit, 2006).

There are multiple ways hip-hop can communicate language by shifting different terms to translate a message. If applied to instruction, students could translate and decode traditional English into their own cultural message. In other words, “rap” vocabulary is used to create a new reality with the way students accurately understand and describe their comprehension of classroom lessons. Lisa Delpit (2006) and Theresa Perry, Claude Steele, and Asa Hilliard III (2003) discussed how cultural language should advance the educational experience to provide students with a better opportunity to express their understanding and synthesis of subject matter. This model actually facilitates higher learning experiences within the classroom because students speak and interpret from a “voice” of instructional understanding. It increases students’ involvement and participation within the learning arena. Some critics suggest teaching using African American vernacular, sometimes referred to as Ebonics, simply reinforces nonstandard English. However, a CVD pedagogy stresses the importance of educators allowing students to utilize their cultural dialect in academic spaces to effectively communicate their ideas and understanding of instructional lessons. To do so inevitably grants minority learners with more access to engage academia (Perry & Delpit, 1998). Similarly some scholars believe this language conceptual model incapacitates students’ ability to translate the standard language system into academic and professional success. Such an argument has been widely addressed for a number of years. Hip-hop linguistics critically contradicts this argument supporting the viewpoint that students learn better when they speak and translate conversations from their own realities. When students are translating and decoding instruction from their lens, Delpit (2006) referred to this type of learning as “biculturality.” This means students have a language system of their own that requires valuing and adherence if learning is to actually take place within a standard classroom setting. When this occurs, a classroom becomes authenticated and real because students are intellectually qualifying academic concepts based upon their linguistic understanding (Perry et al., 2003).

**Restoring a Connection**

A hip-hop CVD model allows students’ inner human and cultural experiences to materialize within the physical space of a classroom. When students are provided opportunities of self-expression, they are educated to learn how classroom instruction connects with their own lived experiences and environments. Lawrence Krisna Parker, known by the stage name KRS-One, expounded on this saying:

> This of course, is in no way a degradation of math and science. But if math and science are not put in their proper intellectual places, real HipHop as well as the nature of one’s true reality will be impossible to comprehend. (2013, p. 17)

Math and science, according to KRS-One, as authentic “sciences,” should be used to help students perceive the importance of learning these brilliant pedagogies rather than believing they are somehow obscure or disconnected experiences. Math is used every day when, for example, spending money or thinking about how to access power, whereas science assists in cooking or nourishing one’s body. In other words, both of these fields have to be applied and shown to students to demonstrate how they contribute to their intellectual wherewithal.

When students perceive learning as a part of their reality, it causes them to want to learn more. The problem, from Paulo Freire’s (2000) belief, is that far too many subject areas are taught as an abstract concept instead of an applied approach. History, science, math, and English are viewed as separated fragments of each other rather than interdisciplinary units of the same field. All of these subjects should be utilized and connected to students’ educational
experiences by way of project-based learning opportunities. Whatever learners are currently studying in history should already apply to what they are learning in English, science, and math. Freire asserts this is a type of classical education where fields of study are seen as organic experiences versus an abstract study.

KRS-One addresses this issue when he teaches about the origins of hip-hop as a cultural movement. As it relates to history, KRS-One discusses Afrika Bambaataa’s architecture and engineering of a cultural movement that blended math, science, and English. From the standpoint of cleaning up or redeeming parts of New York’s urban culture that had been abandoned by mainstream society, Bambaataa used music as a source to teach people how they could transform their lives. Embedded within this musical narrative is a powerful lesson of how people used graffiti or “tagging” to beautify abandoned, burnt-out apartment complexes scattered throughout the Bronx and Brooklyn that were deliberately destroyed by arsonist landlords to collect insurance claims. To exorcise illicit and criminal activities normalized within these abandoned buildings’ interiors and courtyards, Bambaataa produced and performed parties (Parker, 2013). As an English lesson, poetry with its multiple literary devices educated and entertained people about their cultural history and the principles of community empowerment. Rent parties emerged to support families in need. Aesthetic graffiti became a necessary tool to manifest innate natural talents to reclaim forgotten spaces. Disc jockeys like Kool DJ Herc and Grand Master Flash engineered their record turntables applying science and math, using thrown-away mechanical parts from industrial lots and janitorial garbage to develop the “cut and scratch” dual technique of playing music. Hip-hop, to become a success, applied an interdisciplinary methodology to proactively engage its clientele and community. It changed the way today’s youth express their attitudes and the way they behave in the classroom and in their neighborhoods. Teachers should apply an interdisciplinary, project-based, CVD learning construct as an instructional strategy to improve the engagement of minority learners. Without orchestrating a direct, interdisciplinary response to students, they will continue to remain disengaged, disconnected, and unexpressed within many standard classroom settings.

**Transformative Learning, Modes of Expression, and Forms of Inquiry**

2Pac, Lil Wayne, and Lil’ Kim return to class the next day excited from experiencing yesterday’s hip-hop CVD lesson. Not only were they involved in developing an interdisciplinary project-based assignment between their English and social studies classes reading Erik Larson’s *Devil in the White City* (2004), but also they seemed highly engaged with the art-integrated lessons utilized within the classroom. 2Pac is examining the murder mystery of H. H. Holmes’s crimes as depicted in the book and developing poetic letters expressing the killer’s intentions for committing mass murder. Lil Wayne is reading a section of the book with his peers about the skeletal wages and hazardous work assignments immigrant employees received to build and design the “White City” for the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893. Lil Wayne’s task is to write diary entries of an immigrant who worked on the White City. The teachers have agreed he can use poetry or any other creative writing styles to complete the diary, including Internet blogs, Facebook posts, memoirs, or a television skit. Lil’ Kim is studying several cases of missing women the serial killer is suspected of murdering. Her assignment is to role-play a woman who escaped Holmes’s death traps and report on the mysteries of his dwellings and personality. Again, the teacher is allowing her to apply creative writing concepts such as notebook, dialogue, protagonist, point of view, and plot to express her comprehension and synthesis of Holmes and the female victims he murdered. Other students are applying science to determine the chemical Holmes used to incapacitate his victims, or utilizing geometry to erect a building onto the campus of the White City. These kinds of popular cultural milieu, and the artistry involved, inevitably are modes of expression. Viewed in this way, the hip-hop artist 2Pac and other artists can be seen as educational scholars, theorists, or researchers.

The ability of students to experience voice in a classroom radically materializes desired learning outcomes, which represents the true intent of transformative education (Ladson-Billings, 2005). 2Pac, the stage name for Tupac Shakur, at one point in his life attended a performing arts school in Baltimore where he studied the works of Shakespeare, Machiavelli, Nietzsche, and Hegel. These literary
texts and the associated philosophies had a deep impact on 2Pac’s viewpoints and beliefs (Rose, 2013). At the Baltimore Performing Art Academy, 2Pac participated in plays, designed visual sets, applied poetic devices, and so forth, to express his understanding of academic lessons. 2Pac discusses the impact this sort of curriculum had upon him when he says:

There should be a class on drugs. There should be a class on sex education, a real sex education class. Not just pictures and diaphragms and un-logical terms and things like that. . . . There should be a class on scams, there should be a class on religious cults, there should be a class on police brutality, there should be a class on apartheid, there should be on racism in America, there should be a class on why people are hungry, but there are not, there’s class on gym, you know, physical education. . . . Actually they should be teaching you English, and then teaching you how to understand double-talk, politicians’ double-talk. (Tupac Shakur, 2013)

For 2Pac, education is not or should never be just about abstract concepts inherited within subject matters. Rather it should address the needs of a community while teaching students how to translate assignments into their perspectives. When students become investigative clinicians and participants of their own learning, they transform into intellectual scholar warriors (Rose, 2013). A hip-hop CVD allows students to speak from their own voices, vernacular, and understanding without any racial or subjective judgments cast toward them. It beckons them to seek out meaning, understanding, and clarity, which adds value to their lived experiences. More important, it builds efficacy and cultural capital in learners and helps them to find real meaning and purpose of education.

Questions remain: Do 2Pac and other hip-hop artists’ lyrics and intellectual philosophy actually reflect a modality of inquiry? If 2Pac can be considered a philosopher, educator, and theorizer, can the representations in his music not be a form of inquiry and of themselves? While one could and should turn to the arts-based research of Tom Barone and Elliot Eisner (2012), or many other forms of qualitative inquiry (e.g., Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Denzin, Lincoln, & Tuiiwi Smith, 2008) to capture key features of popular cultural milieu in its many forms, or hip-hop pedagogy in particular, it is possible to argue that hip-hop artists are theorists and researchers in popular culture who have, in fact, developed their own forms of theory and inquiry that are true to the medium they create. Whereas the forms of expression are incorporated into the work of the hip-hop artists, many scholars study the popular cultural milieu in various ways. For instance, educational researchers use anthropological forms of ethnographic methods to study hip-hop curriculum and pedagogy (Hill, 2009). Greg Dimitriadis (2001/2009) conducted an ethnography of hip-hop culture at a community center. Similarly, both David Stovall (2006) and Marc Lamont Hill (2009) used ethnographic methods to study critical hip-hop pedagogy in high school settings. Ernest Morell and Jeffrey Duncan-Andrade (2002) narratively documented their work engaging youth through hip-hop to teach traditional and canonical texts. Other scholars such as Carol Lee (2007) have guided the study of hip-hop and the popular cultural milieu through what Lee has called cultural modeling.

The whole issue of responding to popular cultural milieu in curriculum would require book-length treatment. In fact, this has been done in another handbook (Sandlin, Schultz, & Burdick, 2010). In this chapter, we illustrate how hip-hop, one highly influential dimension of the popular cultural milieu, can become culturally relevant by employing a CVD pedagogy. In doing so we acknowledge that this pedagogy is derived from culturally responsive teaching as characterized by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994), who has continued to develop this approach through hip-hop as elaborated on her websites at the University of Wisconsin. A central point of this chapter is that culturally relevant and highly educative dimensions of popular culture can be the basis for curriculum in a diverse array of subjects and educational contexts. It can engage student experiences and invigorate their aspirations to excel.

References and Further Readings


This chapter describes an impossible project—perhaps an oxymoron. “Browning” the curriculum involves the exhumation of ghosts past and present, and like the process of caramelizing by exposing raw food to high heat, it aims to transform—even undo—the very thing it seeks to understand: curriculum and the work curriculum does. At the hands of those who have been historically marginalized by the curriculum, this is a messy process that leaves dirty marks—not just new marks, but alterations on marks that were there to begin with and that have been covered by the layers that domestication leaves behind.

This chapter outlines the contours of “browning” as an attempt to unsettle curriculum—both its study as well as its making, in order to describe what it could have been, had it been what it cannot be. As a decolonial and antiracist move, browning seeks to historicize as well as dissect the complexity of curriculum as a colonial project based on heteropatriarchal White supremacy—not just the unambiguous White supremacy of Ku Klux Klans and organized hate groups, but the White supremacy of state-sanctioned police violence, elusive micro aggressions, and apparently innocuous exclusions from the school curriculum. Building on the work of scholars who have challenged racism and White supremacy in education, browning emerges as a response to an espoused yet minimally enacted commitment to diversity—ostensibly benign, yet as typically instituted, itself a colonial project—within scholarly organizations dedicated to curriculum work. It evolves through concerted efforts to reveal the inadequacies of how scholars and organizations respond to the persistence of the heteropatriarchal White supremacy and colonialism that permeates curriculum. This response has taken a number of different directions, including, for example, critiques of citation practices, the (in)visibility of racialized bodies, the desire to negate racist politics, and the appropriation of modes of theorizing (see Gaztambide-Fernández, 2006; Gaztambide-Fernández & Murad, 2011).

Understanding curriculum as always-already a colonial project, browning does not seek to establish a new mode of doing curriculum. Rather, it demands a recognition of the ways in which curriculum, however invoked, always carries its history as a colonial project—the traces that dirty the otherwise tidy image of curriculum. To brown is to expose while it is also to dirty—to mess with and in the process to change by making explicit what is otherwise supposed to remain hidden. Yet, because this hiding is critical to
the very constitution of curriculum, browning is also about the undoing of curriculum—it seeks to unhinge and thus to unsettle curriculum as a project of colonial settlement and a tool of domination.

**Historical Hindsight**

At its core, curriculum is a humanist project; it is fundamentally about the possibility that “humans” can be improved—made better through educational projects. Thus, curriculum relies on particular definitions of what it means to be human and what counts as worthwhile knowledge, including knowledge about human potentiality and the imagined human self. In short, curriculum is a technology for the production of humanness. Yet the concept of the human is not universal. Rather, both the concept of the human and the assumption of its universality emerge from the particularity of the European Enlightenment. There are different conceptions of how this “human” comes to be fully developed and debates about what this human should know and be able to do. Yet all these ideals share a fundamental view of the human based on the domination of the European, heterosexual, male subject as the model of humanness, what Denise Ferreira da Silva (2007) called the “transparent I.” As da Silva argued, humanism is a racial project. If this was self-evident when Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote his famous *Emile* and when Herbert Spencer posed the question, “What knowledge is of most worth?” the project of browning seeks to reveal how it continues to operate, albeit in more subtle ways, within contemporary curriculum projects by throwing dust on the otherwise invisible ghost of Man—the Enlightened conception of the human—that animates and gives curriculum substance.

From the historical hindsight of the 21st century, marked as it is by the ecological degradation, continued colonization, and further marginalization of what the human marks as “non-White,” it is not difficult to see evidence of White supremacy at particular historical junctures in the “official story” of curriculum. Indeed, how curriculum is historicized into an official narrative is itself evidence of this, with its assumption of a field that improves through a self-reflexive process into subsequently more adequate, more accurate, and more productive modes of human making. Whether it is expressed through Spencer’s social Darwinist conception of worthy knowledge, John Dewey’s pragmatist view of educative experience, Paulo Freire’s critical “conscientization” toward full humanity, William Pinar’s autobiographical deconstruction of the human subject and cosmopolitan renewal, underneath each of these proposals lurks the specter of Man, as the descriptive statement of the human (Wynter, 2003).

Consider the racist and colonial assumptions underlying the evolution of the modern schooling project as illustrated through the emergence of residential schooling and the argument for universal public education. The professed “fathers” of public schooling—Horace Mann (in the United States) and Edgerton Ryerson (in Canada)—envisioned a system for the improvement of Man and the assimilation of the not-quite-so. Both Mann and Ryerson saw universal schooling as the necessary mechanism for the development of a properly civilized nation that assimilated all into its own self-image. Yet, the limits of possibility as to the assimilation of “other-than-Man” are clearly evident in the “separate but equal” doctrine and its de facto inequality. It is also evident in the evolution of discourses about disability and abnormality that continue to be deeply racialized and fundamental to the constitution of the imagined educated human subject (Erevelles, 2011; Winfield, 2007).

The project of assimilation of the not-quite, never-quite human is violently expressed through Lieutenant Richard Henry Pratt’s genocidal rallying cry, “Kill the Indian, . . . save the Man,” and his project of forced cultural assimilation through residential schools. In Canada, beloved prime minister and father of Confederation John MacDonald established residential schooling as part of a larger project to wrangle Indigenous people from the land, undermine treaties, destroy families, erase Indigenous language, and enforce European cultural domination through forced assimilation. Likewise, the enslavement of Black people was premised on their presumed incapacity for humanness and thus ineducability; it is expressed a century and a half later through the school-to-prison pipeline and the prison plantations of the 21st century (Meiners & Winn, 2010).

Mass schooling demands not only an image of what it means to be “properly” human but also the production of theories of learning and conceptions of knowledge. In the canonic narrative of curriculum,
existentialism, from a concern with curricular content and organization to an examination of the subject and the phenomenology of educational experience. In part as a reaction to the increasing technicalization of education in which curriculum continues to be understood as design, the “reconceptualization” of curriculum studies during the 1970s turned the field toward self-excitation and ideological critique. Despite the continued richness of its theoretical and conceptual venturing, the reconceptualization—now “post”-reconceptualization—of curriculum work has largely failed in several ways. First, after almost 4 decades of scholarly work, reconceptualist curriculum work has left largely untouched the mainstream focus on content and design. Indeed, the traces of reconceptualization in national, provincial/state, or local policy are almost null. Moreover, despite some important work that has focused on the force of continued racism in education, reconceptualization has largely failed to dethrone the White subject as the definition of humanity. Increasingly solipsistic and enamored with its own image, (post)reconceptualist curriculum scholarship continues to struggle with its self-conscious humanist inheritance, quibbling that any and all suggestions of continued White supremacy are manifestations of “identity politics.” As a parental silencing device, the severe dismissal forestalls and shelters curriculum work, turning attention back to itself and its own solipsistic embroilment with escaping from the existentialist looking glass. Most recently this manifests through a negation of the humanist project that, nonetheless, reinscribes whiteness, now as the only legitimate “posthuman.”

The Problem That Is the (Racist) Present

It might be tempting to reinterpret these historical narratives as evidence of curriculum’s past—of beliefs and attitudes that have been surpassed and corrected by a more enlightened, compassionate, and embracing version of Man, now construed as “diverse men and women.” The project of browning is to reveal the opposite: how these apparently less-than-human brutalities are in fact all-too-human and how they persist in contemporary modes of curriculum work, from the minutiae of curriculum design to the obfuscations of curriculum theorizing. Regardless of
how the human is reimagined, curriculum projects are always premised on an idealized subject, the image in the fountain of the narcissistic father seeking to reproduce and recreate himself through—now inclusive, now reflective, now ethical—educational projects. What browning reveals is that such recreations require not only a becoming-subject through the curricular journey but also a becoming-object through curricular projects of elimination, incarceration, and perpetual marginalization. At the heart of these projects is the machinery of schooling.

The century-and-a-half history of contemporary schooling reveals its fundamental role in the constitution of the properly human subject and its corollary, the not-quite-human. First, modern schooling is premised on the idea that some ways of knowing are superior to others, more adequate for contemporary society and more relevant to the success of the modern economic system. Even as a wider range of “knowledges” are deemed relevant, how knowledge is expressed, transmitted, and confirmed remains ensconced in the singular, rational, and individualized conception of what it means to know, most recently through the so-called Common Core State Standards. From this view, knowledge can be parceled into subjects, structured into mandated curriculum documents, sequenced into levels and grades, and, most importantly, assessed through standardized methods.

Standardized assessment is, indeed, a defining characteristic of contemporary schooling. From IQ tests to SATs and other forms of high-stakes testing, the ability to standardize both knowledge and knowing is central to the enforcement of a White supremacist logic that requires a hierarchy of human subjectivity. The logic of schooling normalizes this hierarchy through practices such as tracking, which distribute learning opportunities in ways that make outcomes predetermined by racist logic appear as natural and common sense. In the last 2 decades, both formal and informal forms of tracking/streaming have resegregated schools and played a central role in the reemergence of a new plantation based on the prison industrial complex. The school to prison pipeline is, in effect, a direct result of curricular segregation and how White supremacy imposes a particular structure on knowledge.

This logic also confirms the right of the settler to own and inhabit stolen land, by construing the settler as more knowledgeable and thus more deserving of the land and its resources. More insidiously, it translates Indigenous knowledge into the White supremacist hierarchy of knowing by integrating it into curriculum standards and textbooks, historicizing Indigenous narratives into linear logics, and incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing into what Sandy Grande (2004) called the “whitestream.” Appropriating Indigenous narratives as “American history,” the curriculum confirms the White subject as the true native, the only native, the native by manifest destiny.

At the margins of such supremacist text, however, is the spillage of what supremacy cannot eliminate—the excrement of the White subject as he attempts to consume all in his path; the excesses that spill beyond the neat confines of the curriculum drain, beyond inclusion, available only for elimination. *This is the object of browning.*

### Theoretical Heat

A number of theoretical approaches provide conceptual strategies for illuminating the operations of White supremacist ideology in contemporary curriculum. In this section, I summarize two such approaches, theorizing settler colonialism and critical race theory (CRT). Like a magnifying glass, these theoretical lenses focus the light into a searing beam that burns and cuts through the layers of humanist discourse in curriculum studies, excavating to reveal the underlying racist logic. Some of these approaches are complementary, while others raise necessary tensions and, sometimes, competing ways of approaching the problem of persistent colonization and White supremacy.

Examining the operations of the settler colonial project is fundamental to the project of radically unsettling curriculum work. Settler colonization is an attempt not only to occupy land but also to impose a particular logic of occupation (Veracini, 2010). This logic renders Indigenous people as incapable of “properly” taking care of the land and casts the occupier as the legitimate “owner” by divinely appointed destiny; the supremacy of the colonial settler is not just logical, it is divine (McCoy, 2014). In light of the impossibility of physically eradicating the “native,” settler colonialism devises a curricular
project invested in complete assimilation. This assimilation takes two forms: first, the conversion of those who survive genocide by other means; and second, the incorporation of Indigenous ways of knowing and being, as well as ways of resisting colonial settlement. This incorporation renders the settler as the true native, confirming manifest destiny and the divinity of the right to occupy (Miller, 2006). This insight, as noted later, helps us understand the colonial entrapment of additive approaches to multiculturalism through curriculum products such as textbooks and policies.

The divine right of the settler to occupy land must be confirmed through both religious and secular logics that produce the supreme White subject. This White subject, however, must be continually produced and that production requires the constitution of national as well as cultural borders that protect access not only to land but also to particular subject positions along with the material, legal, and symbolic resources attached to being a particular kind of person—the right kind of human.

CRT and the variants that have germinated from it provide an important foundation for dismantling these logics. By tracing how race and racial categories are continually constructed and negotiated through legal, educational, and other ideological processes, CRT unmasks the White supremacist logic that enforces racial categories (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). CRT sheds a searing light, revealing the shadows of the artificial boundaries that enforce racial hierarchies, which, while false, have real material, symbolic, and affective consequences. These boundaries do not require explicit enactments of racism through literal statements or acts of violence by individuals. Rather, they operate institutionally and ideologically, producing what Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2001) called “color-blind racism.” This “racism without racists” allows White supremacist logics to operate while occluding racist attitudes (Bonilla-Silva, 2013).

CRT has been taken in a number of directions focusing on a wider range of experiences of racialization emerging from different histories of colonization, enslavement, and marginalization. For instance, Latino critical race theory (LatCrit) scholars examine the transnational dynamics of migration that have shaped the congealing of a Latina/o subjectivity (Delgado Bernal, 2002). These dynamics not only reveal artificial boundaries but also rather take “the border,” both real and symbolic, as the site of conflict over political belonging and cultural identification—as the place where the brown matter of the human is revealed as precisely all-too-human. Tribal critical theory (TribalCrit) examines the “liminality” of Indigenous people as political and racialized subjects in the specific context of settler colonization (Brayboy, 2005). Both TribalCrit and LatCrit scholars move beyond CRT’s central focus on revealing the legal, political, and cultural dynamics that produce and are produced by the Black/White racial binary that dominates discourses of race in the United States, what W. E. B. Du Bois (1903) succinctly named “the problem of the color line” (p. 3).

To reveal the persistence of colonial and racist logics, these critical lenses mobilize narrative modes not only to reveal the machinations of White supremacy but also to bring forth new modes of being and knowing. CRT scholars insist on “counternarrative” as an antiracist strategy that topples normative mythologies of what it means to be human. TribalCrit scholars ground their work on storytelling as a mode of revealing and theorizing experience as well as exerting sovereignty over knowledge. LatCrit scholars mobilize testimonios to reassert the centrality of hybridity—or mestizaje—and movement across borders and to reveal both the violence and the beauty inherent in the encounters that produce subjectivity.

All of these approaches demand the examination of how systems of domination intersect through categories of race, gender, sexuality, etc., that, while socially constructed and imposed, are also materially, symbolically, and affectively lived. Such an analysis, often described as intersectional (aka “interlocking matrix of oppression,” “standpoint theory,” etc.), reveals the complicated ways in which these categories overlay. This overlap shapes the experience of oppression and marginalization while at the same time providing the social material upon which standpoints develop and orientations toward the world become concretized. There are ample debates regarding the ways in which these categories of identification intersect and whether, when, and how one category takes prevalence over others. Because these categories are political as well as social and cultural, their intersections can occlude their power as categories, creating a thick veil of mythologies that limits our capacity to see their constructedness, in part
because of how “real” they become through the lived experience of what Frantz Fanon (1967) called sociogeny.

Reflecting on the lived experience of blackness, Fanon argues that the Black subject emerges as a reflection of the image—the mask—that White supremacist ideology has constructed as the opposite of whiteness. This incongruity between the first- and the third-person account of the Black subject that Du Bois (1903) called “double-consciousness” and that Fanon dubbed the “triple person” is fundamental to how non-White (i.e., not-quite-human) subjects come into self-consciousness. Ever aware of how blackness has been construed at the bottom of a racial ordering, the Black subject precariously emerges through the collusion of a present self-consciousness with a mythologized savage past that justifies enslavement and imprisonment in the scope of the White father’s gun.

This bind leaves little outside of identity as a strategy of subjective reconstitution. As Stuart Hall (1996) has argued, identification is a political process that, on the one hand, reinscribes but, on the other, makes reinvention of social categories possible. And yet, it is precisely identity that the supreme father now wants to rob, diminished as anti-intellectual, abandoned by a now posthuman subject that is at once beyond identity, and yet again anew the White (now cosmopolitan, now self-reflexive, now decentered and postidentitarian) subject.

**Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression: Eating the Mainstream**

Understanding identification is necessary for revealing the ideological mechanisms of White supremacy. Intellectually, it requires the kind of ideological critique that Chela Sandoval (2000), drawing on Roland Barthes’ conceptualization of mythologies, called “meta-ideologizing.” Politically, this requires a persistent attention to the conditions on the ground and a careful mobilization of what Sandoval called “differential consciousness” and what Gayatri Spivak (1990) has labeled “strategic essentialism.” Pedagogically, it demands a commitment to solidarity based on relationality, transitivity, and creativity (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012). Sandoval’s (2000) meta-ideologizing, or reworking dominant ideological forms for liberatory purposes, teases apart the signifiers that both distract from and secure the hold of White supremacist power hierarchies. This deconstruction of historical, political, and sociocultural signifiers requires recognizing how different ideological frames overlay and often hide each other.

Andrea Smith (2006), for instance, pointed to three ideological “pillars” or “logics” of White supremacy and their intricate relationship to heteropatriarchy as the foundational “building block” of colonization and empire. The logics of slavery/capitalism, genocide/colonialism, and orientalism/war intersect to justify colonization and naturalize a hierarchical order that pits people of color against each other. These logics promote an illusory “convergence” between the interests of particular groups and the aims of empire and colonization, producing conditions that advance some at the expense of others, but ultimately securing White supremacist hierarchies (Bell, 1979).

Such analyses reveal how various kinds of contemporary curriculum work are implicated in the persistence of White supremacy. These conceptual tools can be mobilized in a number of ways in relation to a range of dynamics operating in curriculum work. Ostensibly, an examination of citation practices (i.e., whose scholarship is cited, how often, and by whom) and the optical verification of presences and absences within curriculum spaces of various kinds (i.e., what the physical presence and organization of particular bodies suggests about who belongs and who controls particular spaces), from academic to policy contexts, provides some—perhaps equivocal—evidence. Within reconceptualized curriculum studies, this manifests in the creation of canonical lists intended to construct an image of curriculum studies as a legitimate academic field. Of course, the very idea of a legitimate academic field requires a supremacist logic that assumes that some works are more important than others. In light of the long-standing critique of the colonizing effects of canonical logics, the very idea of a canon seems absurd, yet necessary for legitimation within the White supremacist logic of academia (Desai, 2013).

This can be corrected, for example, through a rehistoricizing of curriculum as a field that starts from the struggles of various communities of color over both access to and the ability to construct the
reinvent and recover subjectivities (Alcoff, 2000). It engages the transitivity of solidarity by assuming that all parties must be transformed by solidary action. This requires an active and creative engagement with both the material and the symbolic content of specific struggles in specific contexts (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012).

