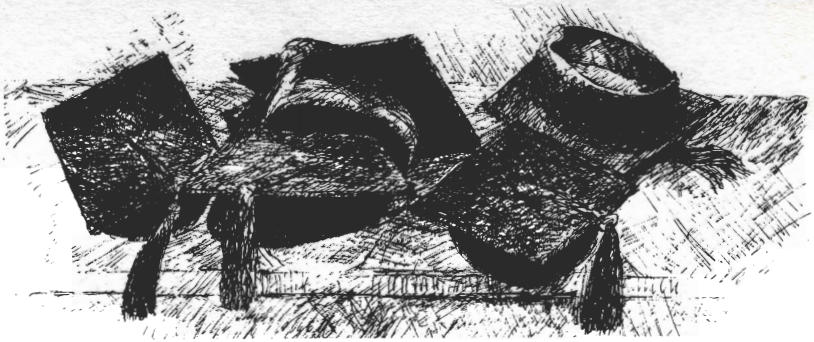

Spring 1982 Vol. XVII No. 2

# McGill Journal of Education

## SCHOOLING A PEOPLE

Edgar Friedenberg on

## Cultural Hegemonies

Jeffrey Bulcock on

## Assessing Schools

Douglas McCall on

## Quebec and Ontario in Contrast

# McGill Journal of Education



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McGill University

# Résumés

**Core Curriculum, Nostalgia, and Anomie** Edgar Z. Friedenberg

L'article qui suit est la reprise d'un discours prononcé à l'université Concordia à Montréal au mois d'octobre 1981 sur les programmes de tronc commun. Quiconque a déjà lu ou entendu Edgar Friedenberg n'ignore pas qu'il utilise une langue des plus colorées qui crée un véritable effet de surprise chez ses auditeurs ou lecteurs. Ceux-ci, désarçonnés par la rapidité de son élocution, ses feintes, et ses jeux de séduction, se laissent prendre et lui font marquer un point. Ce point est que les écoles n'ont pas d'autre choix que de se plier à la culture qui les a engendrées, d'enseigner l'idéologie de cette culture par le biais d'un programme de tronc commun efficace et au moins de le bien faire sans prétendre qu'elle sert autre chose que l'hégémonie culturelle au sein de laquelle elle se trouve.

**Evolution and Revolution: secondary school changes for Ontario and Quebec** Douglas S. McCall

Il est manifeste à bien des égards que le Québec n'est pas une province comme les autres. En éducation, l'importance de l'engagement à développer le système, et avec lui, en temps voulu, toute la société, semble mal comprise même au Québec et pourtant, il existe peu de situations parallèles dans le monde. McCall compare deux documents de réforme du système secondaire apparemment analogues au Québec et en Ontario, (son voisin massif et plein d'assurance) et démontre que les véritables différences entre les deux sont multiples et ont toutes une base idéologique; que cela soit dû au fait qu'il y ait deux idéologies différentes en jeu, ou seulement une, reste à prouver.

**From Design to Implementation** Harold H. Smithman and Brian Maddock

Le Régime pédagogique du Québec est abordé dans son ensemble ailleurs dans ce numéro (article de McCall) et ses conséquences sont ici évaluées à l'échelle globale d'une société toute entière. Cet

article décrit son application à l'échelle des salles de classe dans le cadre d'un nouveau cours de géographie au niveau du secondaire. Smithman et Maddock démontrent tout le temps e tous les efforts des professeurs concernés (et pas seulement des professeurs de géographie) qu'il a fallu pour appliquer de manière pratique ce nouveau programme afin d'assurer une maîtrise complète de la discipline, ce qui a été un enrichissement pour tous les intéressés.

**School Assessment: the Middle Way** — Jeffrey W. Bulcock

Quand une partie quelconque de la race humaine n'a plus foi dans sa propre existence, il en va de même des institutions chargées d'assurer son renouvellement. Pourtant, comme le souligne Bulcock, ne serait-ce que pour assurer l'avenir immédiat de notre race (soit, jusqu'à environ l'an 2040), les écoles de nos sociétés occidentales ont une responsabilité immédiate et urgente: elles doivent en effet tirer le meilleur parti possible de nos jeunes générations dont les effectifs ne cessent de baisser. Nous ignorons à peu près tout de l'efficacité de ces institutions (nos écoles) qui doivent relever ce nouveau défi, à savoir de former la population active minoritaire d'une société différente qui s'annonce. Bulcock discute des raisons pour lesquelles nous tenons à maintenir et même à protéger cet état d'ignorance et il offre des exemples des moyens dont nous disposons pour y remédier.

**It's Good to be a Teacher** — David G. Marshall

Il faut faire bien attention de ne pas prendre ce qui suit trop à la légère. Selon Marshall, il semble que les directeurs d'école soient voués à devenir une simple utopie. Il s'ensuit que, n'ayant plus grand chose à faire, ils se mettent vraiment à l'oeuvre et aident leur corps enseignant. Parlerait-on alors d'utopie pour les professeurs? (Oui, bien entendu).

**The Value of Questions** — Walter Werner

**Questions of Value** — Richard Butt

Les deux articles qui suivent et qui portent sur ce que devrait être l'école ont été écrits en complément l'un de l'autre. Werner étudie les principales questions soulevées ainsi que les méthodologies utilisées depuis plusieurs dizaines d'années dans l'étude des programmes. Il explique leurs limites et leurs insuffisances et attire l'attention du lecteur sur certaines nouvelles préoccupations qui poussent ceux qui travaillent dans ce domaine à se poser des questions de valeur plutôt que des questions de technique. Butt, qui examine cela avec plus de recul, se demande si les programmes actuellement enseignés dans les écoles répondent vraiment aux besoins de la vie humaine qui nous attend. Il part d'une enquête sur les valeurs dysfonctionnelles

présentes dans la société pour proposer un nouveau plan des valeurs qu'il convient d'enseigner si l'on veut que notre société puisse survivre. C'est sur ce plan que devraient être fondés tous nos programmes à partir d'aujourd'hui.

**Teaching about Race Relations: a ten year program in Britain** — Chris Bagley

**MacDonald's Models: curriculum development in sex education** — William E. Searles

Les deux courts articles qui suivent présentent une forme de compte rendu susceptible d'expliquer au profane l'essentiel d'un projet de recherche d'une façon qu'un rapport de recherche normal est incapable de faire à cause de tout l'apparat académique qui l'entoure. Il s'agit dans les deux cas de questions d'éducation plutôt délicates et présentant un intérêt très vif pour bien des membres du public de nos sociétés occidentales contemporaines.

Les recherches que Bagley a menées en Grande-Bretagne pendant un certain nombre d'années nous apprennent qu'il est possible de réaliser de vrais progrès en ce qui concerne l'enseignement de la tolérance à un grand nombre d'étudiants même si, grâce à cette approche, on n'a pas réussi à redonner confiance à ceux qui en manquaient ou à remédier aux tendances racistes de certains professeurs. Searles décrit l'introduction réussie d'un programme d'éducation sexuelle dans une école de Montréal, projet qui a nécessité la combinaison de deux schèmes de valeurs différentes pour la négociation d'un nouveau programme d'étude, l'un s'appuyant beaucoup sur la participation communautaire et l'autre sur les besoins des étudiants. Les deux rapports témoignent des mérites qu'il y a à aborder avec patience une question qui deviendrait autrement un probléme culturel insoluble.

**Education for Democracy** — Laurence Stott

Plus on est intelligent, moins on a de patience pour les choses qui se produisent lentement. C'est pourquoi l'éducation semble nous empêcher de saisir la façon dont les choses se passent réellement, notamment dans les affaires humaines, et il semble qu'on ne puisse jamais accéder à la sagesse à mesure que l'horizon de l'intellect s'éloigne et tente de nous séduire au-delà des réalités présentes. Comme nous devrions le savoir, une démocratie pratique est fragile et la négligence est son pire poison. Ce qui est plus grave encore, comme le fait si bien remarquer Stott, c'est que nous nous en servons à profusion dans les écoles sans le moindre fondement et en nous basant sur de graves malentendus. Avant même que nous n'en ayons conscience, la prochaine génération, dégoûtée et ignorante, se tournera vers quelque chose de bien pire, à moins que nous ne songions sérieusement à enseigner les véritables mérites du système dont nous avons hérité.

## COLLABORATEURS

**Chris Bagley** est professeur titulaire de la Chaire Burns à l'université de Calgary où il donne un cours sur la protection de l'enfance. Il a réalisé des travaux de recherche sur l'enseignement en Grande-Bretagne, en Jamaique et en Inde et se penche actuellement sur la question de l'intégration des enfants handicapés dans les écoles régulières au Canada.

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**Richard Butt,** professeur agrégé de sciences de l'éducation à McGill, travaille pour le département d'enseignement primaire et pour le département d'administration et politiques. Il donne des cours sur les programmes d'étude et, en collaboration avec Norman Henchey, il coordonne un nouveau projet relatif à l'étude des programmes. Il mène actuellement des études sur le terrain afin de découvrir comment faciliter l'élaboration, l'application et la modification des programmes au niveau de l'école.

**Edgar Z. Friedenberg** enseigne la pédagogie à l'université de Dalhousie. Son plus récent ouvrage s'intitule "Deference to Authority: the Case of Canada".

**Brian Maddock** est conseiller pédagogique en sciences humaines à la commission scolaire du Lakeshore. Il a beaucoup contribué à l'évolution des programmes de sciences humaines depuis dix ans.

**David G. Marshall** est professeur adjoint au Département d'Administration scolaire et des Fondements de l'Education à l'Université du Manitoba. Il s'intéresse principalement aux questions d'administration scolaire dans les régions sous-developpées et aux applications pédagogiques de l'informatique.

**Douglas S. McCall** est un enseignant qui a occuppé différentes fonctions au sein de l'Association des Enseignants du Lakeshore, de l'Association provinciale des Enseignants protestants du Québec (PAPT) et de la Fédération canadienne des Enseignants. A la lumière de ses études supérieures et de son expérience, il étudie certaines orientations qui inquiètent les enseignants, particulièrement celle de la centralisation des programmes.

**William E. Searles** est professeur au département de l'enseignement

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**Laurence Stott** est directeur du Département d'histoire, de philosophie et de sociologie à l'Université de Toronto. Il écrit: "Je persiste à prendre position en faveur de l'importance de la philosophie, en tant qu'étude des valeurs, dans les programmes de formation générale et professionnelle des enseignants. Je m'inquiète de la vague actuelle d'anti-intellectualisme qui envahit d'une façon générale la formation des enseignants."

**Walter Werner,** professeur adjoint au Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction à l'Université de Colombie-Britannique, donne des cours d'évaluation et d'application des programmes au niveau des 2e et 3e cycles, cours axés sur la méthodologie qualitative. Il effectue actuellement des recherches sur le rôle de la "croyance" dans les méthodes d'application.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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**Douglas S. McCall** is a teacher who has been elected to various positions in the Lakeshore Teachers' Association, the Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers of Quebec, and the Canadian Teachers' Federation. He has combined post-graduate studies with this experience to examine teacher concerns such as the centralization of curriculum.

**W.E. Searles** is a Professor in Secondary Education at McGill University. He is the author of a monograph on "Thinking and the Processes of Science in Inquiry-Type Curricula." He has researched the use and categorization of different curriculum development models in science education, and his present interests include the application of this knowledge in curriculum development.

**Harold H. Smithman** is Director of Instructional Services at the Lakeshore School Board. He has been a visiting lecturer at McGill for the past ten years.

**Laurence Stott** is Chairman of the Department of History, Philosophy and Sociology of Education in the University of Toronto. He writes, "I am continuing to argue the importance of philosophy, here regarded as essentially the study of values, within teacher preparation and teacher education programs. I worry about the current wave of anti-intellectualism sweeping through teacher education generally."

**Walter Werner,** an Assistant Professor in the Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of British Columbia, teaches graduate courses in curriculum evaluation and implementation, with emphasis upon qualitative methodology. He is presently doing research on the role of "belief" in implementation processes.

Editorial

# Problems of crowd control

One could characterize our times by an intense curiosity and an increasing knowledgeability about the forces that determine change in our societies, coupled with a persisting sense of our helplessness to control them. Much of the writing in this issue has been based on the premise that schools can make things happen; it is an assumption that has been seriously brought into question by learned writers in the last decade or so. The same learned writers might however concede that schools do keep making the wrong things happen (and thus of course concede the point).

Nevertheless there is a persistent confidence in these pages that things in society at large can be put right by the right use of schooling. Thus schools are constantly being thought of as more than merely the instruments of an obscurely self-maintaining culture. Does a human society really have the capacity to straighten itself out, if the direction things are taking is not to its taste?

Many of our present customs and institutions, far from being the manifestations of deep forces in the culture, have merely acted to freeze some temporary aberration of power into a lasting distortion of the body politic. The fact that we have public schools at all, and that all of them are organized in vast bureaucratic systems, does not mean that they came into being because they had demonstrably served a need of society to regenerate itself - only that some people in power meant that they should.

An alternative to tinkering with an old engine or massively rebuilding it is to throw the thing away and get a new one. This solution seems especially attractive when new sources of energy are about. We are nowadays contemplating with dawning interest an education completely in the home, without schools, for it offers both

the neat technology of the computer and an alternative energy resource in personal motivation, rather than compulsion by agents of the state. As a bonus, it promises to relieve us of those problems, seemingly inseparable from schools, that arise from their management of socialization, selection, and custody of the young.

One could draw up a few criteria to be met by any attempt to bring about through education a successful self-correction of culture or society. The enabling institutions must be durable. The people who carry it all out must be thoroughly professional. The undertaking must be on a large enough scale to affect the entire related nexus of customs and beliefs.

Now the commercial system that has brought computer technology to its present state of feasibility for education is one of the two major and rival institutions in our society, the other being the government that runs the schools; and some would say that it is the more durable. The scale on which the government of Quebec has undertaken its revolution in schooling is huge, admirable, and effective; the scale of the computer revolution is world-wide. But can the professionalism of the personnel (including the teachers) in a system bureaucratised from top to bottom compare with that of the agents of high tech in a free enterprise market?

The chances for home education winning out seem good. The educational function would be better served; the functions of custody and selection would no longer be required of institutions in the same way. There remains the function of socialization, which if not required by society would certainly continue to be served by the peer group. The togetherness created by a school is for many of the young its single positive feature; no one seems to have thought of what to do about **that** need, once the schools have all been closed.

**J.K.H.**

The Journal wishes to acknowledge the generosity of Miss **Gloriana J. Martineau,** MA'47, whose financial support has made possible the publication of this issue.

Edgar Z. Friedenberg

# Core curriculum, nostalgia, and anomie

**What follows is a speech given to a conference on core curriculum in late October 1981, at Concordia University in Montreal. Anyone who has read or heard Edgar Friedenberg will know that his language is a bobby-dazzler - to use the accolade of Scottish soccer fans. That is to say, there is a display of bewildering skill - full of feints, seductions, and sheer speed - that achieves its aim and your entertainment at the same time. While you look the other way, bedazzled, he scores a winning point. That point here is that schools have no option but to bow to the particular culture from which they spring, to teach that culture's ideology through an efficient core curriculum, and at least to do it well, without pretending that it is anything but cultural hegemony that they serve.**

Ever since it was first proposed, core curriculum has seemed like a sound idea. I believe it has also been rather widely adopted. When I was a graduate student 40 years ago, core curriculum was really hot and, I would assume, has kept on trucking ever since. It seems such a sensible approach to curriculum building that one would expect it to prevail, gradually - except on the doubtless numerous occasions when it comes into serious conflict with established and entrenched curricular organization, along departmental lines, say; or with a bitter and vigilant "back to basics" movement. You'd have to be pretty devoutly sectarian to get excited about the adoption of core curriculum as if it were a fundamental heresy; though I am sure that on many occasions educational fundamentalists have.

I cannot, myself, seriously doubt that people learn best, if not only, by experience, and that the division of instructional resources along the lines of subject specialties fragments experience and reduces

its potential meaning; and that the organization of blocks of school time around meaningful aspects of living, which take account of as many relevant factors as may be useful in interpreting them, makes more sense than scheduling consecutive 45-minute periods allotted to English - or whatever the statutory language of a province may be - social studies, and so on; while the resources of the school may be judiciously enriched by incorporating events and materials derived from other institutions of the community. So what else is new? And, why, then, apart from the risk of re-iterating the obvious, should I feel queasy about addressing a Conference on "Core Curriculum: Issues, Perspectives, and Implications"?

I do, though; and the balance of this talk will be devoted to explaining why. At the outset, a metaphor might help. I feel rather like a South African, addressing a group of his fellow civil servants in the Department of Tourism, about how to improve tourist services so that the beauty of the nation's scenery, its marvelous beaches and fabulous wildlife preserves, its richly evocative mix of native cultures, its stirring sporting events, hospitable people, and truly unique social and political institutions might be made more accessible and enjoyable to a wider clientele. The Union of South Africa possesses all these attractions in full measure; and though its tourist accommodations and services are already regarded as of high quality, especially the railways, they could doubtless be improved still further. And, indeed, there are a great many people in the world who might - or might not - enjoy a visit to the U. of S.A., but who are deterred from making one because they fear they might not be comfortable there or perhaps could not afford it. They're probably missing a lot; and maybe we could reach more of them.

Valid propositions, all; and yet I'm awfully glad I don't have to address that problem. There are, after all, certain questions of emphasis, of prior assumption left unstated, of possibly relevant considerations (that must necessarily be omitted as lying beyond our terms of reference) which might well prove burdensome. Let me turn, gratefully, therefore, to the innocent and apolitical question of core curriculum, here in Montreal.

**Authenticity - one cannot learn from someone else's experience**

Core curriculum is first of all curriculum, and as such, is affected by the problems that beset all attempts at curriculum construction. To begin with, there is the inherent absurdity - of assuming that important learning is best fostered by requiring people to participate in or submit to organized, planned, and budgeted events or spectacles, intended to teach them something that other people have decided they ought to learn. Not only have the pupils made no such decision; their teachers usually haven't either. Basically, the decision is made in Quebec City or the equivalent. And in this

respect, at least, I do feel grateful for the opportunity to address an audience of anglophones who have recently been informed that their cultural hegemony can no longer be taken for granted. All my audiences have been anglophone, since I speak no other language fluently; but you may be the first to really grasp what I mean when I say that regardless of the instructor's intention, having somebody else's trip laid on you is no good. But curriculum is always somebody else's trip, although school teachers are pretty smug about this as long as they regard themselves as agents of a superior culture, superior on grounds of ethnicity, social class, age, education, or any combination of these.

The issue here is not freedom, but authenticity. One cannot learn from somebody else's experience; or, more precisely, one learns only from one's own experience, which can of course include the experience of being informed or persuaded or coerced by others. Experience keepeth a dear school - compared to what? Really, there is no other. This is not to deny that children and other people learn a lot in school (as they would out of school) but what they learn is the experience, continuously and sometimes under great stress, of submitting to instruction whether or not one feels it to be irrelevant or false. Another is the experience of gradually losing confidence in your own ability to decide what is valid and important and what is not, as one assimilates the appropriate set of social categories. (These categories are slightly different in French and English schools, so it looks like quite a few figure-and-ground relationships are going to get reversed.)

School is quite a poor place in which to learn about the rest of the world; just as a hospital is a poor place in which to become healthy. In both institutions, normal processes like learning and convalescence are subordinated to institutional demands and routines that have little to do with the patient's needs or condition; for the pupil, too, may properly be referred to as a **patient,** as distinct from an **agent,** the active source of his own agenda. Both schools and hospitals may perform a useful, indeed essential service for people who require skilled intervention or specialized techniques and equipment to help them through some critical juncture of their lives. But there is also a growing awareness that illness is as much a social as a physiological category; and that any diagnosis of people as chronically ill, mentally or physically, is likely to be less closely related to any pathology they may display than to the problems they create for other people. Children are sent to school in Canada, and everywhere else that I know of where they **are** sent to school, primarily because there is no place else in society that will tolerate them, let alone allow them to learn by active participation. It's that kind of society.