In the context of schools, such work presents a peculiar contradiction: Since educational institutions are fundamentally racist and premised on the elimination of non-White subjectivities, then curriculum can never be decolonized, at least until schools—as we know them—cease to exist. This bind of having to work in and against institutions can create locations of anxiety, where Sandoval’s differential consciousness is a necessary tool for what Gerald Vizenor (2008) called “survivance,” involving imaginative acts of remembrance and creation through the exclamation of active presences leading to empowerment and freedom.

Such work demands new modes of humanness that take marginalization as the starting point. Some have proposed an antihumanist position or a posthumanist sensibility. Such projects, however, seem more interested in recasting the White male subject as an antidote to White man himself. The desperate move to erase the human while at the same time reinscribing White man does little to decolonize, as it leaves untouched the privilege of the already constituted White male, now repeated as a farcical caricature of his previous self—as zombie, as superhero. Such posthumanist futures promise little to those who have never been human enough and on whose broken backs the supremacy of the White male subject stands. What we need, instead, are new formulations of human cohabitation and collectivity, some of which might be based on modes that preexisted the 5 centuries of colonization and the very invention of the human. This is the aim of browning the curriculum—the end of curriculum itself, as a humanist project; the recasting of the human through the nonhuman other; indeed, an oxymoron.

References and Further Readings


What does it mean to teach for a curriculum that is inclusive of all living and nonliving things in a particular space? How do we come to know a place and the knowledge inherent to that particular place? *Ecological milieu* is best defined as an intellectual (and often physical) space whereby knowledge is constructed through an interdependent mélange of knowledges, practices, traditions, beings, lives, and organisms. In the wake of the ecological crisis, emphasis on the *ecological* has increased in both academic and popular literature. In the field of curriculum studies, ecological milieu has evolved from referring to physical surroundings to a much more complex dialectical phenomenon, invoking a complex conversation among various knowledges and sensibilities. In particular, this conversation attempts to make sense and meaning of how the ecosystems in which we are situated act on our understanding of the world and an appreciation of how our actions impact ecosystems.

Matters of the ecological milieu are driven by many questions. How do we come to understand the place in which we are situated? How do spaces, places, and the many beings that occupy them inform our individual and collective experiences? How do our individual (and collective) human lives impact other beings around us, and how does this impact shape our subsequent relationship to the world?

Ecological milieu draws upon foundational knowledge about the environment and the study of ecology and the study of the interdependence of living things in a specific ecosystem and recognizes that places and the life that inhabits them inform our understanding of the world. Reflective of the state of discourse in the field, this chapter will assume the term *ecological* to have a more applied and holistic meaning. While still concerned with the interdependence of living beings, ecological milieu extends that relational understanding to include human knowledge, livelihood, and economy—in other words, how might we consider the interdependence of the complex fabric that makes up human and nonhuman life?

**Contemporary Concerns About Ecological Milieu**

Al Gore’s award-winning documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006) highlighted the mounting evidence that the earth is experiencing changes in its climate that are human-made and severely threaten numerous forms of life in ecosystems across the globe. An overwhelming number of scientists and agencies consider this evidence to be irrefutable. Such attention to climate change has prompted many
ecological milieu in their teaching and practice. But the changing climatic world is also a world experiencing global economic, social, and political change that threatens the sustainability of both natural and human systems.

Aside from rising sea levels, which threaten countless coastal communities (human and nonhuman), the ecological crisis raises serious questions about the sustainability of the many human cultures on earth. An increasingly globalized economy has led to a homogenization of cultures and has posed a serious threat to diversity (and diverse ways of knowing others). Consumptive practices of the West have become more prolific as markets are expanded across the globe, displacing traditional practices for Western education.

Education as a “human right” becomes a form of “recolonization” as the autonomy of cultures is threatened through the proclamation that “education is essential for the survival of every culture, past, present, and future” (Prakash & Esteva, 1998, p. 11). What entails is a systemic process of the removal of cultures, loss of languages, traditions, and communities, displaced by Western knowledge and orientations to knowledge, place, and people. Rebecca Martusewicz, Jeff Edmundson, and John Lupinacci (2011) have noted that while “changes introduced by modern society have improved the level of comfort in those societies,” these changes have also “increased our relative insecurity” (p. 5). For example, cultures that have recently joined the global economy were previously self-sufficient, “living on land now controlled by transnational corporations” (p. 6). Loss of land accompanies a loss of culture and the means to subsist.

These transformations around the globe, shifting economies to focus on industrial production for a Western consumer market, entail devastating impacts on local ecosystems such as watershed contamination and overusage of water, air pollution, destruction of sensitive habitat areas, overfishing, and deforestation.

**Contexts of Ecological Milieu**

C. A. Bowers (2001) asked that we consider not only the conservation of places and the organisms that inhabit a given place but also the knowledge and cultural systems that contribute to its existence. Richard Kahn (2008) pointed out that to be ecological is to “think and live historically . . . to move in a bed of context.” Much of the theoretical basis for ecological milieu stems from inquiry into contexts. Aside from the more obvious context of biological diversity, concerns over cultural diversity, race, class, gender, and economy all underpin the theoretical foundation upon which ecological milieu is constructed.

There is a distinct relationship between race and land. Human work on the land has long been associated with that of menial labor, and those who do that work are often subordinated through class or race. Wendell Berry (2002) has argued that the problem of race in the United States is grounded in a desire to rise above the “human condition,” whereby success is merely the ability to distance oneself from those activities needed to live (grow food, harvest crops, slaughter animals for meat, prepare food, procure drinking water). Berry noted that in the years following civil rights legislation, Black land ownership experienced its “steepest decline” (p. 51). This is related, Berry argued, to the systemic understanding that “American blacks will be made better or more useful or more secure by becoming as greedy, selfish, wasteful, and thoughtless as affluent American whites” (p. 49). This underlying narrative of success as moving away from land has implications in historical struggles for racial equality. bell hooks (2009) wrote that “W.E.B. Du Bois’ vision of the talented tenth did not include farmers” or those who otherwise worked with the land (p. 44). hooks (2009) said that both her grandparents “understood that black folks who had their ‘forty acres and a mule’ or even just their one acre, could sustain their lives by growing food, by creating shelter that was not mortgaged” (p. 46). hooks, like Booker T. Washington, questioned “social and racial uplift that meant black folks would lead us away from respect for the land . . . to imitate the social mores of affluent whites” (p. 46).

Questions arise as to whether people marginalized along lines of class and/or race attaining high-status positions should be equated with progress and success, especially when success for some serves as “both a false beacon for populations that could not hope for such attainment, and a standing rebuke for not having made it” (Prashad, 2012, p. 103).
To counter this, Berry advocated the idea of *commonwealth*, or the “wealth of localities and the local economies of household, neighborhood, and community” (p. 58). He is critical of social mobilization that is wholly dependent on becoming disconnected from the land and work associated with it.

As we look to orientations to the land that are different from those underpinned by what hooks (2000) called a *white supremacist-capitalistic-patriarchal* episteme or orientation to knowledge, many scholars look to indigenous practices and traditions, though this is not without problems. Too often, discussions of indigenous practices relegate native people to being “people of the land.” This becomes a challenge—how do we learn from non-Western cultures regarding their relationship to land and the natural world without narrowly defining their relationship as being “one with nature?” Timothy Regan (2005) has challenged the way in which indigenous peoples are presented ahistorically and unidimensionally and says that even categories of “Western” and “non-Western” essentialize the experiences of diverse people and traditions.

Consequently, many of the categorical delineations used to organize our analysis of the ecological crisis (consumers, producers, capitalists, etc.) should be troubled for their complexities; the conversation is only limited by dualistic argumentation. Context is key: Contextual understanding of ecological milieu is better understood through an examination of the theoretical contributions to this emergent field of study.

**Theory of Ecological Milieu**

While much of the knowledge associated with conversations about the environment resides within the natural sciences, important contributions to the dialogue are being made by both educators and philosophers, even if these contributions lie on the margins (see Kahn, Nocella, & Fassbinder, 2012). Theoretical orientations that underpin the study of ecological milieu seek to explore the interconnectedness among humans, their places of inhabitation, and the knowledges that define that place for them. It is in this interconnectedness that *ecological* becomes both substantive and metaphorical—humans are inextricably linked to the world in which they are situated; our attempts to understand this link are informed by diverse and interrelated knowledges. The *ecological milieu*, then, represents the emergent conversation about places, people, and the countless relationships (biological, emotional, communal) that define places, natural or otherwise, and community, human or otherwise.

The concept of the ecological milieu complements curriculum studies quite well. The work of John Dewey situated the circumstances surrounding the child and the curriculum as being fluid and dynamic, one not being clearly or easily separated from the other (see Chapter 29, “Students as Curriculum,” in this volume). While the term *ecological* was not explicitly developed by Dewey, he was aware of the complex nature of experience and that the natural world in which we are situated certainly contributes to that fabric (Dewey, 1929).

The work of L. Thomas Hopkins is of particular interest to the study of the ecological. In his book *Integration: Its Meaning and Application*, Hopkins (1937) sought to define the “integrated” individual through diverse disciplinary lenses. This book, inclusive of chapters authored by scholars in seemingly disparate fields (such as philosophy, biology, and the arts), sought to provide various definitions of the “integrated individual.” Hopkins’s theorization of the integrated individual led to his discussion of the “emerging self” that is in constant interaction with environment. In *The Emerging Self in School and Home*, Hopkins (1954) drew from biological processes to articulate an approach to understanding human experience. While Hopkins did not discuss integration of ecological knowledge per se, a clarification of curriculum inquiry as one of “integration,” or bringing together diverse knowledges, is complementary to the ecological, especially when one considers an ecological approach to knowledge. Hopkins, like many curriculum theorists at his time, placed humans in the center of the world, though this should not be seen as a limitation. Given his application of the interrelatedness of organisms in an environment, Hopkins provides a foundation upon which to build an ecological appreciation in curriculum.

C. A. Bowers (1993, 1995, 2001) is credited with being a primary force in encouraging curricular discourse around ecological and environmental concern. In *Educating for an Ecologically Sustainable Culture*, Bowers (1995) addressed the values that
underpin the ecological crisis and argued that “the deepest assumptions of the culture . . . go unrecognized even in the face of the most radical political change” (p. 2). While many works in curriculum studies were debating questions of racial, class, and gender inequity, Bowers pushed for the discourse to include the cultural assumptions that predicate many of the global environmental issues we face today. To discuss the ecological, one needs to discuss the cultural.

Bowers (2009) has argued that academic discourse is trapped in a double-bind thinking—a “linguistic domination of the present by the past” (p. 5). The double bind, Bowers argued, limits attempts to resolve ecological problems by applying the same logic to solutions that underpins the creation of the problem. Thus, cultural assumptions must be interrogated along with the immediate environmental threat. Bowers has highlighted the importance of “conserving” those traditions that sustain ecological balance, such as the notion of the idea of the commons.

Bowers drew from a rich tradition discussing land and the commons. In A Sand County Almanac, Aldo Leopold (1949) detailed the passing of seasons in the sand counties of central Wisconsin. Detailed and precise, observational and insightful, this work calls for an appreciation of the natural world and the subtle complexities of life found therein. Leopold began with observations of seasonal change and its impact on ecosystems. Following this, he discussed the tendency for humans to destroy ecological balance as a matter of progress. What entails is the development of what Leopold called a “land ethic,” or way of living “with wilderness.” Leopold’s land ethic seeks to transform the human relationship with the land from one of “conqueror . . . to plain member and citizen of it” (p. 240). This approach to living with the land entails considerable reflection on the ways in which one’s livelihood impacts the world. Leopold argued that a “thing has value insofar as it preserves the stability and health of the biotic community (Kruidenier & Morrison, 2013, p. 436).

The question of how modern society can live “with wilderness” is raised throughout much of Berry’s work. The agrarian philosopher, writer, and tobacco farmer has written extensively on the topics of local economies, efficiency of land, and the value of both land and those who work it. Berry was critical of what he called an American tradition of exploitation, whereby successive generations learn to be “successful” by finding a place and/or people to exploit—that is the way people “make it” in the United States (Berry, 1996).

The land ethic provides a foundation for inquiry into the meaning made about the spaces occupied by people, or place. Place-based education emphasizes learning about human relationships in the local environment. Described by David Gruenewald and Gregory Smith (2008) as a form of “new localism,” place-based education contests increasing globalization and homogenization of global cultures by reinforcing the importance of local knowledge and culture and seeks practices that sustain both.

Place-based education requires that students be enabled to learn from spaces beyond the classroom walls, overcoming “the traditional isolation of schooling from community life” (Gruenewald & Smith, 2008, p. xx). To this end, Bill Bigelow (1996) has questioned how schools teach a “hidden anti-ecological curriculum” by reinforcing values that privilege indoor spaces over outdoor spaces. Bigelow noted that the vibrant natural areas immediately outside his school were not utilized as part of classroom instruction, reifying the notion that important decisions are made indoors. In order to avoid an antiecological experience in schools, Bigelow argued that we must make full use of the natural world immediately outside the school, no matter how small or “wild.”

While much of place-based education concerns the local places we inhabit, Greenwood (2013) argued that the tension between “locally focused educational inquiry, and inquiry that is attuned to a wider array of worldwide interconnection” (p. 452) captures the modern-day discourse in place-based educational literature. How then do we nurture a local sense of place while also learning about “other” places?

Whereas the study of place does assume a critical disposition toward capitalist industrial practice (see Gruenewald, 2003), ecopedagogy specifically engaged the problem. Building from a foundation in critical pedagogy, ecopedagogy integrates critical theory to study the intersection between social and environmental issues. Heavily influenced by Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed, first published in 1968, ecopedagogy seeks a trans-member,
trans-species liberatory pedagogy, one that encompasses the concerns of oppressed people, animals, and indigenous concerns (Kahn, 2008). Ecopedagogy entails the development of a critical ecoliteracy that lends itself toward ethical responsibility and action, the goal of which is a move beyond “mere observation and understanding of natural and social systems” toward action that seeks to repair the harm done to natural and social systems. Ecopedagogy calls for us to be mindful not to reproduce social systems that have contributed to the ecological crisis in our efforts to take action. For example, Richard Kahn (2009) has questioned the way in which “green consumerism” enables individuals to feel good about environmentally friendly purchases while avoiding the critical issue of challenging human overconsumption, an issue directly tied to the ecological crisis. Additionally, some scholars have called for less emphasis on individual actions for the environment and instead a greater focus on community and systemic changes (Kruidenier & Morrison, 2013).

Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression

How does one inquire into human relationships with another and the environment? How do we articulate the cultural underpinnings of the ecological crisis? Just as ecological milieu entails a discussion drawing from complex and diverse theoretical orientations, forms of inquiry of ecological milieu are equally diverse. Each form of inquiry examined here should not be taken as the only path toward understanding the ecological, but one of many emergent ways of knowing and experiencing the world around us. An important theme throughout these unique forms of inquiry is questioning the social, cultural, and economic underpinnings of the ecological crisis—naming the cause of environmental problems entails a complex discussion. Martusewicz, Edmundson, and Lupinacci (2011) have developed what they call an “ecological cultural analysis,” an ecodiversity inquiry that broadens the dialogue to integrate social, political, and cultural lenses into educational critique.

In seeking to integrate human and ecological concerns, inquiry into environmental racism reveals the ways in which the means of production entail a harsh reality whereby both humans and ecosystems are harmed. For example, Derek Rasmussen (2005) detailed the health issues of the Inuit people of the province of Nunavut, Canada. Despite practicing traditional hunting and gathering, an overwhelming number have been sickened with industrial disease, such as dioxin in breast milk and high PCB body burdens. Rasmussen noted that while citizens who live in the industrial and urbanized North America are more than willing to contribute money, food, and medical supplies to support the Inuit, they fail to evaluate how their industrial existence and livelihood contributes to the demise of other people. This dynamic acknowledges the ways in which “settlers” seek a sort of innocence regarding relations with indigenous peoples, who are often oppressed by the same forces of progress that mark the land.

Lupinacci (2011) said that “education ought to be for understanding that we are all connected to diverse, local, living relationships” and that we should “learn to value and participate in living locally toward the long-term health of diverse communities” (p. 101). Inquiries into ecological milieu entail a discussion of community and diversity that is inclusive of nonhuman organisms and the relationships among all entities in an ecosystem.

Modes of Expression of Ecological Milieu

Modes of expression or representation of ecological milieu are clearly found in a variety of environmental education programming both in and out of schools. Environmental education entails “giving students basic knowledge of ecology, of ecological systems, encouraging appreciation of the outdoors, [and] awareness of ecological issues” (Martusewicz, Edmundson, & Lupinacci, 2011, p. 10). It is difficult to discuss environmental education without also discussing out-of-school curriculum. William Schubert (1981) argued that “school curriculum is but one among many curricula” (p. 186) and that curricular inquiry need be inclusive of work, home, family, media, and other “out of school educative forces” (p. 190). Consequently, much of the literature regarding environmental education presupposes an
out-of-school context, though this context is typically limited to outdoor spaces and natural areas.

Drawing from both place-based and environmental education, the No Child Left Inside movement seeks to encourage learning outside the bounds of the traditional classroom. In particular, this movement seeks opportunities for students to engage in environmental activities outside the classroom. Richard Louv’s work *Last Child in the Woods* (2005/2008) argues that students have developed what he calls “nature deficit disorder” from a lack of experience in the outdoors. As part of the No Child Left Inside movement, teachers in K–12 schools throughout the country create opportunities to bring their students outside, into whatever natural areas might be accessible to the school. At the most basic level, students can go outside and observe local flora and fauna. More advanced applications might investigate human impact on local ecosystems immediately around the school.

Partnerships with local environmental organizations, museums, and nature preserves can provide rich outdoor experiences to youth, especially in urban communities. An example of this collaboration is found in school garden projects. Garden projects have become a common project-based curriculum application in schools around the country. Various organizations committed to issues of food security, healthy eating, and local economy, such as the Western Growers Foundation through its Collective School Garden Network, provide outside support for teachers who wish to integrate this into their classroom practice. School gardens are particularly useful in urban areas where local nature study is hindered by school policy or geography. School gardens may lead to discussion about the problem of “food deserts” in urban areas where socioeconomic forces make it difficult for marginalized residents to access fresh, inexpensive, and/or local produce.

Environmentally focused schools provide another example of ecological milieu in practice. Sunnyside Environmental School in Portland, Oregon, is an elementary school that is environmentally and community-focused. Emphasizing both time in nature and project-based curriculum, Martusewicz et al. (2011) noted that while “there is little effort to examine the deep cultural assumptions of modernity or the language that carries those assumptions,” the school practices “commons oriented thinking” (p. 296). Environmentally oriented schooling is not unique to K–12 education. For example, Northland College is a small, environmental liberal arts college in the northwoods of Wisconsin, along the shore of Lake Superior. Place plays a major role, as does examining the political and scientific underpinnings of ecological problems.

Despite ecological concerns becoming a subject of greater interest at academic conferences and the focus of curricular objectives in classrooms, the study of ecological milieu as it pertains to curriculum remains an emergent field that is in its infancy. One finds that forms of inquiry employ different modes of expression from histories to interpretative essays, from ethnographies to stories and narratives, from empirical studies to critical discourses—in short many forms of qualitative and quantitative inquiry and expression, from arts-based to phenomenological, humanistic, and scientific. Focus in this section primarily has been on actual projects, because ecological education projects often use multiple integrations of diverse modes of expression. Many scholars recognize that continued conversation is necessary to move toward increasingly diverse configurations of inquiry and meaningful and sustainable modes of expression.

**Toward a Curricular Expression of Ecological Inquiry**

Aldo Leopold (1949) said that “conservation is a state of harmony between men and land” (p. 243). By men he meant all humans. If we are to embrace conservation of life and ecological tradition, it is imperative to engage the question of what knowledge is worthwhile and what kinds of lives are worth living. The ecological is both substantive and metaphorical—it comes down to seeking a balance. How can we come to understand the fragile and dynamic balance of interdependent relationships in our ecosystem? How, too, do we seek balance and harmony among the diverse knowledges concerning place? Through continued curricular conversation, we can continue to interrogate, understand, and integratively participate within the tenuous balance between life and knowledge that underpins the ecological milieu.
References and Further Readings


Websites

Collective School Garden Network: http://www.csgn.org
I was in line for the security check at the international airport of a mid-sized U.S. city, right on the eastern edge of the Midwest, in July 2013. The names, in white lettering, on the back of a fellow traveler’s bright, deep blue T-shirt (in fact the same blue that TSA officials wear) caught my (Nina’s) eye. Five or six names in a list with a two-digit number after each name. All ending in “Singh” or “Kaur.” The date at the top of the list was 08.05.12. It took me a few minutes to realize—this traveler was wearing a T-shirt memorializing those killed by Wade Michael Page, a White supremacist, who attacked a gurudwara (the place of worship for Sikhs) in Oak Creek Wisconsin, on August 5, 2012.

I wondered about the woman’s decision to wear it while flying. Did she wear it every time she flew? What were her thoughts and feelings as she went through the security check? Was the choice of the color intentional? Was this an act of resistance? Then I saw the front of the T-shirt. It said, “I pledge humanity.” I had my answer: yes, it was an act of resistance, on so many levels.

In this chapter, two U.S.-based scholars discuss key considerations for curriculum in the international/transnational milieu, which is characterized also by discourses and efforts to counter globalizing forces. The opening narrative serves as just one instance of the evidence of the inescapable intertwining of global, transnational, and local concerns even in micro-contexts within the United States today. If, indeed, we read this text—literally and metaphorically—as the curriculum of the larger U.S. society, then what are some questions that curriculum scholars and other educators need to consider? How do we construe and engage both belonging and difference? How might schools and classrooms function as “embryonic societies” (Dewey, 1990/1900, 1902, p. 18)? How might we, as “agents of translation” (Schwab, 1973, p. 502), represent the “five bodies of experience” (p. 502)—subject matter, learners, milieus, teachers,
and curriculum making—that curriculum theorist Joseph Schwab identified four decades ago as part of his call for “the practical”? For instance, Schwab wrote:

Knowledge of the children should include a range of information about their present state of mind and heart treated as a stage in development toward their probable destiny as adults. This should include some probabilities about their future economic status and function; what leisure they will enjoy; what adult aspirations and attitudes they, their friends and neighbors are likely to have; what roles they will play in the family, their political community, their ethnic or religious community. . . .

Relevant milieus will also include the family, the community, the particular groupings of religious, class, or ethic genus. What aspirations, styles of life, attitudes toward education, and ethical standards characterize these parents and, through their roles as parents, affect the children (as well as the character of what can and cannot be attempted in a curriculum)? (1973, p. 503)

His words and insights resonate today—in fact they appear to speak directly to the issues implied in the opening narrative. What is the state of mind and heart of the young Sikh American kids—and, indeed, of all kids—in Oak Creek? How is “community”—political, religious, ethnic—constructed in Oak Creek? What are the aspirations and fears of the parents of these kids? And what do teachers and other educators attempt in the curriculum? What don’t they? Why?

Perhaps John Dewey and Schwab saw this coming. Perhaps not. What we do know is that it is our task to wrestle with and identify what must, can, and should be attempted in a curriculum that engages the global, transnational, and local in agentic, productive, generative, and forward-looking ways. In so doing we will need to consider how local educational spaces reflect—and also counter—increasingly globalized societal trends and issues, as rapidly changing demographics and information flows within and outside the United States, along with the spread of capitalism and corporatization, shape the character of our classrooms and curricula in the coming years. And how might we then also envision education as one of the influences shaping societies?

**Contemporary Concerns**

Even as our student populations become more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, and nationality, we continue to struggle with such issues as lack of teachers of color, continued racial and socioeconomic segregation, structural poverty, and a systemic under-valuing of teaching and teachers in a United States that remains firmly in the grip of untrammeled capitalism. In 2012, for example, fully 42% of 13-year-old students assessed on the National Assessment of Educational Progress mathematics test were Black, Hispanic, or Asian/Pacific Islander—compared with only 20% in 1978 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). The number of Hispanic students completing this test alone has more than tripled in 3 decades—one outcome of continuous, high levels of immigration from Mexico and Central America. This shift reflects more global trends in immigration, in which movement from the global South to the global North “has been the main driver of global migration trends” since 1990 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2013).

Still, while the participation of students of color—including many immigrant youths—has increased dramatically, people of color continue to comprise a comparatively small portion of the teaching workforce. In 2007–2008, for instance, only about 16% of full-time and part-time public school teachers were Black, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, or multiracial (U.S. Department of Education, 2012)—up only slightly from about 12% in 1972 (Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012). With few adult role models of color in their classrooms, and higher rates of structural, historically sedimented poverty at home and in their communities (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010), students of color face steeper challenges in relation to educational achievement and, ultimately, upward social and economic mobility. Such systemic poverty among people of color is perpetuated, in part, by apparatuses of global capitalism that favor White communities and the global North, encourage individualism over collectivism, and value the “rights” of corporations over those of individuals—particularly in the realm of education.

These concerns make culturally relevant programs in critical multicultural education, antioppressive education, and critical literacy education essential for educational progress and achievement. However, such programs in the United States have been attacked (mostly by right-wing political groups) for their so-called political correctness, dilution of “American” identity, emphasis on promoting “White
guilt,” and tendencies toward capitalist critique. Witness, for example, a blanket ban on ethnic studies in Tucson’s (Arizona) public schools. These attacks act to maintain existing ideological balances in curricula across the United States, by which White, wealthy, male, heterosexual, English-speaking, and non-immigrant interests are best served.

**Theoretical Frames**

In considering how global influences shape curricula, local educational experience, and the contemporary concerns outlined earlier, curriculum scholars today may turn to a broad range of theoretical perspectives and approaches, including critical theory, multiculturalism, postcolonialism, indigenous theory, feminism, poststructuralism and postmodernism, anthropological theory, historiography, sociological theory, cultural studies, literary criticism, psychoanalysis, race studies, and queer theory. We draw particularly on Arjun Appadurai’s (1996) notion of various, porous, and fluid global “scapes” and, in relation, the production of “locality . . . in new globalized ways” (p. 9). For instance, *ethnoscape*, according to Appadurai, is “the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live . . . moving groups and individuals constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree” (p. 33). *Technoscape* is “the global configuration, also ever fluid, of technology . . . that . . . now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries” (p. 34). *Mediascape* refers to the spread among private and public interests worldwide of electronic capabilities to generate and disseminate information; *financescape* refers to the rapid, complex flows of global capital; and *ideoscape* refers to political ideologies of states and countereconomic movements. These “scapes”—construed as dynamic spheres of social, cultural, political, and economic influence that shape global human interaction today—capture and frame the movement of human, material, cultural, financial, and political capital and related discourses, including educational discourses and practices, within and across national borders.

Indeed, educational discourses may be understood as shaped by the global/transnational ethnoscape, financescape, ideoscape, technoscape, and mediascape in the context of “progress” defined by a globalized capitalism. For instance, as critical thinkers in the U.S. education field (e.g., Kumashiro, 2008; McCarthy & Teasley, 2008; Taubman, 2009) have noted, the last 2 decades have been marked by the pursuit of individual monetary gain (often read as “wealth” and “success”); the headiness of facile, virtual proximity afforded by digitization; the spread of Western-style capitalism and corporatization in various countries; and the effects of escalating consumerism, debilitating economic collapses, and environmental depletion—all in a context of increasing global interdependence. These preoccupations have resulted in material, everyday consequences for schools around the world.

The dynamic intersections of financescape, ideoscape, and ethnoscape are evident, for instance, in terms of how corporatized discourses of standardization and accountability are shaping not only curriculum and teaching (including interactions in classrooms and schools) but also the lives of students and teachers. In his essay titled “The global war against teachers,” Vijay Prashad (2006) discussed how the “U.S. ruling class” (p. 12), in order to maintain power, works to spread its particular ideologies of capitalism and democracy overseas—not only shaping discourses of national identity and security but also silencing speech, including the speech of teachers, with the demand that they “stick to the facts” (p. 12) and not teach in ways that disrupt the status quo (attacks on multicultural and critical educational curricula provide clear examples). Mediocrity that maintains systems of consumption and production becomes the goal, not intellectual endeavor that interrogates, critiques, or revises. The spread of high-stakes testing, value-added assessments, and related discourses of accountability deforming U.S. schooling is symptomatic, as are the growth of charter schools and the increasing privatization of public education. In this climate, protests against such educational discourses and practices have grown in various parts of the country, as documented in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Huffington Post*, among other sources (see, for instance, Hernández & Baker, 2013; Klein, 2013; Simon, 2012; Strauss, 2013; Winerip, 2012).
Forms of Inquiry Into Global, Transnational, and Local Curriculum

Empirical inquiry into the international/transnational/counternational/counterglobalizational milieu has been varied in both theory and method, although a large portion of this work has been qualitative in nature (Denzin & Giardina, 2013; Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). The need for close attention to complex social and institutional forces that privilege and reproduce particular ways of learning and knowing, as well as demands for deep analysis of researchers’ own positions as (trans)national (i.e., with reference to and across specific national contexts) and global (i.e., with reference to the larger global context) citizens, has recommended methodologies like critical ethnography, autoethnography, critical comparative research, and critical narrative research as generative approaches to international/transnational/counternational/counterglobalizational scholarship (Denzin & Giardina, 2013; Steinberg & Cannella, 2012). In addition, scholars such as Linda Tuhawi Smith, Bekisizwe Ndimande, Kakali Bhattacharya, and Bagele Chilisa have called for indigenous and decolonizing research methodologies that are based upon and privilege indigenous ways of knowing, being, and interpreting the world. Smith’s work with Maori peoples in New Zealand, for example, provides numerous examples of how educational researchers can reframe research agendas, questions, methods, and ethics to generate culturally sensitive and enriching scholarship in the interests of research participants. For Smith (2012) and other indigenous methodologists, questions like who defines the research problem, who determines a study’s relevance, and who will gain knowledge or status from the research are paramount. In the context of an increasingly diverse global ethnoscapes—with a constantly shifting makeup of racial, national, and transnational identities—these methodologies seek to acknowledge and leverage viewpoints and lived experiences of all peoples in the service of basic humanism and social justice. Furthermore, critical and indigenous methodologies demand close examination, interrogation, and ultimately transformation of a global ideoscape that favors Whiteness, wealth, and corporatization in many (if not most) aspects of society and culture.

While particular qualitative paradigms have provided the frameworks for much inquiry into the international/transnational/counternational/counterglobalizational milieu, researchers in this field have also emphasized the importance of methodological innovation and flexibility. Scholars such as Joe Kincheloe, Peter McLaren, and Shirley Steinberg have advocated for multidisciplinary research in the spirit of *bricolage*, a process in which “research knowledges such as ethnography, textual analysis, semiotics, hermeneutics, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, historiography, discourse analysis combined with philosophical analysis, literacy analysis, aesthetic criticism, and theatrical and dramatic ways of observing and making meaning” (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2012, p. 21) are combined to achieve the methodological and theoretical complexity appropriate for studying issues of identity, politics, and social action. Similarly, Donna Mertens and colleagues have pioneered a “transformative” paradigm in mixed methods research, in which quantitative and qualitative methods are strategically combined to address problems related to social justice and human rights (Mertens, 2013). Such openness to multidisciplinarity and improvisation is particularly important in studies of identity, discourse, and social marginalization, as scholars seek new ways of working within the confines of research methodologies that are themselves implicated by systems of social, institutional, and political power (Lather, 2007; Smith, 2012).

Modes of Expression About Global, Transnational, and Local Curriculum

Many scholars who study international, transnational, and global issues in curriculum have found personal and professional voice through the use of narrative, either as one part of a larger project (e.g., as short vignettes within a longer ethnography) or as the primary means of representing research. The goals for such work are varied, including attempts to document and describe everyday enactments, negotiations, and tensions of within discourse, identity, and power in educational contexts. Bic Ngo (2010), for instance, mixed narrative with insightful historical and discursive analysis to
PART IV. MILIEU AS CURRICULUM

demonstrate how Lao American high school students construct, negotiate, and reinvent their identities as “urban” and “immigrant” youths. Some forms of narrative—including counternarratives or critical race narratives—actively seek to disrupt commonsense or normative understandings (sometimes called master narratives) of people and their experiences in the world. Daniel Solórzano and Tara Yosso (2002), for example, have described how telling counterstories about people of color can upset pervasive racist, sexist, and classist narratives in education.

With roots in oral historical traditions, such stories have the potential not only to describe the experiences and politics of individuals’ everyday lives but also to remake social power relationships in small but cumulative strides. Personal narratives, whether focused on research participants or researchers themselves through autoethnography or memoir, can help both teachers and students (re)imagine possibilities for social and cultural identities and contexts. Furthermore, narrative representations of research may make curriculum scholarship more relevant and accessible to wider audiences, aiding efforts to make scholarly work more meaningful for research participants and their communities.

Implications for Policy and Practice in Relation to Contexts

Given that educational contexts are interdisciplinary, fluid, hybrid, and rapidly, constantly changing, U.S. educators—including teachers and teacher educators, educational researchers, and curriculum scholars, whether working within the United States or across national borders—need to be prepared to cultivate agility and nimbleness in engaging difference(s) not only of race, culture, gender, nation, and socioeconomic status but also in terms of the framing of educational work—its purpose and role in larger social and global contexts, particularly given the pervasive influence of the various “scapes” outlined earlier. Specifically: What are key curricular and pedagogical considerations for fostering community in contexts of belonging and difference? For attaining synchronicity in milieus of difference or, as Schwab phrased it, “maintaining coordinacy” (1973, p. 511)? For rethinking education as agentic? What are some possibilities for framing the relationship between education and society as mutual and bidirectional, with each playing a role in shaping the other, rather than allowing education to succumb to the forces of global corporatism?

Perhaps, following Pratt (1991), we may seek the “pedagogical arts of the contact zone” (p. 40). According to Pratt, contact zones are “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (p. 34). And Pratt recommended that storytelling, exercises in identifying with the ideas and thoughts of others, the development of collaborative critiques, and engagement with difference and formerly suppressed histories and narratives are the pedagogical arts with which we may teach and learn effectively.

Deepening the analyses further, perhaps like Thich Nhat Hanh’s (1992) “organic gardeners,” we can practice and foster a culture of “looking deeply” (p. 58) toward healing splits between “us” and “them.”

When we have a compost bin filled with organic material which is decomposing and smelly, we know that we can transform the waste into beautiful flowers. At first, we may see the compost and the flowers as opposite, but when we look deeply, we see that the flowers already exist in the compost, and the compost already exists in the flowers. . . . When a good organic gardener looks into her compost, she can see that . . . she values the rotting material and does not discriminate against it. . . . We need the insight and non-dual vision of the organic gardener. (p. 58)

Indeed, returning to the traveler in the TSA-blue T-shirt, one may read the text (the actual text) as breaking down binaries and calling stereotypes into question. Brown of skin, passing through checkpoints where security and surveillance have been heightened and where racial/ethnic profiling is even less covert than in U.S. society “at large,” she reminded those around her that acts of terrorism happen “here,” “at home,” “where we are the victims and survivors. In this instance, “here” was a small town in the Midwestern United States; the home space was the gurudwara; and “we” were Americans and Indians like any other Americans and Indians. And (not “but”), we were also Sikh and brown. The “them,” in this instance, was actually also one of us—and he was a White American. Even as the
traveler saw and spoke to the “rotting material,” she also went beyond a reactive response to an agentic one—to the “non-dual vision of the organic gardener”—in stating, “I pledge humanity.” This traveler served as a social justice activist and a critical educator.

It is such critical reading of texts and contexts that we will need to foster in students, teachers, parents, and communities as the forces of Appadurai’s dynamic scapes shape human interaction on a global scale in increasingly complex and (at times) contradictory ways. We will need to teach teachers and youths of all races, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds to see—presently and historically, locally and globally, every day and over time—the topographies of the shifting ethnoscape, technoscape, mediascape, financescape, and ideoscape of which they are a part. And we will need to encourage them to see themselves not simply as cogs in a global apparatus—dependent on the turning of every other gear and belt—but also as essential actors who can influence the inputs and outcomes of the apparatus both above and below. Practicing teachers and administrators must also share their stories—through research publications (like those described earlier), practitioner publications, and popular media—of how they have acted, whether successfully or unsuccessfully, to change the discourses of education in their local sites of teaching and learning. Certainly, examples of individual acts of resistance and innovation in teaching abound: Witness, for instance, several excellent writings available from Milwaukee-based publisher Rethinking Schools, which cite instances of critical, self-reflexive curricula and pedagogical approaches. These publications highlight ways in which schools and teachers can take up and challenge the hegemony of global scapes through local, everyday educational practices.

On a larger scale, however, how can we emerge from the confines of untrammeled corporatism and move toward a more organic and agentic view of education? Examples from outside the United States may provide some guidance. For instance, in Finnish Lessons: What Can the World Learn From Educational Change in Finland, Pasi Sahlberg (2011) has suggested, “the true Finnish difference is that teachers in Finland may exercise their professional knowledge both widely and freely in their schools” (p. 7). Teaching, in Finland, is the “number one profession among young Finns—above medicine and law—and . . . primary teacher education in Finnish universities is one of the most competitive choices of study” (pp. 7–8). (In which case, one may ask why the United States has not built similarly on its own history of progressive education when others—such as Finland—have done so.) And in the ethnically and politically complex kingdom of Bhutan, the concept of “gross national happiness,” informed by the importance of sustainability in life and nature, is more important in shaping policy and development—including in education—than is “gross domestic product” (McDonald, 2005; Rinzin, Vermeulen, & Glasbergen, 2007). Following such examples then, instead of convincing ourselves that we should settle for a seemingly unending series of such “quick fixes” as vouchers, charter schools, and value-added assessments, we may do better to take the time to “look deeply,” as Hanh suggests. Taking the time to look deeply at our own and other nations’ educational discourses and practices, as well as the “scapes” within which they exist, might allow us to see otherwise obscured possibilities for revisioning education today.

References and Further Readings


INDIGENOUS LAND AND DECOLONIZING CURRICULUM

EVE TUCK
State University of New York at New Paltz

Curriculum has a long history as a tool of settler colonialism, a history that includes resistance from Indigenous peoples. As Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2014b) wrote of one such incident of resistance,

In 1895, 19 Hopi men were incarcerated in the prison facility on Alcatraz Island, “because,” as reported by a San Francisco newspaper, “they would not let their children go to school.” The U.S. Federal Government had enacted policies in Orayvi and across Hopi lands that were designed to limit Hopi sovereignty and facilitate settler colonialism. The new policies divided shared land into individual tracts, removed Hopi people from mesas, required new agricultural practices, and demanded that Hopi children attend far away boarding schools (Sakiestewa, 2010). In the lead up to the arrest of the 19 men, white settlers had drawn a false dichotomy between Hopi who were “Friendlies” and “Hostiles”; hostiles were those who refused to give up collective planting of wheat in favor of individualized farming practice, those who refused to adopt Washington ways, and refused to turn over their children. A nearby Mormon/Navajo land dispute involving bloodshed added to settlers’ fearful exasperation over the Hopi refusals.

The 19 men, deemed hostiles, were rounded up, and marched by foot, horse, train, and eventually boat to the San Francisco bay, a journey that took more than a month to complete (Holliday, n.d.). When the captured Hopi men arrived, they were sensationalized by San Francisco newspapers as a “Batch of Apaches [sic]” imprisoned “until they have learned to appreciate the advantage of education” (Holliday, n.d.). They were kept on Alcatraz from January 3 to August 7, 1895.

Hopi refusals to send (or more often agreeing to send but never sending) their children to remote boarding schools became emblematic of Hopi resistance to settler colonialism and the settler colonial state writ large. (p. 1)

To write about Indigenous land and decolonizing curriculum, especially in the context of the United States, Canada, and other settler colonial nations, requires addressing the aims and structures of settler colonialism, curriculum as Indigenous erasure and assimilation, the persistence of Indigenous land as curriculum, the project(s) of decolonization, and how they might differ from other social justice efforts. This chapter discusses all of these aspects of Indigenous land, curriculum, and decolonization.

Author’s Note: This chapter synthesizes discussions from several publications (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012, 2014).
Aims and Structures of Settler Colonialism

In settler colonial contexts, as Tuck and Yang (2014a) noted, “land is the ultimate pursuit. Settlers arrive in a new (to them) place and claim it as theirs.” Scholars of settler colonialism seek to understand the particular features of settler colonialism and how the shapes and contours of domination of settler colonial nation-states (such as the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Israel, China, and Australia) differ from other forms of coloniality. Jodi Byrd argues that it was the “breakaway” speed formation of settler colonies that produced the global North, which shifts the brunt of its militaristic, economic, and environmental needs on the global South, all the while maintaining “internally contradictory quagmires where human rights, equal rights, and recognitions are predicated on the very systems that propagate and maintain the dispossession of indigenous peoples for the common good of the world” (2011, p. xix). A primary understanding in settler colonial studies is that invasion is a structure, not (just) an event in time (Wolfe, 1999). That structure destroys and then later erases Indigenous peoples (via assimilation or cultural strangling, but also schooling and curriculum) and uses weapons and policy to extinguish Indigenous claims to land. As Tuck and Yang (2014a) noted,

Settlement requires the labor of chattel slaves and guest workers, who must be kept landless and estranged from their homelands. The settlers locate themselves at the top and at the center of all typologies—as simultaneously most superior and most normal. Because land is the ultimate pursuit, settler colonialism involves a daedal arrangement of justifications and unhistories in order to deny genocide and brutality. Settler colonialism must cover its tracks, and does so by making its structuring natural, inevitable, invisible, and immutable. (pp. 812–813)

Settler colonialism can be understood through a triad of relationships among settlers, chattel slaves, and Indigenous peoples. As Tuck and Marcia McKenzie (2015) noted,

Settler colonialism wants Indigenous land, not Indigenous peoples, so Indigenous peoples are cleared out of the way of colonial expansion, first via genocide and destruction, and later through incorporation and assimilation (Wolfe, 2006). The settler colonial discourse turns Indigenous peoples into savages, unhumans, and eventually, ghosts. As a structure and not a past event, settler colonialism circulates stories of Indigenous peoples as extinct, disappeared, or maybe as never having existed at all. The goal of settler colonialism is to erase Indigenous peoples from valuable land. (p. 66)

In settler colonial Virginia and other colonies that would form the United States, Africans were stolen, enslaved, and brought by force to the colonies. There they were kept as “chattel,” which means property of the owner, and were barred from owning land (see McCoy, 2014). As Tuck and McKenzie (2015) argued, “In chattel slavery, it is the body that is valuable, not the person. The person is seen as in excess of the body; the person is ownable, punishable, murderable” (p. 66).

Antiblackness is a core feature of settler colonialism. Settler colonialism circulated stories of (the descendants of) chattel slaves as monsters, as requiring containment; similarly, the contemporary prison industrial complex in the United States can be understood as “an extension of chattel slavery, in which Black and brown bodies are contained to build the wealth of mostly white towns relying financially on incarceration centers” (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 67).

Scott Lauria Morgensen argued that the term settler is “a way to describe colonizers that highlights their desires to be emplaced on Indigenous land” (2011, n.p.). Settlers live on stolen land and make it their home. Settlers are not immigrants; they implement their own laws and understandings of the world onto stolen land. As Tuck and McKenzie (2015) noted,

Settler pursuits of valuable land are the context for the invention of race in the United States—race, almost two hundred years after plantation colonies were established, became the justification for the ways in which settlers made Indigenous peoples and slaves inhuman to get land and labor. (p. 71)

Settlers are defined by their actions; they are not a particular (racial) group (Tuck & Yang, 2012). As Eve Tuck, Allison Guess, and Hannah Sultan (2014, n.p.) noted,

Jodi Byrd’s borrowing of the word arrivants from African Caribbean poet Kamau Brathwaite in place of “chattel slave,” refers broadly to people forced into the Americas “through the violence of European and Anglo-American colonialism and imperialism around the globe,” (2011, p. xix). This nomenclature is
a recognition of the ways in which arrivants both resist and participate as settlers in the historical project of settler colonialism. The word “arrivants” helps to highlight the complicity of all arrivants [including Black people] in Indigenous erasure and dispossession, because settler colonialism “requires settlers and arrivants to cathect the space of the native as their home,” (ibid., p. xxxix; see also da Silva, 2013). But “arrivants” may also conceal the unique positioning of Blackness in settler colonialism and the complicity of white people and nonwhite people (including Native people) in antiblackness.

It cannot be emphasized too many times that settler colonialism wants Indigenous land. Some readers will understandably credit the way settler colonialism takes Indigenous land and turns it into property to capitalistic appetites for resources and means of production, yet capitalism is not the singular explanation for the pursuit of land—the case of Chinese Tibet is evidence of that. For the purposes of the discussions in this chapter, the problem is settlement; curriculum is but one site in which, as “settler colonialism turns Indigenous land into property by destroying Indigenous peoples and turns humans into chattel/property by destroying their humanity” (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 68).

Indeed, “settler colonialism destroys to replace” (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388). In the global North it does so by denying the existence of Indigenous peoples and the legitimacy of claims to land. It denies the long-lasting impacts of slavery. It continues to dispossess Indigenous peoples and Black peoples, promoting White supremacy. It requires arrivants to participate as settlers. Settler colonialism implicates everyone, and in doing so, in being so uncomfortable to discuss, it is evasive. Indeed, settler colonialism covers its tracks (Veracini, 2011). As Tuck, McKenzie, and Kate McCoy (2014) noted,

A final general characteristic of settler colonialism is its attempt (and failure) to contain Indigenous agency and resistance. Indigenous peoples have refused settler encroachment, even while losing their lives and homelands. Writing about Aotearoa/New Zealand, [Jo] Smith (2011) cites the long history of Maori resistance to settler invasion, describing the settler nation’s need to “continually code, decode, and recode social norms and social spaces so as to secure a meaningful (read: proprietary) relationship to the territories and resources at stake” (112, parentheses original). (p. 8)

Thus, settler colonialism is “both an ongoing and incomplete project, with internal contradictions, cracks and fissures through which Indigenous life and knowledge have persisted and thrived despite settlement” (Tuck et al., 2014, p. 8).

## Curriculum as Indigenous Erasure and Assimilation

Curriculum and its history in the United States have, for the most part, invested in settler colonialism and the permanence of the settler colonial nation-state (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013; see also Willinsky, 1998). In particular, the settler colonial curricular project of replacement has attempted to erase Indigenous peoples and replace them with settlers, who see themselves as the rightful claimants to land and as indigenous (Donald, 2012; Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013). As Tuck and Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) noted,

The historical work of curriculum scholars like Douglas McKnight (2003), William Watkins (2001), John Willinsky (1998), and Annie Winfield (2007), among others, demonstrate that from its inception and to the present day, the project of schooling in the US and Canada has been a white supremacist project. More specifically, McKnight (2003) and Willinsky (1998) demonstrate how the project of schooling has been historically premised, first and foremost, on maintaining symbolic logics through which to justify the theft and occupation of Indigenous land. Their work points to the ways in which schools were instruments of settlement, as evidenced in the important role they played in what McKnight describes as the “jeremiad” of colonial Puritans who sought to establish a utopian society.

The critical role of schooling in the project of settler colonialism is further evidenced during the expansion of the “chartered academics” throughout the 17th and 18th century, when small schools were established in local communities, mostly by settler merchants (Beadie & Tolley, 2002). It is also manifest in the establishment of Indian schools within the context of what eventually became elite Universities (such as Harvard), and perhaps most perversely implemented in the Indian Boarding Schools, where assimilationist projects to “kill the Indian, save the man” involved widespread violence and abuse and ultimately served as models for the Nazi genocide.

Intimately linked to schools, the field of curriculum studies has played a significant role in the maintenance of settler colonialism. Early curriculum scholars conceived of educational projects through logics of replacement in which the settler ultimately comes to replace the Native. . . .
Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the view that all non-white cultures represented earlier stages of development akin to childhood was expressed by all curriculum thinkers, progressive and technocratic alike (Fallace, 2012). Recapitulation theory proposed that individual development followed the stages of the development of the species, with European civilization representing the full maturation of an adult. While some early scholars believed that blacks and Indians were incapable for being civilized, the dominant view was that schooling could provide the necessary curriculum to civilize these representations of earlier forms of human life, which meant to make them more like their white teachers. (p. 75–77)

The Persistence of Indigenous Land as Curriculum

Quechua scholar Sandy Grande (2004) elaborated the “deep structures” of what she calls “colonialist consciousness.” These are the animating beliefs that course through colonialist societies, hegemonic perspectives that serve as common sense. These deep structures involve five core beliefs—“(1) belief in progress as change and change as progress; (2) belief in the effective separateness of faith and reason; (3) belief in the essential quality of the universe and of ‘reality’ as impersonal, secular, material, mechanistic, and relativistic; (4) subscription to ontological individualism; and (5) belief in human beings as separate from and superior to the rest of nature” (p. 69). For Grande, contemporary cultural and ecological crises can be credited to these deep structures, which both afford and justify environmental degradation, cultural domination, and the practices of “overdeveloped, overconsumptive, and overempowered first-world nations and their environmentally destructive ontological, axiological, and epistemological systems” (p. 68; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 50).

Yet, Indigenous understandings of land predate and have co-developed alongside and in spite of the deep structures of colonialist consciousness. Synthesizing the role of place and land in Indigenous philosophical frameworks, Vine Deloria Jr. (2001) argued,

Power and place produce personality. This equation simply means that the universe is alive, but it also contains within it the very important suggestion that the universe is personal and, therefore, must be approached in a personal manner. . . . The personal nature of the universe demands that each and every entity in it seek and sustain personal relationships. . . . [Thus], the corresponding question faced by American Indians when contemplating action is whether or not the proposed action is appropriate. Appropriateness includes the moral dimension of respect for the part of nature that will be used or affected in our action. Thus, killing an animal or catching a fish involved paying respect to the species and the individual animal or fish that such action had disturbed. Harvesting plants also involved paying respect to the plants. These actions were necessary because of the recognition that the universe was built upon constructive and cooperative relationships that had to be maintained. (p. 23–24)

As Tuck and McKenzie (2015) noted, for reasons related to Deloria’s observations about the relationship between action and place,

Indigenous authors have indicated preference for the term “land” over place. “Land” in these discussions is often shorthand for land, water, air, and subterranean earth—for example, in discussions of wetlands (Bang et al., 2014) and Sea Country. (p. 51; see also Whitehorse, Watkin, Sellwood, Barrett, & Chigeza, 2014)

As Greg Lowan has discussed, each group of Indigenous peoples has a distinct relationship to the place they live, and these relationships cannot be generalized. Cajete (1994) articulated:

Every cultural group established relations to [their land] over time. Whether that place is in the desert, a mountain valley, or along a seashore, it is in the context of natural community, and through that understanding they established an educational process that was practical, ultimately ecological, and spiritual. In this way they sought and found their life. (p. 113; as cited in Lowan, 2009, p. 47)

Similar to curriculum, land is suffused with these relationships and the practices and knowledges that grew out of those relationships. “Relationships to land are familial, intimate, intergenerational, and instructive” (Tuck et al., 2014, p. 9). As Manulani Aluli Meyer (2008) wrote,

Land is our mother. This is not a metaphor. For the Native Hawaiians speaking of knowledge, land was the central theme that drew forth all others. You came from a place. You grew in a place and you had a relationship with a place. This is an epistemological idea. . . . One does not simply learn about land, we learn best from land. (p. 219, italics original)
Meyer’s emphasis on the epistemological components of (Indigenous) relationships to land underscores the centrality of place in Indigenous knowledge systems and theories of learning. Sandra Styres, Celia Haig-Brown, and Melissa Blimkie (2013), in explaining the idea of a “pedagogy of Land,” used language similar to Cajete (1994) and Lowan (2009) to argue that land refers not just to its material quality but to its “spiritual, emotional, and intellectual aspects” (p. 37).

Land can be considered a conduit of memory (Brooks, 2008; Wilson, 2005), in that it “both remembers life and its loss and serves itself as a mnemonic device that triggers the ethics of relationality with the sacred geographies that constitute Indigenous peoples’ histories” (Byrd, 2011, p. 118; see also Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 50).

For some Indigenous peoples, land is a language curriculum. Iñupiaq scholar Edna Ahgeak MacLean (2010) spoke to how language reveals relationships to land and water:

People use their language to organize their reality. Iñupiaq and Yup’ik cultures are based on dependence on the land and sea. Hunting, and therefore a nomadic way of life has persisted. The sea and land that people depend on for their sustenance are almost totally devoid of landmarks. These languages have therefore developed an elaborate set of demonstrative pronouns and adverbs that are used to direct the listener’s attention quickly to the nature and location of an object. In place of landmarks, words serve as indicators about proximity, visibility, or vertical position and implies whether the object is inside or outside, moving or not moving, long or short. For example, Inupiaq has at least 22 stems that are used to form demonstrative pronouns in eight different cases and demonstrative adverbs in four cases. American English has two demonstrative pronouns [this and that] (plural forms these and those), with their respective adverbs here and there. (p. 49)

MacLean’s description of land as language curriculum attends to the complexity of both Indigenous languages and Indigenous understandings of land and place.

Land has been described as the first teacher (Styres et al., 2013). Yup’ik scholar Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley (2010) wrote that for Yupiaq people land and nature are “metaphysic” and pedagogical:

It is through direct interaction with the environment that the Yupiaq people learn. What they learn is mediated by the cultural cognitive map. The map consists of those “truths” that have been proven over a long period of time. As the Yupiaq people interact with nature, they carefully observe to find pattern or order where there might otherwise appear to be chaos. (p. 88)

As Tuck et al. (2014) noted, “Kawagley’s rendering of Yupiaq relations to land braids together the cosmological, pedagogical, pragmatic and spiritual” (p. 10). It is an articulation of land as curriculum.

For those who are not Indigenous yet wish to engage Indigenous constructions of land as curriculum,

Styres, Haig-Brown, and Blimkie (2013), Meyer (2008), Kawagley (2010), and others also warn against understandings of Indigenous knowledge of land as static or performable. Calderon (2014) emphasizes embracing protocols “that are mindful of how Indigenous knowledge has been co-opted and omitted” (p. 6), including for example, expectations that Indigenous peoples lead discussions on place. This mindfulness of co-option also entails an acknowledgement that Indigenous identities and knowledge are not static, and that non-Indigenous desires for performances of “authentic” Indigeneity are also problematic. (Tuck et al., 2014, p. 10)

**Project(s) of Decolonization and How They Differ From Other Social Justice Efforts**

Many educators are interested in the promises and possibilities of what is sometimes called a decolonizing curriculum. Yet, as decolonizing curriculum becomes more and more trendy, it is important to address what is problematic about the superficial adoption of “decolonization” as a descriptor for curriculum. Frantz Fanon (1963) wrote,

Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a program of complete disorder. But it cannot come as a result of magical practices, nor of a natural shock, nor of a friendly understanding. Decolonization, as we know, is a historical process: that is to say it cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content. (p. 36)

Applying Fanon’s insights to education and curriculum, it is important to note that decolonization is always specific and historical—it cannot be generalized or standardized.
Another issue is how often the language of decolonization is used without referring to the works and lives of Indigenous peoples (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

At a conference on educational research, it is not uncommon to hear speakers refer, almost casually, to the need to “decolonize our schools,” or use “decolonizing methods,” or, “decolonize student thinking.” Yet, we have observed a startling number of these discussions make no mention of Indigenous peoples, our/their struggles for the recognition of our/their sovereignty, or the contributions of Indigenous intellectuals and activists to theories and frameworks of decolonization. Further, there is often little recognition given to the immediate context of settler colonialism on the North American lands where many of these conferences take place. (pp. 2–3)

In these instances, decolonization is only a metaphor, because, as Tuck and McKenzie (2015) noted, “the discourse of decolonization is epistemically severed from the specific colonial contexts from which it emerges. The result is the use of ‘decolonization,’ as a synonym for civil and human rights-based social justice projects” (p. 52). These other forms of justice often seek greater inclusion, representation, or services from the settler colonial nation-state. Decolonization, in contrast, wants the end of the settler colonial nation-state, making this use of decolonization as a metaphor problematic. As Tuck and Yang (2012) noted,

[It is] a form of enclosure, dangerous in how it domesticates decolonization. It is also a foreclosure, limiting in how it recapitulates dominant theories of social change. (W)e wanted to be sure to clarify that decolonization is not a metaphor. When metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future. Decolonize (a verb) and decolonization (a noun) cannot easily be grafted onto pre-existing discourses/frameworks, even if they are critical, even if they are anti-racist, even if they are justice frameworks. The easy absorption, adoption, and transposing of decolonization is yet another form of settler appropriation. When we write about decolonization, we are not offering it as a metaphor; it is not an approximation of other experiences of oppression. Decolonization is not a swappable term for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools. Decolonization doesn’t have a synonym. (p. 3)

When decolonization is superficially invoked, it allows the built-in antagonisms of the settler colonial triad to be dismissed or overlooked. “Decolonization within settler colonial nation-states is complicated because there is no spatial separation between empire, settlement, and colony/colonized” (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, pp. 52–53). Using the term decolonization as a metaphor allows people to avoid the aspects of it that are unsettling; as Tuck and Yang (2012) noted,

Decolonization as metaphor allows people to equivocate these contradictory decolonial desires because it turns decolonization into an empty signifier to be filled by any track towards liberation. In reality, the tracks walk all over land/people in settler contexts. Though the details are not fixed or agreed upon, in our view, decolonization in the settler colonial context must involve the repatriation of land simultaneous to the recognition of how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted; that is, all of the land, and not just symbolically. This is precisely why decolonization is necessarily unsettling, especially across lines of solidarity. . . . Settler colonialism, and its decolonization, implicates and unsettles everyone. (p. 7)

Thus, theories of decolonization within curriculum and curriculum studies must be purposefully informed by Indigenous analyses of colonization and theorizations of unsettlement. Further, decolonizing curricula in settler colonial contexts must always involve recalibrations of human relationships to land. In the context of settler slave estates, decolonization must also involve the abolition of slavery in all of its forms.