Precisely because going to school is normal, however, it is less devastating than a hospital or prison. It does not stigmatize its inmates - not grossly, at least, although schoolchildren are defined as

and often treated as persons of no dignity. But that is the way children are regarded in Canada - consider the cutesy-poo children on TV commercials: a child shown as competent would be perceived as brash. Simply being in school counts in your favour, though this depends on the credential you develop there, and that in turn depends on a lot of factors, mostly associated with social class. So it turns out that you do learn a great deal about life, politics, and society in school; though the less attention you pay to the official curriculum - **except as a social artefact;** that's very important - the more valuable your learning will be.

**A creature of the culture**

If you canvass people's memories of high school (including probably your own) in later life - as Ralph Keyes did in Is There Life After High School? and Michael Medved and David Wallenchinsky did in What Really Happened to the Class of '65? - you will find little reference to academics at all. Again, despite the great disparity in numbers, teachers recall especially interesting students more readily and vividly than students do teachers. Subject matter is just not what school is really about; it's really about making it - "winners and losers" as James Herndon so memorably said in How to Survive in Your Native Land. It's about status, friendship, rivalry, and just living. Even when it was published twenty years ago, James Coleman's The Adolescent Society seemed naive in its efforts to devise some means of nagging students into placing the same value on conventional scholarship that he found they did on athletic prowess and sexual atrractiveness. Coleman, a good American if ever there was one, was quite willing to encourage students to go on playing the prestige game; he just wanted to switch the source of prestige from the peer culture to academic achievement, at least enough to balance things out more. But this kind of manipulation is probably impossible, and I think manifestly undesirable.

The whole point of the school is that it is a creature of the culture; and in North America that culture, while anti-intellectual and sexually exploitive, cherishes the illusion of choice. That illusion is especially cherished by captive clienteles. Our culture offers - especially to the young - far more choices that are banal than heroic; but within the range available, no school system is going to pre-empt their choice. The possibility isn't even in the myths. What film, novel, short story or TV drama with a school for its locale has a plot hinging on the **content** of what is taught there? Even The Paper Chase - the irony of its title abandoned for TV purposes - has nothing to say about the law. It's about making it in law school, and how a crusty old male WASP and a pillar of the establishment may have a heart as golden as any prostitute. As to high schools, the classroom and the teacher are, happily, no longer usually portrayed as sources of buffoonery; rather, they are treated as parts of a political scene,

albeit oversimply and sometimes dishonestly. But the premise is accurate enough.

In school, the curriculum serves a similar function to the plot of a porno film, though the emphasis is on quite different pursuits. It isn't supposed to be realistic; it serves as a pretext to get the action going. If you take it seriously, you're in deep trouble.

**The unyielding core**

A well-designed modern curriculum is light, strong, moderately flexible, but hollow - something you can climb on safely, with interchangeable parts to meet special demands. It should resist abrasion and the ravages of a hostile climate, and be easy to keep clean. Core? Don't be silly; how could such a structure have a core?

Well, there is a sense in which it can, and in which the components of that core are very important, even though very few people really learn them, and even though their validity cannot be verified - which is essentially the position in which we find ourselves. These important components may have highly undesirable consequences as well as more beneficial ones; and in any particular cultural situation they will be very difficult to change by acts of conscious policy, even if they can be identified and labeled. Usually, though, the vital core of the curriculum is simply taken for granted. It is hidden, though usually not deliberately; but what I am discussing now is not what is usually called the hidden curriculum. That is a very loose term for what the school teaches its pupils simply by being what it is (which is more readily apparent than we sometimes like to think). The core I am talking about now is an aspect of the academic program, of the course of study, as distinct from the total curricular experience.

The school, by its course of study, establishes the categories of thought and official limits of what John Kenneth Galbraith has called "conventional wisdom." This is a much more important matter than the specific content of that curriculum. The schools may - and demonstrably do - avoid raising or even dealing directly with the most crucial questions that trouble the society that supports them; and they avoid the most complete or revealing answers to the questions they do raise. But that does not make the curriculum merely banal. For, in the process, it nevertheless establishes the proper way of dealing with questions deemed important: how you tell which questions are more important than others; what kind of record, datum, document, or witness constitutes evidence and lends authority.

All of this is antecedent to and more fundamental than even the most fundamental question. In North America, as perhaps nowhere

else in the world, for example, most people are Marxists - that is, economic determinists, who believe that policies can best be justified or motives explained in economic terms. As a result, not only politicians and industrialists, but ordinary people whose lives are full of drudgery and who should therefore know better, are impressed by almost any proposal for economic development that will, as the saying goes, "create jobs" - even though the jobs created are not only not worth doing, but actually harmful to the general welfare.

There exists no corresponding mechanism for asking what needs to be done, and how to organize for getting it done even though there is no way to turn a profit by doing it. Unless, of course, national security is involved. Poisonous water, unbreathable air, and a people who have totally given up supposing that they have a right to expect to make a place for themselves doing anything useful (that's why they're so grateful if jobs are created) - factors like these do not affect national security. They are, however, problems, and if they affect enough people seriously - like by leaving them obviously homeless or dead - a Royal Commission will be established to study whether the problem really exists. It will report its findings to Cabinet, which will decide which of them, if any, to make public.

None of this is new - that's one reason why the condition has become disgraceful - and it never was funny, though the Royal Canadian Air Farce has been saying such things for years. My point here is that the schools play an important part in teaching people to look at procedures like these as reasonable - and in such a way that no alternatives can be found. They teach children that the government is the instrument to turn to for dealing with their problems (even when schools don't identify the problems correctly) thus helping to suppress the alternative perception of government as a device establishing and maintaining the very conditions from which relief is sought. The curriculum, in short, is an ideological instrument; and ideology functions most effectively neither by lying nor by suppressing or concealing the truth; but by keeping the most important questions off the agenda altogether.

If this fails, the instrument functions by making sure that what is considered an authoritative answer is defined in advance in innocuous terms: by providing an automatic cut-in to declare that "more evidence is needed" as a policy is about to be formed; by denying standing to witnesses who aren't qualified experts with the right credentials; or by directing the search for answers to hypotheses that are just in the wrong part of the ball park for catching any fouls. This is not, of course, a function peculiar to the schools; it is shared by all ideological instruments. Poor Terry Fox is probably the best friend industrial pollution ever had. By his martyrdom, he has provided millions of dollars and invaluable publicity to be used in defining cancer as a medical problem, rather than as a political and economic problem. But school children, too, are taught to admire

him, and to contribute their Pepsi money to the fund.

**A core of entrenched attitudes and small coin**

So it goes. Some of the ideological factors that mould the core of the curriculum are so deeply rooted that they hardly lend themselves to illustration by applications to specific social issues; they undergird the whole structure. Consider, for example, the fact that core curricula rather seldom seek to integrate natural science with the traditional English and social studies, though the arts are often included as aspects of history or offshoots of culture. When science **is** included, it is likely to be included in a rather remarkable way, which gives it a unique authority; in fact, it is treated as the ultimate authority. Biological concepts may, for example, be introduced into sophisticated units on population; or physics may be used to put the energy crisis in perspective. What is hardly ever done is to consider the edifice of science itself as a social artefact, with its ritualized methodology and ceremonial obeisance to objectively determined evidence - whatever that might be. Science cannot really be integrated into the core curriculum because it is the dubious beneficiary of a kind of separation-of-powers doctrine. It's the court of last resort, and is treated respectfully as if it were above the conflict - like the Supreme Court, only more so (since the whole nation now knows that Bora Laskin mumbles).

Thomas S. Kuhn's classic The Structure of Scientific Revolutions is 20 years old now, too; and most of its critics have argued that Kuhn did not go far enough in his modest claims for the ideological character of scientific doctrine. Yet students are still taught that science stands above and is detached from social conflict; that scientific theories, however well established, may be destroyed and must be abandoned if they fail a single truly crucial test; and that science advances by induction from facts on which all qualified observers, whatever their relationship to the means of scientific production, must agree. The charisma of scientific method has a powerfully corrosive effect. Social and economic propositions are subject to refutation - as they should be - by contradictory evidence; but scientific generalizations can seldom be called into question by equally strong evidence of their ideological function. This just isn't the right kind of question to raise about scientific statements, whose authority is enhanced and even reified by their privileged place in the curriculum - a question quite distinct from, though hardly unrelated to their content.

Curriculum, then, certainly can and does have a core, but that core is composed of entrenched attitudes and predispositions, certain institutionalized habits of thought and perception, and a great many definitions. It also includes a mass of inaccurate information, inaccurately recalled, which serves as the small coin of daily

discourse, though its inappropriate use leads by default to large political and social bills. This is the stuff of conventional wisdom, though not, usually, of delusion, because it is not really believed. Its function is not to deceive, but to allay doubt and still the voice of inquiry, or, failing that, to direct it into innocuous channels. Success in school, like the enjoyment of any drama, merely requires the willing suspension of disbelief. But the habit tends to become addictive.

**A solid and noble core**

Does this seem too cynical, or too despairing, or both? Perhaps. Anyway, let us assume for the moment that the issue is worth raising seriously, at least in principle. (I would not advise you to challenge me on the **substance** of this issue; that is, by trying to argue that any considerable proportion of people believe what they are intentionally taught in school, and continue to turn to this - it was supposed to prepare them to take their place in society, wasn't it, on the assumption that they were somewhere else already? - to meet the challenges of everyday life. You don't believe that yourselves, surely; and, as for me, I never, never went to school, which was doubtless bad for my character but very good indeed for the mind.) Let us agree, provisionally, that what is intentionally taught in school might be of great and lasting value in helping large proportions of young people to lead richer and more productive as well as more satisfying lives (even though it seldom if ever has been), if the curriculum had a solid and noble core of content; and see where this leads us.

We're in trouble, really, before we can even begin. Schools are expected, and so far as possible required, to do a lot of other things first; things that are not very compatible with helping large proportions of young people to lead richer, more productive, and more satisfying lives. Like separating them into winners and losers, and conditioning them for assimilation into a society in which most men lead lives of quiet desperation. We don't need to go into all that again, surely.

Again, then, let us beg that question by the usual sophistry, and proceed. "Richer, more productive, and more satisfying lives, within the limits imposed by the real world as it actually is, okay?" No, sorry. Not okay. We've already lost the Puritans who believe that a rich life cannot be satisfying; and the Buddhists, who believe that a satisfying life need not be, in our sense, productive and certainly cannot be rich. More to the immediate point, we've lost the millions of North American parents who, as John Holt so eloquently observes again in the introduction to his new book Teach Your Own, insist that the schools give their kids a hard time just so they'll know better than to expect anything more when they grow up. In many Canadian communities, a rich, productive, and satisfying life would be regarded as an affront to decent society. You can read about these

communities in the novels of Margaret Laurence; but the people who live there won't let you bring those books into the schools if they can stop you.

**Accepting cultural hegemony**

The problem isn't that they can stop you. In most communities they can't, finally; and anyway, opposition and conflict are wonderfully instructive in themselves and they toughen you up for the future.

No, the problem in designing a solid and noble corecurriculum is cultural relativism. I don't mean to imply that I am, or that I think you should be, too timid to make and cultural judgments. As teachers, this is our responsibility, or one of them. Those people who would bar Laurence's books from the schools are her cultural inferiors; I know that and so do they - that's one reason they act that way. Those mullahs and demonstrators in Iran seem awful to me, too; really gross, but here I'm a little less certain of my ground. They're violent and they're boring; but they aren't that much worse than the rest of what you see on TV every night, though they seem to be having some trouble developing their plot. Anyway, I doubt that the CRTC will go on letting them appear next season unless they arrange to include more Canadians in their show. Anne Murray, perhaps, saving the children, and René Simard for cultural balance.

Oh, we have a lot to offer; there's no doubt of that from any point of view. There's no problem about claiming that. The problem is that any such cultural judgment, however valid, is still derived from a particular cultural framework, and reflects and transmits the ideological basis of that culture. And this involves not only understanding and moral judgment, but power and cultural hegemony. I have absolutely no doubt that Shakespeare is a greater playwright than Racine or Molière - indeed, than Racine **and** Molière - and that many, berhaps most French critics would agree, since French literary criticism tends on the whole to be more profound than British. (But they might not, because their grounds tend to be narrower as well as deeper, and are also different.) It doesn't matter, though; and neither does the anti-French stereotype in plays like Henry V, which is too silly to be a problem even for a chauvinist in the original sense. The problem is the expansionist joy, the scale and range of Shakespeare, the evocative quality of the language, for those who share his tradition. It isn't a matter of precision, of le mot juste. A culture with Shakespeare at its core is just not going to be French. No way.

If I designed a core curriculum, setting aside my doubts and just asking myself what knowledge is of most worth, what qualities of insight are most precious, what values should be made clearest, what kinds of explanations of the world we live in make sense; my curriculum would be an American curriculum, even if I used only

Canadian examples as I have largely done in this paper. We see the same issues differently: public order - how to keep it from getting out of hand; the government - how to keep it off your back, state or federal, and make it tell you what the hell it's doing; violence - when and how to use it, and for what. Americans differ, violently, in the positions they would take on these issues; but they start with no presupposition in favour of peace and order, and regard good government as a bad joke. It isn't that I can't learn the Canadian answers; it's that I can't ask the Canadian questions. They seem funny to me.

The same thing happens when English Canadians try to set up a curriculum for francophones, or French Canadians for anglophones. Not entirely, because there really is a Canadian nation that comprehends, in one sense at least, its two solitudes; but enough. School curricula are instruments of cultural hegemony, whether you want them to be or not. Sometimes, the obstacles to good, liberal praxis are so blatant you don't know whether to laugh or cry.

Peter McLaren's recent book Cries in the Corridor has been widely hailed as a moving account of the heroic though unsuccessful effort of an unusually sympathetic schoolteacher to bridge such a cultural gap, though in this case occasioned by class rather than separate-but-almost-equal ethnicities. On the whole, it deserves the praise it has received. McLaren really puts out for his poor, ghetto kids. He visits them at home, and describes to the reader the plastic plaques on the kitchen wall with messages like "Old fishermen never die; they just smell that way", and lampshades from Niagara Falls that simulate a waterfall when the light bulb heats them up. He tells of bringing his daughter, about a year younger than his own students, to his class; which puts on a display of pubescent dirty talk for her until he takes her down to the office and leaves her there for refuge. He doesn't **criticize** his pupils for their defects, he just lets you know what he was up against. In the process he also, perhaps inadvertently, lets you know (as we say) where he was coming from, and what **they** were up against. He's a wall, that man; he doesn't seem to have any doubts that the reader will agree that at least he was trying to be helpful. But I didn't. And I'm not sure l'honorable Camille Laurin would, either.

A well-designed core curriculum is a more efficient instrument of cultural hegemony by far than a conventional curriculum. I'd still favour it. If you're going to teach school, you might as well do it as well as you can. Although it must in the nature of things ultimately be transitory, cultural hegemony has its uses. The word hegemony after all, is Greek. The important thing is to remember who you're really working for, and not to expect the natives to think it's them and be grateful. You'd understand that easily, if you were a native yourself.

## Illustrations in this issue

The drawings are by **Gentile Tondino,** an associate professor with joint appointment in the School of Architecture and the Faculty of Education at McGill University.

The photographs, from a photographic essay entitled "Openings", are by **Claire Dupuis,** a student who is just graduating from the Department of Education in the Arts as an Arts major at McGill University.

In the next issue

## "Decline and Protest"

Planned for September, the third issue of this year will deal with the issues arising, wherever schools appear to be headed for closure, between parents, communities, and administrators of education.

The articles are contributed from universities across Canada by academics having a special interest and experience in such conflicts:

**Peter Coleman,** Simon Fraser University
**Barry Lucas,** University of Saskatchewan
**Charles and Evelyn Lusthaus,** McGill University
**Norman Robinson,** Simon Fraser University
**Verner Smitheram,** University of Prince Edward Island
**Richard Townsend,** Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Douglas McCall

# Evolution and revolution

## Secondary school changes for Ontario and Quebec

**That Quebec is not a province like the others should be apparent in many ways. In education the sheer scale of the undertaking to develop the system, and with it in due course society as a whole, seems little appreciated even within Quebec, and yet there are few parallels to it in the world. McCall compares two apparently similar documents of reform of the secondary system, in Quebec and in Ontario - its massive and confident neighbour - and shows that the real differences between them are far-ranging and have an ideological base; though whether that is because two different ideologies are at work, or only one, may be a question.**

In November of 1981, the Secondary Education Review Project **(SERP)** tabled its Report with the Minister of Education of Ontario, Ms. Bette Stephenson. Eight months earlier Quebec's Minister of Education, Jacques-Yvan Morin, had the Quebec Cabinet adopt a set of regulations entitled the **Régime Pédagogique.** In many ways the two documents represent the educational responses of two governments with quite different ideologies to similar sets of social problems, generated by a declining economy and the advent of the post-industrial society. One of the purposes of this article is to identify the correlations between those governing ideologies and the proposed changes to school curriculum.

A second objective of this effort is to assess whether or not the proposed changes to Ontario's and Quebec's secondary schools constitute significant social change. Paulston's distinction between "innovation" and "reform" (Schwartz, 1977: 136) has been popularised in the terms "evolution" and "revolution". If school curriculum changes "cause major changes in educational budgets, in the slope of the pyramid of school involvement, in the effect of educational investment on individuals or social development, or would entail significant

ideological, structural, and programmatic changes within the educational system," then we can call those changes "revolutionary" or truly significant social change. This distinction will be explored further in the conclusions of this paper.

It is interesting to note that the SERP report and the Régime Pédagogique have both been produced in newspaper formats for generalized distribution to the population. Holmes' comment that the **SERP Report** has been carefully written to seek broad public support can be equally applied to the **Régime Pédagogique** (Holmes, 1982: 19). But only by careful examination does one begin to see the social and political orientations underlying the two documents.

A particularly relevant fact in our comparison is the similar educational histories of the two provinces. Both Ontario and Quebec have spent the last two decades in massive expansion of educational facilities and programs. These changes were led by American progressive thought, expressed in similar fashion both by the Ontario Hall-Dennis Report and the Quebec Parent Commission (Tomkins, 1977: 10-14). However, as Harris points out in his book, The Quiet Evolution: A Study of the Educational System in Ontario, the social underpinnings of the Ontario changes may have been "evolutionary" while Quebec's reforms may have been "revolutionary" (Harris, 1967: VIII). It is noteworthy that the authors of the SERP report characterize their document with exactly the same terminology (SERP, 1981: 2).

Before we get too upset about Quebec's curriculum "revolution" we should remember two fundamental points. First, we should recognize that curriculum is always an ideological instrument (Friedenberg, 1981: 8). In every society, someone decides what kids "ought to know" and then imposes that view on schools. Second, we should realize that both the Ontario and Quebec governments are centralizing curriculum control. This is part of a national trend which A.S. Hughes, of the Atlantic Institute, calls "the emergence of the firm hand ideology" (Hughes, 1981: 9). The Ontario Government's approach is to tighten its grip through the credit system and the periodic extensive use of standardized pupil assessment. The Quebec Government will assert its authority through the credit system, standardized assessment, a "suggested" pupil timetable, detailed program objectives, and teaching guides.

The introductory remarks in the two documents offer something to begin our discussion. Both provide an analysis that is a careful echo of society's list of complaints or questions about the school system. Neither attempts to sort out or to evaluate what "many people" are saying about schools. However, the basic differences in the documents, in my opinion, become apparent when we look for the definition of "the problem". The SERP report is primarily concerned about youth unemployment, and states that the public wants schools

to provide a "solid, basic, useful education" with "more prescription", more "discipline", and more "standards." The Régime Pédagogique uses much the same rhetoric, but also discusses the schools' failure to complete the social reforms of the Quiet Revolution of the "sixties".

**More than education**

My analysis of the content of the curricular changes proposed by the two reports is organized in relation to the four basic functions of formal schooling; socialization, custody, selection, and education. Far too often we discuss schools only in relation to the educative function, the skills or knowledge to be imparted. The other three functions of schools have in fact a far greater impact on our children and our society.

**Socialization.** Schools socialize children by various means. The role of a student in decision-making in school and classroom will determine his or her attitude towards authority figures. An emphasis on "academic" or "practical" knowledge will favour certain types of children within the system. The school's orientations towards sex roles, international and national developments, what constitutes "proper" values, and the economic system will guide a student in his or her adult life.