This chapter has drawn together different aspects of the significance of land in curriculum, especially Indigenous perspectives of land. Settler colonialism is designed to make land seem like a backdrop to human activity, as something not needing much reflection or action. Indigenous understandings of land as central to human knowledge and learning have persisted during invasion and serve as counterpoints to settler constructions of place and property. Curriculum is one site in which the problems of settler colonial depictions of land can be addressed, but not if efforts toward “decolonization” are superficial. Decolonization in settler colonial contexts must redress the relations of the settler colonial triad and involve repatriation of Indigenous land and abolition of slavery.
References and Further Readings


Kivaki Press.


The curriculum milieu is no longer a monocultural, monolingual, or monoracial space. It is diverse, complex, and changing with individuals, communities, peoples, and societies. Societies of people, who once had little or no regard for one another, now depend upon and interact with one another. Such forms of interdependence between large-scale localities influence small-scale individuals and communities, which in turn influence larger groups of peoples and societies. These forms of interdependence and connections transform the monocultural, monolingual, and monoracial milieu into a multicultural, multilingual and multiracial milieu, which poses challenges to students, teachers, parents, leaders, policy makers, and educational workers. This chapter addresses the complexities and diversities of such a multicultural, multilingual, and multiracial milieu.

Contemporary Concerns

Within the multicultural, multilingual, and multiracial milieu, historically marginalized individuals, groups, and communities continue to experience all forms of oppression. As oppressions persist, they take on new forms. Sometimes the forms are subtle and sometimes they are blatant. Such oppression could be illuminated in the literature on “the achievement gap,” which is described by the U.S. Department of Education as a significant difference in academic achievement among a subgroup [i.e., gender, race, or socioeconomic status] in comparison to the highest achieving subgroup as measured by reading, writing, and mathematics assessments (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). This achievement gap can be traced back to the 1970s by referring to the difference in school performance between White and non-White students. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was aimed at measuring the performance differences and making schools accountable for ensuring all students performed well in school, no matter what their racial, socioeconomic, or other demographics are. It has been close to a half-century since research on the achievement gap between ethnic and racial groups of students in school began. Similarly, it has been over a decade since the passage of the NCLB legislation. Some argue that over the past few decades there has been marked movement toward closing the achievement gap. Others believe that the NCLB legislation offered quantifiable evidence that the achievement gap existed pervasively and persistently across communities and schools in the United States. Whichever side of that argument
one is on or whichever way one theorizes the existence of the term achievement gap, the achievement gaps remain. Students who are ethnic and racial minorities in the United States are likely to be achieving in schools below the levels of their White peers.

Whether in schools or in teacher education programs at colleges and universities, educators in the multiracial milieu are challenged with the “demographic imperative” and “the disjunction between sociocultural characteristics and previous experiences of typical” teachers and many P–12 students (Lowenstein, 2009, p. 166). The large majority of the teaching profession is White, middle- or upper-class females teaching and learning with an increasingly diverse student population. The teaching profession is monocultural, but the students who are being taught by these teachers are increasingly multicultural, multilingual, and multiracial (Howard, 1999/2006). Well-intentioned educators (e.g., Grant & Sleeter, 2003; Kumashiro, 2000; Sleeter, 2005) call for anti-oppressive work to elicit potentially transformative solutions for this dilemma (Lowenstein, 2009). So far, however, this work has failed to translate into higher achievement for students. Despite the efforts of policy makers, researchers, teachers, and activists, some groups of non-White students remain behind White students in academic performance. The monocultural teaching force continues to leave other people’s children (Delpit, 1995) behind.

The achievement gap and the demographic imperative, if coupled, reveal a significant concern in terms of the multiracial milieu. Efforts to address this concern have made slight improvements and alterations to the curriculum and the education of children and their teachers in this milieu. These minor movements are unrecognizable if one looks intently at how increasingly complicated the milieu continues to become. One result of these movements is an altered lexicon of words used among those with an interest in curriculum and education. Due to continuous changes in the milieu, the words educators use in regard to students, curriculum, and learning about culture, language, and race have transformed since the 1970s. Educators refer to learned words and phrases to claim allegiances to theories that are intended to liberate children of disenfranchised groups. Teachers have learned to claim to value multicultural education (e.g., Banks & Banks, 1995, 2004; Nieto, 2000; Nieto & Bode, 2011), culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994/2009), culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000), teaching for social justice (e.g., Ayers, Hunt, & Quinn, 1998; Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009), and antiracist pedagogy (Giroux, 1992). Within the same moments that these claims are made, lessons, strategies, methods, curricula, and pedagogies are selected and implemented in classrooms that offer no opportunities for critical thinking, let alone liberation set forth in the pedagogical praxis of Paulo Freire (1970). For example, if one claims to believe in the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy, but insists on following the prescribed curriculum, cultural relevance is inherently excluded from the curriculum in the vast majority of schools, because few schools have explicitly adopted curriculum that is culturally relevant. Unless liberatory pedagogies are intentionally included, the marginalizations, oppressions, subjugations, and suppressions remain. Teachers could transform students’ curriculum experiences through participatory actions that engender multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, or antiracist pedagogy within their classrooms, schools, and communities (He & Phillion, 2008).

**Context**

The multicultural, multilingual, and multiracial milieu is continually influenced by younger generations. Many generations of scholars, theorists, educators, and citizens have sought to understand and value the complicated mix of cultures, languages, and races (Anzaldúa, 1987; Banks, 1974). Younger generations are increasingly aware of the multiplicities of these phenomena and their influence on curriculum and education (Reginald, Kina, Dariotis, & Fojas, 2014). They have recognized that they are living in the multiple spaces filled with cultures, languages, and races that were once deemed socially, culturally, or politically impossible. What would make these spaces impossible? In some societies, it is the governing bodies that prohibit multicultural, multilingual, and multiracial spaces to exist. Until 1967 interracial marriages in the United States were illegal. It took the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in *Loving v. Virginia* (1967) to legalize interracial marriage (Root, 1996). Close attention needs to be paid
to multiracial milieu to understand how curriculum and education influence and are influenced by individuals who identify with their heritages and genealogies across two or more races.

The multicultural, multilingual, and multiracial milieu is well documented in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s 2009 World Report, where a section was specifically devoted to explaining how our world has moved “from monolithic to multiple identities. . . . We increasingly define ourselves, as individuals and societies, in terms of multiple identities” (p. 20). “Each individual exposed to this multiplicity of potential identities lives or manages it differently” (p. 21). Some choose to embrace multiple identities, while others choose to identify poignantly with one. Where, when, and how individuals choose to situate themselves on a spectrum of managing their hybrid identities is one consideration for educators. Another consideration is a working awareness of the fluid cultural dynamics of a society that has a rapidly growing number of individuals choosing to navigate their hybrid and multiracial identities. This proliferating choice to define and navigate these identities influences ways of knowing and being in the world among children and adults across communities. Cultural mixing is sometimes referred to as hybridity or “[comprising] syntheses of cultural forms or fragments of diverse origin” (p. 22). A movement of individuals who collectively identified as racially hybrid worked together to gain political recognition in the United States (Winters, 2003). The movement led to the addition of a mark-all-that-apply option when completing the racial identification section of the 2000 U.S. Census. Beginning in 2000, people living in the United States could list all of the racial categories with which they identified. This movement of individuals with multiple racial identities was a type of participatory activism that created a more descriptive representation of how individuals racially identify themselves in the United States.

From that change in Census data collection, more accurate data on the number of individuals who identify as multiracial is available. In 2000, 6.8 million people in the United States, or 2.4% of the nation’s population, identified as having two or more racial identities. In 2010, nine million people reported more than one race, which was about 3% of the total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). It is significant that the number of children identifying as multiracial increased 50% between 2000 and 2010 to 4.2 million children, which means multiracial children are the fastest growing youth group in the country. At present, children are the segment of the population identifying as multiracial most frequently. Today’s multiracial children, alongside their diverse classmates and peers, are being exposed to and potentially educated through curriculums in P–12 schools. This phenomenon, one of increasing multiracial diversity, has implications for students, teachers, parents, leaders, policy makers, and educational workers.

Theory

The multicultural, multilingual, and multiracial milieu can be understood from several theoretical frameworks. These include those associated with critical race theory (e.g., Delgado, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), multiculturalism or multicultural education (e.g., Banks & Banks, 1995, 2004; Nieto, 2000; Nieto & Bode, 2011), multilingual theory (Fitzgerald, 2003), Black feminist thought (e.g., Collins, 2008; Davis, 1981), Chicana feminist theory (e.g., Arrendondo, Hurtako, Klahn, Najera-Ramirez, & Zavella, 2003; Trujillo, 1998), queer theory (e.g., Sullivan, 2003; Turner, 2000), and critical indigenous theory (e.g., Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; Grande, 2004). Recently, “critical mixed race studies” (Reginald et al., 2014), which “is the scholarship and research addressing the personal, social, and political implications of an individual coming from more than one racial group” (Shih & Sanchez, 2009, p. 2), has emerged. There has been a growing amount of work in the field even though the work was often dispersed across such disciplines as psychology, sociology, education, and public policy prior to the formation of the Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies in 2014. Without space to explore the interdisciplinarity of multiracialism, the capacity for expanding an understanding of multiracialism is often exclusive to individuals and communities that are directly influenced by its growing significance. The field is cutting-edge and has begun to make intersections within and across theories, methodologies, pedagogies, and research.
The two prominently reoccurring themes in the cross-/inter-disciplinary multiracial studies are multiracial identity development and political issues that influence multiracial individuals.

Early works in the field of psychology that addressed multiracial identity development were rife with negative innuendos and implications. A widely referenced work by Everett Stonequist (1937) introduced a multiracial identity development model referred to as the “marginal man.” The model’s premise was that individuals who had multiple racial heritages were suffering psychologically. Joseph Teicher (1968) introduced another deficit model concluding that multiracial children were hospitalized because they struggled with their multiple racial identifications. The participants in Teicher’s study were all psychiatric patients whom he used as a basis for describing a model for multiracial identity development.

There was a turn toward the positive experiences of multiracial individuals in the field (e.g., Poston, 1990; Root, 1990) who offered explanations, classifications, levels, and resolutions associated with a healthy multiracial identity development. W. S. Carlos Poston offered five levels of multiracial identity development, which specifically distinguished multiracial from monoracial identity development within the three middle levels. What was missing from Poston’s research was the recognition of societal racism that impacted the identity development of multiracial individuals. This omission was reconciled in later works. Maria P. P. Root’s work mirrored minorities’ monoracial identity development in the early stages. She proposed that as multiracial individuals reached the later stages, their identity alliances became somewhat tumultuous, entering what she called a “dual existence” (p. 200). Nevertheless, the model that Root proposed included four positive reconciliations for multiracial identity development, which was a needed development for understanding the multiracial experience.

Following Root’s (1990) research, sociologists Kerry Ann Rockquemore and David Brunsma (2002/2008) studied a large number of young adults with one Black parent and one White parent. Their research proposed four different ways that multiracials could identify: border, singular, protean, and transcendent. Around the same time, Kristen Renn (2000, 2004) conducted research that concluded with similar patterns of identity construction for multiracial individuals. Her study presented an ecological perspective describing five patterns of identity development for multiracial college students. Cross-/inter-disciplinary themes around multiracial identity development emerged in the early to mid-2000s. The five patterns that Renn identified are inclusive of the four that Rockquemore and Brunsma proposed, as well as the four that educational psychologist Kendra R. Wallace (2001) proposed. Renn’s five patterns are (1) student holds a monoracial identity; (2) student holds multiple monoracial identities, shifting according to the situation; (3) student holds a multiracial identity; (4) student holds an extraracial identity by deconstructing race or opting out of identification with U.S. racial categories; and (5) student holds a situational identity, identifying differently in different contexts. Each of these works relied upon a cross-disciplinary approach while providing alternative models in comparison to past models that only proposed a marginal existence for multiracial people (Stonequist, 1937).

Root reached beyond consideration for the identity development of racially mixed individuals into the influence that political issues have on multiracial people when she edited two anthologies (1992, 1996) on the multiracial experience. Her turn to policy was most evident with her inclusion of a new Bill of Rights—A Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People. This particular chapter lists 12 rights referenced throughout the field of multiracial studies.

I have the right . . . not to keep the races separate within me . . . not to justify my ethnic legitimacy. I have the right . . . to identify myself differently than strangers expect me to identify. I have the right . . . to change my identity over my lifetime—and more than once. (Root, 1996, p. 7)

The rights just outlined generated a point of reference across a spectrum of writings about the multiracial experience, whether in scholarly publications, as a part of public forums, within blogs, or as a part of website designed to connect individuals influenced by the increasingly multiracial milieu. Loretta I. Winters and Herman L. DeBose (2003) edited a later anthology that captured more recent research in the field and bridged the multiracial identity development to the political issues that impact multiracials.
The political issues that influence the multiracial milieu in the United States shifted dramatically with the unanimous decision in the Supreme Court case of Loving v. State of Virginia (1967). In 2000, the issues shifted again with the inclusion of a “mark-all-that-apply” category on the racial demographic section of the census. The political issues are realized within a multiracial movement that consists of theorists, advocates, educators, and community members with diverse interests in the political and social future of this ever-evolving group (or nongroup). The multiracial movement is not unified socially, ideologically, or politically, as explored in the works of Heather M. Dalmage (2004) and Kimberly McClain DaCosta (2007). Winters (2003) categorized the movement’s divisions into three models: (1) multiracial movement, (2) countermultiracial movement, and (3) ethnic movement (p. 373).

The multiracial movement model supported the 1997 modification by the Office of Management and Budget changing the federal standard for collection of racial data to include a “mark-all-that-apply” section. This is something this faction of the movement collaboratively fought to have added to federal documents to ensure a problematic notion of racial accuracy in the census’ portrayal of racial demographics in the United States. Perceptions associated with racial accuracy are one of the impossible, complex, nuanced notions that are theorized within critical mixed-race studies (Daniel et al., 2014). Legislated alterations to government policy often lead to unintended consequences. Nonetheless, the members of this segment of the movement argue that such documentation helps multiracial individuals to feel included, but not marginalized, from the rest of society that is being counted by race. Root is a multiracial theorist who aligns her ideas with the multiracial movement. The ethnic movement model advocates for people to no longer identify themselves according to the mythical constructions of race. They would like people to identify themselves according to their ethnicities. Within this segment of the movement, it is believed that ethnic characterization would be even more accurate and affirming than adding a multiracial category. American Indians, Hawaiians, and Hispanics are often proponents of this movement that resists assimilation by “becoming White” (Winters, 2003, p. 377).

The countermultiracial movement model disagrees that adding a sixth racial category to census papers or any similar document is a step forward. They are in pursuit of antiracialism, in which people are not identified by race or multirace. Adding the multiracial category is seen as diminishing many civil rights gained by racially grounded political groups. The power and numbers in these historically race-based political groups decrease in significance with the addition of multiracial groupings. Rainier Spencer (1999), a multiracial theorist who resonates with the ideals in the countermultiracial movement, discussed how historically oppressive and unreliable notions of multiracialism are toward the work of becoming a society without racism. Spencer (2006) criticized the quality of the arguments made by multiracialists who are in favor of a sixth category to distinguish multiracial individuals from monoracial individuals on government documentation. Despite his critique, Spencer (1999) recognized how multiracial and antiracial ideologies could disrupt the U.S. racial ordering of society by asking “how can mixed-race or multiracial persons place themselves with consistency and meaning within that system?" (p. 5). He argued that the biological construction of race is reemerging disguised as the social construction of race. Race is a myth; therefore, multirace is a myth according to Spencer (1999). The negative ramifications of racism in association with the belief in race will continue to plague multiracial individual and monoracial individuals as long as the myth of race remains. Spencer believes it is time to begin problematizing race categories altogether by moving away from classifications of people and promotes the ideology that we are all members of the human race. The ideologies that Spencer encourages around a new racial order within multiracial milieu can be furthered examined through works such as Jennifer L. Hochschild, Vesla M. Weaver, and Traci R. Burch’s (2012) book, Creating a New Racial Order. These authors discussed how the individuals identifying as multiracial and the multiracial movement have created new spaces for younger generations to understand and practice race. They argued that social, ideological, and political beliefs would benefit from a reimagining in this multiracial milieu.

There are educational theorists researching and writing with specific attention to the practical implications of responding to the evolving multiracial
Part IV. Milieu as Curriculum

Inquiry is apparent. This type of inquiry into the daily functions of multiracial individuals remains a strikingly significant way to portray the complicated and fluid nature of these individuals’ experiences (Kwan & Speirs, 2004). Each narrative of this multi-racial experience is unique, from the setting, time, and place to the characters’ personalities and intricate relationships, from the multirace person’s upbringing to his or her phenotypic racial characteristics. Multiracial studies are a form of “deliberative discourse” that lies beyond modern and postmodern identity theories, potentially within a “transmodern” theory (Salgado, 2004, p. 34). Most of the multiracial studies lie in between two or more theories. “Misceg-narrations” (a term created by Raquel Scherr Salgado, 2004) of the multiracial experiences are a potential form of discourse that is deliberative while centered in a space “that moves” (p. 47). Misceg-narrations describe diverse and far-reaching narrative approaches to inquiry into multiracial experiences. For example, James McBride’s (1996) memoir details his experience in the 1960s, before multiracial studies was conceptualized. As SanSan Kwan and Kenneth Speirs (2004) said in the introduction to their anthology, “[I]t is only through the individual lived experiences of mixed-race people that we can understand the plural nature of multiracials” (p. 4). Within the space of personalized pluralities, the rigid categorization of people based on the biological and/or social construction of race diminishes. Narrative inquiries in the multiracial milieu, demonstrated as multiple modes of expression, allow for the idiosyncrasies of distinct experiences that cannot be repeated between siblings of the same parentage (Root, 1996). These narrative inquiries take on modes of expression in the form of autobiography, biography, memoir, counternarrative, anthology, and poetry.

How can students, teachers, parents, leaders, policy makers, and educational workers understand the multicultural, multilingual, and multiracial milieu when most educational situations are plagued by homogeneity? The multiracial milieu is a space where individuals are no longer identified with one race, but with two or more races; where groups are organizing according to social, political, and ideological beliefs about how race can be understood and deconstructed to allow for more just understanding of individuals who comprise the human race; and

Forms of Inquiry and Modes of Expression

The multiracial milieu can be understood through such forms of inquiry as narrative inquiry, historical inquiry, phenomenological inquiry, and ethnographic inquiry. There is a tendency for these forms of inquiry to overlap, intersect, and transform the traditional forms of inquiry. Narrative inquiry dominated the field of multiracial studies even before this theory was named. Autobiographical, biographical, and historical works about such individuals as Olaudah Equiano or Langston Hughes illuminate the complexities of living in multiracial spaces early in the history of the United States. Even within this early example of inquiry in the multiracial milieu, an intersection between narrative inquiry and historical inquiry is apparent. This type of inquiry into the daily functions of multiracial individuals remains a strikingly significant way to portray the complicated and fluid nature of these individuals’ experiences (Kwan & Speirs, 2004). Each narrative of this multiracial experience is unique, from the setting, time, and place to the characters’ personalities and intricate relationships, from the multirace person’s upbringing to his or her phenotypic racial characteristics. Multiracial studies are a form of “deliberative discourse” that lies beyond modern and postmodern identity theories, potentially within a “transmodern” theory (Salgado, 2004, p. 34). Most of the multiracial studies lie in between two or more theories. “Misceg-narrations” (a term created by Raquel Scherr Salgado, 2004) of the multiracial experiences are a potential form of discourse that is deliberative while centered in a space “that moves” (p. 47). Misceg-narrations describe diverse and far-reaching narrative approaches to inquiry into multiracial experiences. For example, James McBride’s (1996) memoir details his experience in the 1960s, before multiracial studies was conceptualized. As SanSan Kwan and Kenneth Speirs (2004) said in the introduction to their anthology, “[I]t is only through the individual lived experiences of mixed-race people that we can understand the plural nature of multiracials” (p. 4). Within the space of personalized pluralities, the rigid categorization of people based on the biological and/or social construction of race diminishes. Narrative inquiries in the multiracial milieu, demonstrated as multiple modes of expression, allow for the idiosyncrasies of distinct experiences that cannot be repeated between siblings of the same parentage (Root, 1996). These narrative inquiries take on modes of expression in the form of autobiography, biography, memoir, counternarrative, anthology, and poetry.

How can students, teachers, parents, leaders, policy makers, and educational workers understand the multicultural, multilingual, and multiracial milieu when most educational situations are plagued by homogeneity? The multiracial milieu is a space where individuals are no longer identified with one race, but with two or more races; where groups are organizing according to social, political, and ideological beliefs about how race can be understood and deconstructed to allow for more just understanding of individuals who comprise the human race; and
where children, students, teachers, policy makers, researchers, and educational workers work together, not only in educational theory but also in classroom practice, to communicate, educate, and liberate one another from historical oppressions and subjugations to reimagine, to create, and to foster a multicultural, multilingual, and multiracial milieu for a better human condition for all.

References and Further Readings


We hope that one outcome from reading the foregoing chapters is that you perceive the great complexity of curriculum. We invite you to look at the contents of The SAGE Guide to Curriculum in Education as a beginning to read some of the many references cited in each chapter and in sources you find in your own explorations.

As we conclude the guide, we reiterate some of the sources already mentioned and we provide additional ones. We suggest that you consult key reference works (e.g., Banks & McGee Banks, 2004; Connelly, He, & Phillion, 2008; Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; Jackson, 1992; Knowles & Cole, 2008; Kridel, 2010; Lewy, 1991; Lynn & Dixson, 2013; Malewski, 2009; Rubin, 1977; Sandlin, Schultz, & Burdick, 2010).

We sincerely hope that you will read some of the key synoptic texts that have brought new conceptualizations of the curriculum field and state of the art of curriculum studies in different eras (e.g., Alberty, 1947; Caswell & Campbell, 1935; Eisner, 1979; Marshall, Sears, Schubert, 2000; Marsh & Willis, 2007; Null, 2011; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995; Schubert, 1986; Smith, Stanley, & Shores, 1950; Stratemeyer, Forkner, & McKim, 1947; Taba, 1962; Tanner & Tanner, 1975; Walker, 1989; Zais, 1976). Some of these books and the lists that follow have been published in several editions, and we typically provide an early edition date with hopes that you can search for more recent editions.

We encourage you to review key collections of some of the most influential articles preserved in books of readings (e.g., Alcorn & Linley, 1959; Bellack & Kliebard, 1978; Caswell & Campbell, 1937; Eisner & Vallance, 1974; Flinders & Thornton, 1997; Giroux, Penna, & Pinar, 1981; Giroux & Purpel, 1983; Gress & Purpel, 1988; Hass, 1987; Hollins, 1996; Orlosky & Smith, 1978; Ornstein & Behar-Horenstein, 1994; Pinar, 1975; Short & Marconnet, 1968; Stern & Kysilka, 2008; Ulich, 1954).

Realizing that too much curriculum revision has been ahistorical, or done without valuable historical perspectives, we urge you to find perspectives in such works (e.g., Connell, 1980; Cremin, 1961; Davis, 1976; Franklin, 1986; Kliebard, 1986; Kridel & Bullough Jr., 2007; Marshall, Sears, Allen, Roberts, & Schubert, 2007; Miller, 2005; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995; Schiro, 2008; Schubert & Lopez Schubert, 1980; Schubert, Lopez Schubert, Thomas, & Carroll, 2002; Seguel, 1966; Tanner & Tanner, 1990; Watkins, 2001; Willis, Schubert, Bullough, Kridel, & Holton, 1993).

Along with the chapters in this guide, the works mentioned here will provide you with greater wherewithal to reflect on and respond to the multitude of curriculum issues and concerns depicted by the following questions, which are variations on questions derived from reflections on Curriculum Books: The First Hundred Years (Schubert, Lopez Schubert, Thomas, & Carroll, 2002, pp. 525–526):

What’s worthwhile?

What’s worth knowing, experiencing, doing, needing, being, becoming, overcoming, sharing, and contributing?

What can be done to increase meaning, goodness, and happiness in lives of students—in all our lives?

What prevents focus on this in schooling and in other forms of education?

How does the nexus of power (corporate, military, governmental, religious, media) that strives for empire prevent progressive educational practices?

How can alternative forms of inquiry and modes of expression counter hegemonic practices?

How do class, race, gender, ability, health, membership, age, appearance, place, belief, ethnicity, sexual orientation, status, nationality, reputation, and other factors influence education and other opportunities?

How can the lore of educators (parents, teachers, educational leaders, policy makers) and students themselves contribute to insight about matters mentioned in these questions?

How can we focus more broadly on education, seeing schooling as one of several educative forces that create us and our sense of identity?

How can we better understand intended, taught, null, hidden, and learned or embodied dimensions of curricula in schools and outside-of-school venues (e.g., in homes, families, marriages, friendships, churches, communities, gangs, peer groups, radio, television, movies, computers, video, videogames, popular print, sports, stores, clubs, dance studios, music, art, hobbies, jobs, and more)?

How can we empathically understand each other’s autobiographies and aspirations as curricula?

How can we build curricula on strengths of all engaged with it in ways that revitalize faith in the goodness of human potential?

As you consider these never-ending questions and look into the Resource Guide at the end of this volume, we hope you will reconnoiter with others through whatever spheres of curriculum you traverse to cultivate curricular experiences for next generations to thrive in a world of greater freedom and beauty, integrity and justice, peace and possibility.

References and Recommended Readings


Washington, DC: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.