The list of proposed changes for Ontario's schools will do little to change the current ideological stance of those schools. Student participation in decision-making is to be improved by a vague call upon schools to "develop strategies." Practical or "every-day living" aspects will not merit the status of special courses, but instead will be "intertwined" in the regular program. Little mention is made of new sex roles in our society. Values education is changed only by producing a teachers' guide. The national aspects of the compulsory history course will be de-emphasized. A new, optional Economics course designed to "improve understanding of our economic system" will be offered, but it must simultaneously teach students about our political system.

The Quebec Régime Pédagogique, however, is full of significant changes. There are legislative measures guaranteeing the students' rights to participate in decision-making. New compulsory courses on Technology and Ecology are established to help the student in "practical living." A rewritten, compulsory "national" history course is to focus on Quebec's development. A compulsory course on Economics is also featured. In addition, all students will follow a Home Economics course, and specific guidelines to eliminate sex-role stereotyping are a feature of all new curricula, educational materials, and teaching guides.

**Custody.** The length of time a student is required to stay in school is a major political decision made by every government. The economic and social consequences of laws governing pupil attendance in schools affect the entire population.

The SERP report proposes that Ontario's Grade Thirteen be abolished and the present curriculum "compressed" into twelve years. The economic and social consequences of such a change tend to reflect the conservative orientations of the government in power. An economist's analysis of the proposal, prepared for the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation, notes that the disappearance of Grade Thirteen will depress the future wages of highly educated workers by flooding that particular labour market, will increase the proportion of public financial support given to university-bound students (as opposed to other types of students), and will redistribute the wealth of Ontario's society towards Capital and away from Labour (McInnis, 1981: 1-2). Furthermore, the authors of the SERP report note that the increased academic pressure on poor or failing students (usually working-class children) due to the "compressed" curriculum could increase student drop-out. The authors hope that a more relevant curriculum will offset this concern.

Quebec's changes are limited to the creation of a twelfth year for technical-vocational studies. This additional year is required because the Régime delays the differentiation between academic and vocational programs within the secondary school. Such a delay is consistent with the Quebec Government's socialist orientation, which would try to offset the division which normally separates working-class children from others in the school program. However, it remains to be seen whether or not these students will remain in school for this additional year.

**Selection.** Schools help to sort and select students for placement in their future careers. The mechanisms used for this process include standards for pupil evaluation, student certifications, the criteria used for access into other institutions or alternative private schools, and the atmosphere and rules for pupil discipline.

Before continuing our comparison, it might be useful to examine the differences between Ontario's Community Colleges and Quebec's CEGEPs. The Ontario Colleges were established as an alternative to university studies, providing vocational or technical education for students of nineteen or twenty years of age. They currently attract about 15% of the high-school-leaving population (SERP, 1981: 8). Quebec's CEGEP system was established as an intermediate step between the secondary school and university, as well as a place for technical or vocational education. Students can opt between several academic, vocational, or mixed tracks. Approximately 56% of seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds leaving high school go into the

CEGEP Ministère de l'éducation, 1978: p.3).

The proposed changes to Ontario's secondary schools would not greatly alter the status quo. A four-track system of course difficulty is reduced to three, in order that the "basic" track be more relevant for preparation for technical colleges and employment, and the "advanced" track offers a four-year wait for university instead of the current five. The present system of two different high-school-leaving certificates is changed to a single diploma (a possible contradiction in philosophy to other changes). The current system of credit accumulation, the use of standardized test items from a provincial "pool", and a loose framework of provincial exams will be maintained, although they will be made more restrictive.

The private school network in Ontario will not be touched by SERP. The changes to student discipline reflect a conservative orientation. Free time within the pupils' timetable is to be eliminated, the SERP researchers explored increasing "sanctions" to improve pupil behaviour, and the basic recommendation is that each school develop a Code of Conduct for pupils. In short, the changes reflect governmental satisfaction with the societal status quo.

In Quebec, the Régime Pédagogique will dramatically affect the selection process within schools. Standardized pupil evaluation is to occur at four grade levels instead of two within the public system. The "passing grade" for secondary subjects is increased from 50% to 60%. However, this apparently conservative step will be offset by the introduction of a "Mastery Learning" concept in all courses. Mastery learning theory stipulates that course content should be designed so that all pupils reach a certain level. In other words, all students should "pass" to the next level.

Quebec's private schools must follow the same programs, a requirement which, with a centralized curriculum, will reduce the attraction to those schools. A dramatic change is made regarding student discipline as well. Quebec's answer to pupil misbehaviour is to involve the students in school decision-making and to establish student rights. The measures within the Régime Pédagogique will be complemented by a Youth Protection Act, a Student Ombudsman, and a booklet on student rights and responsibilities prepared by the Quebec Human Rights Commission. The net effect of the Quebec reforms is to take another step towards egalitarian practices within the school.

**Education.** The fourth task for schools is to equip students with the appropriate skills and knowledge. What is most relevant for students to learn? Obviously, the requirements will vary from society to society, from era to era. The elements for discussion here revolve around who in society, or which agency, will provide the information or the skills. By examining this aspect we may determine the

ideological orientations of educational changes.

One should note the similarities in the approaches of the two provinces. Both are moving towards a broader, more general, and compulsory curriculum. The student in Grade 7 and 8 in both Ontario and Quebec will have almost no choice in electives. The Ontario student must obtain 56 credits from compulsory courses out of a possible 120; the Quebec student has to get 40 out of a possible 176. However, when one analyzes the specifics, it becomes clear that in fact many courses in Ontario will become obligatory, because of the arrangements in the credit system (Holmes, 1982: 17). In Quebec, the Régime stipulates a pupil timetable establishing very little student choice. The theme of centralization is consistent in both models; the differences arise in the content.

The rationale for SERP's changes to curriculum content are best reflected in the following extract:

> Many people felt schools were not successful enough in helping students develop the skills and attitudes that will lead to personal satisfaction and productivity in the world of work. Employers, for example, have made it clear that they value communication skills and attitudes such as reliability, acceptance of responsibility, and ability to work well with others...

The Ontario answer, to the lack of correspondence between the curriculum of secondary schools and post-industrial society, is better co-operation between government and school boards. The expanding gap between technology and schooling will be bridged by "contracting out" education to corporations and an increased use of "work study" programs. Specifically, SERP recommends close school-business co-operation, tax incentives to encourage employers to set up private training programs, and the introduction of younger students to "work-study" programs which place the child in an office or factory. The proposals favour local control and the private sector.

The Quebec approach is quite different, once again reflecting its socialist direction. The State is perceived as the instrument best equipped to ensure the relevance of schools, and therefore provincial control of all aspects of schooling is the basic feature of the Régime. Detailed course objectives, "manuals" for each course, and teaching guides will be carefully prepared for each subject. Pedagogical research and professional improvement for teachers are also to be centralized, to ensure the application of the Régime.

**A quiet revolution does not lie down**

If we return to Paulston's distinction between "reform" and

"innovation" (or "revolution" and "evolution" in this context) we may justifiably conclude that Quebec's Régime Pédagogique is a serious attempt to change the "pyramid of school involvement", through its changes to the socialization and selection functions of schools. Moreover, the Quebec changes are linked, through the content of several of the new compulsory courses, to a change in the ideological status quo of the province. Ontario's changes, while not being ideologically neutral, do appear to represent only "innovation" or "evolution" from the status quo. No major social change is being reflected in the proposals of SERP.

A second criterion for assessing the "evolution" or "revolution" question is provided by Kazamias and Epstein (1968). Their model stipulates that "revolutionary" educational change will be linked with a "national" crisis or a significant stage in the nation-building process. Such changes will be expressed in educational "blue prints", and will address issues such as secularization, modernization, and centralization. It is evident that Quebec's changes are clearly linked to the election of a nationalist movement which gained power in 1976 and is openly involved in "nation-building". The Régime Pédagogique clearly addresses issues of religion, modernization, and centralization. Indeed the Régime is only part of a complete overhaul of the educational system. The SERP report tends to avoid such issues, and is not part of a major re-organization of the system.

A third criterion is the depth and breadth of the changes attempted. Quebec's reforms are clearly associated with all four social functions of the school, whereas Ontario's proposals tend to deal only with the educative role. The Quebec Ministry of Education has paid a great deal of attention to curriculum, teaching methods, teaching guides, and educational materials, to the atmosphere within the school, and to the teacher-pupil relationship. Each component is clearly linked to a plan. Indeed, the White Paper produced by the Quebec Ministry is called just that, "A Plan of Action." The SERP report, on the other hand, does not try to delve into the in-school processes. Whenever these processes are identified as problems, SERP recommends investigation by other agencies rather than proposing specific solutions.

Magnusson has described the changes made to Quebec's schools in the sixties as being created by the secular, centralizing, nationalistic, and egalitarian forces of the "Quiet Revolution" (p.102). The Régime Pédagogique clearly continues this process. Although in Ontario a recent major restructuration and financial reorganization is reported within the Ministry itself, its educational changes in the previous decade have been described as "innovation" because each specific component was changed in isolation, generated little public debate on the social consequences, caused no restructuration of the system, and was implemented in a compartmentalized manner (Harris, 1967: VII). The SERP report continues this trend.

In conclusion, the SERP and the Régime can be seen as products of their societies and the ideologies of their governments. Ontario's reforms are summed up in the SERP report. But Quebec's Régime Pédagogique is only the pedagogical tip of an iceberg that includes changes to school-board re-organization, school financing, parental involvement, and school governance. As we examine and discuss each of the documents, we should note their connections to government orientations in other sectors of society. This comparison is offered as a beginning to such discussion.

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Harold Smithman and Brian Maddock

# From design to implementation

**The Régime Pedagogique of Quebec is discussed as a whole elsewhere in this issue (McCall's article), and its implications are there assessed on the global scale of a whole society. This article describes its application on the scale of particular classrooms, in a new geography course in secondary school. Smithman and Maddock show how a lengthy pilot trial and the involvement of teachers from its inception (not all of them geography teachers) was necessary to make the practical implementation of this new curriculum, to ensure mastery of the subject, not only feasible but really rather rewarding to all concerned.**

Since 1960, educational reform in Quebec has proceeded with great haste and rigour. Legislation and regulations like the Charter of 1961, the Parent Report, Regulation I, and Bill 27 have had profound consequences on the schools of Quebec. With a few minor exceptions, these changes were in the form of administrative remodeling and were not aimed specifically at curriculum reform. For example, the Government created the Ministry of Education, introduced free schooling, made the provision of secondary education obligatory for school boards, and gave birth to the concept of school committees and parent committees. Although administrative reorganization may be the first priority, real impact on learners comes only when there is a change in curriculum and instruction.

Until the latter part of the fifties, curriculum was provided by the Ministry in a finely detailed form. However, in 1959, programmes began to appear with fewer specifications, organized with global aims, vague references to methodology, and no precise reference to content.

This treatment of curriculum and instruction according to some observers led to a decade of wandering in the wilderness, a period of laissez-faire, and in many instances, chaos. Although the intentions of the Ministry to decentralize curriculum, to meet local needs, and to encourage school boards to develop programmes were commendable, the theoretical paradigm never materialized. Criticism of this approach to curriculum emanated not only from parents, but also from professionals, teachers, and administrators alike who felt a certain uneasiness with the strategy. The apparent lack of definitive direction in the Ministry's programmes created difficulties also in evaluation of student progress, in delivery systems, and in curriculum. More pressure on the educational system was produced by the movement in the United States and Canada called "Back to Basics". Within this context the scene was set for a new look at Quebec's schools. A major reform was thought to be required but with a difference; the emphasis was now to be on curriculum, instruction, and evaluation.

This paper focuses on the curriculum changes prescribed in the Plan of Action. We do not pretend to provide a critical appraisal of the merits of the Plan of Action, its emphasis on behavioral objectives, or the Mastery Learning strategy. Instead, as practitioners we have engaged the question of their efficacy, through a series of field projects. The preliminary report of one such project is give here.

**The Green Paper**

Recognising that the reform in administrative organization resulted in few changes at the level of the learner, the Ministry of Education in the mid 1970's began to be more attentive to what was happening in the schools, particularly to the teaching-learning process. A committee was constituted to review the structures of the period and to recommend a policy for the future of education in Quebec, a policy that would render justice to all students. In this case the operative word was "all", that is, to the rich, the poor, the gifted, those with learning difficulties, and the handicapped. Although the task was enormous, the members of the committee made their final report in 1978, after a three or four year study and the traumatic experience of a change in government.

Borrowing the nomenclature from the British parliamentary system, the government issued a proposal aptly called the Green Paper. This document was to form the basis for a massive consultation that took place with every segment of society. For approximately one year the Minister of Education and his subordinates travelled to every corner of the province consulting with as many citizens as possible. From the beginning it was quite evident that the majority of parents supported the new concepts outlined in the Green Paper. Teachers, administrators, and some school commissioners,

however, were not quite so enthusiastic; these latter groups saw a further erosion of prerogatives and responsibilities that they had held for generations.

The Green Paper proposal was, apparently, a radical departure from the traditional Quebec educational situation in which the local school board and the individual school staff had had a great deal of autonomy relative to curriculum. Viewed historically, however, the Green Paper represents a return to the centralist prescription evident prior to the sixties. This trend is not limited to Quebec but is prevalent to some degree all across Canada (Hughes, 1980). In Quebec it has been decreed apparently that the central authority is not only going to change school programmes, but also to make it mandatory that all children achieve specific objectives in specific disciplines. Furthermore, periodic evaluation, reporting, and to some degree, instructional methods are to be legislated.

**The Schools of Quebec**

As a result of consultation on the contents of a Green Paper the Government of Quebec responded in 1978 to the wishes of the populace by issuing a document titled The Schools of Quebec: Policy Statement and Plan of Action. The policy paper was, without doubt, an honest attempt to answer the questions and concerns of the public.

An underlying assumption of the Plan of Action is that all students have the right to achieve a basic level of education as determined by the government. In order to reach this goal, new programmes are being written with objectives that, it is assumed, are attainable by the vast majority of young people. For those students who complete a programme successfully in a time frame shorter than that expected, extension activities and/or more challenging courses are offered. Students who have difficulty are provided with remediation using different learning opportunities which go under the name of "correctives." To accomplish the correctives in an already busy teacher timetable such strategies as peer teaching, remediation classes after school, programmed learning, and summer schools are recommended.

Not stated, but certainly implied in the Plan of Action, is a strategy called "Mastery Learning." The technique is one developed by Bloom and popularized by James Block (1971). In this strategy the operational objectives are defined very specifically, criterion test items are developed to measure the objectives, and a series of learning opportunities and correctives are established to assist the learner in achieving the objectives. The basic assumption of "Mastery Learning" is that most or nearly all learners can achieve at a high level of performance given sufficient time and excellent instruction.

Block's research appears to provide substantial evidence that the spread of achievement can be reduced considerably by implementing Mastery Learning. Specifically, the spread is diminished by fifty percent if the learners have achieved all the entry behaviours necessary for a new sequence of learning. Furthermore, the spread is decreased another twenty percent as a result of effective instruction and ten percent more if the students begin a course with positive attitudes. It is not beyond teachers' expectations, therefore, to see at least eighty percent of their students eventually achieve a satisfactory level of performance on a set of educational objectives. Variance in pupil abilities would still be respected, however, in the time taken to reach mastery of a certain skill, and the amount of enrichment and learning each pupil is able to acquire beyond the minimum competencies.

**Design to practice - one experience**

Lack of information about the Plan of Action and implementation procedures, as well as the much-delayed publication of the revised programmes, has caused anxiety among teachers. This has occurred despite the fact that teachers played a major role in the revision committees, and that hundreds of practising teachers were consulted and asked to evaluate various draft versions. Questions were asked such as these: Will the new course objectives prove to be "straitjackets"? Will the objectives be too many for the proposed allotment of time? Will there be time for teachers to add some extra objectives of their own choosing? Will the reporting system have to be changed? Will teachers reject the new courses? Where will the required materials come from? How will funding be found in shrinking budgets?

In an effort to explore these questions and investigate the practicality of one of the Ministry's new curricula, the Lakeshore School Board conducted a pilot study in Mastery Learning at the Secondary 1 (Grade VII) level with the blessing of the teachers and administrators concerned. The general geography course was selected for the trial experience because there was much dissatisfaction with the old course and growing impatience with delays in the approval of the new course.

Although the major aims of the project were to answer the many questions raised by teachers, and to evaluate pupil performance on the new M.E.Q. programme, the issue of curriculum alignment was also of utmost importance. When a curriculum is composed of objectives, instruction, and evaluation, all three must be aligned to secure effective schooling (Niedermeyer and Yelon, 1981). We were interested, therefore, in knowing whether the designers of the new programmes had been cognizant of this need.

Certain implications had to be accepted before implementing the pilot study: for example, the objectives were not approved and might have to be altered, revisions might be made during the experimental phase (this did happen), and final approval was not to be expected before the conclusion of the second year of trials. Furthermore, the teachers at Secondary I were not specialists in geography and required extensive inservice training in geography skills and content. Also, no suitable core text books were available from the point of view of objectives or readability. Finally, since over half the pupils took the course in the French language, there was a need to develop parallel materials in English and French at an equivalent level of difficulty.

After the administrators approved the project in the spring of 1979, four teachers worked in the summer to develop materials for the first two of the five modules into which the course was divided. The composition of the team was not deliberately planned, but it had much to recommend itself. One teacher was a specialist in reading and study skills, another was a special education teacher familiar with the needs of pupils with learning problems, and the other two were experienced and successful teachers at the Secondary I level who understood the needs of this group. Since none had any special training in geography this component was supplied by the curriculum consultant. It proved a happy and productive mixture inasmuch as each of the important parts - the subject content, the language and learning skills, the students, and the teachers - had an experienced advocate.

Because of their school responsibilities the teachers could not find time to play a major role in writing the three remaining modules, but they did check the drafts and suggest changes. These modules followed the pattern developed for the first two. However, in retrospect, the solution was not ideal, and means will have to be found to release teachers for curriculum development work without paying $70 or more per day for substitute teachers.

A dozen teachers volunteered to use the materials in their classrooms in 1979-80. These volunteers were given a minimum of training by the consultant in geography before using the modules with their pupils. The experience, nevertheless, was quite successful, since the pilot teachers gave invaluable assistance to the authors of the modules by identifying major weaknesses and areas needing improvement. As a result of these field trials, one of the teachers who used the programme and the geography consultant revised and expanded the materials based on the suggestions they had received.

As a result of their efforts two modules were completed by the conclusion of the summer recess and three more in the autumn. Each of these modules contained a fifty-page pupil workbook with the objectives, pertinent information, and criterion items. For teacher use there were formative and summative tests, correctives, extension

activities, film strips, a teacher's guide, and a report form.

New programmes, new instructional methods, and new administrative structures are not guarantees for effective change at the classroom level. To bring about real change, school personnel - teachers, administrators and consultant - have to take ownership. Such a commitment, however, requires that staff are well informed and well trained in the contemplated changes. In the case of geography, administrators in the schools arranged for the teachers of general geography to meet with the consultant at the beginning of each module. During these sessions, usually after school or during non-teaching periods, materials was presented and feedback on previous modules were solicited from the staff. This was a most formidable undertaking, since the decision in September 1980 was to implement the new programme in all Secondary I classes, both French and English, served by the Board.

By the end of December, 1980, answers to many of the questions that were posed earlier in the study began to appear. Following an oral exchange of views, teachers and pupils completed a questionnaire, and although no claim is being made as to the scientific nature of the questions, some very clear and exciting data were obtained. Eighty-six percent of the teachers appreciated being given precise objectives by the Ministry of Education, and a similar percentage believed that objectives help pupils to know better what it is they are expected to accomplish; eighty-seven percent of the pupils perceived the same statement to be true. All agreed that the course was too extensive, but that such a deficiency might be overcome in another year when teachers become more familiar with the materials. Relative to the question on the rigidity of a centralized curriculum, most teachers felt they had ample opportunity to be creative not only in programme delivery but also in defining new objectives. It was concluded, therefore, that teachers and pupils were in favour of the notion of Mastery Learning and in fact recommended that similar programmes be developed in other disciplines.

One of our most gratifying findings was that we had achieved curriculum alignment. The learning opportunities and the test items appeared to be in perfect alignment with the objectives. Credit for such an accomplishment has to be given to the teachers and the consultant who piloted the project through its many phases. Correlation of curriculum, instruction, and evaluation is not a mew concept, but one in which curriculum developers have not always been attentive. Now that the rules are about to change (that is, objectives will be defined explicitly) teachers will have to strive for alignment in so that their pupils may achieve the basic competencies.

## Conclusion

It seems reasonable to expect that most teachers and students will appreciate being given specific objectives for core programmes. As more and more courses are completed and mastered by most pupils, in other words as pupils come to new courses with most of the prerequisite knowledge and skills (and probably with positive attitudes too), the instructional process will be more efficient and more productive.

However, if the revised programmes are to have a fair chance, a means has to be found for providing the inservice training, the curriculum development, and the instructional materials required to give the programmes that chance. One has the impression that, having gone through a long laborious gestation period, the authorities may not have the financial resources to support the successful implementation of new curriculum. Support materials, programme guides and text books appear to be items that will not be available for a number of years. One glimmer of hope, however, is that the regional bureaus are oganizing personnel from the boards to act as animateurs or "multiplicateurs", to assist teachers at the classroom level with implementation. Furthermore, the dedicated group of professionals in the school systems, using their usual ingenuity and knowledge, will find means to overcome these bureaucratic deficiencies.

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Jeffrey W. Bulcock

# School assessment

## The middle way

**As any part of the human race falters in faith in the point of its own existence, so do the prospects of the institutions charged with supervising its self-renewal. Yet as Bulcock points out, if only to secure the immediate future to which the race is already committed - up to about the year 2040 - the schools of Western society have an immediate and challenging task: to make the most of our numerically dwindling younger generations. We are in a state of astonishing ignorance about the effectiveness of those institutions - our schools - that should meet this new challenge, namely to provide the minority work-force of a different society that is already on the way. He discusses the reasons why we at present maintain and indeed protect that state of ignorance, and offers examples of the means, already available to us, to overcome it.**

Schools are historically recent social institutions, designed among other things to counteract social inequality in open societies. Few deny the importance of schooling, and it is well known that the goals of people everywhere require education as the chief means of reaching them. Thus, in most societies schooling is a necessary condition for the acquisition of self respect and successful participation in daily life. Nevertheless, many Canadians seem dissatisfied with the schooling provided, and many believe that the schools are in need of reform. There might even be support for the view that the schools have failed in their historic mission as the "great equalizers ... and balance wheels of the social machinery". Yet, few Canadians would, with confidence, be prepared to identify the specific aspects of schooling that need to be changed. Thus, few would be prepared to specify what the schools should do that they are not doing, or what they might stress that they are prone to ignore.

School systems seem to be relatively independent institutions in society. Compared to most organizations in the public household sectors of most nations, they seem to be able to operate more independently of the economic and political arrangements. The complex relationships between schooling and the other infrastructural arrangements in society seem little understood. We do not know what the schools are doing; what children should know, that they do not know; in which areas of schooling progress is being made; or who benefits and why?

Though Statistics Canada churns out masses of descriptive and quantitative information about Canadian schools, so that there is an abundance of data which parallels that on health, incomes, employment, and the cost of living, there is nevertheless a paucity of information of the kind needed. If there is a change in X what would be the concomitant effect on Y, other things being equal? For example, how responsive are achievements Y1 and Y2 (in grade 5 science and mathematics) to changes in X1, X2, and X3 (in the opportunity to learn school-related skills at home, in the stage of thinking, and in reading comprehension)? In the absence of firm answers to such questions, effective policy-making is sometimes difficult.

Three of the several reasons for conducting school policy research follow.

**Demographic changes**

Two successive demographic anomalies - a baby boom followed almost without pause by a baby bust - have ensured that within another generation there will be fewer workers in relation to both young and old dependents than at any other period in Canadian history. Statistics Canada has forecast a shift in demographic balance at some time between 2020 and 2021 - a situation where there will be more elderly than children and youths. By the year 2031, if immigration rates remain constant at 100,000 per year, and if the total fertility ratio declines steadily to 1.50 in 1985 and remains constant thereafter, there will be four persons over 65 for every three under 18. The leading edge of the projected workforce during this period of demographic imbalance is just beginning school now. The scarcity value of these children makes them the most precious in Canadian history: they have to be socialized to accept responsibility for caring for both young and old dependents; they have to be given incentives to have children of their own. Their values and beliefs will influence the quality of retirement life for the "boomies" who are now aged 21 to 35.

These children who will be entering school over the next two decades will probably have to pay well over half their earnings in

taxes to support soaring expenditures on actuarially unsound pension schemes; they will have to be much more productive, hence more highly trained, and probably more prepared to stay on for post-secondary schooling, than any previous generation of workers. Given expected political realities, these future workers will probably have to accept less active political roles than past workers, since the future elderly and near elderly combined may well have greater political clout than the workers. This situation, where the least productive have as much or more political influence than the more productive, will be unprecedented, so that in the 21st Century demographic imbalance and political imbalance may occur in tandem.

Though the prescience of demographers is notoriously weak, if these demographic projections are reasonably correct one can predict that in tomorrow's society the young will have scarcity value. Society will not be able to afford blighted individuals; thus, debilitating environments will not be tolerated. It can also be predicted that today's cherished educational theories are likely to prove but modest way-stations on the route to the construction of more comprehensive and authentic educational theory. Indeed, today's theories may well prove to be the vestiges of a wasteful era in public education. Thus, given current demographic realities, today's educational practices are unlikely to be equal to the tasks ahead.

Even today the problems of coping with the contradictory features of the public school system seem formidable. Consider the following facts:

- that even though puberty comes some two years earlier than it did two generations ago, the length of psychological dependency, thanks to compulsory schooling laws, continues to increase;
- that few teachers have direct experience of productive work themselves despite a mandate for initiating youth into the world of work;
- that despite longer material dependency on the nuclear family, youth are increasingly segregated from adults by a compulsory placement in schools;
- that the schools continue to operate as if they still held a monopoly on knowledge transmission, in the age of television and the computer;
- that whereas the instructional functions of schooling are undermined by the media and its socializing functions are undermined by the peer group, the legitimate functions of schooling which remain (screening/selection and custody/control) are perceived as constraining and repressive rather than liberating;
- that several of the values of the adult society which are simulated in school settings (for example, social competition and consumerism) are exploitative of youth; and
- that in school settings there is a conspicuous absence of the natural learning incentives that impel learning in everyday life; rather schools are dependent for instrumental incentives on loss of reward (negative

punishment), extrinsic reward, and disguised competition, all of which can have debilitating effects on the motivations and ambitions of students. (1)

Because of these inconsistencies in the formal features of contemporary schools, it is reasonable to ask whether such arragements are suitable for coping with the educational requirements of a society with a worker shortage.

The educational problems attendant upon radical demographic change call for policy-defining research, that is, research designed to provide an information base for social policy in situations where the problem is recognized but where no social policy action has been taken. Policy-dictated research is the other side of the coin: that is, commissioned research designed to evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs and policies. Both kinds of assessment research are necessary.

**Changing incentives**

School assessment research is necessary to monitor developments in schooling not only during periods of rapid demographic change but also in periods of economic change. According to human capital theory, occupational attainments are responsive to educational achievements, and national economic growth is responsive to the aggregate educational levels of the labour force.

The human capital model of school performance is essentially a predictive model. The individual is seen as being confronted in the late teens with a spectrum of alternative paths. One choice is between school and work; another is between jobs in a wide range of alternatives. A major criterion is individual welfare, or lifetime utility; that is, the job selected will be the one which maximizes the individual's expected lifetime earnings. The individual's decisions restrict his options, in the sense that one choice (in preference to another) will foreclose some options while maintaining the feasibility of others. The model is predictive, then, to the extent that the anticipated gain from pursuing a selected future activity will motivate the very behaviour which is designed to make the preferred future activity feasible.

The theory posits the notion that educational behaviour is governed by the individual's perception of the consequences of that behaviour. It can be hypothesized that student decisions will be influenced by the perceived labour market opportunities. The decision to attend a post-secondary institution will depend to an unknown but knowable extent on the student's perception of the long-term benefits of college or university attendance; that is, on the anticipated differential between the lifetime earnings of college graduates on the one hand and high school graduates on the other. The central idea is

simple: the greater the anticipated net gain from the decision to enter the higher education sector, the greater the individual's investment in intellectual competencies. Theoretically, then, a lack of articulation between education system outputs and labour market opportunities would depress the incentives for youth to invest in additional intellectual competencies. The direct consequence would be a significant and real decline in test score performances. Though test score declines have been documented in other countries, little or no evidence is available on either a national or provincial level in Canada.

Because this mismatch between schooling and work is common to most OECD nations, it has been predicted (Bulcock, ed.,1976) that in the absence of compensatory mechanisms the school mathematics and science curriculums will prove unequal to the task of meeting the infrastructural needs of Western science. Current leadership in the sciences enjoyed by Western nations could be eroded - even lost in some fields (Smith and Karlesky, 1978; Commission on Human Resources, 1979). Thus, the effect of declining birth rates and declining employment opportunities in the intellectual occupations could prove a decisive negative influence on the development of scientific research in Canada and other Western nations.

What is the magnitude of the test score decline? Is it a real or spurious decline? How responsive are performances in the content fields of schooling to any predicted declines in the lifetime earnings of college and university graduates compared to high school graduates? Are the effects for girls different from those for boys? What other factors might account for declining investments in intellectual competencies? Are there, for example, curriculum effects; grade inflation effects; homework, television, or textbook effects; broken home effects; life style (including drugs, the "pill", and alcohol-related) effects; absenteeism effects? Canadians do not know the answers to these questions.

There is no Canadian institutional equivalent to the National Institute of Education in Washington, the National Institute of Educational Research in Tokyo, the Australian Council of Educational Research in Melbourne, the Max Planck Institute of Educational Research in Berlin, the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the Soviet Union in Moscow, or the National Council for Educational Research in England and Wales. We do know that the magnitude of school assessment research in Canada is negligible compared to that in many other nations.

**Changes in the locus of competition**

The earliest school assessment research, conducted in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, was designed to evaluate the quality of public schooling. Not surprisingly, these early efforts were

complete failures because teachers regarded them (probably quite rightly) as attempts by outsiders to attack the teaching profession. These early attitudes of mistrust toward educational researchers have continued to the present day.

Despite vestiges of this mistrust, school assessment is part of a broader movement toward the construction of social indicators designed to ascertain the quality of contemporary social life. The movement is accelerating for at least two reasons. First, as Tyler (1971, p.25) points out, decision makers in open societies need more relevant information than can be obtained by personal observation or by descriptive information alone. Second, one of the ways of minimizing the costs of policy error is to monitor today's decisions and policies because these are the ones which affect the future.

There is evidence that Canada is entering a post-industrial era characterized by a highly developed tertiary or service sector, complementing the increasingly capital-intensive secondary or industrial sector. According to Daniel Bell (1973) such a society is one in which theoretical knowledge assumes a larger role in economic and political affairs than in non post-industrial nations. The post-industrial society is also necessarily closely integrated into the world economic system (see Laffer, 1975 and Mundell, 1975). Whereas in industrial societies the competition for such scarce zero-sum resources as wealth and prestige was assumed to be confined within and between groups inside countries, in post-industrial societies the competition assumes an additional dimension - that between countries within an open world economic system. It does not mean that because a country has a well-legitimated structure for coping with within-system competition, that it can **ipso facto** cope with between-system competition.

Talent loss - a failure to make the most of what talents people have even when they are not in the first rank - is apt to follow from competitive situations in school or society. Though the legitimacy of the structure of competition at the within-system level has been traditionally associated with a degree of tolerance for talent loss - hence the welfare state as a compensatory mechanism - the evidence from most demographic and many economic indicators suggests that to cope with between-system competition at the international level the continued tolerance of talent loss may be seriously debilitating (World Bank, 1980). High national levels of educational achievement are probably necessary if nations competing in the world's market economies are to cope with the competition for scarce international resources. And a major way of bolstering the aggregate educational level of any nation is through investment in improving the quality of the population.

**Positions opposed to school assessment**

Earlier it was asserted that there was a paucity of relevant information on Canadian education of this kind: How responsive are behaviours Y1 and Y2 to changes in Z1, Z2, ..., Zn while taking other things such as X1, X2, ..., Xn into account? Why is assessment research of this kind not conducted by educational researchers in Canada? The fact that the Provinces are sovereign entities insofar as education is concerned, and the fact of their niggardliness when it comes to financing educational research, are ready answers. But why the niggardliness? Consider two reasons. The first relates to bureaucratic interests, the second to the firm opposition to any research defined as behavioristic.

Canadian educational systems, like the Canadian postal service, are largely self-regulating. Both services are state-sanctioned near-monopolies. It is common knowledge that the members of the postal service have developed self-serving mechanisms which constitute powerful barriers to change. And if one strips away educational rhetoric to the bones, similar self-serving arrangements may be shown to prevail. The role-players in Canadian educational systems are beholden to their immediate superiors: the students to the teacher, the teachers to the principal, the principals to the superintendent, and so on. Each strives to please the other - a system of conditional freedom which ensures that the direction of the incentives in educational bureaucracies is toward self-maintenance and preservation. Such incentives lean educational systems as well as the post office in the direction of organizational conservatism; that is, toward the non-disturbance of the prevailing organizational environment.(2) Now, if this requires the occasional suppression of a controversial or critical report, so be it. And if the preferred state of affairs might be threatened by comparative research between provinces or between countries, then organizational imperatives will demand the non-support and non-sponsorship of comparative educational research.

The official position of the educational bureaucracy, however, will probably be one of conditional but tacit support, for two reasons. First, there is recognition that a demand exists for information. Second, there is recognition of the principle that the schools are accountable to their supporters.

Such principles would probably be voiced in low key. The fears of the officials would probably be given much greater prominence. These would include (a) that a proposed assessment program might be poorly developed; (b) that the results of school assessment would be misused, especially through the making of odious inter-school and inter-provincial comparisons; (c) that teacher interests would be overlooked - for example, assessment instruments if not developed in

cooperation with teachers could result in the distortion of the curriculum (3); (d) that school assessment would be a further step toward greater centralization of schooling; (e) that the costs of assessment research would be excessive; and (f) that the time spent by students writing tests would be unnecessarily disruptive of the ongoing program of the school.

The net result of all this would be a set of caveats designed to restrict the purposes of school assessment research. First, the instruments would have to be constructed not merely with the approval of the teachers, but by teachers. Second, the research organization would have to be part of the bureaucracy; that is, lodged under the appropriate wing of provincial departments of education. The results would have to be presented so as to prevent any identification of schools, school districts, and even provinces. Any questions related to ethnicity, religious affiliation, social status, and other "sensitive" matters would be tabooed on the grounds of "invasion of privacy".(4)

Ironically, there is a desire to suppress comparative evaluation and school assessment research on both the bureaucratic right and the ideological left. Bureaucratic objections are based on the joint interests of teachers and officials. The objections of the left wing of the ideological educational-spectrum are based on a self-appointed role as guardian of the interests of the young. They include the following: (a) that student assessment depends on tests which are unreliable and invalid, because contrary to popular opinion the purposes of education are concerned not so much with achievement in the content fields of schooling as with students' states of mind; (b) that (such is their obsession with the assessment of cognitive competencies) school assessment models ignore the conative and affective outcomes of schooling, a host of important intangible outcomes which simply defy measurement; (c) that all too often the assessment measures prove to be merely weakly predictive of school performance, and therefore research results do not warrant the efforts demanded by the research participants; (d) that unintentionally, achievement tests have debilitating and discouraging effects on the many students who, as a function of invariant mathematical laws, must fall below arbitrarily selected criteria of competence; (e) that achievement testing procedures inadvertently reward conformity and passivity; thus, divergent and creative thinking, aesthetic appreciation, and a host of performance-based skills are completely ignored by test makers; and (f) that achievement testing promotes cheating behaviour and the invidious comparison of students.

While several of the arguments which counter school assessment research are spurious, they nevertheless have a "ring of truth" and a plausibility which demands serious attention.(5) Obviously school assessment research cannot be successful if it rides roughshod over the interests of teachers and students. Obviously, too, assessment research is not possible unless wider interests can override bureaucratic

interests, and unless the educational research climate becomes more supportive of empirical methods favouring quantitative social modelling (see Kendall, 1968).

The question which arises, then, is this. Is there a middle way? Is there an authentic position, supportive of school assessment, lying midway between the strong pincer movement of the bureaucratic right and the ideological left? The writer thinks there is. Four prototypical studies of the school assessment variety are described in the next section.

## Prototypical school assessment projects

### (i) Development of school assessment indices

Over a decade ago Henry Dyer (1970) of the Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey, made a proposal for the establishment of an educational accounting system - which is not to be confused with the different notion of fiscal accounting. The idea had considerable merit, but was probably threatening enough to the self-serving interest groups in education that the proposal has long since been forgotten.

The central notion of educational accounting was that the school staff - the principals, specialists, and teachers - were collectively responsible for keeping themselves informed about the diverse needs of their pupils and for doing their best to meet those needs. The three principles governing the idea of professional responsibility were first, that the professional staff were collectively responsible for knowing about the conditions and educational services which facilitate or impede pupil development; second, that the professional staff were collectively responsible for using this knowledge to promote the development of pupils toward performance objectives of the school; and, third, that the school board had the corresponding responsibility for ensuring that the school staff were provided with the means for carrying out its duties.

It is inferred from these principles that educational accounting is a dual partnership between the professional staff of a school and the school board. Thus, though the staff is responsible to the board, the board in turn is accountable for supplying the appropriate information and facilities that each school staff requires to operate effectively.

Close to the notion of a school or district accounting system is the development of School Effectiveness Indices (SEIs). Though SEI construction is complex, the idea is simple. Consider, for example, the construction of an English Language SEI. As the major pupil and instructional resources which determine achievements in the language arts become better known, it becomes feasible to predict language

scores for pupils in a given school; the estimated scores are based on both school and pupil resources as governed by the models of school learning. The discrepancies between predicted and actual scores for individuals may be regarded as language effectiveness scores, which when aggregated to the level of a school then constitute the Language Effectiveness Index of the school.

Simple linear transformations of the scores could provide easily interpretable scales; for example, a score of 100 might indicate that the student's actual score and predicted score were the same, or a score of 105 would indicate that the pupil is performing five points above what can be predicted. It is relatively easy to conduct separate analyses for students grouped in various ways. Suppose a school had a significant proportion of pupils whose mother tongue was different from the language of instruction. Or suppose it were believed that the school resources were being used disproportionately to favour a special group. Analyses could be conducted to see whether the groups specified were benefiting to the same extent as other groups in Language Arts. If it were found that a particular group was benefiting disproportionately, it would be possible to examine the parameters for the different groups in order to identify in what respects the process of language attainment was different. If the process differences were attributable to manageable variables it might then be feasible to initiate curriculum or other changes in order to compensate.

If the principle of educational accounting systems were accepted, schools could be given effectiveness ratings. School A might **appear** to be more effective than other schools largely because school A's resources in terms of the background characteristics of students ensured high absolute levels of performance. But the students' performances in school A might be lower than those predicted on the basis of the resources available. By the same token, the students in school B may only achieve at modest absolute levels, yet, in terms of the resources available, they might be performing significantly above predicted levels. In today's terms, school A is the better school because of its higher level of absolute performance. But on the basis of its School Effectiveness Index school B would be the better because the children in it are responding more positively to the opportunities available, given their resources. The use of SEIs would thus offset some of the inequities used in evaluating schools, and would help to bring about a more equitable distribution of the scarce, policy-manageable, educational resources in a community.

One caveat. The implementation of a school assessment program should be done in such a way as to safeguard the delicate balance of interactions between students and teachers, which requires a wide margin of indeterminacy if the goals of social maturity and self actualization are to be met. To achieve such school level organization there must be an unimpeded flow of communication and information

between the primary actors - the students, the teachers, and the parents. The development of SEIs as unobtrusive components of a school accounting system could prove to be one useful element in meeting the information needs of a school.

(ii) **Culture adjusted achievement-scores**

SEIs would not obviate the need for individual testing. Psychological diagnostic tests are as legitimate today as they were when begun by Binet at the turn of the century. Analogy tests are probably the most commonly-used measures of mental ability. Aptitude tests are used to measure particular skills, largely in order to be able to predict what an individual might attain with specialized training. Education or achievement tests usually measure school-related skills: reading comprehension, spelling, grammar, numeracy, and work study skills.