Resource Guide

Organizations With Conferences

American Association for Teaching and Curriculum (AATC): aatchome.org
American Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies (AAACS): www.aaacs.org
AERA Division B (Curriculum Studies): www.aera.net/DivisionB/CurriculumStudies(B)/tabid/11087/Default.aspx
AERA Special Interest Group on Critical Issues in Curriculum and Cultural Studies: www.aera.net/tabid/11093/first/a/last/g/default.aspx
American Educational Studies Association (AESA): www.educationalstudies.org
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: www.ascd.org
Bergamo Conference on Curriculum Theory and Classroom Practice: www.jctonline.org/conference
Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies: www.csse-scee.ca/cacs
Curriculum and Pedagogy Group (C & P): www.curriculumandpedagogy.org
International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies (IAACS): www.jctonline.org/iaacs-conference
The John Dewey Society: www.johndeweysociety.org
Kappa Delta Pi (KDP): www.kdp.org
National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME): nameorg.org
Phi Delta Kappa (PDK): pdkintl.org
Society for the Study of Curriculum History (SSCH): ssch.cehd.tamu.edu
Society of Professors of Education (SPE): societyofprofessorsofeducation.com
World Council for Curriculum and Instruction (WCCI): wcci-international.org

Journals

American Educational Research Journal, aer.sagepub.com
Anthropology & Education Quarterly, onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111%28ISSN%29291548-1492
Critical Inquiry, criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu
Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue, aatchome.org/journal-information
Curriculum Inquiry, onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111%28ISSN%29291467-873X
The Curriculum Journal (British), www.tandfonline.com/toc/rcjo20/current#.VO00XzF_0E
Curriculum Perspectives (Australian), www.acsa.edu.au/pages/page33.asp
Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education, www.tandfonline.com/toc/hdim20/current#.VO0O0XzF_0E
Educational Researcher, edr.sagepub.com
Educational Studies, www.tandfonline.com/toc/ceds20/current#.VO0KP3zF_0E
Educational Theory, education.illinois.edu/educational-theory
Harvard Educational Review, hepg.org/her-home/home
History of Education Quarterly, onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111%28ISSN%29291748-5959
International Journal of Critical Pedagogy, libjournal.uncg.edu/index.php/ijcp
International Journal of Education & the Arts, www.ijea.org
JCT: Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, journal.jctonline.org/index.php/jct/index
Journal of Asian and African Studies, jas.sagepub.com
Journal of Black Studies, jbs.sagepub.com
Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy, www.tandfonline.com/toc/ujcp20/current#.VO0MrnzF_0E
Journal of Curriculum Studies, www.tandfonline.com/toc/tcus20/current#.VO0OHHzF_0E
The Journal of Educational Foundations, intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=144&pageID=9
Journal of Teacher Education, jte.sagepub.com
Journal of Thought, journalofthought.com

Multicultural Perspectives, www.tandfonline.com/toc/hmcp20/current#.VO0pHzF_0E
Phenomenology + Pedagogy (archives), ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/pandp/issue/archive
Professing Education, profed.brocku.ca
Progressive Education [no longer published]
Review of Educational Research, rer.sagepub.com
Social Frontier (archives), www.tcrecord.org/frontiers
The Sophist's Bane, societyofprofessorsofeducation.com
Teachers College Record, www.tcrecord.org
Teaching Education, www.tandfonline.com/toc/cted20/current#.VO0S-3zF_0E
Theory Into Practice, www.tandfonline.com/loi/htip20#.VO0TInzF_0E
Urban Education, uex.sagepub.com

Recommended References


Counts, G. S. (1932). *Dare the school build a new social order?* New York, NY: John Day.


INDEX

Academic rationalism, 82
Accountability, 38–39, 55, 154, 183, 201–202
  control and surveillance in, 186
  No Child Left Behind Act and, 64, 98, 128, 186, 251
  “no pass, no promotion” regulations, 201
  privatization and, 290
  teacher education and, 201–202
  testing and, 201–202
  See also Common Core State Standards
Accrediting bodies, for teacher education, 201
Achievement gap, 210, 447–448
Act Your Age!: A Cultural Construction of Adolescence (Lesko), 385
Action research, 17, 140
Active learning, 242, 264
Activists, teachers as, 160–164
  characteristics and definition of, 161
  contemporary concerns and contexts for, 160–161
  forms of inquiry and modes of expression in, 162–163
  narratives on, 162
  resources for, 162
  theory of, 161–162
Activity theory, 92
Actor-network theory, 92
Adams, H., 59
Addams, J., 155, 236, 292, 295, 296, 332
Additive schooling, 265, 329
Additive Schooling in Subtractive Times (Bartlett and Garcia), 265
Adler, R. P., 338
Adolescence (Hall), 384, 386
Adolescents. See Youth cultural milieu
Adorno, T., 138, 178
Advertising, 146–147
Aesthetics, 131–132
African Americans, 260
  Black English, 66, 100, 262
  Black female subjectivity, 123–124
  Black feminism, 122–124
  Black teachers in urban schools, 215–222
  books and children’s literature of, 269, 270
  Brown v. Board of Education and, 22, 269
  changing curriculum goals and, 98
  civil rights movement and, 262, 269, 361
  currere of, 120
  Freedom Schools and, 237, 332
  slavery and, 121, 306, 307, 394
  Souls of Black Folk, The, 59, 307
  standards-based reforms, impacts of, 64
  stereotypes and, 121–122
  violence witnessed by, 408
  What African American Parents Want Educators to Know, 329–330
  See also Black education; entries beginning with Black
  Africana Womanism (Hudson-Weems), 362–363
Against Common Sense (Kumashiro), 162
Agee, J., 216
Agency, 337, 338, 371
Ahmed, S., 371
Aikenhead, G., 31
Ain’t I a Womanist Too? (Coleman), 363
Alberts, J., 157
Alberty, H., 14, 96
Alim, H. S., 211, 265
Alliance for Excellent Education, 260
Almond, L., 73
Aridge, D., 306
Alternative school milieu, 391–399
  contemporary concerns about, 392–394
  context of, 394–396
  definitions, 391–392
  democracy and, 397–398
  deschooling, 392
  diverse populations and, 393, 396
  feminist critique of, 393–394, 396
  forms of inquiry and modes of expression in, 396–397
  homeschooling, 391
  nonschool curriculum, 394, 396
number of children involved in, 392
religion and, 395–396
schools as deculturalizing institutions, 394
socioeconomically disadvantaged communities and, 393
theory of alternatives, 396
unschooling, 391–392, 392
Althusser, L., 165, 166, 385
Amanti, C., 235
American Association for Colleges of Teach Education, 198
American Educational Research Association, 198
Anderson, J., 397
Anderson, J. D., 305–306
Ann Arbor Black English Case (1979), 262
Anti-Intellectualism in American Life (Hofstadter), 106
Anyon, J., 178, 194, 322
Anzaldúa, G., 120, 124, 126
Appadurai, A., 136, 434
Appelbaum, P., 30
Apperceptive mass, 236
Apple, M. W., 14, 17, 59, 92, 178, 191, 238, 368
APRAIS (The Alliance to Prevent Restraint, Aversive Interventions and Seclusion), 281
Apthecker, H., 306
Archibald, J., 331
Archival inquiry, 314
Arenot, H., 178
Aristotle, xxvi, xxvii
Armstrong, S., 306
Armstrong Manual Training School, 308
Art as Experience (Dewey), 294
Art of the Personal Essay, The (Lopate), 162
Arts, 45–52, 131–132
aesthetics and, 50
alive-arts vs. dead signs curricula, 46, 47, 48, 50–51
“anti-art” artists, 50
apprenticeship model of, 48
Art as Experience (Dewey), 46, 49
Arts and the Creation of Mind, The, 49–50
arts of eclectic, xxvii
arts-based education, 131–132
contemporary concerns in, 46–48
context of subject matters of, 48–49
dead signs curricula, 45–46, 47, 51
discipline-based art education (DBAE), 48–49, 51
disciplines included in, 45
Education for Socially Engaged Art (Helguera), 51
forms of inquiry and modes of expression in, 50–51
living arts/practices, 45
postmodern concepts and, 50
self-expression and, 48–49
STEM curricula and (STEAM), 47, 49
student-centered curriculum, 47–48, 51
subject matters of, 45–52
theory on, 49–50
vocationalism and, 49
“what is art?” 46–47
Arts-and-crafts, 49
Arts-based research, 204–205, 238
Asante, S., 278
Asian Americans, 260, 269
books and literature of, 269, 270
immigrant populations and, 250, 254, 323
model minority myth and, 254–255
population statistics for, 113
stereotypes of, 122, 254–255
Askov Schools, 296
Assault rifles, 376
Assessment, 38–39
authentic, 193
skill-based, 55
See also Testing
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 198
Authentic assessment, 193
Authoritarianism, 106, 192
Autism, narrative of, 282
Autobiography, 103, 106–108, 157, 205, 323, 397
critical race/feminist, 119–126
in the field, 108–109
immigrants and, 253
multicultural, 110–118
theories of, 106–107
types of, 107–108
See also Currere
Axtelle, G., 14
Ayers, R., 162
Ayers, W., 58, 157, 162, 191, 203, 204, 238, 323
Baer, M., 11
Baggs, A., 282
Bagley, W. C., 3–5, 6, 8–9
Baglioti, S., 282
Bain, L. L., 75
Baker, A., 269
Baker, B., 140
Baker, P. B., 64–65
Bakhtin, M., 292, 294, 296
Balester, V., 265
Bandura, A., 92
Banking education, 225, 237, 284–285
Banks, J., 62, 111, 116
Barone, T., 413
Barth, R., 421
Bartlett, O., 238, 265
Bashing of teachers. See Teacher bashing and deskilling
Baszile, D. T., 115, 116, 360
Baugh, J., 265
Bauman, Z., 296
Beane, J. A., 14, 17, 96, 97, 99, 238
Beauboeuf-LaFontant, T., 211, 363
Bell, C. C., 408
Bell, D., 126
Belland, J., 93
Bennett, C., 67
Bennett, W., 286
Beowulf, 409–410
Berg, R., 193–194
Bennett, W., 286
Berman, J., 144
Berman, L. M., 2, 129
Bernstein, B., 187
Bernstein, L., 130
Berry, W., 393, 425–426
Bettelheim, K., 296
Bhattacharya, K., 435
Bhutan, happiness in, 437
Bias, 63, 125
Biculturality, 411
Biddle, B., 179
Biesta, G. J. J., 377
Bilingual-bicultural analysis, 296, 297
Bilingual Education Act, 64, 262
Bilingualism, 64, 265
Biliteracy, 22
Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People, A (Root), 450
Biographical milieu, 311–314, 317
biographer’s relation to the subject, 314
biographer’s voice, 313
contemporary concerns and issues in, 313–314
context and modes of expression for, 311
forms of inquiry for, 311
intellectual biography, 312
life history writing, 312
memoir biography, 312
narrative biography, 312
portrayal of the subject’s character, 313
research accuracy and, 313–314
scholarly chronicler, 312
theoretical perspectives on, 311–313
See also Autobiography; Documentary milieu
Biographical research, 311–313
Biographical works, 59, 253, 311–313
Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), 385
Bishop, A. J., 30
Bishop, R. S., 271
Bitzer, D., 88
Black Americans. See African Americans; entries beginning with Black
Black biography, 312
Black Boy (Wright), 107
Black education, 303–310
Cooper, A. J., and, 307–308
current perspectives on, 309–310
eyear days to freedom, 305–306
giants in, 306–309
historical milieu of, 303–310
Kemet (ancient Egyptian) education, 303–304
Woodson, C. G., and, 308–309
Black English, 66, 100, 262
Black families, parenting styles in, 322
Black female subjectivity, 123–124
Black female teachers, 209–210
Black feminism, 122–124, 330, 358–366, 449
See also Womanist/Black feminist milieu
Black Feminist Thought (Collins), 122, 362
Black History Month, 309
Black teachers in urban schools, 215–222
contemporary concerns for, 217–218
current context of, 218–219
culturally relevant curriculum and, 219–220
declining number of teachers, 217
forms of inquiry and modes of expression, 220–221
need for research on, 221
teacher preparation and, 217–218
teacher theory on, 219–220
understanding of students by, 218
undervaluation and disrespect of, 218
Black Teachers on Teaching (Foster), 221
Black Women Organized for Action, 361
Blanchett, W., 278
Blanton, L. P., 282
Blogs and bloggers, 324
Bloom, A., 135
Blount, J., 354
Boaz, F., 209
Bobbitt, J. F., 15–16, 17, 155, 185, 242, 418
Bode, B., 13–14, 96
Bode, P., 111
Boggs, G. L., 126
Bonilla-Silva, E., 420
Bonnett, M., 93
Bonser, F., 15
Bourdieu, P., 66, 286, 329
Bowers, C., 92
Bowers, C. A., 425, 426–427
Brantlinger, E., 370
Bricolage, 435
Briggs, A., 143
Brock, R., 360, 364
Bronx High School, 246
Brown, A., 387
Brown, J. J., 338
Brown, J. S., 92
Brown, K. D., 213
Brown, M., 320
Brown v. Board of Education, 22, 262, 269
Browning the curriculum, 416–423
artificial boundaries and, 420
citation practices and, 421
critical race theory and, 420–421
forms of inquiry and modes of expression in, 421–422
historical hindsight in, 417–418
meanings and concepts in, 416–417
object of, 419
oppression, matrix of, 420–421
racism, persistence of, 418–419, 422
settlement colonization, logic of, 419–420
theoretical approaches to, 419–421
unsettlement and, 416
White supremacy, logic and effects of, 417–420, 421, 422
womanist/Black feminist studies and, 359–360, 364
Bruner, J., 24
Brunsma, D. L., 450
Buber, M., 58
Buendia, E., 65
Bullough, R. V., Jr., 179, 238
Bullying, 279, 352
cyber-bullying, 409
Bunker, D., 73
Burbules, N., 93
Burch, T. R., 451
Burke, P., 143
Bush, G. W., 286
Business model of education, 155, 288–289
Cage, M., 50
Cai, M., 270, 271, 272
Cajete, G., 442
Caldecott Honor award, 270
Call From the Stranger on a Journey Home, The (Wang), 157, 403
Campbell, D. T., 187
Campbell's Law, 187
Camus, A., 57
Canada
colonialism and, 417
immigration to, 250
Inuit people, health issues of, 428
Cannon, K., 363
Capitalism, 165–166, 167, 169–170, 374, 433, 434
competitive milieu and, 344
democracy and, 170
globalization and, 169, 433
neoliberal, 169–170, 374–375
Career and life skills, 335
Carger, C., 238, 254
Carini, P., 193
Carnegie, A., 185
Carnegie Foundation, 320, 337
Carr, P. R., 379
Carruthers, J. H., 304
Casemore, B., 108
Caucus of Rank and File Educators (CORE), 355–356
CCBC (Cooperative Children's Book Center), 269, 270
Centrie, C., 65
Chambers, C., 106
Chan, E., 156, 157, 254
Charter schools, 186, 289, 353, 379–380
vouchers and, 376
Charters, W. W., 16
Chattel slavery, 440
Chicago Grassroots Curriculum Project, 333
Chicagoland Researchers and Advocates for Transformative Education (CreATE), 323, 324
Chicana feminist theory, 449
Chicano movement, 262
Child and the Curriculum, The (Dewey), 236
Child-centered theory, 243, 332
Child development, theory of, 32
Childhood obesity, 71, 72, 74, 75
Children of the Rainbow curriculum, 353
Children's House (Casa dei Bambini), 332
Children's literature. See Multicultural children's literature
Chilisa, B., 331, 435
Chinard, G., 58
Chomsky, N., 144
Cicero, 305
Citation practices, 421
Citizenship
promotion through social studies, 36, 37–38, 39–40, 41
STEM curriculum and, 27, 28, 33–34
See also Democracy; Global citizenship
City University of New York (CUNY), 262
Civil Rights Acts, 262
Civil rights movement, 262, 269, 319, 361, 396
Clandinin, D. J., 108, 156, 157, 323
Clark, S., 237
Class, socioeconomic. See Socioeconomic class milieu
Class, The (film), 180
Classical (Greek and Roman) education, 304–305
Classroom curriculum, 79
Clementi, T., 352
Climate change, 295, 424–425
Clinton, H., 352
Cobb, C., 237
Coevalness, 388–389
Cognitive transfer, 185
Cohen, A., 385
Cohen, C., 351
Cold War, 74, 82, 156, 319, 379
Cole, M., 21
Coleman, J., 328
Coleman, M., 363
Collaboration, 226–228
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 408
Collins, A., 336, 337
Collins, P. H., 329, 330, 362
Colonialism, 165–166, 168–172, 416, 439–446
aims and structures of, 440–441
antiblackness of, 440
assumptions underlying schooling, 417
browning of curriculum and, 416–423
colonial-capitalist society, 166
colonization of educational systems, 120–121
colonization of the Americas, 168
context of teaching and, 171
continuing effects of, 168, 169–170
core beliefs of, 442
decolonial pedagogy and, 171, 172
decolonial philosophy and, 168
decolonialization and, 110, 111, 238, 443–444
decolonizing curriculum and, 252, 416–423, 439–446
decolonizing one’s mind, 120, 121, 125
persistence of, 422
postcolonial theory and, 112
settler colonization, logic of, 419–420
See also Browning the curriculum; Indigenous land and decolonizing curriculum
Colored Women’s Young Women’s Christian Association, 307–308
Coltrane, J., 225
Combahee River Collective, 361
Commodification, 294, 297, 345, 387
of students, combating, 284–291
Common Core State Standards (CCSS), 8–9, 16, 96, 176–177, 422
adoption by states of, 201
deficiencies in, 97–98, 184
funding and, 142, 201
high-stakes accountability and, 142
vs. living core, 97
media literacy and, 142, 143
reasons for, 127, 142, 176
required achievements for, 98
scripted curriculum and, 184, 186, 243
social studies and, 38–39
standardization and, 183–189, 261
STEM and, 27–28
teacher deskilling and, 176–177
teacher preparedness for diversity, 63–64
See also Standardization; Standards; Testing
Common faith, xxvi
Common schools, 290–291, 395
Commonplaces, xxv–xxvii, 9, 232
subject matter as, 2, 3
teachers as, 153–154
Commons, the, 427
Commons-oriented thinking, 429
Communal well-being, 165–173
Community, 162, 195, 328, 433
community-based organizations, 332
community-based violence, 408
community involvement, 326–334, 327–330, 332
constructions of, 433
funds of knowledge of, 329, 331
global, transnational, and local curriculum and, 432–438
parental, familial, and communal milieu, 326–334
school-community connectivity, 327
school policies for, 327–328, 332–333
Competition, 344–347
capitalism and, 344
competitive economy, 83, 147, 174, 183, 200
dissatisfaction and, 346–347
emphasis on, 344
globalization and, 33, 49, 147, 174, 200, 261
humanistic alternatives to, 344–350
for jobs, 368
in sports, 73
standardization and, 178, 186
stress and, 346
violence and, 346, 348
Complicated conversation, 105, 107
Computer-assisted instruction (CAI), 88
Computer use in schools, 88–89
Computing science, 87–95
curriculum of, 90–91
Condon, D., 244
Configurable culture, 145
Confucius, 57, 292, 293
Connelly, M., 108, 156, 157, 323, 331
Connoisseurship, 129, 131
Constructivism, 32–33, 92, 157, 285–286
Continuity in action, 12–13
Continuum of services, 279
Cooper, A. J., 307–308
Cooper, G., 307
Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC), 269, 270
Cooperative learning, 280
Cooperative schooling, 348
Cope, H., 15
Copernicus, 131
Copyright, 316–317
CORE (Caucus of Rank and File Educators), 355–356
Core curriculum, 14, 15, 96, 97
vs. living core, 97
living core and, 97–101
Core Knowledge project, 286
Core standards. See Common Core State Standards
Coretta Scott King Award, 270
Corporate-military-governmental milieu, 374–382
assault rifle sales and, 376
concentration of power by, 374–375
contemporary concerns in, 376–378
contexts for, 378–379
forms of inquiry and modes of expression, 380
immigrant students' experiences and, 251
impact on education, 375–378
militaristic products for schools, 376
military recruiters, 376
military spending, 375
neoliberal policies and, 374–375, 377, 379
privatization and, 374–375, 377, 379
results of challenging, 377
test preparation materials and, 376
theory on, 379–380
war, pervasiveness of, 378
Correlated-subject design, 80
Côté, J. E., 66
Co-teaching, 280
Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 201, 287
Council on Interracial Books for Children, 269, 272
Counternarratives, 243, 264, 420
Counterstorytelling, 123, 254, 331
Counts, G. S., 204
Courage to Teach, The (Palmer), 157
CREATE, 323, 324
Creating a New Racial Order (Burch), 451
Creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile learning,
292–299
contemporary concerns and contexts, 294–295
forms of inquiry and modes of expression, 295–297
historical background on, 292–293
Creativity
imagination and, 128, 129
improvisation and, 223–230
Cremin, L., 238
Critical curriculum theory, 78, 82
Critical humanizing sociocultural knowledge, 213
Critical literacy research, 254
Critical media literacy. See Media literacy
Critical mixed race studies, 449–450
Critical pedagogy, 170–171, 251, 260
Critical race/feminist currere. See Race/feminist currere
Critical race methodology, 254
Critical race theory (CRT), 65–66, 123, 188, 237–238, 251, 331, 449
in browning the curriculum, 420–421
counternarrative and, 420
Latino (LaCrit), 420
tribal (TribCrit), 420
Critical thinking, 162, 170, 195, 287
Crosland, K., 65
Cross-cultural education, 111, 251
Cross-cultural literature, 271
Crouch, J. L., 408
Crozier, G., 368
Cruising Utopia (Muñoz), 355
Crummell, A., 308
Cruse, H., 120
Csikszentmihalyi, M., 144
Cultivating Humanity (Nussbaum), 58
Cultural authenticity, 271
Cultural competence, 191–192, 220, 322
Cultural deficit model, 322
Cultural difference theory, 209
Cultural epoch theory, 12
Cultural identity, 112, 115, 116, 271
Cultural knowledge/values, transmission of, 6, 99–100, 191
Cultural mismatches, 208, 243, 250, 251, 252
Cultural modeling, 264
Cultural reproduction, 56, 83, 85
Cultural studies, popular culture and, 139
Cultural synchronization, 207, 208
Cultural workers, teachers as, 190–197
contemporary concerns for, 190–191
current challenges for, 191–192
forms of inquiry and, 193–195
humility and, 192, 193
testing and assessment and, 193
Culturally and linguistically diverse students, 259–267
assets-based approach for, 263
bilingualism, 262, 265
centering in schools and curricula, 259–261, 264–265
civil and voting rights and, 262
competitiveness in global marketplace, 261
contemporary concerns on, 260–261
current concerns of, 261–262
cultural capital of, 259
debates and decisions about, 262
ecological perspective on, 263–264
ethnic groups included in, 260
forms of inquiry about, 264–265
learning theories on, 263–264
marginalization, 261
modes of expression about, 265
primary language other than English, 260
questions for, concerning education, 261
sociocultural perspective on, 263
theory on, 262–264
Culturally congruent curriculum, 207, 252
Culturally contested pedagogy, 251, 254
Culturally diverse students, 259–267
Culturally relevant pedagogy, 170, 207–214, 219, 238, 409, 448
Black teachers and, 219–220
contemporary concerns in, 210–212
historical movements in, 209–210
immigrant students and, 251
modes of inquiry and forms of expression in, 212–213
students’ experiences and, 243
theories on, 208
of value for all students, 210
See also Culturally values-driven curriculum
Culturally relevant teaching, 207, 238
Culturally responsive teaching, 64–65, 207, 208, 238, 251, 264, 448
Culturally synchronous teaching, 207, 208
Culturally values-driven curriculum, 407–415
community-based violence and, 408
contemporary concerns and contexts, 408–9
instructional vibrancy and, 409–410
literacy skills and, 410–411
modes of expression and forms of inquiry in, 412–413
restoring connection through, 411–412
theoretical perspectives for, 409–412
transformative learning and, 412–413
visual stimuli, use of, 410
Culture, 61–69, 158, 209, 270
biculturality, 411
as context for curriculum, 82–84, 235
counter narratives on, 243
cultural bias, 63
culturally responsive teaching, 64–65, 208, 238, 448
diversity in, 62, 64
economics and, 170
gaps between home and school, 253, 254, 322
immigrant students and, 252
interculturality, 171
multicultural milieu, 447–454
multicultural perspectives, 61–69, 111, 170, 251
popular culture, 134–141, 407–415
of poverty, 209
role in teaching other people’s children, 322
sociocultural theory, 65–66
teachers as cultural workers, 190–197
youth cultural milieu, 252, 253, 383–390
See also Language, culture, identity, and power; Popular culture
Culture-epochs theory, 242
Cummins, J., 67
Currere, 103–126
autobiographies in the field, 108–109
autobiography, methods in, 103, 107, 122
autobiography, theories of, 106–107
autobiography, types of, 107–108
bracketing in, 115–116
as complicated conversation, 105, 107
critical race/feminist currere, 113, 115–116, 119–126
definition of, xxv, 103, 114
dialectical content of, 104–105
forms of inquiry and modes of expression in, 116, 124–125
four steps of, 104, 105, 114, 119
as lived experience, 103, 105–106, 114–115
of marginality, 113–114, 116, 123
multicultural, 110–118
personal transformation through, 110–111
psychic arrest and, 105
regressive moment in, 104, 124
as response to authoritarianism and conformism, 106
as subject matter, 103–118
theories of, 106–107, 114–116, 122–124
Curriculum aspects of, xxv
books and readings on, 455
browning of, 359–360, 364, 416–423
as cause and effect, 324
classroom curriculum, 79
“collection type,” 80
commodification of students by, 284–291
content and context of, xxiii–xxvi, 79, 244, 247
critical curriculum theory, 78, 82
cultural politics of, 285–286
disciplines-based, 79–80, 82, 156
diversity in, 156
experience-based, 11–18
explicit, 215
forms of, 215
functions of, 83–84
goodge and, 402–404, 405
hidden, xxv, 190, 344
as humanizing and dehumanizing, 284–285, 348–350
implicit, 215
importance of, xxiii
integrated, 81, 88, 96–97
key questions about, xxiii–xxiv, 56, 57, 84, 285, 455–456
limitations due to standards movement, 64, 78, 155, 166, 176–177, 184, 243
lived, 138, 139, 211
living, 158, 235–236
milieu as, xxv–xxvi, 301–454
neoliberalism and, 288–291
null, 215, 353
organization and sequencing in, 78–86
out-of-school, xxv, 394, 428–429
as pedagogy, 244, 247
planned, vs. taught and learned, 153
policy curriculum, 79
policy milieu and, 319–325
positivism and, 286–288, 349
practical vision for, 156, 237
privatization and, 288–290, 295, 309
process-driven vs. product-driven, 2, 55
programmatic curriculum, 79
question of “What is worthwhile?” xxiii–xxvi, 53, 56, 57, 58, 60, 321, 456
relevance of, 194, 207–214, 216, 234, 409
scripted, 184, 186, 243
students as, 231–299
students’ experiences as, 241–248
synoptic texts on, 455
for teacher education, 198–206
teachers as, xxv–xxvi, 151–230, 152, 153–159
technology as, 335–338
Curriculum Books: The First Hundred Years
(Schubert et al.), 456
Curriculum development. See Curriculum making
Curriculum guide
conceptual framework for, xxv–xxviii
functions of, xxiii
Curriculum imagination. See Imagination
Curriculum making, xxvii, 78–86, 242–243
child-centered framework for, 243
contexts and domains in, 79
developmental framework for, 242–243
Frameworks for, 242–243
organization and sequencing of subject matters, 78–86
progressives vs. traditionalists on, 236
scientific framework for, 242
standards movement and testing, effect on, 78
students and, 235–237
teachers and, 153, 156, 247
theory on, 235–237
as transdisciplinary, 129
See also Organization and sequencing
Curriculum mapping, 403
Curriculum of Imagination in an Era of Standardization,
A (Lake), 129
Curriculum, The (Bobbitt), 155
Curriculum theory, 122
Cushman, K., 246
Cyber-bullying, 409
Cygnaeus, U., 12
da Silva, D. F., 417
DaCosta, K. M., 451
Dalmage, H. M., 451
Dantley, M. E., 161
Danza, Tony, 158
Darling-Hammond, L., 286
Darwin, Charles, 6, 7, 119, 384, 417
Davis, A., 125
Davis, B. M., 452
Davis, O. L., 215
Davison, C., 67
De Garmo, C., 12
de Hostos, E. M., 422
DeBoe, H. L., 450
Decolonial pedagogy, 171, 172
Decolonialization, 110, 111, 238, 443–444
Decolonizing curriculum, 252, 416–423, 439–446
See also Browning the curriculum; Indigenous land and
decolonizing curriculum
Decolonizing methodologies, 252, 254, 444
Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, 250
Deficit model, 322, 328
Dehumanizing force of curriculum, 283–284, 349
Deleuze, G., 50
Delgado-Gaiton, C., 333
Deloria, V., Jr., 442
Delpit, L., 162, 218, 323, 393, 411
Democracy, 4, 5, 8, 12, 13–14
capitalism and, 170
democratic curricula, 8, 98, 99, 242
democratic decision making in schools, 194–195, 238
democratic living, 12, 122
democratic schools, 17
Dewey and, 312
education for, 190, 191, 192
promotion through social studies, 36, 38, 39–40, 41
Democracy and Education (Dewey), 12
Demographic imperative, 448
Demographics, changing, 113, 155, 244, 249–250, 295, 433
Dennison, G., 17, 179, 237, 238
Derrida, J., 50
Deschooling, 392
See also Alternative school milieu
Desire-based research, 254
Deskilling of teachers. See Teacher bashing and deskilling
Developing and Documenting the Curriculum
(Armstrong), 80
Developing nations (so-called), 167, 169
Devil in the White City (Larson), 412
Dewantara, K., 292
Dewey, A. C., 236
Dewey, E., 17, 57–58
books about, 312–313
Digiovanni, L. W., 64–65
Digital age and media, 94, 142–149
e-books, 273
See also Media literacy
Digital divide, 338–340
Digital literacy skills, 335
Digital technology and computing science, 23, 87–95
computer-assisted instruction (CAI), 88
computing science curriculum, 87, 90–91, 94
contemporary concerns about, 89–91
contexts of, 88–89
forms of inquiry and modes of expression in, 93
hidden curriculum in (coding), 89, 91, 94
history of, 88–89
information and communication technology (ICT), 87, 88, 90, 93–94, 336, 338
integration of, 91, 93–94
posthuman concept and, 93–94
theory of, 91–93
using vs. understanding, 89, 90
See also Technological milieu
Dillard, C., 124
Dillard, J. L., 265
Dimitriadis, G., 139, 140, 413
Disability(ies), 176, 202, 276–283
classroom organization and climate and, 279
contemporary concerns about, 277–281
continuum of services and, 279
curriculum and, 279
differing views of, 276–277
disability studies perspective, 276–277
educational issues in, 278–280
environment, interactions with, 277
forms of in inquiry and modes of expression, 282
identities, multiple, 276, 278–279
inclusive education and, 278–281
inclusive education, challenges to, 281
language and labeling issues for, 277
mainstreaming, 278
medical model for, 276
overrepresentation issues and, 277–278
pedagogy and, 280
people-first language for, 277
person-centered approach to, 276
presuming competence for students with, 280
Response to Intervention and, 175–176
special education teachers for, 280
staffing and service provision for, 280
students and, 176, 202, 276–283
teacher education and, 280
theory on, 281–282
Disciplines-based curriculum, 79–80, 82, 156
Disney (Walt), 137, 140
Diversity, 62, 63, 155, 156, 202–203, 259–267
Black teachers and, 215
culturally and linguistically diverse students, 259–267, 327
in curriculum, 156
experiences of diverse groups, 210
funds of knowledge and, 244, 260, 322
globalization as threat to, 425
increase in, 111, 112, 113, 191, 247, 249–250, 433
multicultural issues and, 111–112
participation and, 191
social studies curriculum, redefining for, 37–38, 40
subject matter organization and, 84
teacher preparedness for, 63–64, 192, 202
of teachers, 191, 202, 215–216
in urban classrooms, 235
See also Culturally and linguistically diverse students
Doctrine of disciplinarily, 82
Documentary milieu, 314–317
aesthetic interpretations and, 314–315
archival access and, 316
archival inquiry and, 314
authenticity and, 315
contemporary concerns and issues in, 316–317
context, forms of inquiry, and modes of expression in, 314–315
copyright and, 316–317
credibility and, 315
criteria for appraising documents in, 315
documentary research and, 314–315
meaning and, 315–316
representativeness and, 315
significance of materials in, 317
theoretical perspectives on, 315–316
See also Biographical milieu
Doll, M. A., 108
Douglass, Frederick, 101, 309
Doumbia, F., 65
Downs, B., 223, 225
Dozens, the, 360
Dream Act, 250, 356
Dreamkeepers Successful Teachers of African American Studies (Ladson-Billings), 221
Dropouts, 244, 407
  income potential of, 260
  on the color line, 420
  educational thought of, 306–307
  *Souls of Black Folk*, The, 59, 307
Duchamp, M., 50
Duncan-Andrade, J., 413
Dunn, A. W., 39
Durkheim, É., 292
Dyson, A., 138