All of these tests have been attacked - often in the name of humanistic schooling - on a variety of social and political grounds. There are those who fear the misuse of test results by the State or quasi-governmental agencies, and who invoke the dangers of self-fulfilling prophecy. Some egalitarians believe that the whole concept of testing is shot through with questionable assumptions and principles associated with elitism and meritocracy.

The use of culture-adjusted achievement scores is designed to allay some of the fears of test abuse and to undermine some erroneous notions about "fixed" abilities. Indeed, adjusted achievement scores are compatible with a view of mental ability which holds that intelligence consists of a skill in a culturally-defined context - a view which takes account of the contribution of motivational factors in skill performances. In this way emphasis can be placed on the role that poverty might play in depriving children of learning opportunities.

On the basis of information gathered by test instruments, medical examination, and parental interviews, a child's cognitive, socioeconomic, cultural, and physical resources are assessed. This assessment is compared to those of children of the same age and background. The child's score is not being compared to unlike children from different backgrounds, but rather with children who come from similar groups. The child's ability or achievement score is ranked in terms of those in the representative group, and the resultant adjusted score can be regarded as an indicator of the individual's learning potential (see Rice, 1979, p.34).

(iii) **The quality of school life**

It is well known that there are environmental differences between schools. Some are dull and depressing, even oppressive; others are lively, cheerful, and stimulating. If the gap between such schools could be reduced it would enhance the quality of life for large numbers of students (as well as teachers) who spend upward of a fifth

of their lives in school.

Research currently under way at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is designed to identify the framework of the social-structural influences that determine the quality of the students' and teachers' school life. To this end a quality-of-school-life measure (from the students' perspective) has been successfully developed with high reliability and validity (Williams and Batten, 1979; ACER, 1979). Work is under way to develop a multi-dimensional measure of the quality of school life from the perspective of the teacher. Subsequent findings on this affective dimension of schooling could be fed back to school decision-making structures.

Measuring the perceptions of students about the strengths and weaknesses of their schools is a necessary step in improving the environments of schools for both teachers and students. School assessment research has tended to be restricted to the evaluation of school achievement. This writer believes that research into the quality of school life may prove to have as important an impact as research into the evaluation of school achievement.

(iv) **Final examinations**

The final examination is a time-honoured educational practice which nevertheless constitutes a serious obstacle to equality of educational opportunity for some minorities and the disadvantaged. Though attention is usually focused on grade 12 final examinations, the end of the year (or grade) finals conducted in the elementary and secondary school classrooms are justified on similar principles and are in practice equally discriminating.

Exam results are useful for identifying the best students in terms of standards assumed to be absolute. If only the best are selected for entry to a college, that institution's outputs will be of high quality, as will its reputation - what comes out depends on what goes in. If only a few minority students get in - even those with high learning potential - so be it.(6)

Education, however, has little to do with ranking student performances; rather, education is concerned with changing students for the better. Final examinations have little to do with measuring cognitive change or moral development. They are merely measures of performance at a given point in time, not measures of change in performance.

As ranking devices examinations are usually reliable, but because they do not measure learning potential or the student's responsiveness to instruction they are of limited pedagogical utility. When the examinations are final examinations for students in their last year of secondary schooling, and when a student's post-secondary opportunities and future socioeconomic career depend on success in these "one shot"

exams, they become pernicious and repressive in their effects. To have redeeming pedagogical value the examination would have to indicate what the student has learned over a specified period of time - a semester, a grade, a high school career. In order to do this an examination result would have to be compared to a base-line measure, preferably with the same metric, given at an earlier point in time. In this way one could gauge how much an individual's performance has improved.

Measures of growth in educational performance have pedagogical merit on three grounds: (1) the change score indicates what, and how much a pupil has learned; (2) the scores can be used as a diagnostic aid - for example, to help direct students along the most productive paths; and (3) the scores are indicators of instructional effectiveness, hence useful for teachers as aids to improving their pedagogical strategies.

Schools which place importance on the use of examinations tend too frequently to emphasize the prediction of student performance rather then the provision of opportunities to improve their performance. In effect, the schools which accept uncritically the legitimacy of the final examination are imposing (unintentionally for the most part) zero-sum rules on the learning context. Zero-sum practices limit the numbers of high achievers because the mathematical logic of normative scoring methods forces the scores into a curved distribution, when the test is discriminatory. These artificial learning incentives are pernicious because they work only by ensuring that someone's gain is someone else's loss.

There is something bizzarre about public institutions which by virtue of compulsory attendance laws enjoy monopoly status, but which impose rules which by definition ensure that a proportion of the clients will not benefit. When the clients are the young the situation, if not macabre, is certainly coercive.

School assessment procedures can be introduced whereby final examinations become standardized post-tests designed to measure cognitive or affective growth, moral development, the quality of school life, and the effectiveness of instruction. Their use would almost certainly reduce the prevailing obsession with ranking students, and in this writer's opinion would help humanize the art of teaching.

## Conclusion

In this paper an effort was made to illustrate the kinds of question about schools and schooling that school assessment research can answer; to demonstrate the current need for school assessment research in view of impending demographic changes and structural changes in the economic order, which are shifting traditional

alignments and linkages between the schools and other social institutions; and to explain the traditional suspicion of school assessment research by teachers, the fears of school assessment research by educational officials, and the objections to the testing methods and grading practices erroneously attributed to school assessment researchers by pedagogical idealists.

It was argued that a middle way between the fears of the bureaucratic right and the objections of the ideological educational left could be found; and that school assessment projects which avoided most of the legitimate objections of both interest groups could be justified and implemented. In particular the notions were advanced of school-effectiveness indices, culture-adjusted achievement scores as measures of an individual's learning potential, quality of school life indices, and standardized pre- and post-test examinations, all as measures of educational change and of student responsiveness to instruction. Their implementation would reduce the zero-sum principle which in large part accounts for the repressive and coercive aspects of today's schooling. School assessment research of the kind advocated would provide an information base which could be used to reduce talent loss and move closer to equality in educational opportunity.

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NOTES

1. Most of these issues are discussed at greater length in Bulcock (ed., 1976), Coleman et al (1974), and Husen (1979).

2. A similar argument is developed by Coleman (1971, pp.78-81).

3. The notion here is that in order to ensure that their students perform well on the assessment tests teachers would teach for the tests and tend to neglect the less tangible but no less important aspects of the school curriculum.

4. A case study of bureaucratic intervention in a proposed school assessment reached project in the U.S. is presented by Tyler (1971).

5. Space does not permit a rebuttal of these arguments which counter research of the school assessment variety. The arguments are representative, not exhaustive. Ebel (1980) takes some of the arguments and draws attention to their limitations.

6. For similar arguments, but with reference to the post-secondary level of education, see Astin (1979).

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David G. Marshall

# It's good to be a teacher

**What follows is not so light-hearted that it couldn't happen. A Utopia for school principals, Marshall seems to say, is just over the horizon. And it follows, as the night the day, that having little left to do they then could really get in on the act and help their teachers. Would that be a Utopia for teachers? (Well, of course.)**

As far as Harvey Mathews was concerned, the biggest challenge of 30 degree-below mornings was surviving the walk from his allotted parking stall to the front door of Fletcher Barnbridge Junior High. Heated sidewalks had reduced the chance of a slip and related injuries, but no amount of technology had yet been able to control Arctic weather fronts. As he ran the gauntlet of a 2500 watt windchill, he appreciated the fact that he didn't have to remove his gloves to perform the first of his duties as school principal.

"Good morning, Horace," Harvey greeted the front door of the school. "Activate school opening procedures."

Recognizing his voice, Horace immediately unlocked the front door as well as the other school entrances designated as appropriate for use at this time of year. At the same time, Horace turned on all of the necessary school lights (his all-night task of rotating light-use finished) turned up the heat by 5 degrees C, started quietly playing some Debussy over the school's P.A. system, and started the coffee in the staffroom.

During the day, Horace would monitor corridor traffic, keeping track of the frequency of use of rooms, gym facilities, audio-visual equipment, and other physical resources of the school. Occasionally,

he would automatically turn the lights down, or perhaps reduce the heat to a certain part of the school that wasn't being used.

Although monitoring the flow of people all day was a little boring at times, Horace had had his exciting moments. Like the time he sensed some unusual activity under a first floor stairwell and passed this information on to Millicent in the offices. She, in turn, suggested that Harvey, the principal, investigate, and in doing so Harvey was able to break up a rather vicious fight before it got out of hand. Horace had also been instrumental in reducing vandalism at night. Not very much happened at the school, day or night, that he wasn't aware of.

Meanwhile, Harvey entered the school and continued down the corridor to his office.

"Hello, Millicent," Harvey offered as he entered his office. "Messages please." Also recognizing his voice, Millicent awoke, and in her characteristically monotonous tone, a voice that reminded Harvey of the speaking style of some of his university professors, proferred the information that Harvey had requested.

> "Bussing: É22 is stalled on Highway 3 - have sent info to divisional office - alternate bus on the way - 18 students will be late for homeroom - notes to this effect have been placed in appropriate teachers' boxes.
>
> "Teacher illness: Mary O'Neill called in sick - list of available supplies is on your morning printout - on the basis of past performance and suitability for Mary O'Neill's class profile, I would recommend substitute É6, with É4 as a second choice.
>
> "Horace has indicated that the thermostat in Room 12 is broken - have sent this info to divisional service department - we are 4th on the list for service - e.t.a. of repairman 10.05 a.m. List of student absences - those who have missed more than 6 days this term - is on morning printout. Have placed the information on guidance counsellor's printout as well.
>
> "There was a message from divisional office for a principal's meeting this afternoon at 2.30 - indicated that you would be busy on a É4 priority meeting at that time - division office requested a É2 priority for their meeting - have rescheduled your meeting with science teachers for tomorrow at 3.00 - have informed same."

"Thank you, Millicent," Harvey replied, as he retrieved his unsweetened, slightly whitened coffee from the coffee machine that

Horace had put into action. "Give me a printout on my revised schedule for today."

Harvey thought for a moment and then continued: "Also, send out to all parents the standard letter regarding our plans for an open house sometime next month. At the same time give me a projection of attendance at an open house for each of Wednesday and Thursday nights. I'd also like a list of all students, and their subject teachers, who are in a failing position in their course work as of yesterday. Compare this number with divisional statistics you can get from the central office computer.

"We also have a new student starting today in Level 5 - he's from Pinewood School - request his data file from the Pinewood office computer and do a profile match to see in which homeroom and with which teachers he should be placed.

"Oh - and one more thing," Harvey continued. "There is some scuttlebut around the division that Ridgeway school is going to be closed and their French Immersion program combined with regular programs in our school. The Ridgeway profile should be available from either theirs or the divisional computer. Do a simulation based on 1, 3 and 5 year projections, and provide me with an analysis of the sociological, psychological, climatic, and organizational implications of this proposal for our school. Give me a printout of your analysis and store the analysis for my retrieval only."

Harvey went to his desk, and while waiting for Millicent's analysis of the simulation, worked on some ideas he had for improving the social studies curriculum. He had noticed in a computer knowledge update on social studies the results of some recent research in politicization that intrigued him, and he wanted to work with his social studies people on some directions in this area.

"Teachers and students arrive in 30 minutes," he thought. "Time enough for me to go over Millicent's analysis before spending the morning helping one of the newer teachers with a perplexing instructional difficulty she has."

Harvey couldn't help smiling about the prospects of being able to spend a morning actually helping a teacher. Since Millicent took over the evaluation of teachers for promotion, tenure, and so on, he had been able to spend his time on instructional improvement. In the old days they used to distinguish between these as summative and formative evaluation, and the ability of a principal to help teachers (that is, formative evaluation) had been greatly hampered by the fact that he or she also had to do the summative evaluation. Ever since the school board and the teachers' union had agreed on the measurable indicators of teacher performance, Millicent had handled the summative evaluation in a fair and neutral way, to everyone's

satisfaction. Except those who got a bad report of course. But then, how can you argue with a computer?

At any rate, all Harvey had to do now was worry about making his instructional team better, and Millicent was instructed not to take into consideration any of his discussions with teachers when she generated their performance probability score.

In the stillness of the pre-student morning hours, Harvey felt satisfied.

"It's good to be a teacher," he mused, as Millicent's analysis started to appear on his desk-top printer.

Walter Werner and Richard Butt

# The value of questions, and Questions of value

**The following two papers on what school should be about were written to complement each other. Werner examines the main questions asked, and the methodologies employed, for the past several decades in the study of curriculum. He illuminates their limitations and inadequacies, and draws attention to some new concerns that are redirecting those working in this field from questions of technique toward questions of value. Butt, taking a perspective more distant from the field, asks whether our present curricula in schools are addressing the most pressing needs of human life ahead of us. He turns from a survey of the dysfunctional values present in society towards proposing a new scheme of values that should be taught if society is to survive. It is upon this scheme that any curriculum should be put into force, henceforth.**

## Part I

### The Value of Questions

The field of curriculum studies is exceedingly broad, and so is the range of possible critiques. It includes research, and the construction of descriptive and prescriptive images in curriculum development, change, evaluation and implementation. Also the field includes immensely practical decision-making directed at "getting things done" while drawing upon child development and learning theory, pedagogical wisdom, and the subject-matter of the disciplines. Traditionally these tasks included designing learning environments within the constraints of real schools; selecting print and non-print resources to enhance student learning; sequencing learning activities;

and justifying the choice of learning goals and content. In particular, intense work was directed at curriculum development and evaluation across North America during the past two decades, and judging from current interest, the 1980's promise considerable research sophistication in curriculum implementation and teacher inservice training. These new reseach areas are expanding quickly through graduate programs, international journals, and professional associations and conferences.

One way to critique this growing and diffuse field is through its major **questions,** and the **consequences** that these questions have for the field's development. Central to any form of inquiry are the questions that the inquirer devises, for in the absence of questions, everything potentially is relevant and inquiry remains random. Questions imply what is to be looked at (what counts as relevant data), how data are to be examined (what constitutes appropriate method), and even what acceptable range of answers can be expected. Hence the quality of practical and scholarly curriculum work depends on formulating good questions to guide the scope and depth of that work.

**Questions**

What are the questions that orient curriculum workers, and around which their occupational techniques, skills, and attitudes are developed? From early theorists such as Franklin Bobbitt (1918), through Ralph Tyler (1949), and to a host of curriculum technologists today, the prominent questions have been administrative and technical, concerned with procedures and organization in developing and evaluating curriculum. Tyler's basic "how to" questions summarize this dominant view:

> What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
>
> How can learning experiences be selected which are likely to be useful in attaining these objectives?
>
> How can learning experiences be organized for effective instruction?
>
> How can the effectiveness of learning experiences be evaluated?

Underlying these questions is a concern for the ends (the goals or objectives of the curriculum) and the means (the teaching methods and resources for achieving ends). The way in which the ends and means are related by these questions implies definite values: precision, predictability, certainty. Once ends are established in precise form, the curriculum worker searches for those means that are time and cost effective for ensuring goal achievement. Since the best means

are those that make the goals predictable, the techniques within curriculum development and evaluation focus largely on aligning ends and means. According to Tyler's questions, this is a simple task conceptually, although sometimes complex technically.

Examples can be given of how this set of questions may focus the curriculum worker upon technology for devising means and aligning these with ends, rather than upon other issues. Producing classroom resource material is a curriculum development task that may be time-consuming and require considerable expertise. If the ends-means orientation of Tyler's questions is taken for granted, as it usually is, the curriculum developer would be guided by questions concerning how that material is to facilitate desired outcomes in the classroom:

> Is the selection of this material effective for predicting and controlling goal achievement?
> Is the use of this material efficient in terms of the time and cost of goal achievement?
> Is the material applicable to achieving goals across a broad range of teacher, student, and organizational characteristics?
> Is the relation of means to the ends explicit and clear?

These typical criteria illustrate that resource material is a vehicle for achieving objectives, and as such can be judged on the strength of its instrumentality. By seeing material as simply instructional means to achieving prescribed learning ends, curriculum developers may neglect many important questions about the nature and use of materials in the classroom, and about their socio-political import. Tyler's questions are important both for what they emphasize and for what they neglect.

That questions with a technical emphasis continue to have priority raises an interesting question for anyone critiquing the field. Why are most of the metaphors characterizing curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation based on technical and administrative interests? Three reasons for this instrumental orientation can be postulated.

We could look at the practice of the occupation itself. Traditionally the things that occupied curriculum workers were classroom materials and activities. Devising and selecting these resources and strategies were concrete tasks, and this contributed to the development of an occupational orientation that concerned itself with instrumental questions. During the 1960's and 1970's, curriculum developers and evaluators gained legitimacy through enormous output of materials and reports, and the permanence of their status depended upon what they could continue to do for schools. Their success within the educational enterprise lay in producing visible products and teaching strategies, and this practical interest influenced the thinking of curriculum workers to such an extent that their technology became

the important aspect of curriculum studies. In other words, as they became conscious of their techniques and productions, the field of curriculum was rationalized in terms of an instrumental orientation towards schools.

The rising power of educational psychology concurrently strengthened this instrumental orientation in curriculum studies. Various lists of learning "needs" were devised by psychologists during the 1950's and 1960's to define the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains of learning, and by implication, the types of skill and knowledge that all students "needed". Educators quickly absolutized these need inventories and taxonomies to the extent that they became the goal and justification of curriculum. Few people questioned the premise that curriculum was the means for satisfying student "needs"; as the ends of curriculum thereby became nonproblematic, curriculum workers would busy themselves further with the technology that seemed to be their rightful domain. Indeed, it is difficult to find any curriculum from the past fifteen years that does not directly use or reflect the language of the **Taxonomy of Educational Objectives** (Handbooks I and II) developed by Benjamin Bloom and others (1956 and 1964). On the unquestioned assumption that these Handbooks were truly lists of "needs", and that curriculum was to serve these lists, curriculum development and evaluation became focused on ways to "diagnose" and "adjust" student "deficiencies" in terms of these famous taxonomies of learning "needs". These lists of "needs" were used as if they were independent entities and essential descriptions of human beings, rather than a way of talking about human learning or as concepts for guiding research. Such reification obscured the value basis of curriculum.

Another reason for the technical emphasis of curriculum studies has to do with a dominant social belief that schooling is to be defined and valued primarily in terms of what it is for. Generally policy makers assume that the school is and should be an instrument for implementing their vision of our social and economic future; parents commonly take it for granted that the school prepares youth for family life and leisure; business groups value the school for its power to train and select students for the job market. It is viewed as a "tool" for furthering national ideals, an instrument for achieving societal goals, a means for promoting a group's values. Given this instrumental orientation towards education, it is not surprising that federal agencies and groups from the private sector fund and develop curriculum to serve their particular interests; that skill-oriented and job-related curricula have proliferated; "that educational institutions would reflect a 'factory' or 'managerial' model of organization, or that the making of a human being might be thought of as analagous to the making of an automobile" (Crittenden). Given this ideology, it is not surprising that the language used to conceptualize evaluation, implementation, and development relies heavily upon an ends-means logic and technical schemes and questions.

There is a circularity here. Though curriculum practice has been influenced by the instrumental view of schooling, it shapes these values more precisely in curriculum evaluation, implementation, and development, thus contributing to the entrenchment of instrumental values. When practising their craft, curriculum workers often may be guided by a narrow concern for concrete outcomes in the classroom, and with the best ways to achieve visible results. This interest in turn shapes the attitudes of curriculum workers towards their own activities and classrooms, including what it means to be a teacher and student and what constitutes classroom knowledge. Once developed, these outlooks insulate thinking from other questions and interests, and become screens for modifying or rejecting innovative ideas that curriculum workers may encounter. Such screens become formalized in various "instruments" and "checklists" that further guide and guard the development of the field. For example, curriculum analysis systems such as EPIE have enshrined technical values and instrumental questions ("Materials Analysis Form" published by EPIE Institute, 463 West Street, New York; Erault, Goad, Smith, 1975.)

## Consequences

Dependence upon instrumental questions had important consequences for curriculum studies. A central concern with technology allowed the field to develop without much substance other than its techniques. With so much energy and expertise put into curriculum technology, it was overdeveloped through the proliferation of procedures that were variations of one another and that served the same value of predicting and controlling goal achievement. This preoccupation with methodology resulted in a narrowing of the field: development became the mere production or selection of means and the aligning of these with predetermined ends or "needs"; evaluation involved a judging of how well ends and means were related; implementation was seen as the transmission of curriculum into classroom practice with little regard for the situational features of that classroom. Curriculum evaluation in particular developed without a complementary deepening of philosophical bases. Scores of evaluation "models" appeared in the journals, but few of their authors questioned the notions of evaluation and curriculum implied by this technology. By 1969 the entire field of curriculum was open to charges of being "moribund, unable by its present methods and principles to continue its work and desperately in search of new and more effective principles and methods" (Schwab, 1969, p.1).