Easton, L., 244
Easton-Brooks, D., 217
East–West learning, 293–94
Ebonics, 262, 411
Ecojustice, 295

Ecological milieu, 424–431
  anti-ecological curriculum and, 427
  contemporary concerns about, 424–425
  contexts of, 425–426
  definition of, 424
  ecological cultural analysis and, 428
  ecopedagogy and, 427–428
  environmentally focused schools and, 429
  forms of inquiry in, 428
  green consumerism and, 428
  land ethic and, 427
  modes of expression of, 428–429
  new localism and, 427
  No Child Left Inside movement and, 429
  race and land, relationship of, 425–426
  theory of, 426–428
Ecological perspective on learning, 263–264
Ecology, 424
  climate change and, 295, 424–425
  as context for education, 235
  of language, 263, 264
Economic capital, 329
Economic demands of society, teachers and, 166
Economic goal of education, 160
Economic inequalities, 368, 369–370, 371
Economics
  capitalist systems of, 165–166, 167, 169–170, 374
  as context for education, 235, 328, 329
  culture and, 170
  financial crisis and bailouts, 368, 375, 379
  globalization and, 114, 135–136, 235, 425
  neoliberalism and, 285, 374–375
  school failures and, 194
Economy
  competitive, 83, 147, 174, 183, 200
  financescape, 434
  financial bailout programs, 375, 379
  new economy, 368
  TARP and, 375
  U.S. economy, 368
  Ecopedagogy, 427–428
  Edel, P., 313, 314
  Edgerton, S. H., 107, 122, 123
  Edmundson, J., 295, 425, 428
  EdTPA, 188, 201, 287
  *Educating for an Ecologically Sustainable Culture* (Bowers), 426–427
Education
  Black, historical milieu of, 303–310
  business model of, 155, 288–289
  capitalism and, 165–166, 167, 169–170, 433
  colonization of, 120, 168–170
  commercialization of, by private providers, 169
  cross-cultural, 111, 251
  as a cultural intervention, 190
  factory model of, 185–186
  goals of, 160, 170, 190–191, 234
  as holistic process, 344
  inclusive, 278–281
  multicultural, 111–113, 170, 447–454
  political goals of, 160, 170, 190, 191
  professionalism and, 200–201
  public education for the public good, 191, 192
  purposes of, 6–8, 82, 160, 190–191, 195, 242, 285
  scientific management and, 185, 287
  social education system, 165–166

*See also* Educational reform; Pedagogy

*Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical* (Spencer), 57
*Education and Emergent Man* (Bagley), 6
Education deficit, 210
*Education for Socially Engaged Art* (Helguera), 51
*Education of John Dewey, The* (Martin), 312
*Education Research in the Public Interest* (Ladson-Billings and Tate), 162

Educational confusion, 57, 96, 297
Educational policy. *See* Policy makers; Policy milieu

Educational reform, xxiii, 13, 17, 36, 82, 186, 286, 290
  activism and, 160
  business of, 289
  critiques of, 174
  high-stakes testing and, 183
  privatization and economics in, 309–310
  standards and accountability and, 38, 42
  technology-rich schooling and, 135
  vouchers and, 376


Egypt (ancient), Kemet education in, 303–304
Eight-Year Study, 100
Einstein, A., 130, 147
Eksner, H. J., 265
Elbaz, F., 59
Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), 201
Eli Broad Foundation, 377
Elite students/education, 370
Ellington, Duke, 229
Ellison, R., 58
Ellsworth, E., 51
Ellul, J., 324
Embodied curriculum, xxv
Emerging Self, The (Hopkins), 58, 426
Emotional disturbances, children with, 408–409
Emotional integrity, 227–228
Emotions, 371–372
socio-emotional development, 408
Empire, 404
Empowerment of students, 191, 194, 242
Encyclopedia of Curriculum Studies (Kridel), xxiv
Enforcement, education as, 294–295
Eng, B., 157
Engineering, 28
See also Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)
English language
Black English, 66, 100, 262
English as a second language, 252
English-only movement, 62, 64, 262
primary language other than English, 260
proficiency in, 64, 252
Standard vs. Black English, 66
Title III (English Language Acquisition), 64
English language learners (ELLs), 38, 42, 63, 65, 202, 251
performance on standardized tests, 251
support for, 251
teacher preparedness for, 63
English speaker of other languages (ESOL), 241, 244
Enlightenment, 57, 58
Ennis, C. D., 75
Environment. See Ecological milieu; Milieu
Environmentally focused schools, 429
Equiano, O., 452
Equity
equity pedagogy, 264
teacher education and, 202–203
See also Diversity; Inequality; Social justice
Erasmus, D., 57
Essay tests, 185
Essentialist philosophy of subject matter, 3
Esteva, G., 392, 396, 397
Ethics. See Moral and spiritual milieu
Ethnic identity, 67, 235
Ethnic studies, ban on, 434
Ethnographic studies, 21–22, 67, 193, 254
of hip-hop culture, 413
of popular culture, 138–139, 140
of youth cultural milieu, 385, 387–388
Ethnoscape, 434
Evaluation of teachers. See Teacher evaluation
Evans, J., 72
Evans, R., 39
Evolution, 6
Experience(s)
Dewey on, 11, 12–13, 17, 131, 153, 242
of diverse groups, 210
of immigrant students, 249–258
lived experience, 103, 105–106, 114–115, 211, 238, 411
Living in the Future Project, 245
Madison 2020 Project, 245
of students, 79–80, 80–81, 82, 98, 170
of students, as curriculum, 236, 241–248, 411
of students, current focus on, 243–244
of students, theory on, 242–243
subject matter as, 11–18
of teachers, 153
TSE Project, 241–242, 245–246
What Kids Can Do Project, 246
Experience and Nature (Dewey), 131
Experience-based curriculum, 11–18
contemporary concerns in, 16–17
directed/designed experience, 14–16, 17
motivation and, 11
orientations to, 12–16
technology and, 337
Experience-based learning, 14
Explicit curriculum, 215
Fabrication, 383
Facebook, 136, 144, 146, 147, 324, 384, 408
Facer, K., 338
Factory production model of education, 185–186
Fadel, C., 335, 336
Falling in Love with Chris and Greg, 356
Families
definition of, 326
social capital of, 329
See also Parental, familial, and communal milieu
Fanon, F., 421, 443
Feminism, 111
Black feminism, 122–124, 330, 358–366, 449
Chicana feminist theory, 449
critical feminist currere, 119–126
critique of alternative schooling options, 393–394, 396
critique of high-stakes testing, 187–188
feminist autobiography, 108, 113
feminist biography, 312
gender stereotypes and, 121–122
gendered division of labor in teaching, 178
parental and communal milieu and, 330
popular culture, gendered experience of, 138–139
poststructural feminist theory, 112
White cultural background of, 362
See also Womanist/Black feminist milieu
Field trips, 395
Financescape, 434
Finnish Lessons (Sahlberg), 437
Fiore, Q., 144
Fires in the Bathroom (Cushman), 246
Fires in the Mind (Cushman), 246
Fiske, J., 139
Flaunt It! (Quinn and Meiners), 162, 163
Fleury, S., 296
Flinders, D., 400
Flintoff, A., 72
Florian, L., 282
Forkner, H. L., 16
Forms of inquiry. See Inquiry, forms of
Foster, M., 209, 216, 218, 221
Foucault, M., 99, 119, 139, 179, 187
Foundations of Curriculum Making (Whipple), 236
Foxfire Magazine, 100
Frankenberg, E., 63
Frankfort School, 138, 178
Fraser, J., 218
Freedman, D., 51
Freedom Schools, 237, 332
Freedom Writers (film), 179
Freire, P., 14, 62, 99, 131, 148, 156–157, 178, 191, 192, 204,
225, 237, 238, 284–285, 291, 293, 294, 296, 411–412,
417, 427, 448
Friesen, N., 93
Froebel, F., 12, 15, 99, 292
Fromm, E., 237
Funding, 66, 155, 328
No Child Left Behind Act and, 128, 142
standards and, 71, 128, 142, 183, 201
Funds of knowledge, 23–24, 62, 66, 235, 238, 244, 260
approach, 264
dark funds, 24
form of inquiry, 264
home and community knowledge as, 329, 331
student diversity and, 24, 66, 244, 260, 322
Furtak, E. M., 30
Gaming and game-based learning, 23, 337
Gandhi, M., 292, 296, 348
Gangs, 385
Gaps, sensing, 129–131
Garcia, O., 238, 265
Garoian, C. R., 51
Garrison, D. R., 341
Garrison, J., 295, 296
Garvey, M., 308
Gates, Bill, 49, 176, 198, 321, 323
Gatto, J. T., 397
Gaudelli, W., 402
Gay, G., 62, 213
Gay milieu. See Gender, sexuality, and queer milieu
Gaztambide-Fernández, R., 418
Gee, J. P., 22, 23, 61
Gender
critical feminist currere, 119–126
and division of labor in teaching, 178
issues with high-stakes testing, 187–188
popular culture, experiences of, 138–139
roles, 67
science and math issues concerning, 27, 30, 31
spaces set aside for groups, 65
stereotypes, 121–122
teaching as gendered work, 216
See also Feminism; Womanist/Black feminist milieu
Gender, sexuality, and queer milieu, 351–357
contemporary concerns, 352–353
context of, 353–354
curriculum and, 353–355
forms of inquiry and modes of expression for, 355–356
heteronationalism, 354
heteronormativity, 353
LGBTQ, 351, 352–353, 355, 356
normal, and failure at, 354–355
power relationships and, 352
queerness, meanings and uses of, 351–352
suicides and violence and, 352–353
theory of, 354–355
Genre-based study, 272–273
Geographical milieu, 400–406
critical geography and, 400–402, 404
curriculum as geography, 403–404, 405
curriculum mapping and, 403
geography as curriculum, 402–403, 405
globalization and, 404–405
identity and, 401
place and, 401, 402
politics of location and, 403
power and, 401
space and, 400–401, 402
Geography, 235, 238
critical geography, 400–402, 404
low-performing schools on standardized tests and, 251
See also Colonialism
Gettysburg Address, 239
Gibson, R., 217
Giddings, P., 361
Global citizenship, 294
- mobility of populations, 192
- preparation for, 195
- social studies and, 37, 41
- STEM and, 27, 28, 33–34

Global, transnational, and local curriculum, 432–438
- capitalism and, 433, 434
- construction of community in, 433
- contemporary concerns about, 433–434
- diversity and, 433
- forms of inquiry into, 435
- implications for policy and practice, 436–437
- modes of expression about, 435–436
- "scapes," variety of types of, 434
- theory on, 434

Globalization
- as context for education, 168–170, 235, 320
- differing views on, 235
- economics of, 114, 135–136, 235, 425
- geographical milieu and, 404–405
- global marketplace, comparisons and, 320
- global marketplace, competitiveness in, 33, 49, 147, 174, 200, 261
- global “war on teachers,” 434
- global youthscape, 384, 387
- humanities and, 56
- immigrant students’ experiences and, 251
- language programs and, 64, 67
- pedagogy and, 168–170
- popular culture and, 135–137, 140
- science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and, 27, 28, 29, 33–34
- social class and multicultural issues and, 114
- social studies and, 37, 41, 42
- technology and, 335
- as threat to diversity, 425

Goddard, H., 185
Goffman, E., 345
Goldberg, N., 227
Gonzalez, N., 235, 238, 329
Goodson, I. E., 108
Goody, J., 21
Gore, A., 424
Goulah, J., 293, 296
Government
- education and, 374–382
- financial bailout programs of, 375, 379
- role in educational privatization, 379

See also Corporate-military-governmental milieu

Governmentality, 179
Graffiti, 24, 46, 48, 140
Grafstein, A., 339
Gramsci, A., 178, 385
Grande, S., 419, 442
Grange, J., 296
Great learning, the, 292–299
Greeks, ancient, 57, 304–305
- classical education of, 304–305
Green consumerism, 428
Greene, M., 50, 58, 129, 131–132, 294, 296
Greenwood, D., 427
Gregory, D., 402
Grimké, F. J., 308
Grossman, E., 297
Grow Your Own Teachers Illinois, 330, 333
Gruenewald, D., 402–403, 427
Grumet, M., 45, 59, 103–104, 108, 323
Grundtvig, N. F. S., 292, 296
Guattari, F., 50
Gude, O., 48, 50
Guess, A., 440–441
Guillory, N., 360
Gustavson, L., 140
Gutek, G. L., 305
Gutenberg’s printing press, 20

Hacker, J. J., 368
Halberstam, J., 354
Haley, M., 354
Half Nelson (film), 180
Hall, G. Stanley, 4, 12, 242–243, 384, 386
Hall, S., 271, 272, 285, 421
Halverson, R., 336, 337
Hammerberg, D. D., 99
Hampton model of industrial education, 306
Hands-on teaching/learning, 12, 193–194
Hanh, T. N., 436
Hansen, D. T., 198, 294, 296
Harap, H., 15
Haraway, D., 93
Hardenberg, G. P. F. von, 225
Hardt, M., 404
Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy, 332
Harris, W. T., 3–4, 5–6, 7–9
Harrington, E., 401
Hart, E., 169, 379, 402
Hasebe-Ludt, E., 106
Hatano, K., 296
He, M. F., xxviii, 59, 156, 157, 192, 238, 293, 296, 331
- autobiography of, 108
Health issues, 294
PE and, 71, 72, 74, 75, 76
Heath, S. B., 21–22
Hebdige, D., 139, 385
Hegel, 413
Hegel, F., 236
Helguera, P., 51
Hellison, D., 73, 75, 76
Henle, M., 130–131
Henningsen, H., 296
Henry, A., 215, 218
Henry, F., 75
Herbert, J., 12, 236, 238, 292, 293, 395
Herbertians, 12
Heritage Language Initiative, The, 262
Herman, E., 144
Hernes, M., 397
Herndon, J., 237
Heschel, A., 344
Hickman, L., 296
Hidden curriculum, xxv, 190, 344
High-stakes testing, 183–189
Campbell’s Law and, 187
contemporary concerns about, 183–185, 201
contemporary use of, 186
contexts for, 185–186
curriculum focus on tested subjects, 184, 187
curriculum limitations due to, 64, 184, 187
edTPA and, 188, 201
forms of inquiry and modes of expression, 188–189
Meeting the Challenge of High-Stakes Testing, 201
mixed approaches, qualitative measures in, 188–189
peer effects in test scores, 185
race and gender issues with, 187–188
scripted curriculum and, 184, 186, 243
socioeconomic issues with, 187
subjectivity in grading, 185
teacher evaluation and, 183–189, 202
teaching to the test, 187
test scores, validity questions about, 184–185, 187, 234–235
theories on, 186–188
See also Standardized testing; Testing
Hill, D., 360
Hill, M. L., 140, 409, 413
Hill Collins, P., 120, 122–123, 218
Hilliard, A., III, 411
Hilliard, A. G., 303–304
Hilton, P. M., 236
Hinchey, P. H., 161, 322
Hip hop, 137, 139, 140, 211, 407–415
culturally values-driven curriculum and, 407–415
curriculum base and examples of, 409–413
ethnographic study of, 413
immigrant students and, 251, 252, 253
instructional vibrancy and, 409–410
modes of expression and forms of inquiry in, 412–413
Rhizome of Blackness: A Critical Ethnography of Hip-Hop
Culture, 297
vocabulary and expressions, 410–411
See also Culturally values-driven curriculum
Hirsch, E. D., 127, 286
Historical milieu, 303–310
Historicizing of Knowledge (Brown), 387
History, 36, 37–38, 39, 40, 54
See also Humanities; Social studies
Hlynka, D., 93
Hochschild, J. L., 451
Hoechsmann, M., 143, 148
Hofstadter, R., 106, 198
Hofstede, G., 392
Holistic curriculum. See Integrated, holistic, and core
subject matters
Holler If You Hear Me (Michie), 157, 162
Hollingshead, A. B., 385
Holt, J., 96, 179, 237, 238, 392, 395
Home knowledge, 329, 331
Homeless people, 369
Homer, 304–305
Homeschooling, 391, 392
religious values and, 395–396
See also Alternative school milieu
Homeschooling Our Children, Unschooling Ourselves
(McKee), 397
Homosexual milieu. See Gender, sexuality, and queer milieu
Hong, S., 333
Hooks, b., 216, 221, 425
Hoose, P., 194
Hopkins, L. T., 14, 58, 96, 99, 237, 238, 426
Horkheimer, M., 138
Hornberger, N. H., 264
Horton, M., 17
Howard, G., 112
Howard, G. R., 452
Howard, T., 213
Hudson-Weems, C., 362–363
Huebner, D. E., 225
Hughes, L., 452
Hull House, 332
Humanistic Foundations of Education (Weinberg), 59
Humanities, 53–60
contemporary concerns in, 54–56
context of, 56–57
forms of inquiry and modes of expression in, 59
political issues and, 56–57
pragmatic considerations and, 54–55
Index

purposes and functions of, 53, 55, 58, 59–60
question of what is worthwhile, 53, 56, 57, 58, 60
self-knowledge and, 57, 60
skills and, 54–55
standards and assessments and, 55–56
subjects included in, 53, 59
theoretical perspectives on, 57–58
Humanity
human dignity and rights and, 349
humanistic perspective of curriculum, 417–418
humanistic philosophy of subject matter, 3, 7
humanity and humane relationships, 195, 213, 239, 291, 293
humanizing force of curriculum, 283–284, 344–350
posthuman age/perspective, 90, 92, 93–94, 418, 422
Humility, 192, 193
Hunt, J. A., 162
Hurricane Katrina, 42, 289, 410
Hutchon, K., 92

I and Thou (Buber), 58
I Learn From Children (Pratt), 237
I Won’t Learn From You (Kohl), 162
Ibrahim, A., 297
Identity, 61–69, 166–167
cultural, 112, 115, 116, 271
diversity in, 62
geography and, 401
identity capital, 66
identity development, 67
identity development, multiracial, 450
of immigrant students, 252–253
national, 165, 166–167
See also Language, culture, identity, and power
Ideologies, curriculum and, 81–82, 165–166
Ideoscape, 434
Igoa, C., 130
Ikeda, D., 13, 292, 294, 296
Iliad (Homer), 304–305
Illich, I., 392, 395, 397
Imagination, 127–133, 172
arts-based education and metaphor and, 131–132
connoisseurship and, 129, 131
context for, 128
continuous questioning and, 132
creativity and, 128, 129
curriculum imagination as subject matter, 128–129, 132
forms of inquiry in, 129–131
importance for students, 194
improvisation and, 225, 228
as joining parts, 127–128
perception and, 129, 132
popular culture and, 136
sensing gaps and, 129–131
standardization and, 127, 128, 129
Immigrant students’ experiences, 249–258
absence of perspectives in curriculum, 254
acculturation, decisions in, 253
anti-immigrant sentiments, 253
contemporary concerns for, 250–251
context, 249–250
cultural gaps between home and school, 253, 254, 322
cultural mismatch/incongruity, 250, 251, 252, 255
culture and, 252, 253
English language learners, 251
English proficiency and, 251, 254
forms of inquiry and modes of expression, 253–255
globalization and, 251
identities of, 252–253
integration issues for, 250
language and, 251, 252, 254
language, culture, identity, and power context for, 251–253
living between two worlds, 254, 255
marginalization of, 251, 253, 254, 255
poverty and, 253
power issues for, 253
prejudice and exclusion encountered by, 251, 253
segregation and, 253
standardized testing and, 251
tensions among, 252–253, 254
tension on, 251–253
Immigrants, 249–258
Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, 250
Dream Act and, 250, 356
ESL programs for, 65
increasing diversity and, 249–250
Inner World of the Immigrant Child, The, 130
integration of, 192, 242, 250
social studies and, 38, 39, 42
struggles and hardships of, 250–251, 253
undocumented, 250–251, 356
Implicit curriculum, 215
Improvisation, 223–230
adaptive experience and, 226
as art, 224–225
challenges and complexities of, 228–229
collaborative skills for, 226–228
deep conceptual understanding and, 226
definition/description of, 224–225
imagination and, 225, 228
integrated knowledge and, 226
manifestations of, 225–228
unexpected, taking advantage of, 223, 225
as uninhibited exploration, 225
In loco parentis, 193
In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens (Walker), 358
Inclusive education, 278–281
challenges to, 281
classroom organization and climate for, 279
curriculum for, 279
natural proportions for, 279
pedagogy for, 280
staffing and service provision for, 280
teacher education for, 280

Inconvenient Truth, An (Gore), 424

Indigenous cultures
books and literature of, 269, 270
critical indigenous theory, 449
erasure and assimilation of, 439, 441–442
indigenous methodologies and, 254, 435
indigenous research and, 331
knowledge of, 331–332, 419
land and, 419–420, 439–446
literacy and, 21, 25
resistance from, 439
settler colonization, effects of, 419–420
storytelling and, 252, 254
tribal critical race theory (TribCrit), 420

Indigenous land and decolonizing curriculum, 439–446
aims and structure of settler colonialism, 440–441
chattel slavery and, 440
decolonization projects, 443–444
indigenous erasure and assimilation, 441–442
land as curriculum, 442–443

See also Colonialism; and entries beginning with decolonial

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 176, 408

Inequality, 139
capitalism and, 166
in childhoods, 322–323
economic, 368, 369–370, 371
popular culture as reinforcing, 139, 140
in schools and societies, 169, 183, 190, 191, 202, 208, 290, 378
schools as perpetuating, 187–188, 190, 195, 202, 208, 290, 344
standardization and, 99
teacher education and, 202–203
teachers as counteracting, 190, 194, 195

Information and communication technology (ICT), 87, 88, 90, 93–94, 336, 338

Inner World of the Immigrant Child, The (Igoa), 130

Inquiry, forms of, 17
in alternative school milieu, 396–397
in arts, 50–51, 131–132
in biographical milieu, 311
on Black teachers as curriculum texts, 220–221
in browning the curriculum, 421–422
in corporate-military-governmental milieu, 380
in creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile learning, 295–297
on culturally and linguistically diverse students, 264–265
in culturally relevant pedagogy, 212–213
in culturally values-driven curriculum, 412–413
in digital technology and computing science, 93
in disability(ies), 282
in documentary milieu, 314–315
in ecological milieu, 428
funds of knowledge, 264
in gender, sexuality, and queer milieu, 355–356
in global, transnational, and local curriculum, 435
in high-stakes testing, 188–189
in humanities, 59
on immigrant students’ experiences, 253–255
on inspiring teachers, 193–195
in integrated, holistic subject matters, 100–101
in language, culture, identity, and power, 67
in media systems/literacy, 144–148
in multicultural children’s literature, 272–273
in multicultural curricule, 116
in multicultural, multilingual, and multiracial milieu, 452–453
on parents and community as curriculum, 330–332
in participatory, 332
personal essays and, 162–163
personal~passionate~participatory, 193, 251, 254
philosophical mode, 323
in physical education, 75–76
in policy milieu, 323–324
in popular culture, 140
practical, xxvii
in race/feminist curriculum, 124–125
reader-response mode for, 55–56
in sciences, 29–30, 33–34
sensing gaps, imagination and, 129–131
in social studies, 41–42
in socioeconomic class milieu, 370–372
on students as curriculum, 238
on students’ experiences, 244–246
on teacher bashing and deskilling, 179–180
in teacher education, 204–205
in teacher evaluation, 188–189
on teachers and pedagogy, 171–172
on teachers as activists, 162–163
on teachers as cultural workers, 193–195
on teachers as curriculum, 156–158
in womanist/Black feminist milieu, 363–364
in youth cultural milieu, 387–388
Inspiration of teachers, 193–195