The process of getting to this moribund state of affairs has been outlined by sociologists studying occupations (Bensman and Lilienfeld, 1973, pp.339-340):

> The focus on methodology serves to provide a dynamic for an occupation because every technique, craft, and starting

> assumption which becomes the basis for a method is necessarily limited. The concentration on technique results in an elaboration and development of these various limited sets of assumptions which may cause such a proliferation of methods, vocabulary, and products on such a narrow base that the work done tends to collapse under the weight of overrefinement, complexity, repetition, and sterility. It may also collapse under the weight of its incomprehensibility and uselessness, for any craft or occupation can easily go beyond the point of diminishing returns in the pursuit of elaborate techniques with limited goals. When a set of technical ... or other limited assumptions is exhausted through overdevelopment, then it may be necessary for innovators to alter the initial assumptions, methodologies, and techniques, so that these new assumptions can provide the basis for new or different methods, contributions, and content of an occupation. But even here there are dangers. The development of new assumptions, methods, and techniques may become an aesthetic and a dynamic of a profession which has no other impulse to its development than change per se. The emphasis on such change produces a kind of meaninglessness which can be called pure occupational virtuosity. Solutions to such problems of meaninglessness can be found by either the return to earlier methodological ... assumptions, or through the borrowing of such assumptions from related fields.

As a way out of this cul-de-sac of technical overdevelopment, curriculum workers began in earnest to borrow methodological assumptions and content from other disciplines in the hope of generating new questions and directions. Borrowing since 1970 has been intense and is proving to be useful. The so-called "reconceptualist movement", as an example, seeks new foundations in diverse areas such as psychoanalysis, phenomenology, anthropology, aesthetic and literary criticism, and political theory (Pinar, 1975 and 1978; van Manen, 1978). During this past decade a new literature of curriculum scholarship has arisen and gone far beyond technical concerns (Willis, 1978; Eisner, 1979). However, a consequence of this borrowing is that the field has become fractured into competing groups. Commitments to particular assumptions and values makes each group especially self-conscious, and their social networks intensify through special conferences, professional associations, and journals that draw people with similar outlooks together. And as each group develops its own focus and speciality more clearly through these avenues, their domain of inquiry takes on special status and other domains are ascribed secondary value.

From such ferment there is emerging an interpretive orientation to complement the dominant instrumental orientation in curriculum

work and studies. This view focuses upon the relations between curriculum and the context within which it is maintained, rather than on relations between ends and means. The curriculum is not seen as something independent of its social and political contexts (including social values, economic relations, and interest groups) or of the quality of life experienced by teachers and students within classrooms.

Many ethical and political questions are raised about the power relations established or reflected through a curriculum, and about the values that it stands for. Which groups have or should have the right to determine goals and content? Who should be involved in developing and evaluating curriculum? How and when should they be involved? What ideological interests are served through the curriculum? In what ways does the curriculum legitimize existing social and economic relations within the community? What knowledge is worth including in curriculum, and on what principles does this selection operate? What is the nature of childhood, learning, or work implied within a curriculum? These questions are only illustrative, but they do give rise to new methods of interpreting and evaluating curriculum, of illuminating the quality of experience that may be implied through a curriculum, and of explicating the necessary relations between a curriculum and the society it serves. This trend to interpretive rather than technical questions makes the sociology of curriculum increasingly important as an area of curriculum studies for the 1980's (Bates, 1978; Saha, 1978; Giroux, 1979).

This is not to say that technology is unimportant, or that lists of learning "needs" are not useful for devising curriculum goals. Needs and methodology are derivative rather than basic; values are at the heart of educational activities (Lee, 1969; Werner, 1980). When anyone develops a curriculum, both ends and means are selected on the basis of values (often expressed as "needs"); ends and means are themselves values. Similarly, curriculum evaluation judges value in terms of selected criteria for particular contexts; curriculum innovation and implementation represent changed values for the classroom. Even a cursory look at "needs assessment" literature reveals that there are prior value commitments by researchers on how to conceptualize a "need". In short, the currency of curriculum work is values and valuing.

## Summary

Instrumental questions will continue to influence curriculum studies and work, but on their own these questions are inadequate for understanding the meaning and uses of curriculum. New questions have arisen for interpreting curriculum in relation to various contexts, and for addressing the values that are negotiated in curriculum implementation, transmitted through curriculum change, maintained in curriculum development, and justified by curriculum evaluation

activities. This explication requires reference to both a theory of value and to the specific contexts of curriculum. Current curriculum studies draw upon socio-political and ethical theories for understanding and arguing values, and upon numerous qualitative research approaches for understanding the classroom experiences engendered through curriculum.

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## Part II

### Questions of Value

Walter Werner's investigation of the questions that have dominated the field during the past several decades reveals their severe limitations and our need to evolve from questions of technique to questions of value. While Werner's critique is discipline-centered, my own focuses on human life.

Judged from the humanist position, any field of knowledge is only as good as its potential for improving the human condition. A curriculum only has human value if it gives access to knowledge that will improve the lot of the individual learner. My focus on the individual in no way excludes the needs of the community and society. Nor does such an emphasis imply a narcissistic or anarchistic approach to life. Like Walt Whitman and the New England Transcendentalists, I believe that enlightened self-interest inevitably leads to group action, community co-operation, and the negotiation of collective values.

My view then is that education is or should be the development of individual and social meaning; that curricula and the curriculum field should provide for an improvement in the human condition; and that they should enable the individual and thus the community to engage in a continuous emancipation. The question is, how far do existing curricula and the curriculum field achieve these ideals? An answer to this question must focus on the practical world into which our learners are evolving, the problems they encounter there, and the role curriculum can play in solving them (D. Pratt, 1981).

### Problems in human life

For a significant proportion of the population there is a diminishing personal satisfaction with life, especially for the young. Symptoms of this malaise are manifest in a lack of purpose and feelings of futility, anomie, helplessness, and alienation. The hardest - in both senses of the word - and most unfortunate datum that underscores this problem is that 75% of mental illness now occurs in persons under twenty-five. The world suicide rate **doubled** between 1971 and 1975. One is reluctant to seek out more recent figures (D. Glines, 1978).

There is abundant documentation of marriage breakdown and urban deterioration attended by alienation and violence. Terrorism, rioting, kidnapping, and other violent crimes fill the media. It is not

surprising (though hardly a solution) that there has been an increase in the use of police and military personnel to maintain order. A decrease in the sense of community, and constant inter- and intra-national strife, have been accompanied by the advent of non-institutionalized religions. These symptoms have been shown to represent a pre-revolutionary state (W.W. Harman, 1972); in countries where the social malaise has reached critical proportions, revolutions "successful" and "unsuccessful" have already occurred.

Our most basic problem is the increasing scarcity of things fundamental to our physiological needs - food, water, air, space, energy, and shelter. We have ample evidence of the depletion of non-renewable natural resources. The easiest space to build on has been the alluvial flood plains, so that our best agricultural land is being gobbled up. We are also familiar enough with not being able to swim at our favourite beach, boiling our drinking water, mornings when the air makes us cough, an increase in respiratory diseases and cancer, and most recently, the energy crisis.

Many people blame modern science and technology for these problems, not realizing that it is thanks to them that the earth is able to support its present population. People are starving in today's world, but without scientific methods most of the rest of the world would starve as well. Science - the use of human reason to understand the environment - is in its origins value-laden, revering independence, originality, the views of others and their right to dissent, and the sanctity of life (Brunowski, 1965). What the industrial state has done with science and technology is to abuse it with the beliefs that man is omnipotent, that science can conquer nature, and that ecological cycles are inconsequential when measured against profit. Control over the industrial effort has been wielded by persons ignorant of its ecological, social, or human consequences.

**The industrial state paradigm**

Underlying the personal, social, and ecological crises in human life is the current industrial state paradigm that dominates our society and lives. Its dysfunctional effects now outweigh its desirable characteristics. We have come to the limits of its usefulness (Harman, 1972).

The root problems are the values underlying the industrial **modus operandi** and the very powerful momentum that it has. Consumerism, the work ethic, and economic growth have been overemphasized. The focus of human life has been changed from family and community to the workplace. There is a dwindling sense of personal identity and control, a lack of autonomy and authenticity. Individuals feel like servomechanisms to the machine of commerce and have become split from the old socially-based community, from the extended family, and

recently, from the nuclear family as well. There is widespread lack of interpersonal support and trust (Toffler, 1970). All of this is further complicated by the helplessness engendered by future shock, and the phenomenal rate of technological change, which easily outpaces the evolution of social institutions sensitive to such changes (Shane, 1973, Ch.3). It is no wonder that the lone individual turns naively to the industrialized state's trap of hedonistic materialism as a palliative. We need drastic value shifts so that industry may operate using appropriate and benign technologies in harmony with healthy human and social values. Even if we wished, we cannot abandon industry. We do need a significant proportion of its products. But we **can** be discriminating in what it is essential to consume and how it should be produced. We **can** weigh carefully the environmental and social consequences before allowing continued industrial growth. We **can** clean up our existing act.

Modern society in its presentism and narcissism has not developed an adequate sensitivity to the future. Where is this train going? Nowhere fast? What future do we want? What values will generate that future? I'm really not interested in the finer subtleties of preferred futures. The real basic is survival, not just of a privileged or accidental few who survive an ecological or nuclear holocaust, but of all of us. This requires a more conscious appreciation of the nature of environmental health, both social and ecological, as well as a more concrete vision of the future and of those values which will carry us there (Boyer, 1973).

**What knowledge is of most worth to survival?**

Do our current curricula provide each young person with the skills to address these serious problems (Shane, 1973)? Curricula for our young people are determined in large part initially by what knowledge policy makers include and exclude, but in the last real instance, by what teachers put in and leave out. If we judge existing curriculum policies and activities by what is needed for human survival and development, they are inadequate. What we see, despite all the efforts of so-called reform, is the skeleton of a Sabre-Toothed Curriculum (Peddiwell, 1939), whose thinly disguised content of academic rationalism is irrelevant not only to the real though misguided world of industrialism, materialism, and consumerism, but more importantly, to human survival and development. Not only is the raw content inadequate, but the very design of our curricula is causing problems. In keeping the humanities (as a source of values) separate from social science, and social science adrift from science, we do not encourage the type of thinking that creates bridges between those bastions of knowledge that are necessary to address our human problems. Wren-Lewis cites research studies which show that

> the impersonal, specialized structure of science courses

> tends to attract those students whose fear of their own emotions makes them want to retreat into a world of abstractions. At the same time, the more vigorous, concerned minds are so repelled by what they see science has become that they retreat into a counterculture which is more and more explicitly antiscientific. This trend, if not altered, could spell disaster for the human race, since it would lead to a situation in which those who possess the knowledge, which is power, are lacking in all conviction, while those whose concern about the future has passionate intensity remain powerless to translate their ideals into practice. (Wren-Lewis, 1974)

**Process as content?**

In curriculum, process is as influential as curriculum content and design (Parker and Rubin, 1966). At present, most schools can be construed as thinly disguised factories, with lock-step production times and products which receive certificates of approval for use in the machine. The very structure of many curricula is based on behavioral performances to be achieved through prescribed means which only contribute to personal and social alienation. We do have and have had curricula which move towards human development and social and scientific literacy; but they stand little chance of becoming either policy or action in the competition for classroom time. Policy makers already have a full timetable and agenda, so do teachers - both being heavily pressured by industry, universities, and short-sighted parents to concentrate only on the so-called basics (Butt, Benjamin, Burridge, 1982). Even where policy has advocated curricula which are potentially emancipatory, their implementation has failed miserably owing to a "top-down" methodology (Berman and Pauly, 1975). This approach apes the industrial model by delivering curriculum packages developed by experts to teachers unprepared in their use, many of whom, refusing to be treated as technicians or assembly line workers, circumvent such packages in most ingenious ways.

As new knowledge and value structures become necessary for human life, it is essential that we find ways of enabling learners to have access to them in the classroom. Our current ways have not met with much success. The injection of new curricula into classrooms has often been ignorant of the particularities of unique schools, communities, and teacher and pupil needs. Recent attempts at classroom change have revealed that school and community-based approaches are much more successful than other more bureaucratic methodologies (Goodlad, 1975). This is especially true when school district curriculum personnel provide the leadership, support, animation, and resources school staffs request. These more local approaches, however, have tended to be limited in scope to immediate needs.

Ways must be found for integrating the broader visionary concerns of the future within the teacher's day-to-day intentions and the child's personally expressed purposes, to provide a curriculum of mutual benefit to all.

## Curriculum basics for the future

Criticism and rhetoric are naked uithout constructive suggestions. I propose a curriculum design-framework which, if elaborated and complemented, will focus on human development and emancipation. While addressing current human problems, it also embraces future needs. Implicit in the approach is that the school must liberate itself from being the caboose of society and become instead a trailbreaker, the leading edge. This is not tinkering with the existing curriculum; this is not reform, but major and radical reconstruction, which needs to be implemented in a gradual and continuing fashion over the next several decades.

Just as it is obvious that schools will need many resources from outside to implement such a curriculum, it is equally obvious that a curriculum prescribed and imposed by experts will not work. Classroom change must proceed at the teacher's pace to be successful. Teachers must also be the authors of their own curriculum so that they liberate themselves from the technician's or mere user's role. In turn, classroom transactions, to be liberating for pupils, should surely provide for a transition towards independence and authenticity at a reasonable pace. This is not meant to imply that each teacher and each school derive and develop all of the curriculum from zero, but that materials that are available from outside the school be acted upon - elaborated, modified, and adapted to suit the philosophy, aims, and objectives of the school and its community (Walker, 1979; Connelly, 1972).

In considering the content and design of the school's curriculum we return to the question of what knowledge is of most worth. What are the basics for human survival, development, and emancipation? I take the stark position that there is no point in being able to read, write, or add if you are dead from some environmental, social, or personal breakdown. That is, the traditional basics will become increasingly useless on their own if they are not combined with new basics which emerge directly from current and future human concerns. These new basics need to be integrated with a curriculum structure which explicitly manifests their interrelatedness.

## New basic literacies: a proposal

In order that school curricula may help our children meet existing and future challenges, they need to be built upon an

integration of the old and the new basic literacies. The new literacies that may be derived from the foregoing analysis consist of three first order literacies, one second order, and one third order.

The first order "basics" are scientific, social, and personal literacies. They are not mutually exclusive. Currently, many social and personal needs and problems have a scientific base, in either a positive or negative sense. Though a separate new curriculum might be necessary for each first order literacy, their integration must be reflected in the selection of content and structure - for example, a science curriculum might include an examination of the social impact of various technologies, or consist of a study of social problems with a science base.

The manner in which these literacies are taught is as important as their content. In contrast to the separation of existing curricula from real life, the new literacies should be taught using an experiential approach. The more traditional approach, learning a theory and then applying it to real life, is replaced by praxis whereby student learning is based upon projects in the community. Being involved in useful community work, besides providing for an acquisition of new skills, illustrates to the student that his or her actions can have an effect on society. This type of learning can, of course, be consolidated with more conventional study relating to the concrete problems encountered in the field.

### Scientific

Fieldwork, laboratory work, and conventional study can give students an understanding of the fundamental ecological cycles, their essential relationship to a healthy environment, and our ultimate dependence on that environment. Our curricula must provide an understanding not only of the major physical science processes but also of how these may affect our lives now and in the future through various technological developments. With this approach pupils could become literate in the use and abuse of science, so that they might determine which technology is inappropriate, appropriate, or benign.

Personal and community projects could include such activities as school and home energy conservation, health care, nutrition, food production, and monitoring of local air and water pollution.

### Social

Human cooperation and understanding is of paramount importance, not only to avoid international, intersectarian, cultural, and racial strife, but for positively building human groupings that are healthy.

There are abundant opportunities for involving our elementary and high school pupils in projects in the community. Becoming active in any local groups concerned with such issues as day care, recycling projects, parks, playgrounds, food co-ops, involvement in various ethnic groups, and assisting persons in need would provide a base for acquiring skills in social literacy while animating healthy community development.

More conventional study would then build on and elaborate field work. Typical content would include the varied notions of family, community, and society evident within the different cultures within Canada and in other nations. The processes of social innovation, change and stagnation, as well as paradigms of past, current and future societies, would be important features of the new curriculum.

**Personal**

The ability to evolve one's own set of values, short and long term goals, and personal positions with respect to issues in one's own life constitute what might be called personal literacy. This curricular element is designed to alleviate the purposeless anomie and alienation that has led to increasing breakdown and suicide among young people. Whereas major elements of personal literacy will evolve from the social and scientific literacies, there are aspects which are unique to each individual regarding his or her own needs, interests, aspirations, and approach to life.

Personal literacy can be provided for as much by its integration into social and scientific literacy and into the **process** of education as it can by means of specific content. If the curriculum involves personal action and the application of its principles in student everyday living and aspirations, the lack of personal control, autonomy, or authenticity in these young lives may be countered. Only if the curriculum process and instruction engage each pupil's own perceptions, purposes, and needs through joint pupil-teacher negotiation will personal development through school be enhanced.

**A second order literacy - values**

Even the most superficial analysis of the problems of human life - social, psychological, and physiological needs - leads to a scrutiny of the current **modus operandi** of society - the industrial state. Underlying the environmental, social, and personal crises are values dysfunctional to human life; the amelioration of these problems depends on value shifts. The humanities, as a source of values, must be integrated into the curriculum. Students need such a basis upon which to judge what is appropriate or benign technology, and how such technology may best be applied to social life. This leads us to the

notion of values literacy.

Values literacy is implicit as a common theme throughout the first order literacies. It arises from a study of the values that undergird

the scientific way of knowing

environmental health

past, present, and alternative notions of family, community, culture, and society

the current industrial state paradigm

the ethics of social issues having a scientific base, such as abortion, euthanasia, and cloning

the consequences of the use of various value sets and value shifts

**A third order literacy - futures**

This curriculum would entail

the generation of possible, probable, and preferred futures for communities, societies, and individuals (Singer, 1974)

the elaboration of a future-focused role image for the learner; that is, how one individual's activities might influence change for future survival

the identification of value shifts necessary to achieve various future scenarios

the design of community action projects geared to the above

A curriculum for the three first order literacies and one second order literacy would not yet be sufficient to complete a curriculum's design which meets the present and the future aspirations for human life. The very momentum of our societal dynamics, the feelings of personal helplessness, and the lack of a positive vision for the future - all these impede the value shifts necessary for survival. Hence we need to be literate about possible, probable, and preferred futures and how we get there.

**Summary**

The second part of this paper has attempted to critique the curriculum field, its process and design products, from the perspective of human survival and development. Curriculum, as one access point for human knowledge, should provide for a continuing improvement in the human condition. Existing curricula and the curriculum development process were felt to be lacking in content, design, and relevance to the basic problems of contemporary environmental, social, and personal crises. They are also devoid of suitable images of tomorrow's world into which our children will be thrust. In order to evolve elements of curriculum that would address these concerns, I have analysed the problems to suggest new curriculum basics.

If we are to survive and develop, curricula must engage questions of value in the lives of all humans, which means that the field of curriculum studies must do the same. Rather than remaining preoccupied with questions of a utilitarian nature for our existing industrial society, or for the dinosaur of academic rationalism, we must engage questions such as those raised in the initial portion of the paper. It is equally important that curriculum workers translate broad visions into concrete exemplars of local action.

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# Field Notes

**The following two short articles represent a form of short report that can elucidate for the non-specialist the gist of a piece of research in a way that the regular research paper, clad in full academic regalia, can hardly do. Both are on points of education that are of acute interest - and indeed are rather touchy subjects - for many of the public in contemporary Western society.**

**Bagley's summary of some research carried out in Britain over a period of years tells us that real progress can be made in teaching racial tolerance to large numbers of students, even though with this approach no dent was made where the students suffered from low self-esteem, or where the teachers were of racist inclination. Searles describes the successful introduction of a sex education program in a Montreal school, an achievement that deployed a combination of two different schemes of value in negotiating a new curriculum, one making much of community involvement and the other of student needs. Both reports demonstrate the rewards of patient scholarship concerning what otherwise would seem intractable cultural problems.**

Chris Bagley

## Teaching About Race Relations

A curriculum pack of race relations materials had been prepared for use by teachers using a a non-directive, discussion approach (Parkinson and MacDonald, 1972). It had been developed from the Humanities Curriculum Project directed by Lawrence Stenhouse and his colleagues at the Centre for Applied Education at the University of East Anglia (Stenhouse, 1975). An evaluation of the approach, using specially devised attitude scales of established behavioral validity (Bagley and Verman, 1975), indicated that the "race pack", when used by specially trained teachers using non-directive methods (the "neutral chairman" approach), resulted in moderate but statistically significant shifts towards tolerant attitudes and interpersonal orientations in

comparison with control subjects (Verma and MacDonald, 1972; Verma and Bagley, 1973).

Political controversy in Britain has surrounded the use of these materials. Critics of the right suggested that the materials in the race pack were too inflammatory, and that race-related issues were best ignored in the classroom; critics of the left argued that prejudice and racism should be overtly condemned by teachers, and not handled in the open, humanistic way that Stenhouse had pioneered (Jenkins et al., 1979).

Partly in response to these criticisms a much larger project was mounted, involving some 2,000 pupils aged 15-16, in 39 English schools. Three different strategies were evaluated: A. a didactic chairman using the race pack; B. a neutral chairman using the race pack materials; C. use of psychodrama and role playing in race-related situations. Some 500 pupils were enrolled in each strategy, the remaining pupils acting as controls. Each program lasted three months, and before-and-after testing using a variety of attitudinal and psychosocial questionnaires involved both the "experimental" and the "control" pupils.

Six months after the teaching, those involved in both Strategies A (didactic chairman) and B (neutral chairman) showed statistically significant attitude shifts in the direction of tolerance in comparison with the controls. A similar but non-significant trend occurred with Strategy C (use of drama) (Verma and Bagley, 1979). Analysis of the pretest data showed that poorer self-esteem, various psychological difficulties as measured by Cattell's HSPQ, poor scholastic achievement, and alienation from school and teachers significantly predicted racist attitudes in these pupils (Bagley et al., 1979). Poor self-esteem was seen as a pivotal factor in attitude development and change, and an experiment in one school showed that enhancing self-esteem was more effective than classroom teaching of various kinds in reducing racist attitudes (Bagley, 1979).

Post-testing of the available experimental subjects and controls, eighteen months after the teaching program had been completed, showed that the attitudinal shifts of the experimental subjects remained significant, although less marked, in comparison with the controls. Strategy A, using the didactic chairman, had the most clear and positive long-lasting effects (Bagley and Verma, 1982).

Further analysis of the data showed that some students in all programs showed a negative attitude change after teaching. These students had particularly poor self-esteem, a high degree of alienation from school and teachers, and came from depressed urban areas where their families had to compete with ethnic minorities (mainly West Indians and South Asians) for scarce employment and housing resources. The students whose attitudes changed most fundamentally and

permanently in a positive direction tended to be female, well-adjusted high achievers, from middle class areas with less ethnic minority settlement. A further factor in less successful outcome was the dispositions of teachers themselves. Those who handled the race-pack materials with active distaste, and who were were shown in prior attitude testing to have negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities, tended to have pupils showing a less favourable outcome.

These results are moderately encouraging. They show that teaching about race relations in school can have some positive outcomes in terms of attitude shifts in the direction of tolerance. Nevertheless, such teaching cannot counter a range of factors in the wider social structure which dispose many individuals to prejudice and racism; and it cannot cope with the problem of a general climate or culture of racism reflected in the attitudes of some teachers (Bagley and Verma, 1979).

**This note was prepared for the Invitational Symposium on Multicultural Education of Queen's University, Ontario, November, 1981.**

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William E. Searles



In recent times controversy has almost invariably arisen over the development of curriculum for sex education. Concern has been expressed by parents and educators who have been shocked with the content of the curriculum and who have questioned its suitability for the students for whom it was intended.

The purpose of this paper is to report the development of a curriculum in sex education using a consensus of concerned parents and educators and the input of students. It makes use of curriculum development models, identified in the field, whose values have been clearly delineated. In this respect it is interesting to note that the three "ideal types" of curriculum development models identified by Macdonald (1975) are in line with three of the models (or conceptions) recognized by Eisner and Vallance (1974).

## Three value positions

Macdonald's three curriculum development models are known as the 1) Linear-Expert, 2) Circular-Consensus, and 3) Dialogical. The basic value position inherent in the Linear-Expert model is "control", which is associated with the subject matter or disciplines approach, an approach concerned with the modes of inquiry and structures of a discipline. The value position inherent in the Circular-Consensus model relates to the problems of living, or social issues; it reflects a concern for practical knowledge rather than the more theoretical concern of the disciplines. The Dialogical model is concerned with the emerging needs of the student; its emancipatory interest fosters self-actualization. These three value positions thus reflect the cognitive human interests of control, consensus, and emancipation.

The developmental procedures of the Linear-Expert model are dominated by experts, who attempt to maximize a control by the discipline. The whole process therefore "is controlled and monitored with specific goals in mind, and it is the experts who make the initial and final decisions about the validity of the content and process." The nationally-developed science curricula produced in the United States during the 1960's are examples of this kind of curriculum development. Most of these curriculum projects were initiated by discipline scholars at the university level, who prepared the materials and tried them out in the schools. These experts obtained feedback regarding the results in the classroom, and then rewrote, piloted, and finally revised

the curriculum materials for broad distribution. In this manner scholars controlled the development of the curriculum and thereby maintained the integrity of their discipline. Support for this model can be found in the work of Phenix (1965), and King and Brownell (1966).

The Circular-Consensus model is commonly referred to as the "grass roots" approach to curriculum development, since it involves teachers, administrators, and community in the developmental process, with experts on call if needed. All members of this group are regarded as being of equal rank in the deliberation process. In this model there is a conviction that unless teachers are present and participate in the process of curriculum development, the curriculum materials emanating from it will be misused in the classroom. It is recognized that there is some rhetoric of control in the developmental process of this model, but that consensus and communication are the more important outcomes. This model is supported by the work of Walker (1971), Schwab (1973), and others.

The Dialogical model is based upon the emerging needs of the student, and is supported by Paulo Freire's work in the field (1970) and by the propositions of Sergiovanni and Starratt (1971), and of Weinstein and Fantini (1970). Initially, the teachers identify student leaders, with whom the educators engage in a dialogue, and it is from an assessment of the results of this discourse that the curriculum emerges. The adults then attempt to provide a match between the cultural resources known to the adults and the expressed needs and interests of the students. In this manner the model actively involves students in curriculum development, and the needs of students are given priority over its social and discipline content.

These descriptions of the three models clearly indicate the value position inherent in each. An empirical research study in science education recently undertaken by this author (1978) substantiated Macdonald's contentions. The findings indicated that the models do have different basic value positions, and that they were responsible for the selection and organization of different content, resulting in a curriculum design that varied with the developmental model used.

## Application in sex education

In the development of a controversial curriculum such as sex education, the educator or curriculum developer should be able to make use of this sort of information about the different models as a guideline. Both the Circular-Consensus and Dialogical models would be useful. The Circular-Consensus model

involves administrators who are responsible for matters pertaining to the school's curriculum, teachers who are responsible for the implementation of the curriculum in the classroom and have knowledge of what can or cannot be taught in a particular classroom setting, and laymen who represent the viewpoint of concerned parents as to the relevant needs and interests of their offspring. The Dialogical model is useful since it allows for the recognition and presentation of the needs and interests of the students for whom the curriculum is being developed. With such information it becomes possible for the administrators, teachers, and laymen in the Circular-Consensus model to match cultural knowledge to the students' needs.

A combination of these two models was recently used by Kotsos in his "Sex Educational and Personal Development Curriculum" for Level V students of the LaSalle Catholic Comprehensive High School in Montreal, Quebec. The critical pathway for this curriculum development was controlled by the paradigm of the two models thus:

1. Discussion with the school principal regarding needs for the curriculum; description of models; and substantiation of the procedures to be used.

2. Approach to the Teacher's Council and presentation of the project. Endorsement of the project by the Teacher's Council. Establishment of a committee of teachers and administrators as the school staff component. (The committee consisted of the school principal, the executive vice-principal, and one member from each of the science, social studies, mathematics, and guidance departments.)

3. Compilation by the committee of a list of recommendations for a student questionnaire. (It was considered that some difficulties would arise if adults attempted to engage teenagers in dialogue regarding their sexual needs and interests, and that a strictly confidential questionnaire would be the best way for the students to express themselves.)

4. Meeting of the curriculum developer with the School Committee (parents) to outline the project to the parents. Establishment of a special subcommittee of the School Committee to work in conjunction with the curriculum developer. (These members formed the community component - laymen - in the developmental procedures that would be governed by the consensus of the group.)

5. Preliminary considerations for the student survey drawn up by the Curriculum Committee, consisting of administrators,

teachers, and laymen from the school community. These considerations dealt with

specific aims
main survey features
obtaining adolescent cooperation
determination of suitable survey questions
organization of survey sections
procedure for selecting students
obtaining parental permission.

6. Presentation to Level V students explaining the purpose of the project and the confidential procedures to be used for the questionnaire, and seeking their cooperation, using the **Dialogical** Model. Completion by students, all volunteers, of a questionnaire based on two standardized questionnaires (Rogers, 1974; Schiller, 1973).

7. Evaluation of the findings by the Curriculum Committee. Development of the curriculum, using the **Circular-Consensus** model.

The empirical evidence obtained from the Dialogical model survey had a powerful influence on the discussion during the developmental procedures of the Circular-Consensus model. The results of the survey clearly indicated that there was a need for sex education and pointed out the most relevant topics to meet the needs and interests of the students. The following are some of the salient findings of the Kotsos survey:

> Fully 28% of the subjects had received no sex instruction from their parents.
>
> Altogether 44% of the subjects admitted to having been uncomfortable to very uncomfortable during parent-child sex talks.
>
> The parents' instruction was not rated highly, and some 45% of the subjects considered it to be 'incomplete' to 'confusing'.
>
> The peer group is the primary source of sex information; however, the subjects had a low regard for the quality of such instruction.
>
> A total of 78% of the subjects classified their level of sex knowledge as from 'adequate' to 'comprehensive' but their mean scores (respectively for these categories) were only 38% and 50%.

Some 25% of the subjects had engaged in sexual intercourse.

Some 39% of the subjects had engaged in heavy petting two or more times.

Some 64% of the subjects had engaged in light petting two or more times.

Fully 71% of the subjects viewed sexual intercourse as acceptable after only a few dates.

Some 72% of the subjects viewed heavy petting, kissing, and fondling the sexual organs of a partner, with the intention of achieving sexual climax, as acceptable after only a few dates.

Some 88% of the subjects considered light petting, kissing and fondling the sexual organs of a partner as acceptable after a few dates.

A total of 40% of the population had masturbated two or more times.

From their deliberations the members of the Curriculum Committee agreed that the philosophy of the sex education curriculum should emphasize factual information about sex and the concomitant interpersonal relationships. The Curriculum Committee also made the following recommendations regarding the implementation of the sex education curriculum they had developed:

A. The implementation of the sex education program be slow and deliberate so as to allow for the proper organization of teachers and methodology. The program should commence in Level V only during the first school year.

B. Experts in the field be consulted regarding the selection of suitable staff and the methodology required for successful implementation.

C. The library be furnished with suitable literature for use by the senior students, and a special section be established for use by parents of children in the school board.

D. The proposed program be carefully monitored by a special committee of persons from both the original staff and the community committees to ensure that the course goals are

being attained.

E. The parents of the intended student group be informed about the new program through a series of lectures during the year prior to the introduction of the course.

F. A committee be established to research the operation of sex education courses already in existence.

In conclusion, it was generally agreed by the school community that the hybrid Circular-Consensus and Dialogical curriculum development models, which had organized the school staff, the community, and the students themselves as planning agents, had resulted in an acceptable and relevant curriculum.

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Laurence Stott

# Education for democracy

**The smarter we get, the less patience we have for things that happen slowly. In this way education often seems to work against a grasp of the way things actually happen, in human affairs especially, and the prospect for wisdom fades as the horizons of the intellect expand to take in alluring possibilities that lie beyond present realities. As we surely ought to have learned from our own lifetimes, a practical democracy has its fragilities, and neglect can kill it. More deadly yet, as Stott points out, we lavish on it in schools sentiment that has no nourishment and praise based on serious misunderstandings. Before we know it the next self respecting generation will turn in disgust and ignorance to something much worse, unless we get serious about teaching the real merits of the system we have inherited.**

Most countries don't give a second thought about using the schools to engender in the young respect for their own particular social system. Not only are we reluctant to do this in Canada, we actually undermine respect for our political system by holding up for appreciation a false view of that system, a fairy tale view. Just as John is a bit hurt when he learns that Santa Claus is really just grumpy Dad, so young people are hurt when they find our way of life to be harsher than the fairy story portrayed. The student rebellions of the 60's, and now the current cynicism among students, are products, I believe, of this moving from fairy tale to reality. But Canadian democracy as we know it, as it actually is, is worthy of respect and appreciation, and we have no reason to be bashful about using the schools to engender such respect.

By "democracy" I mean parliamentary government as we know it (laws and policy decisions made by a majority of elected

representatives; elections by secret ballot every five years), and liberties as we know them (subject to law, freedom of assembly, speech, religion, media; freedom to dissent). I believe that the schools do little to engender in our young people respect for this democracy, and that they should be doing much more in this regard.

I believe there are three main reasons why we do so little to engender this respect. Firstly, "engender respect" smacks of indoctrination, which latter is deemed, correctly I think, to be anti-democratic, to be totalitarian. In short, some hold that it is not democratic to engender respect for democracy. Secondly, many greatly respect 'true' (or 'real' or 'genuine') democracy, but are very unhappy with the democracy we actually have, judging it to be little more than a sham version of the real thing. Lastly, some believe that respect for democracy in schools will militate against teachers taking a strong leadership stance and against the attainment of high standards: teachers would be unwilling, it is feared, to be demanding, since a demanding leader is held to be authoritarian (and non-democratic) and would teach to the average ability level, or the lowest, lest the schools become elitist (and non-democratic). All three reasons are flawed. Furthermore, the errors are pernicious, not benign.

Democracy is not a doctrine. It makes no truth claims, neither does it make moral claims, thus standing in stark contrast with religions and ideologies. Democracy is essentially an amoral decision-making process. It can throw up any decision, be it deemed moral or immoral, be it based on truth or falsity. Indeed, inasmuch as moral notions are neither justified nor discredited by majority vote (rape would not be rendered moral by receiving majority approval), it is not surprising that democracy and morality live in a tense stand-off. Democracy does not claim that the majority is right, only that decisions have to be made and that, given respect for individual freedom of thought and expression, democracy is the best way (most open-to-change) of arriving at those decisions.

Furthermore, democracy can be rationally defended - that is, it does not need to be inculcated. Our democracy is the deliberate refusal to put too much power in too few hands for too long, which is to say it has a well-founded fear of oppression by those in power. At the same time, this democracy recognizes the need for a law-making, policy-making, effective government, which is to say it has a well-founded fear of anarchy. Democracy allows hard decisions to be made in the face of opposition without suppressing opposition; it allows social stability along with the continuous possibility of change; it accomplishes changes in power without a tank in sight; and it embraces universal education since it has already decided to accept dissent, not suppress it. Moreover, history has shown that this democracy works; it is not merely a utopian dream. For a society which chooses not to repress minority groups or freedom of thought

in general, thus acknowledging and expecting conflicts in value, democracy is clearly the best way of governing.

Thus to engender respect for democracy as we know it is not to indoctrinate. Democracy is not a doctrine, and respect will be born of citing good reasons for such respect.

**A hoax**

To those who respect 'true' democracy but are horrified by the democracy we have, I must say that defining democracy in terms of equality, brotherhood, and freedom (which is how such people usually do define it) is nothing but a cruel hoax.

Our democracy has always been hard-headed about the need for effective government, that is, about the need for some people to be in power over others; and that is to say that there will not be equality of power. Democracy is to a high degree the tyranny of the majority. What little equality there is, is generated by the freedoms embraced by our democracy, by the opportunity to assert one's views. Any vision of democracy that eliminates the need for effective government is utopian and perverse; non-government, which is to say anarchy, is not a viable way of social life.

Democracy places its money upon the principle of competition, and hence streams people into winners and losers rather than into brotherhood. Conflict is at the heart of democracy, captured and crystallized in the institution of parliament where political parties struggle for power before a judging populace. In democratic systems of justice the courtroom is an arena of conflict between two lawyers, each struggling for victory, before a judging populace jury. Furthermore, it is no accident that most democracies still cling to a high degree of capitalism, a system wherein producers compete for markets before a buying populace. Any vision of democracy that exalts equality and brotherly love has to deny competition and conflict, and thus falls into the arms of totalitarianism. Far from being "true democracy", such visions sever all connection with democracy.

As for an idealized dream of freedom, no society will willingly let others violently overthrow it. "Absolute freedom" is strictly speaking, and practically speaking, nonsense. Democracy embodies the rule of law, holding law to be our best guarantee of personal liberties. Any vision of democracy that eliminates the rule of law, and hence rails against police and R.C.M.P., falls into the arms of either totalitarianism or anarchy. Either way, individual liberties will suffer loss.

In short, "true democracy" is utopian and non-democratic. The

democracy which we have does work, does sustain large measures of personal freedom, can throw up decisions which will seek to reduce inequalities, does not forbid brotherly love, and mildly supports brotherhood in the sense that democracy forbids lawlessness and believes all should have their say. But democracy is essentially conflict. The freedoms enshrined in democracy live in dynamic tension with the need for law and policy. Freedoms mean conflict, since unoppressed people who have access to education will differ greatly in their beliefs and ambitions. I have said that "true democracy" as the confluence of equality, brotherhood, and freedom is nothing but a cruel hoax, and not something we should foist upon the children in our schools. Yet some notable educators foster such a hoax:

> When the school introduces and trains each child of society into membership within such a little community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with the instruments of effective self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guarantee of a larger society which is worthy, lovely and harmonious. (1)

> For anyone who takes democracy seriously, the claims of the ideals of freedom, equality and fraternity must all be respected in making practical policies... A theory in which any of these ideals is either given overwhelming significance or virtually ignored can hardly claim to be democratic. It would not simply be a version of democracy, but a different kind of political theory altogether. (2)

The notion that democracy militates against high standards or strong teacher leadership is absurd. Far from being a levelling process, democracy embodies the struggle for supremacy; the spoils go to the capable. And democracy assumes strong leadership inasmuch as it assumes strong government. Democracy is also, however, the attempt to prevent oppression, and hence education should be our best effort at bringing all children to the limits of their potential. This does not mean holding bright students back, nor does it mean weak teachers; it means exactly the opposite. In short, there is nothing within democracy that militates against high standards. Democracy is not anti-intellectual or anti-expert; democracy is not stupid.

Thus there are no good reasons for refraining from engendering in our young people respect for democracy as we know it. Moreover, democracy does merit appreciation. Because we have strong government we bask in the benefits of social order; we do not fear to walk the streets. Changes in power within our society occur without a drop of blood spilt. We enjoy freedom of thought, of assembly, of faith; our children have access to self-development through the public education system; we have access to information and opinions through non-censored media; and we have freedom to

dissent. There is the continuous possibility of social change, which is to say that there is always the possibility of improvement. If this does not merit appreciation and respect, what does?

In sum, the democracy that we have is the attempt to create a viable way of life that actively supports diversity and dares to flirt with dissent. Because it is not a doctrine and does not claim to be moral, it need not rest its case on indoctrination, but rather can embrace education and stand upon reasons. Rather than rail against its lack of divine perfection, let us appreciate democracy, the real democracy that we do have, as a spectacular human achievement the likes of which may never again be seen in human history. Let us seek to improve the decisions the democratic process makes. Let us teach our children, in the schools, to respect it, messy and conflict-ridden though it be. Mess is the price of freedom.