Institutional context, 79
Instructional context, 79

InTASC, 287
Integrated curriculum, 81, 88, 96–97
Integrated ecological whole, classrooms as, 319
Integrated, holistic, and core subject matters, 96–102
  changing curriculum and, 98, 101
  Common Core Standards and, 97–98
  contemporary concerns in, 97
  context of, 97–98
  democratic principles and, 98, 99
  emphasis on interaction in, 100
  forms of inquiry and modes of expression in, 100–101
  living core curriculum, 97–101
  personal level and, 99
  social level and, 99–100
  standards and questions in, 98
  theory in, 98–100
Integration: Its Meaning and Application (Hopkins), 426
Integration, of schools, 396
Intellectual biography, 312
Intended curriculum, xxv
Interaction, 13
Intercultural Education Movement, 209
Interculturality, 171, 172
Interdependences, 2
International Monetary Fund, 167
Internet, 142, 143, 144, 145, 384
Interracial marriage, 448, 451
Interviews, 59
Inuit people, health issues of, 428
Invisibility, overcoming, 348–350
Invisible Man (Ellison), 58
IQ tests, 185
Iron Man character, 137–138
Irvine, J. J., 209, 212–213, 216, 218
Islam, Covering Islam (Said), 139
Itard, J., 15
It’s Our World, Too! (Hoose), 194

Jackson, P. W., 131, 312
James, D., 368
James, H., 313
James, W., 58, 129
Japanese American Curriculum Project, 269
Jardine, D. W., 319
Jenkins, E. J., 408
Jenkins, H., 140, 145
Jewett, A. E., 75
Jewett, L. M., 108
John Dewey and American Democracy (Westbrook), 312
John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism (Ryan), 312
John Dewey and the Philosopher’s Task (Jackson), 312
Johnston, C., 144
Jonassen, D. H., 88, 92
Jones, T. J., 39
Jones, V. L., 269
Jordan, J., 100, 124
Journey to Racial Literacy, A (Davis), 452
Joyce, J., 60
Jupp, J., 112
Justice. See Ecojustice; Social justice issues
Kahn, R., 425, 428
Kant, I., 50, 294
Katie’s Canon (Cannon), 363
Kawagley, A. O., 443
Kelley, W., 140
Kellner, D., 143, 148
Kemet (ancient Egypt), education in, 303–304
Kendall, P. M., 313
Kerschensteiner, G., 15
Kierkegaard, S., 57
Kilpatrick, W. H., 3–4, 5, 6, 7, 8–9, 15, 101, 243
  project method of, 7, 15, 17
Kincheloe, J., 106, 107, 403, 435
King, Lawrence “Larry,” 352
King, Martin Luther, Jr., 270
Kinget, G. M., 58
Kirk, C., 76
Kirkland, D. E., 388
Kleifgen, J., 265
Kliebard, H., 242
Knowledge, 285–288, 419
  as commodity, 290
  holistic, 332
  home knowledge, 329, 331
  indigenous, 331–332, 419
  See also Funds of knowledge
Koehler, M. J., 92, 340
Kohl, H., 96, 100, 162, 179, 237, 238, 395
Kouppanou, A., 93
Kovach, M., 331
Kozol, J., 179, 237, 238, 323, 392–393, 397, 398
Kray, C., 58
Kridel, C., xxiv, 238
KRS-One, 411, 412
Kubey, R., 144
Kumaravadivelu, B., 296
Kumashiro, K., 162
Kwan, S., 452
Labeling, 277
Laboratory School at Teachers College, Columbia University, 237
Laboratory schools, 12, 17, 81, 236, 237
Ladson-Billings, G., 63, 65, 162, 207, 208, 210, 211, 212, 216, 218, 219, 220, 221, 413
Lagemann, E., 180
Lake, R. L., 296
Land, 439–446
  conservation of, 429
  indigenous, as curriculum, 442–443
  indigenous cultures and, 419–420, 442
  land ethic, 427
  as language, 443
  memory and, 443
  race and, 425–426
  relationships to, 442–443
  settler colonization and, 419–420
See also Ecological milieu; Indigenous land and decolonizing curriculum

Landscapes of Learning (Greene), 58

Language, 61–69, 235
  bilingualism, 64, 262, 265
  critical language education, 252
  cultural identity and, 61
  diversity in, 62
  ecology of, 263, 264
  English-only movement, 62, 64, 259, 262
  heritage language maintenance, 252
  immigrant students and, 251, 252, 254
  linguistic empires, 64
  linguistic imperialism, 66
  linguistically diverse students, 259–267
  multilingualism, 61, 64, 65
  social interaction and, 263
  social justice and, 66
  sociocultural perspective and, 263, 264
  Students’ Right to Their Own Language resolution, 262
  theoretical perspectives on, 65–66
See also English language

Language Across Difference (Paris), 265

Language, culture, identity, and power, 61–69, 78
  coloniality of power, 168, 169–170, 171
  culturally responsive teaching, 64–65
  deficiencies vs. assets in, 62
  forms of inquiry and modes of expression in, 67
  global context and, 64, 67
  identity development, 67
  immigrant students and, 251–253
  integration into curriculum, 62
  interconnections within, 252
  language and cultural identity and, 61
  multicultural education and, 63, 64–65, 67
  overview of issues in, 61–62
  as sites of struggle in education, 62–64
  social justice and, 66
  sociocultural theory, 65–66
  standards movement and, 64
  teacher preparedness for diversity, 63–64
  theoretical perspectives on, 65–66
  welcoming and unwelcoming contexts, 64–65
  Western/Eurocentric dominance in, 62, 63, 66, 120–121, 166

Lao American students, 436
Lareau, A., 322
Larrick, N., 269
Larson, E., 412
Lasswell, H., 323
Last Child in the Woods (Louv), 429
Lather, P., 372
Latin America
  immigrants from, 249
  pedagogy in, 167, 168, 171
  Latino/as, 40, 209, 238, 260
  books and literature, 269, 270
  Chicana feminist theory, 449
  critical race theory (LatCrit), 420
  marginalization of, 260, 295
  mothering of, 330
  stereotypes of, 261
  violence witnessed by, 408

Latour, B., 32–33
Lau v. Nichols, 262
Lave, J., 92
Leadership for Social Justice (Marshall), 162
Learner-centered ideology, 82
Lee, C., 413
Lee, Spike, 42
Lee, Stacey, 323
Lefebvre, H., 402
Leggo, C., 106
Leistyna, P., 388
Leonard, T., 236
Leopold, A., 429
Lesko, N., 384, 385
Lessing, A., 100
Letter writing, 59
Levine, A., 200
Levine, C. G., 66
Lewis, O., 209
Lewis, T. E., 380
LGBTQ, 351, 352–353, 355, 356
Li, G., 67, 254
Li, X., 116
Liberal arts, See Humanities
Liberty for All (Salgado), 356
Life history research, 253, 311
Life history writing, 312, 363
Life-based literary narrative, 254
Lifelong learning, 337
Lil’ Kim, 407, 412
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lil Wayne</td>
<td>407, 410, 412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln, A.</td>
<td>239, 309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic capital</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic imperialism</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistically diverse students</td>
<td>259–267, 327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>See also Culturally and linguistically diverse students</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistics</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multilingual milieu</td>
<td>447–454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linton, S.</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>19–26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biliteracy</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical literacies</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultural</td>
<td>61–62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defining</td>
<td>20–25, 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>digital technologies and</td>
<td>23, 335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diversity and</td>
<td>61–63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English-only policy and</td>
<td>62, 259, 262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>funds of knowledge and</td>
<td>23–24, 62, 66, 264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hip hop curriculum and</td>
<td>410–411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>historical context for</td>
<td>19–20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ideological models of</td>
<td>22–24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indigenous cultures and</td>
<td>21, 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>media literacy</td>
<td>135, 142–149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multicultural children's literature and</td>
<td>268–275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multiple literacies</td>
<td>21–22, 65, 263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narrative inquiry and</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potential</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading and writing and</td>
<td>20–21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in science and mathematics</td>
<td>27, 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social practice and</td>
<td>21–22, 263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social studies and</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>socioecritical</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technological</td>
<td>23, 335, 336, 338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theoretical perspectives on</td>
<td>65–66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived curriculum</td>
<td>138, 139, 211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived experiences</td>
<td>103, 105–106, 114–115, 211, 238, 411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living core curriculum</td>
<td>97–101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>See also Integrated, holistic, and core subject matters</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living curriculum</td>
<td>158, 235–236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in the Future Project</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local curriculum</td>
<td>432–438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>locality</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Localization</td>
<td>new, 427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locke, A.</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locke, L.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loewen, J. W.</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Quiet Highway, The (Goldberg)</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lopate, P.</td>
<td>162, 163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lopez, A. L.</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorde, A.</td>
<td>124, 361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louv, R.</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love, Justice, and Education: John Dewey and the Utopians</td>
<td>(Schubert), 58, 313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loving v. State of Virginia</td>
<td>448, 451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowan, G.</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucero, J.</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lupinacci, J.</td>
<td>295, 425, 428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutz, C.</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynd, H.</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynd, R.</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacDonald, J.</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machiavelli</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacLean, E. A.</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison 2020 Project</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mager, R. F.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstreaming</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maira, S.</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makiguchi, T.</td>
<td>13, 57, 293–294, 296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaguzzi, L.</td>
<td>293, 332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malcolm X.</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandates</td>
<td>103, 142, 156, 251, 261, 319, 376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher education and</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for testing</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mann, H.</td>
<td>97, 394–395, 417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manning, L.</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing Consent (Herman)</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marable, M.</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcuse, H.</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginalization</td>
<td>447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of culturally and linguistically diverse students</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of immigrant students</td>
<td>251, 253, 254, 255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of minority groups</td>
<td>260, 262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marinoff, L.</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark-all-that-apply category</td>
<td>449, 451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall, C.</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin, J.</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin, J. V.</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martinek, T.</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martusewicz, R.</td>
<td>295, 425, 428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marx/ Marxism</td>
<td>119, 138, 139, 178, 187, 237, 385, 386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massey, D.</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numeracy and literacy</td>
<td>27, 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>See also Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCarthey, C.</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McChesney, R. W.</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCoy, K.</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCulcho, G.</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCutcheon, G.</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McEneaney, E.</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McInerney, Brandon</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKee, A.</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKenzie, M.</td>
<td>440, 441, 442, 444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKeon, Richard, xxvi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
McKim, M. G., 16
McLaren, P., 148, 375–376, 435
McLuhan, E., 92
McLuhan, M., 92, 143, 144
McMurry, C., 12
McMurry, F., 12
McRobbie, A., 385
Means, R., 126
Media
codes and conventions of, 144
coverage of Middle East and Islam, 139
media theory, 92
as the message, 144
popular culture and, 134–135
Media literacy, 135, 142–149
advertising and, 146–147
in context, 143–144
current state of, 143–144
curriculum and pedagogy for, 148
digital media and technologies and, 142–143
forms of inquiry and modes of representation in, 144–148
Internet and, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146
network vs. networked media systems and, 144
networking platforms and, 144–147
politics and, 143–144, 146
skills and, 142, 143
standards movement and, 142, 143
theory of, 144
Mediascape, 434
Meeting the Challenge of High-Stakes Testing (Sloan), 201
Meiners, E., 162, 163
Memoir biography, 312
Merit pay, 186
Meritocracy, 368–369
Mertens, D., 435
Meta-ideologizing, 421
Metal detectors, 376
Metaphor, 131–132, 157, 268, 273
Metz, M. H., 323
Mexican Americans, 262, 269, 332–333
Chicano movement, 262
Mexican American Studies (MAS), 167
See also Latino/as
Meyer, J. W., 83
Meyer, M. A., 442–443
Michie, G., 14, 157, 162, 238
Milam, J. L., 199
Milieu, xxv–xxvi, 301–454
about: meanings and aspects, 302
alternative school milieu, 391–399
biographical and documentary milieu, 311–318
Black education, historical milieu of, 303–310
browning the curriculum, 416–423
competitive, humanistic alternatives to, 344–350
corporate-military-governmental milieu, 374–382
as curriculum, xxv–xxvi, 301–454
deschooling, homeschooling, and unschooling, 391–399
ecological milieu, 424–431
gender, sexuality, and queer milieu, 351–357
geographical milieu, 400–406
global, transnational, and local curriculum, 432–438
historical milieu, 303–310
indigenous land and decolonizing curriculum, 439–446
moral and spiritual milieu, 344–350
multicultural, multilingual, and multiracial milieu, 447–454
parental, familial, and communal milieu, 326–334
policy milieu, 319–325
popular cultural milieu, 407–415
socioeconomic class milieu, 367–373
technological milieu, 335–343
womanist/Black feminist milieu, 358–366
youth cultural milieu, 383–390
See also specific milieu
Military, 374–382
budget/spending, 375
impact on education, 375–376
militaristic products for schools, 376
military recruiters in schools, 376
neoliberal policies and, 375
war, pervasiveness of, 378
See also Corporate-military-governmental milieu
Millennial generation, 20, 23
Miller, J., 107, 108, 323
Mills, C. W., 161
Milner, H. R., IV, 221
Minha, T. T., 124
Minorities, 62, 63, 65, 202
ban on ethnic studies, 434
culturally relevant pedagogy and, 170, 207–214
currere and, 115–116
curriculum funding and, 66
educational capacities of, 209
high-stakes testing, effects on, 64
increase in, 111, 112, 113, 433
marginalization of, 260, 262
model minority myth, 254–255
participation of, 191
school dropout rates for, 244, 407
spaces set aside for, 65
See also Language, culture, identity, and power;
Multicultural education
Misceg-narrations, 452
Mis-Education of the Negro, The (Woodson), 309
Mishra, P., 92, 340
Mismatches, 208, 243, 250, 251, 252
Index • 507

Model minority myth, 254–255
Modeling, 191
cultural modeling, 264
Modes of Thought (Whitehead), 58
Moffett, J., 128
Mohanty, C., 124
Moll, L., 235
Montessori, M., 14–15, 237, 238, 292–293, 296, 323, 332
Mooney, J., 282
Moral and spiritual milieu, 344–350
affirmation and meaning in, 350
competition, emphasis on, 344–350
dissatisfaction and, 346–347
identity and, 345–346
inequality, schools as reproducing, 344
invisibility, overcoming, 348–350
stress and, 346
tikkun olam concept, 344, 347, 348, 349–350
violence and, 346, 348
Moral Principles of Education (Dewey), 177
Morell, E., 413
Morgensen, S. L., 440
Morris, M., 108, 216
Morrison, K. A., 211
Motivation, 11, 246
Multicultural children’s literature, 268–275
author awards for, 270
calls for source material in, 269–270
civil rights movement and, 269
contexts of, 269–270
cultural authenticity in, 271
definition of, 268
digital technologies and, 273
groups represented in, 269, 270
modes of representation in, 273
practices of inquiry, 272–273
publishers of, 269–270
theories, definitions, and discourses of, 270–272
Multicultural currere, 110–118
contemporary concerns in, 111–112
context of, 113–114
forms of inquiry and modes of expression in, 116
Multicultural education, 111–113, 170, 447–454
vs. cross-cultural education, 111
history and context of, 115
teacher education for, 111–112
Multicultural literature, 270–271
Multicultural, multilingual, and multiracial milieu, 447–454
achievement gap and, 447–448
Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People, A, 450
contemporary concerns in, 447–448
context of, 448–449
countermultiracial movement model for, 451
critical mixed race studies and, 449–450
demographic imperative and, 448
ethnic movement model for, 373, 451
forms in inquiry and modes of expression in, 452–453
government and, 448
multiracial identity development and, 450
multiracial movement model for, 451
number of multiracial people in the US, 449
political issues in, 451
practical implications of, 451–452
theory on, 449–452
Multicultural perspectives, 61–69, 193
immigrants’ experiences and, 251
multicultural education, 63, 64–65, 67
in social studies, 38, 40
Multilingual milieu, 447–454
Multilingualism, 61, 64, 65, 449
Multiracial identity development, 450
Multiracial milieu, 447–454
Muñoz, José, 355
Myers, W. D., 270
NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress)
Technological and Engineering Literacy Framework, 336, 338
Narrative inquiry, 24, 59, 67, 157, 193, 238
critical race, 254
cross-cultural, 253, 254
multicultural, 253, 254
in multiracial milieu, 452
in parental, familial, and communal milieu, 331
in teacher education, 204, 205
Narrative/Biographical inquiry, 388
Narratives
counternarratives, 243, 264, 420
misceg-narrations, 452
multicultural, 251
narrative biography, 311, 312
of teachers, 162, 237, 238–239, 437
Nash, J., 124
Nation at Risk, A (report), 8, 17, 70, 154, 200, 379, 422
teacher blaming after, 174, 177, 200
Nation building, 166–167
National Black Feminist Organization, 361
National Center for Teacher Quality, 179
National Conference on Third World Women and Violence, 361
National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), 38, 40
National Council on the Accreditation of Teacher Education, 201
National Education Policy Center, 323
National identity, 165, 166–167
National Society for the Study of Education (NSSE), 236
Native Americans, 260, 394
books and literature of, 269, 270
impacts of standards-based reforms, 64
social and political thought of, 252
stereotypes, books on, 269
storytelling, 252
See also Indigenous cultures
Ndimande, B., 435
Negri, A., 404
*Negro History Bulletin*, 309
*Negro World*, 308
Neill, A. S., 237, 238, 321, 323, 391, 397
Neoliberal capitalism, 169–170, 374–375
Neoliberalism, 285, 288–291, 294, 374–375, 379
Nespor, J., 403
Networked media systems, 144
New Literacy Studies (NLS), 22
New Orleans
Hurricane Katrina and, 42, 289, 410
Public Schools in, 289
*New Priorities in Curriculum* (Berman), 2
New Teacher Project, The, 198
Newbery Medal, 270
Ngo, B., 435–436
Nieto, S., 62, 111, 194
Nietzsche, F., 413
No Child Left Behind Act, 8, 38, 70, 74, 154, 243, 286, 422
accountability and, 64, 98, 128, 186, 251
achievement gap and, 447
curriculum changes and, 186
inclusive education and, 281
mandates of, 103, 142, 251, 261, 376
on parental involvement, 328
penalties from, 286
Reading First program and, 175
school funding and, 128, 142
No Child Left Inside movement, 429
“No pass, no promotion” regulations, 201
Noblit, G. W., 371
Noddings, N., 294
Nonschool curriculum, 394, 396
Normal schools, 199
Northland College, 429
Null curriculum, xxv, 215, 353
Nussbaum, M., 58, 294
NYCoRE, 356
NYQueer, 356

Oakland Ebonics debate, 262
Obama, B., 286, 352
Dream Act of, 250, 356
on importance of teachers, 199
Race to the Top program of, 8, 98, 103, 155, 286, 287, 376
Obesity, 71, 72, 74, 75
Occupy Movement, 321
*Odyssey, The* (Homer), 305
Oliva, M., 162
*On Being Human* (Kinget), 58
Ong, W. J., 20–21
Online degree programs, 294
Open admissions policy (CUNY), 262
Opportunity gap, 210
Oppression, 361, 362, 447
matrix of, 420–421
Oral cultures, 20–21
Oral history, 253, 397
Orellana, M. F., 265
Organization and sequencing of subject matters, 78–86
academic disciplines orientation, 79–80
approaches to, 80–81
broad-field design for, 80
chronological approach for, 80
classroom curriculum and, 79
collection type curriculum and, 80
contexts and domains in, 79
correlated-subject design for, 80
definitions of organization and sequencing, 79
of disciplines-based curriculum, 79–80, 82
fused-subject design for, 80
ideologies and, 81–82
integrated type curriculum and, 81
orientations and approaches to, 79–82
part-to-whole approach for, 80
programmatic curriculum and, 79
purposes of schooling, 82
questions and forms of inquiry on, 84
sequencing across grade levels, 80
social and economic needs orientation, 79–80
social/political issues and, 79–80, 82–84
students’ interest, experience, and development and,
79–80, 80–81
thematic approach for, 80
whole-to-part approach for, 80
Ortiz, F., 297
O’Sullivan, E., 295
Other mothering, 218, 329, 330
Other people’s children, 162, 238, 322, 448
*Other People’s Children* (Delpit), 162
Other/otherness, 271, 282, 355
*Our Future, Our Teachers* (report), 200, 202
Outcome-based education (OBE), 16
Outside curriculum, xxv, 394, 428–429
Oyate, 269

Pacific Islander Americans, 260
Paley, V. G., 157, 162
Palmer, P., 153, 157
Index • 509

Pang, V. O., 217
Papert, S., 88, 92
Parallel literature, 271
Parental, familial, and communal milieu, 326–334
  access to schools/education processes, 327–328
  community-based organizations and, 332, 333
  community involvement and, 327–330, 332
  contemporary concerns, 327–328
  context of, 328
  definition of families, 326
  economic, cultural, and political capital and, 329–330
  feminist theory and, 330
  forms of inquiry on, 330–332
  funds of knowledge and, 329, 330
  home knowledge and, 329, 331
  local knowledge and, 330
  modes of expression on, 332–333
  parental involvement and, 327–330, 332
  school-community connectivity and, 327
  school policies for parents and community, 327–328, 332–333
  theory of, 328–330
Parental role of teachers, 193, 195
Paris, D., 211, 265
Park, R., 209
Parker, F. W., 12, 292, 293
Parker, L. K., 411
Parks, R., 262
Participation in education, 191, 337
Participatory learning, 337
Participatory culture, 135, 137, 139–140, 145
Participatory inquiry, 332
Partnership for 21st Century Skills, The, 16
Pask, G., 88
Patterson, T., 402
Paul, D. G., 360
Payne, R., 369
Pearson, 320
Pedagogy, 165–173
  banking, 237, 284–285
  capitalism and, 165–166, 167, 169–170
  critical, 170–171, 251, 260
  culturally contested, 251, 254
  culturally relevant, 170, 207–214, 219, 238, 243, 251, 448
  culturally values-driven, 407–415
  curriculum as, 244, 247
decolonial, 171, 172
definition of, 165, 167
ecopedagogy, 427–428
forms of inquiry for, 171–172
global context for, 168–170
globalization and, 168–169
ideals and goals for, 165, 167–168
ideologies and, 165–166
imaginative, 172
intercultural, 171, 172
polities and, 166–168
practical position (praxis) on, 237, 238, 284, 448
problem-posing, 225, 237, 284–285
progressive, 170, 236
reciprocal, 172
social education system, 165–166
standardization and, 166–168
transformative, 143, 194, 211, 347–350
for well-being, 165–173, 192, 195
Pedagogy of Freedom (Freire), 156–157
Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Freire), 427
Peer effects in test scores, 185
Peer teaching, 280
Pelosi, N., 352
Perception, 129, 132
Performing Identity/Performing Culture (Dimitriadis), 139
Performing Pedagogy (Garoian), 51
Perry, R. B., 58
Perry, T., 411
Personal essay, 162–163
Personal=passionate=participatory inquiry, 193, 251, 254
Pestalozzi, J. H., 130, 292, 293, 295, 321
Petchauer, E., 409
Petrarch, 57
Pharr, S., 351
Phenomenology, 17, 93, 114–115, 116, 140, 238, 387–388
Phillion, J., 157, 331
Phillips, L., 361–362
Philosophical mode of inquiry, 323
Philosophy, 54
Physical education, 70–77
  contemporary concerns in, 72–74
  content of, 72–73
  contextual forces in, 74–75
  forms of inquiry in, 75–76
  history of (U.S.), 71–72
  ineffectiveness, concerns about, 72
  innovation in, 73–74
  marginalization of, 70–71, 72, 74
  models of, 71–72, 73–74, 76
  multi-activity model of, 71–72
  obesity and health issues, 71, 72, 74, 75, 76
  outcomes and standards in, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76
  theory in, 75
  valuation of, 70–71, 74
Piaget, J., 32, 88
Pinnegar, S., 179
PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), 27, 33, 320
Plato, 119, 153, 296, 377
Plato, Not Prozac (Marinoff), 294
PLATO system, 88
Play, value of, 127, 194
Pledge of Allegiance, 378
Plutarch, 305
Policy curriculum, 79
Policy makers, xxiv, 8, 53, 55, 152, 154
concerns about global competitiveness, 261
standardization and, 55, 103, 106, 143, 166
Policy milieu, 319–325
autobiographical texts and, 323
class structure, poverty, and inequities and, 322
conflicts in, 320
contemporary concerns about, 319–320
context and linkages in, 321
corporations and, 320, 323
curriculum as cause and effect, 324
decision makers in, 319–320, 323
definitions in, 324
forms of inquiry and modes of expression in, 323–324
globalization and, 320
mandates and standardization and, 319–320
market forces and, 320
needs and knowledge gaps and, 320
policy centers and, 323–324
policy elites and, 320
policy-practice gap and, 320
responses to diversity and, 321–322
role of culture in teaching and, 322
theory of, 321–323
Political issues
humanities and, 56–57
in organizing and sequencing subject matters, 82–84
Political science, 53–54
See also Humanities
Politics, 166–167, 170, 187
as context for education, 165–167, 235
media literacy and, 143–144
political goal of education, 160, 170, 190, 191
politically relevant pedagogy, 211
of standardized testing, 186
See also Capitalism; Globalization
Politics of Politeness, The (Ross), 364
Popkewitz, T., 383
Popular cultural milieu, 407–415
Popular culture, 134–141, 407–415
contemporary concerns in, 135–136
context for, 136–138
as destabilizing force, 135
ethnographic studies of, 138–139, 140
films as, 136, 137–138
forms of inquiry and modes of expression in, 140
globalization and, 135–137, 140
hip hop and, 137, 139, 140, 407–415
as lived curriculum, 138, 139
media and, 134–135
production and participation in, 135, 137, 139–140
superheroes in, 137–138
technology and, 134–137
theory of, 138–140
See also Culturally values-driven curriculum; Hip hop
Porifolio, B. J., 379
Positivism, 187, 286–288, 349
Posthuman age/perspective, 90, 92, 93–94, 418, 422
Postman, N., 144
Postmodernism, 41, 50, 380, 386
grassroots, 396
Poston, W. S. C., 450
Poverty, 290
culture of, 209
education level and, 260
students in, 216, 253
See also Socioeconomic class milieu
Power, 61–69, 120–121
binary oppositions and, 271
coloniality of, 168, 169–170, 171
immigrant students' experiences and, 253
race and, 120–121, 122, 123
teacher activism and, 161
See also Language, culture, identity, and power
Poyntz, S., 143, 148
Practical inquiry, xxvi–xxvii, 433
Prakash, M. S., 392, 396, 397
Prashad, V., 434
Pratt, C., 96, 237, 238
Pratt, M. L., 436
Pratt, R. H., 417, 436
Prensky, M., 89
Pressey, S. L., 88
Prison: school-to-prison pipeline, 290
Privatization, 174, 288–290, 295, 309, 377, 379
Problem-based learning (PBL), 15, 16
Problem-posing pedagogy, 225, 237, 284–285
Problem solving, 11–14, 337
Process-oriented subject matter, 2, 55
Professionalism (of teachers), 200–201
Programmatic curriculum, 79
Progressive pedagogy/philosophy, 170, 236, 395, 396, 397
“Project Method, The” (Kilpatrick), 7, 15, 17
Promise Neighborhoods program, 332
Proposition 227 (California), 262
Provenzo, E., 306
Prozac Nation (Wurtzel), 294
Psychic arrest, 105
Psychoanalysis, 114, 237
Psychology, 129, 385, 450
Puerto Ricans, 269
Pugach, M. C., 282
Punishing aspects, 290–291
Pura Belpré Award, 270
Purpel, D., 344, 348, 350
Purposes of schooling, 6–8, 82

Qualitative Evaluation: Concepts and Cases in Curriculum Criticism (Willis), 59

Queer Art of Failure (Halberstam), 354
Queer milieu, 351–357, 449
   autobiography and, 114
   criminalization and, 353
   fear of the queer, 353
   LGBTQ, 351, 352–353, 355, 356
   queerness, meanings and usages of, 351–352
   suicides and violence, 352–353
See also Gender, sexuality, and queer milieu
Quijano, A., 168
Quinn, T., 162, 163
Quintilian, 155, 305

Race, 62, 271
   artificial boundaries and, 420
   Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People, A, 450
   binary oppositions in, 271, 420
   browning the curriculum, 359–360, 364, 416–423
   context for, 121–122
   critical race currere, 113, 115–116, 119–126
   decolonizing of one’s mind, 120, 121, 125
   interracial marriage, 448, 451
   issues with high-stakes testing, 188
   land and, 425–426
   mark-all-that-apply census option, 449, 451
   multiracial identity development, 450
   multiracial milieu, 447–454
   oppression and, 361, 420–421
   power and, 120–121, 122, 123
   slavery and, 121
   social studies curriculum and, 37–38, 42
   stereotypes of, 121–122
   violent surroundings and, 408
See also Multicultural, multilingual, and multiracial milieu; Racism
Race/feminist currere, 113, 115–116, 119–126
   Black feminism and, 122–124
   contemporary concerns in, 120–121
   context, 121–122
   forms of inquiry and modes of expression in, 124–125
   (re)-membering in, 124, 125
   stereotypes and, 121–122
   theory of, 122–124
See also Currere
Race to the Top, 8, 98, 103, 155, 286, 287, 376
Racism, 107, 191, 202, 260, 269, 295, 361
   Brown v. Board of Education decision, 22, 262, 269
   civil rights movement and, 262, 319, 361
   color-blind racism, 420
   current day violence and, 320
   Freedom Schools and, 237, 332
   immigrants and, 251, 253
   persistence of, 418–419, 422
   racial superiority theories and, 418
   school integration and, 396
   segregation and desegregation and, 216, 253, 290, 396
   systemic roots of, 65–66, 202
   White supremacist logic and, 417–420, 421, 422, 426
Radical constructivism, 32
Radical equality concept, 30
Radical Teacher, 356
Radway, J., 139
Rancière, J., 50, 296
Randall, M., 73
Rasmussen, D., 428
Raup, B., 14
Ravitch, D., 8, 286, 324
Raymond, S., 351
Reading and writing, 20–21
Reading engagement, 175
Reading First program, 175
Reading in a Participatory Culture (Jenkins and Kelley), 140
Reagan, R., 379
Reay, D., 368
Received curriculum, xxv
Reflections From the Heart of Educational Inquiry (Willis and Schubert), 59
Regan, T., 426
Regio Emilia schools, 332
Reid, W., 215
Rein, W., 12
Relevance of education
   culturally relevant pedagogy, 170, 207–214, 219, 238, 409, 448
   politically relevant pedagogy, 211
   for students, 194, 207–214, 216, 234, 243, 409
Religious studies, 363
   Religious values, homeschooling and, 395–396
   (Re)-membering, 124, 125
   Renn, K. A., 450
Resistance Through Rituals (Hall and Jefferson), 385
Response to Intervention (RtI), 175–176
Rethinking Schools, 437
Rhodes, J., 253
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social education system</td>
<td>165–166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social efficiency</td>
<td>82, 243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social goal of education</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social justice issues</td>
<td>29, 30–31, 66, 191, 238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capitalism and pedagogy and</td>
<td>166–168, 169–170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical race/feminist currere and</td>
<td>120–121, 125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forms of inquiry and modes of expression</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narratives on</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social studies and</td>
<td>37–38, 39–40, 41, 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students as activists for</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers as activists for</td>
<td>160–164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers as cultural workers and</td>
<td>191, 194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching for social justice</td>
<td>162, 195, 448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media/networking</td>
<td>136, 144–146, 384, 408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social reconstruction</td>
<td>82, 243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social reproduction</td>
<td>56, 72, 83, 85, 165, 178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>36–44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accountability, assessment, and standards and</td>
<td>38–39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>citizenship promotion through</td>
<td>36, 37–38, 39–40, 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Core State Standards and</td>
<td>38–39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contemporary concerns in</td>
<td>37–39, 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>context and history</td>
<td>39–40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curriculum standards for</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>definition of</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diversity and social issues</td>
<td>37–38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forms of inquiry and modes of expression in</td>
<td>41–42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>global issues and</td>
<td>37, 41, 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>immigrants and English language learners</td>
<td>38, 39, 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>literacy and</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multicultural perspective in</td>
<td>38, 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Council for the Social Studies and</td>
<td>38, 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patriotism and</td>
<td>40, 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public debate on</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purposes of</td>
<td>36, 39–40, 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reconceptualization of curriculum in</td>
<td>37–38, 39–40, 41, 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scholarly research in</td>
<td>36–37, 41–42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social justice issues and</td>
<td>37–38, 39–40, 41, 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject matter and curriculum in</td>
<td>36–44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supplementary materials for</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching the Leves project</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theory on</td>
<td>40–41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traditionalists vs. nontraditionalalians</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal context</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-emotional development</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocritical literacy</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-cultural theory</td>
<td>65–66, 263, 264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic class milieu</td>
<td>367–373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>academic achievement and</td>
<td>370–372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contemporary concerns in</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>context for</td>
<td>368–369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>economic inequality and</td>
<td>368, 369–370, 371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elites and</td>
<td>369–370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotions and</td>
<td>371–372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill-based assessments</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>16–17, 54–55, 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>career and life</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Core State Standards and</td>
<td>142, 243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deskilling of teachers</td>
<td>154, 174–182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>digital literacy</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for improvisation</td>
<td>226–228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for inclusive democratic participation</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning and innovation</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for media literacy</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of students, technology-related</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of teachers, technology-related</td>
<td>340–341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for 21st century</td>
<td>335–36, 338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*See also* Literacy

Skinner, B. F., 88
Skovsmose, O., 30
Slattery, P., 400
Slavery, 121, 306, 307, 394
	chattel slavery, 440
Sleeter, C., 156
Sloan, K., 201
*Slumdog Millionaire* (film), 136
Smith, A., 421
Smith, B. O., 14, 97, 99
Smith, D. G., 93
Smith, G., 427
Smith, J., 354
Smith, L. T., 435
Smith, M., 101
Smitherman, G., 265
Snedden, D., 185
Sober, N. W., 384
Social capital, 322, 329, 330
Social class. *See* Socioeconomic class milieu
Social context, 82–84
Social differentiation, 168–170
forms of inquiry and modes of expression on, 370–372
lack of debate about, 369, 370
lack of fluidity and, 369–370
meritocracy, belief in, 368–369
mobility, belief in, 369
new economy, 368
shifting landscapes in, 368–369
U.S. economy, 368
Socioeconomic deprivation, 253
Sociogeny, 421
Socrates, 50, 54, 57
Soep, E., 387, 388
Soja, E. W., 402
Soka education, 13, 293–294
Solórzano, D., 331, 436
Souls of Black Folk, The (Du Bois), 59, 307
Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 262, 361
Spanish language, 22, 295
Special education teachers, 280
Spectacular Things Happen Along the Way (Schultz), 157
Spencer, H., xxiv, 46, 57, 58, 60, 321, 384, 417
Spencer, R., 451
Spiritual milieu. See Moral and spiritual milieu
Spivak, G., 120, 421
Spolin, V., 223
Spring, J., 396
Springgay, S., 51
Sprit murder, 121
Sputnik era, 82, 106, 156, 177, 243, 319
Standardization, 154, 261, 377, 419, 422
  call for moratorium on, 171
  competitiveness and, 178, 186
  in conflict with changing realities, 243–244
  cultural homogenization and, 158
  pedagogy and, 166–168
  scripted curriculum and, 184, 186, 243
  teachers and, 154
Standardized testing, 105, 128, 154, 183–189, 417
  Campbell’s Law and, 187
  contemporary use of, 186
  contexts for, 185–186
  curriculum focus on tested subjects, 184, 186, 187
  deficiencies of, 106, 184
  equality issues and, 183–184
  impacts of, theories on, 186–188
  language learners and immigrants and, 251
  mandates for, 103, 261, 376
  peer effects in test scores, 185
  penalties for low-performing schools, 251
  reasons for, 183
  scripted curriculum and, 184, 186, 243
  subjectivity in grading and, 185
  teacher evaluation through, 155, 183–189, 201–202
  teaching to the test, practice of, 184, 187
  validity questions about test scores, 184–185, 234–235
See also Teacher evaluation; Testing Standards
  accountability and, 38–39, 64, 154, 186
  curriculum limitations due to, 64, 78, 155, 166, 176–177, 184, 243
  curriculum of imagination and, 127, 128, 129
  humanities and, 55–56
  impacts on curriculum and teaching, 64, 176–177, 186
  impacts on minorities and multicultural education, 64, 67
  school funding and, 71, 128, 142, 183, 201
  scripted curriculum and, 184, 186, 243
  social studies and, 37, 38–39
See also Common Core State Standards
Standpoint theory, 420
Start Where You Are but Don’t Stay There (Milner), 221
Steele, C., 411
Steinberg, S., 435
Steiner, R., 58, 237, 238, 296
STEM. See Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
Stenhouse, L., 156
Stereotypes
  books on, 269
  racial and gender, 121–122, 362
  of youth, 387
  Stiegler, B., 91
Stillman, J., 156
Storytelling, 59, 252, 254, 265, 330, 436
counterstorytelling, 123, 254, 331
Storywork, 331
Stovall, D., 162, 413
Stratemeyer, F. B., 16
Street, B. V., 21, 22
Stuchul, D., 392
Student lore, 238
Students, 231–299
  asking, rather than telling, 247
  assessments of, 193
  creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile living and,
  292–299
  as critical citizens, not commodities, 284–291
  cultural competence of, 191–192
  culturally and linguistically diverse, 259–267
  as curriculum, xxv–xxvi, 232, 233–240
  as curriculum, contemporary concerns for, 234–235
  as curriculum, context of, 235
  as curriculum, forms of inquiry, 238
  as curriculum, modes of expression, 238–239
  as curriculum, theory of, 235–238
  disability and, 176, 202, 276–283
  diversity among, 113, 191, 247, 259–267
dropout rates, 244, 407
dropouts, income potential of, 260
with emotional disturbances, 408–409
empowerment of, 191, 194, 242
engagement of, 244, 247, 264
experiences of, curriculum, 236, 241–248, 411
experiences of, curriculum decisions and, 79–80, 80–81, 82, 98, 170
experiences of, forms of inquiry and expression in, 244–246
experiences of, theory on, 242–243
freedom to choose subject matter, 5, 7
funds of knowledge of, 23–24, 62, 66, 235, 238, 244, 260, 322
imagination and play, importance of, 194
immigrant students, experiences of, 249–258
inclusive education and, 278–281
Living in the Future Project, 245
Madison 2020 Project, 245
mainstreaming of, 278
multicultural children's literature and, 268–275
questions on place in curriculum, 236
reduction to numbers, due to testing/assessment, 193
relevance of curriculum for, 194, 207–214, 216, 234, 243, 409
skills-based assessments and, 55
What Kids Can Do Project, 246
whole/holistic view of, 190–191, 193, 384–391
Students’ Right to Their Own Language resolution, 262
Subtractive Schooling (Valenzuela), 329
Suicides, bullying and, 352
Sultan, H., 440–441
Summerhill School, 237, 238
Sunnyside Environmental School, 429
Superheroes, 137–138
Suspension, overuse of, 377
Swanson, D. M., 30
Sweller, J., 92
Synoptic texts, 455
Taba, H., 14
Takaki, R., 42
Taliaferro-Baszile, D., 115, 116, 360
Talkin Black Talk (Alim and Baugh), 265
Tao, X., 292, 296
TASH, 281
Tate, W. F., 162
Taubman, P. M., 200
Taught curriculum, xxv
Taylor, F., 185
Taylor, H., 404
Taylorism, 185–186
Teach for America (TFA), 177–178, 198
Teachers, xxv–xxvi, 151–230
as a commonplace, 153–154
as activists, 160–164
attrition of, 155, 175, 217
Black teachers in urban schools, 215–222
changing demographics and, 155
culture of teacher as curriculum, 154–155
criticism of, 154–155, 174, 199, 200
of cultural background differing from community, 327, 329–330
as cultural workers, 190–197
culturally relevant pedagogy and, 207–214
as curriculum, 152, 153–159
as curriculum discoverers, 155
curriculum-shaping by, 153, 154
deskilling of, 154, 174–182
devaling of, 154, 155
diverse populations and, 64–65, 155, 156, 192, 202–203, 433
diversity among, 191, 202, 215–216, 433
popular culture as, 134–141
process-oriented, 2, 55
professionalized, 4–5
purposes of, 6–8
of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, 27–35
of social studies, 36–44
Subtractive schooling, 238, 264, 265, 329, 333
Subtractive Schooling (Valenzuela), 329
Suicides, bullying and, 352
Sultan, H., 440–441
Summerhill School, 237, 238
Sunnyside Environmental School, 429
Superheroes, 137–138
Suspension, overuse of, 377
Swanson, D. M., 30
Sweller, J., 92
Synoptic texts, 455
TABA, H., 14
Takaki, R., 42
Taliaferro-Baszile, D., 115, 116, 360
Talkin Black Talk (Alim and Baugh), 265
Tao, X., 292, 296
TASH, 281
Tate, W. F., 162
Taubman, P. M., 200
Taught curriculum, xxv
Taylor, F., 185
Taylor, H., 404
Taylorism, 185–186
Teach for America (TFA), 177–178, 198
Teachers, xxv–xxvi, 151–230
as a commonplace, 153–154
as activists, 160–164
attrition of, 155, 175, 217
Black teachers in urban schools, 215–222
changing demographics and, 155
culture of teacher as curriculum, 154–155
criticism of, 154–155, 174, 199, 200
of cultural background differing from community, 327, 329–330
as cultural workers, 190–197
culturally relevant pedagogy and, 207–214
as curriculum, 152, 153–159
as curriculum discoverers, 155
curriculum-shaping by, 153, 154
deskilling of, 154, 174–182
devaling of, 154, 155
diverse populations and, 64–65, 155, 156, 192, 202–203, 433
diversity among, 191, 202, 215–216, 433
popular culture as, 134–141
process-oriented, 2, 55
professionalized, 4–5
purposes of, 6–8
of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, 27–35
of social studies, 36–44
Subtractive schooling, 238, 264, 265, 329, 333
Subtractive Schooling (Valenzuela), 329
Suicides, bullying and, 352
Sultan, H., 440–441
Summerhill School, 237, 238
Sunnyside Environmental School, 429
Superheroes, 137–138
Suspension, overuse of, 377
Swanson, D. M., 30
Sweller, J., 92
Synoptic texts, 455
TABA, H., 14
Takaki, R., 42
Taliaferro-Baszile, D., 115, 116, 360
Talkin Black Talk (Alim and Baugh), 265
Tao, X., 292, 296
TASH, 281
Tate, W. F., 162
Taubman, P. M., 200
Taught curriculum, xxv
Taylor, F., 185
Taylor, H., 404
Taylorism, 185–186
Teach for America (TFA), 177–178, 198
Teachers, xxv–xxvi, 151–230
as a commonplace, 153–154
as activists, 160–164
attrition of, 155, 175, 217
Black teachers in urban schools, 215–222
changing demographics and, 155
culture of teacher as curriculum, 154–155
criticism of, 154–155, 174, 199, 200
of cultural background differing from community, 327, 329–330
as cultural workers, 190–197
culturally relevant pedagogy and, 207–214
as curriculum, 152, 153–159
as curriculum discoverers, 155
curriculum-shaping by, 153, 154
deskilling of, 154, 174–182
devaling of, 154, 155
diverse populations and, 64–65, 155, 156, 192, 202–203, 433
diversity among, 191, 202, 215–216, 433
diversity, teacher preparedness for, 63–64, 192
experiences of, 153
films about, 157, 179–180
forms of inquiry and modes of expression for, 156–158
good teacher, concept of, 199
heroic portrayals of, 179–180
humility and, 192, 193
importance of, Obama’s statement on, 199
as improvisational artists, 223–230
inspiration of, 193–195
interactions of teachers and students’ experiences, 157
as knowers, 157–158
merit pay for, 186
as model of curriculum in action, 155
modeling by, 191
multicultural currere and, 110–111
narratives by, 162, 237, 238–239, 437
parental role of (in loco parentis), 193, 195
pay, student testing and, 201–202
and pedagogy for communal well-being, 165–173
progressive tradition for, 170
race, class, and gender issues for, 152
as researchers, 157
responsibilities of, 155
“right to work” states/conditions for, 353
roles of, 154, 155, 190–191, 192, 215, 338
as service providers, 377
special/important, remembering, 153
standardization policies and, 154
student empowerment by, 191, 194
subcategories of, influences of, 152
technology and, 338, 340–341
teaching community, 162, 195
theories on, 178–179
Teacher bashing and deskilling, 154, 174–182
Common Core State Standards and, 176–177
contemporary deskilling, 175–177
dubious promotion of, 179
feminist theory and, 178
forms of inquiry and modes of expression in, 179–180
governmentality and, 179
Reading First program and, 175
Response to Intervention program and, 175–176
teacher bashing in context, 177–178
test scores and, 174
theories on, 178–179
Teacher education, 4, 198–206
accountability and, 201–202
accrediting bodies and, 201
Black teachers in preparation, 217–218
certification programs, 177–178
contemporary concerns in, 199–203
debates about, 198–199
equity and diversity and, 202–203
focus on content and, 200
good teacher, concept of, 199
Grow Your Own Teachers Illinois, 330, 333
history of, 199
for inclusive education, 280
inquire and modes of expression in, 204–205
multicultural issues and, 111–112
normal schools and, 199
professional societies and, 198
professionalism and, 200–201
reeducation, 111–112
relevancy and, 199
Teach for America (TFA) program, 177–178
tests for entry to credentialing programs, 183
theory and practice, 203–204
Teacher evaluation, 183–189
accuracy of using test scores for, 184–185, 187
contemporary concerns in, 183–185
contemporary use of standardized tests in, 186
contexts for standardized testing in, 185–186
dTPA, 188, 201
forms of inquiry and modes of expression in, 188–189
high-stakes testing and, 183–189
merit pay and, 186
mixed approaches to, 189
performance assessments in, 188
qualitative methods for, 188–189
skills-based student assessments and, 55
theories on, 186–188
through test scores, 155, 174, 183, 201–202
value-added measurement (VAM) and, 183, 184–185,
186, 188
video of teaching, 188
Teacher lore, 157, 163, 238
Teacher performance. See Teacher evaluation
Teachers’ unions, 178, 353
Teacher–student relationships, 194, 212
Teaching
coc-teaching, 280
culturally relevant teaching, 207–214, 238
culturally responsive teaching, 64–65, 207, 208, 238, 251,
264, 448
peer teaching, 280
teach against the grain, 195
teach critical thinking, 195
teach for social justice, 195
teach in-between, 195
teach the taboo, 162, 195
teach to transgress, 162, 195, 221
teach toward freedom, 58, 162, 195
Teaching community, 162, 195
Index

Teaching Community (hooks), 162
Teaching Critical Thinking (hooks), 162
Teaching for Social Justice (Hunt and Quinn), 162, 195
Teaching the Levee project, 42
Teaching the Personal and the Political (Ayers), 162
Teaching the Taboo (Ayers and Ayers), 162, 195
Teaching Toward Democracy (Ayers et al.), 162
Teaching Toward Freedom (Ayers), 58, 162, 195, 238
Team approach, 11–12
Technological literacy, 23, 335, 336, 338
Technological milieu, 335–343
context and, 339–341
digital divide, 338–340
integration and, 339
interactions with curriculum, 335, 338–340, 342
interactions with subject matters, 338–339
interactions with teachers, 338
NAEP Framework, 336, 338
participation and, 337
participative learning, 337
personalization of curriculum and, 337
research inquiries in, 342
student-centered pedagogy and, 337
students’ capacities and, 341
teachers, role of, 338
teachers’ capacities and skill, 340–341
technology as content, 335–336
technology as context, 337–338
technology as curriculum, 335–338
technology as tool, 336–337
TPACK (knowledge and skills), 340
Technology, 27–35
access to, 340
amount of change in 1909, 177
as curriculum, 335–338
digital technology, 23, 87–95
media landscape and popular culture, 135–136
milieu for, 335–343
See also Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
Technoscape, 434
Television, 134–135
network system and, 144
Tester, K., 296
Testing
accountability and, 154, 155, 186
contemporary concerns about, 183–185, 201
curriculum focus on tested subjects, 184, 187
for entry to teacher credentialing programs, 183
essay tests, 185
historical context for (U.S.), 185–186
international, in STEM, 27, 33, 320
international test score comparisons, 174, 320
IQ tests, 185
mandated, 186, 261
passing tests, 8–9
peer effects in test scores, 185
standardized testing, 103, 105, 154, 183–189
standardized testing, deficiencies of, 106
subjectivity in grading, 185
teacher evaluation through, 155, 174, 183, 201–202
test preparation materials, 376
used in teacher evaluation, 155, 174, 183–189, 201–202
validity of test scores, 184–185, 234–235
See also High stakes testing; Standardized testing
Thayer-Beacon, B., 295–296
Their Highest Potential (Siddle-Walker), 221
Third-Wave Womanist Religious Thought (Coleman), 363
36 Children (Kohl), 100
Thompson, G. L., 329–330
Thorndike, E. L., 180, 418
Thornton, S. J., 402
Thorpe, R., 73
Thrasher, F., 385
Through Students’ Eyes (TSE), 241–242, 245–246
Tibet, 441
Tikkun olam, 344, 347, 348, 349–350
Tillman, L. C., 161, 216
TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study), 27, 28, 30
To Dwell With a Boundless Heart (Jardine), 319
To Teach: The Journey of a Teacher (Ayers), 157, 162
Toda, J., 13, 292
Tolstoy, L., 292
Toward a New Common School Movement (De Lissovoy, Means, and Saltman), 290–291
Toward a Poor Curriculum (Pinar and Grumet), 103, 105, 108
Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings), 211
Townes, E. M., 363
Toynbee, A., 296
TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge), 340
Training of the mind, 5–6
Transformation, personal, 110–111
Transformational change, 160–161, 425
Transformative pedagogy, 143, 194, 211, 323, 347–350
culturally values-driven curriculum and, 412–413
Translating the Curriculum (Edgerton), 122
Translation, 297
Transnational curriculum, 238, 432–438
policy milieu and, 321
Tribal critical race theory (TribCrit), 420
Trilling, B., 335, 336
Index

Tröhler, D., 295
Troubling in My Soul, A (Townes), 363
Truth, S., 422
TSE Project, 245–246
Tu, W., 292, 295, 296
Tubman, H., 361
Tuck, E., 388, 418, 439, 440–441, 442, 443, 444
Tucson, Arizona, ban on ethnic studies in, 434
2Pac, 407, 409–410, 412–413
Turkle, S., 92
2009 World Report, 449
Tyler, R. W., xxvii, 41, 55
Tyler Rationale, xxviii

Understanding Curriculum (Pinar et al.), 105
Undocuqueer Project, 356
Unequal Childhoods (Lareau), 322
Unions, 354
teachers’ unions, 178, 353
United Negro Improvement Association, 269
University of Chicago Laboratory School, 12, 81, 236
Unschooling, 391–392
See also Alternative school milieu
Unsettlement, 416
Urban contexts, 218–219
Black teachers in urban schools, 215–222
community and family involvement in schools, 328
language in, 265
urban characteristic, 219
urban classrooms, diversity in, 235
urban emergent, 219
urban intensive, 218–219
Utopian societies, 14, 58, 98
Vaidhyanathan, S., 147
Valenzuela, A., 238, 265, 329, 332–333
Valero, P., 30
Vallance, E., 59
Value-added measurement (VAM), 183, 184–185, 186, 188
Van Manen, M., 17
Vargas, C., 356
Vasquez, J., 218
Villegas, A. M., 213
Villenas, S. A., 330
Violence, 295, 346, 348, 408
community-based, 408
gender- and sexuality-based, 352–353
witnessed by racial groups, 408
Vizenor, G., 422
Vlieghe, J., 93
Vocationalism, 49
Voting rights legislation, 262
Vouchers, 376
Vygotsky, L., 32, 92, 236, 292
Waiting for Superman (film), 353
Waldorf School, 58, 236–237
Walker, A., 124, 358, 361, 363
Walkerdine, V., 30
Wallace, K. R., 450
Walsh, C., 171
Wang, H., 157, 403
War, pervasiveness of, 378
Ward, L. F., 242
Washington, B. T., 309, 425
Washington, I., 218
Watt, I., 21
Weaver, J. A., 93
Weaver, V. M., 451
Web (World Wide Web), 146–147
Weinberg, C., 59
Weis, L., 65, 140
Weiser, M., 93
Weitzner, D., 144
Well-being, pedagogy for, 165–173, 192, 195
See also Pedagogy
Wells, I. B., 125, 422
Westbrook, R. B., 312
Western/Eurocentric dominance, 62, 63, 66, 120–121, 166
What African American Parents Want Educators to Know (Thompson), 329–330
What Is Curriculum Theory? (Pinar), 105, 122
What Keeps Teachers Going? (Nieto), 194
What Kids Can Do (WKCD) Project, 246
Wheatley, P., 308
When the Levees Broke (film), 42
White, P. B., 422
White supremacy, logic and impacts of, 417–420, 421, 422, 426
White Teacher (Paley), 162
Whitehead, A. N., 58, 204, 292
Whitestream, 419
Whitlock, R. U., 108
Whyte, W. F., 385
Willett, W., 96
Williams, D. S., 363
Williams, P., 126
Willis, G., 59
Willis, P., 178, 385
Windows of the soul, 6
Wineburg, S., 40
Winnemucca, S., 422
Winters, L. I., 450, 451
Womanist Reader, The (Phillips), 361–362
Womanist/Black feminist milieu, 358–366, 449
activism and resistance, 361, 362
Africana womanism, 362–363
challenging the status quo, 360–361
color purple and, 358
constituent elements of, 358, 363
contemporary concerns in, 360–361
context of, 361–362
curriculum topic of, 359–360
forms of inquiry and modes of expression, 363–364
healing and wholeness and, 363
new thinking about curriculum and pedagogy, 360–361
oppression, challenging, 361, 362
religious studies and, 363
terms used in, 358–359
theories of, 362–363
understanding curriculum through, 360
understanding students through, 360
Walker, Alice, and, 358, 361, 363
Women’s rights movement, 361
See also Feminism
Wood, R. M., 88
Woodson, C. G., 96, 120, 204, 308–309, 395, 396, 422
Woolf, V., 54, 59
World Bank, 167, 169
World literature, 270–271
Worthwhile learning, 292–299, 321
See also Creative, associated, joyful, and worthwhile learning
Worthwhile topics for curricula, xxiii–xxvi, 53, 56, 57, 58, 60, 321, 456
Wright, E. O., 367
Wright, H. K., 370
Wright, R., 107
Wright Brothers, 131
Writing, invention and systems of, 19–20, 25
Wurtzel, E., 294
Wynters, S., 124
Yang, K. W., 388, 439, 440, 444
Yerkes, R., 185
Yosso, T., 331, 436
Youmans, G., 356
Young, E. F., 236, 354
Young, M. E., 83
Youth and History (Gillis), 387
Youth cultural milieu, 383–390
applied inquiry and, 388
coevalness and, 388–389
commodification of youth, 387
contemporary concerns in, 383
fabrication and, 383
forms in inquiry and modes of expression in, 387–388
gangs and, 385
global youthscape, 384, 387
historical inquiry and, 387
identities and, 383
immigrant students and, 252, 253
meanings and context for, 383, 384–386
narrative/biographical inquiry and, 388
phenomenological/ethnographic inquiry and, 387–388
popular culture and, 386
school culture and, 384
stereotypes and, 387
storm and stress period, 384–385
subcultural groups in, 385
theory on, 386–387
See also Hip-hop; Popular culture
Youth participatory action research (YPAR), 244, 388

Zentella, A. C., 265
Zinn, H., 40, 42
Zion, S. D., 278
Zone of proximal development, 236
Zuckerberg, M., 146
Zumwalt, K., 400