Rebelling students in the sixties claimed that the only difference between themselves and the adult establishment was that they really believed in the democracy that the elders had held up to them, and what they saw around them was not really democracy. But what they saw around them really was democracy; what they had been taught was a lie, a cruel hoax.

## NOTES

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# Book Reviews

**Richard Joly**
**NOTRE DEMOCRATIE D'IGNORANTS INSTRUITS.**
**Ottawa: Les Editions Leméeac Inc., 1981.**
**239 pp.**

Richard Joly addresses the question, "In what ways may we best prepare our young people to fulfil their obligations and responsibilities as members of a democracy?" This question is a basic one which all concerned with education, and especially those with political education, must try to answer.

According to Professor Joly, the traditional assumptions on which we tend to operate are these: in a democracy we need an informed electorate, one that knows about government at all levels, what the principal issues of our day are, and how government works; the object for each member is to acquire knowledge for intelligent political decision-making; progress in a democracy, it has been asserted, is in proportion to the instruction of its citizens.

The author challenges this view. He argues forcibly that people today, even those who are highly educated, lack expertise in affairs vital to our country. By and large, we are all savants zébrés d'ignorance. How much do our plumbers, surgeons, air traffic controllers, clergy, or cashiers really know about the Constitution, James Bay, energy pricing, CANDU reactors, NATO, or a host of other issues our politicians deal with? Even some of our lawyers describe certain legislation as "a jungle." Besides, to add to our problems, we are manipulated by governments, private enterprise, and the media. The industry of our government today is as complex as our agricultural or aviation industries, about which most of us are abysmally ignorant. The result, according to Professor Joly, is that understandably we are confused and bewildered by public affairs.

The solution to our dilemma is not to cease attempts to transmit knowledge, but to develop an awareness of our values. The task faced by electors at the polls is to choose candidates who have the same constellation of value as their own: "If you have faith in your messenger, you will have confidence in the message that will be

transmitted." The establishment of faith between the governed and the governors will revitalize democracy and help all those of us who are striped with ignorance to become genuine democratic citizens.

The author is a persuasive writer. Repeatedly, he calls forward a legion of pertinent examples to support his arguments; he frequently employs thoughtful analogies to elucidate his point of view (in one chapter the complexity of politics is likened to the playing and televising of a game of football); and he writes deftly and with wit (two thirds of the way through the book, the reader is given a chance to quit - dernière sortie avant péage.).

In the opinion of this reviewer, Professor Joly has probably exaggerated the problem of knowledge that confronts us. We acquire much important knowledge directly from personal experience. We are only too acutely aware of the way in which certain matters touch our lives (pollution, gasoline prices, the language of schooling, traffic congestion, violence on T.V., food additives, and so on) and we may be strongly motivated to know more and to urge action. Moreover, while our elected representatives are channels through which we may voice our concerns, we are not limited by any means to using them exclusively. Each of us has numerous routes through which he can, and does, communicate with governments - our local, provincial, and national governments - and non-government organizations. Think of neighbourhood groups, home and school, political party associations, government regional offices, religious institutions, newspapers, professional organizations, unions, and the like. Surely maximizing participation in these many ways is a powerful way of enhancing democratic citizenship?

It is to be regretted that the author has not considered the merits of several existing curriculum projects in political education which constitute alternatives to the traditional, legal-institutional, and historical approach. The political-process, political-concepts, and public-issues approaches have all been inspired, in part, by the problem of the explosion of knowledge. Two publications specifically, A.B. Hodgetts' Quelle culture? quel héritage? (1968) and Benoit Robert's Perspectives nouvelles en enseignement du Canada (1979) appear to have gone unnoticed, although they, too, grapple with the same fundamental question as does Professor Joly.

In spite of such shortcomings, this is indeed an exciting, analytical, well-documented book, written with verve, conviction and insight. It provides a valuable alternative point of view to existing theories of political education and, as such, it deserves to be read widely by those who study seriously the relationship between democracy and education.

**David C. Smith**
McGill University

**Thomas Popkewitz and Robert Tabachnick.**
**THE STUDY OF SCHOOLING: FIELD BASED METHODOLOGIES IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND EVALUATION.**
**New York, N.Y.: Praeger Publishers, 1981.**
**301 pp. $34.60.**

When people learn that I have been trained as an anthropologist to work in the area of education, they often ask me to give a talk about **the** anthropological approach to studying education, or **the** ethnographic method in educational research. I often get the impression they are seeking the latest fashion in research methodology, or worse yet, looking for a saviour - one to show them the sure path to truth. Usually, they are kind people who mean well. I worry about disappointing them when I say that **the** anthropological approach to studying education does not exist. Rather, there are substantial methodological and philosophical disagreements among the anthropologists, as well as other field workers, who apply their craft to the arena of education. One method does not exist, but many.

Because of such experiences, I heartily welcome and recommend The Study of Schooling edited by Popkewitz and Tabachnick. Their collection of twelve essays is a "deliberate effort to present statements of competing perspectives that are ideologically and sometimes methodologically at variance" (p.x). The portrayal of variance is part of the book's strength. Another source of strength comes from questions posed by the book's contributors. Any book that brings to light a few good questions is worth more to the serious student than one full of trivial answers. This book raises more than a few good questions.

In two essays Thomas Popkewitz questions the philosophical assumptions and implications of three prominent theoretical orientations in field studies, and suggests that topics of study and methodological approaches are tied to larger movements in social history. Five essays deal with the beginning and ending of field research. Louis Smith, Rachel Sharp, and Daniel Kallos each wrestle with the ever troublesome issue - how one goes about defining a research problem. Gary Wehlage and David Hamilton write about the latter stages of research, namely the processes and purposes of drawing generalizations. Anyone looking for easy, quick answers to questions about defining a problem for research or pulling generalizations together should not look here. Everyone willing to take their study seriously, should.

Sandwiched between defining the problem and making generalizations are several questions about doing field work. Harry Wolcott raises often ignored questions about training people to do observational research. Ray Rist probes the critical area of negotiating with gatekeepers who control the access to field settings. Thomas Romberg wonders why quantitative and qualitative research

are not more frequently blended when the benefits can be so great.

The questions raised in this volume are among the most significant that face today's researchers in education. When it comes to answers, beware; this is not a cookbook of neat recipes. You will find that earnest scholars disagree about what should be studied and how.

This is not a "how to" manual with step-by-step instructions on the conduct of field research. It is a volume that reflects on the nature of field work. It reminds us of the importance of stepping back from our work, surveying its shape, sensing its trends, and accounting for its assets and liabilities. Socrates said an unexamined life is not worth living. One might extrapolate that an unexamined field of work is not worth pursuing.

**Alanson Van Fleet**
University of Tennessee

**Hugh Munby, Graham Orpwood, Thomas Russell.**
**SEEING CURRICULUM IN A NEW LIGHT:**
**ESSAYS FROM SCIENCE EDUCATION**
**Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1980.**
184 pp. $8.50 paper.

The authors use as a central metaphor for their essays the idea that philosophy can be used as a "lens" to deal with a wide range of problems typically encountered in the field of curriculum. These problems, although diverse and intractable, can be made to yield when approached philosophically; this is the promise of the book, and one can imagine a wide readership for it. Although the focus is on science education, the book is really about important curriculum problems. It contains ten articles which have been divided naturally into three areas - teaching; curriculum; research.

What sort of a tool does the book offer to the perplexed? At heart, the essays attempt to show how teachers and others who make decisions about the curriculum can do so in a rational manner; the book is about a rational approach to problems. Now there are many approaches to understanding rationality; these essays mostly reflect an approach which has been called by Toulmin "The Philosopher as Geometer." Central to this approach, Toulmin notes, is the idea that "Our beliefs and arguments must be both rigidly structured and anchored to firm ground... The initial acceptance of a geometrical model... was regarded as setting a pattern for all intellectual criticism." Thus, one of the authors notes, "Conceptual Analysis (has) all the promise for looking at educational phenomena... that natural philosophy had for looking at natural phenomena..." (p.6)

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The authors have used an impressive variety of philosophical sources to develop analytical schemes to be applied to particular problems in science education (Scheffler and Komisar on teaching, Pepper on metaphors, Toulmin on argument, Schwab on the practical, Gauthier on practical reasoning, and Dearden on concepts). These sources are used to develop "clue structures" for the analysis of educational rhetoric, classroom discourse, and teacher performance. Two examples will show the orientation and method characteristic of the book. In Munby's "Analysing Teaching for Intellectual Independence", Scheffler's analysis of the conditions of knowledge is used to develop a clue structure (characteristics of discourse which allow one to judge whether or not conditions for independence are provided). The analytical scheme is applied to samples of classroom discourse in order to judge whether or not provision is being made in that discourse for intellectual independence.

Orpwood, in "Analysing Arguments for Objectives", uses Gauthier to establish a clue structure for identifying the conditions for good advice. Good advice is seen to rest on valid practical arguments, the nature of which Gauthier explicates; the analytical scheme so grounded is used to critique a particular example of curricular advice given in the form of objectives. In both examples, and also in Mahung's essay, the analyses are intended to expose the logical structure of the language in question and thereby to provide a model for others to follow. In a sense, these examples are "object lessons" in conceptual analysis.

Other papers move us somewhat towards the domain of teaching in its cultural rather than logical context, without abandoning the "Geometrical" thread. For example, Russell's "Developing Teachers' Analytical Skills" is sensitive to the problems teachers face in attempting to confront their own teaching performances. He argues for teacher self-awareness and self-criticism, and uses the work of Sarrason to support his analysis. Kilbourn argues for the use of ethnographic research methods diagnostically, within a clinical approach to teacher supervision. Again the focus is on a systematic approach to the problems teachers have in the classroom, and on how greater self awareness might be engendered to assist teachers in their professional development.

These latter papers reflect the use of a different philosophical lens, what Toulmin has called the "Philosopher as Anthropologist." From this perspective concepts are considered in relation to their relevance in human life: "One looks for the basis of their rationality not (only) outward in the supposedly universal structure of the world... but inward, in the shared characteristics of human nature, experience, and 'forms of life'."

So the "lenses" at work in the book can be seen as varying, because the underlying conceptions of rationality differ. These lenses

are effectively applied to a wide range of dichotomies that characterize the curriculum field: dependence/independence; holism/reductionism; theory/practice; self/others; scientific/humanistic. The lenses work both to decompose these dichotomies further - to burn away the underbrush - and also to enlarge certain issues in curriculum. The important issue of the nature of the foundations of curriculum is writ large.

The limitations of empirical social science as a source-bed for curriculum theory are exposed; the errors of false dependence on the apparent authority of empirical research in education are documented. For those who consider science as a sacred cow in education, this book will no doubt be bitter fodder. So often in the literature, the experimental paradigm in curriculum is smuggled into discussions of curriculum theory. Not so here. The authors are careful to examine their assumptions about the relevance of the problems and methods they discuss. My only quibble, and it is a small one, is that the authors might have explored briefly, in the spirit of the book, their particular conception of rationality in relation to other conceptions of rationality, and their collective relationship to curriculum theory.

For those who seek a consistent and careful treatment of perennial problems of the curriculum field, and greater familiarity with a particular philosophical approach to these problems, the book is an excellent choice. To a large degree, these essays make good their promise.

**John Olson**
Queen's University

**Peter Medway.**
**FINDING A LANGUAGE: AUTONOMY AND LEARNING IN SCHOOL.**
**London, England: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1980.**
**95 pp. 1.95 Pounds, paper.**

Much of what Peter Medway has to say in this little book is of paramount importance to English teachers and others concerned with English curriculum. However, despite the fact that language is the isue at hand, Medway does not always use it to its best communicative advantage. For one thing, to uncover basic information, the reader must follow the author through an introductory maze (the book starts off with a student composition about rabbits in ditches). Well into Chapter One, the reader finally discovers important background information - namely, that the book is about the British system, the senior school, and students between the ages of 14

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and 16. And whereas syntactic efficiency and clarity should be exemplary in a book of this nature, Medway produces sentences such as the following: "Are scientific concepts and procedures what one 'naturally' reaches for once one has gained, by writing in the way that owes more to literature than science, a certain level of control over one's own experience?" But do not let me unduly discourage those interested in the development of English curriculum from following Medway through his maze, for there are some insightful observations along the way.

In his introduction the author states that his book "arises out of attempts to get right that three-fold relationship: English, humanities, working-class students." The basic contention of the book is that competence in the English language can only be achieved by changing the role of English in the curriculum and the teacher-student role pattern in the English class. The changes Medway recommends are good and valid - namely, that English should be taught "across the curriculum", and that "language is, or ought to be, the concern of all (other subjects)." To this end the author believes in allowing the natural or informal language of students' intuitions, observations, and reactions to enter into all school subjects or disciplines.

> The kind of knowledge which is promoted by English is not, as first appears, peculiar to it but is common to all the disciplines; the way the disciplines are taught, however, tends to conceal this underlying similarity. The separation in the secondary school curriculum of the scientific (in the broad sense) from the personal and intuitive ways of knowing fails to reflect the psychological realities of most of the students under 16 that I have known. It does not correspond to any achieved differentiation in their thinking; few of them have come to regard objectivity and the establishment of impersonal truth as values in themselves. Arrival at that stage appears indeed to be hindered by teaching approaches which insist on the outward forms of objectivity and which exclude the larger part of the child's response.

The methodological assumption Medway makes is that students' communicative abilities in English will improve if they are allowed to express themselves "autonomously" and under the least amount of pressure. Students are to be "coaxed along" and "rarely directed." Work is done in groups or independently. This approach rings of the progressive movement in education and suffers from some of its shortcomings and contradictions. In what direction is the autonomous student to be "coaxed along", and what determines whether students work independently or in groups?

The author attempts to deal with some of these difficulties by pointing out ways in which teachers can "propose" or hint at

possibilities for student activities on a given topic in a particular discipline. However, the reader is left in the dark as to what is to be done if a student "autonomously" rejects a teacher's suggestions.

Another problem is that the book is virtually devoid of information on what (if anything) a teacher is supposed to do about students' writing errors. For the most part, written feedback to students' "log books and projects" takes the form of encouragement - "Great. You're doing very well on this one" - or unexplained, random responses (in colloquial spelling):

> Teacher: When are you off? (referring to the student's assignment, which involves visiting city bridges)
>
> Student: Never if I am put in a fridge. Next week probably, but how do I get there, walk, run, bike, car, taxi, bus, train, plane, ship, rocket, or shot out of a cannon?
>
> Teacher: On yer bike.

What the author does provide of value are suggestions for activities, rich in language and communicative content, and in all the skill areas - reading, writing, speaking, and listening or understanding. But in the area of specific language curriculum content - the grammatical and rhetorical aspects of communication - the book provides little help.

In general, the strength of this book is in its overall sense of idealism and in the comments it provides regarding the role of English across the curriculum. And for those of us concerned with student apathy in English classes, Medway's remarks are of paramount importance.

> Our ideal (is one) of an education voluntarily taken up (by the students) for the sake of the manifest benefits it offers...
>
> Topics in the face of which students had switched off on conventional courses turned out to be successful with us when they were presented as material for exploration, evaluation and dialogue. What it needed was a different sort of process whereby they were able to take a more satisfying and autonomous role in relation to the material...
>
> Ours was a curriculum devised to meet one overriding need: to get students actively involved in their own education...
>
> The diffusion of "English" into other areas can produce great benefits without necessarily endangering the

distinctive core (of other disciplines).

**Gerry Strei**
Nova University, Florida

**Dennis F. Fisher and Charles W. Peters, editors.**
**COMPREHENSION AND THE COMPETENT READER.**
**Inter-Specialty Perspectives.**
**New York, N.Y.: Praeger Pubblishers, 1981.**
**166 pp. $23.30.**

Six years ago the theme of the 19th International Convention of the International Reading Association was "The Teacher - Key to Excellence in Reading." From the 24th Convention comes a book entitled, "Comprehension and the Competent Reader - Interspecialty Perspectives." They've come a long way baby.

Any sign of excellence in thinking, organizing, and communicating ideas would be difficult to find in this collection of articles. The book comprises eight chapters, each submitted by a specialist, psychologist, or researcher either in the reading field or in an associated area of learning.

The preface announces the authors' joint concern that "very little information is being passed from the ivory tower of the basic researcher to the classrooms of the teacher and vice versa." The stated goal of the **project** (the word used, instead of book) is to "provide a forum of mutual concern about comprehension in the competent reader that would allow the basic researcher, applied educational researcher and classroom teacher to effectively 'inter-act' and 'to bridge the information gap'." Quite what is meant by a "forum of mutual concern" is not clear to this reader. It is clear, however, that no bridge could sustain the weight of the ponderous prose used throughout the book.

Chapter One, by Dennis Fisher, addresses the need to understand comprehension competency, to get "people who can read but do not read again and to effectively match research to text to method to reader." No comment.

In Chapter Two Bonnie Mahers describes basic research implications for prose comprehension from an "interactionist perspective." Chapter Three, by Nancy Marshall, addresses basic research implications for reading instruction. James Flood focuses on a particular aspect of comprehension known as "inferencing" in Chapter Four. In Chapter Five Don Nix comments on "The Teaching of Reading Comprehension" via a "Links" system he has developed to teach the theory underlying

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text comprehension. And Charles Peters, in Chapter Six, analyses the extent to which prose comprehension research has been used in instructional materials and the development of such materials at secondary level. The use of basic and applied data is seen by Mr. Peters as being minimal. No wonder, if all the data have been so badly written about as in these articles.

In Chapter Seven Thomas Fitzgerald comments on Mr. Peters' chapter, but takes a slightly different perspective. He points out that many teachers are becoming "material bound" to the neglect of the textbook. Presumably, subject matter is being neglected in favour of so-called "reading aids." In the last chapter Gwendolyn Johnson and Lester Lefton assume, so the preface tells us, a "bottom-up" position. They describe "information extraction capabilities based on the physical characteristics of text and reading necessary to effect the change from print to purpose." Your guess as to what this could mean would be of great interest to me.

Some of the findings and ideas expressed are of a minimal interest. However, the obstacle to the stated goal of transferring information is the way most of the articles have been written and set up. The book is loaded with jargon. What can a "competent reader" make of "top level structure", "advance organizers", "fluent and not so fluent readers", "concept attainment", "inference generating", "micro and macro propositions", etc? None of this is illuminated by the deadly dull analogies about cancer and forests, and by diagrams which would defeat an engineer. Don Nix, in his "Links" article, states unequivocally that "reading comprehension is notoriously difficult to teach, regardless of the education level or age of the student." Perhaps it would not be so difficult (if indeed it is) if those whose business it is and whose concern it should be to think and write clearly had not forgotten or lost that capacity.

Rather than attempt the customary review, I have tried to let this book speak for itself through the quotes; to do otherwise would have been as futile as praising an Emperor's new clothes.

**Doreen Osborne**
Concordia University

**Dwight W. Stevenson, editor.**
**COURSES, COMPONENTS, AND EXERCISES IN TECHNICAL COMMUNICATI(**
**Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1981.**
**230 pp.**

Why can't Johnny, B.Eng., M.B.A., write?

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The current "literacy crisis" is of concern to educators at all levels and in all fields, from elementary school to the engineering

classroom. However, the extent and nature of the problem and the appropriate pedagogical response to it remain much debated questions. Fueled by the often hysterical popular media, the public demand has been for a return to some pre-crisis methodology which would stress the supposedly forgotten "basics" of language. Scholars in fields related to writing, rejecting this nostalgic response, have evolved a body of theory and practice designed to meet contemporary problems in writing instruction; indeed the teaching of composition has experienced a renaissance of sorts in the last decade. Courses, Components, and Exercises in Technical Communication reflects many of the concepts and concerns of this rebirth.

As the title suggests, the book is a practical guide to activities and exercises in "technical writing," a term which usually refers to the writing done in engineering, business, and the sciences. Ideas and suggestions for classroom work in all of these disciplines are included.

While the book should be read carefully, cover to cover, by anyone involved in teaching writing in any discipline, it also deserves a close reading by teachers of technical courses. If **what** a student writes and **how** he writes it are inextricably bound together, then interaction between technical content courses and writing courses is essential. Faculty-wide involvement in writing is practised as well as preached in Stevenson's collection, for its contributors include professors of the Humanities, English, Education, and Linguistics, teachers of technical content courses, technical writing teachers, a professor of Englineering, and a manager of Marketing.

The need for creativity and imagination in technical communication is an assumption shared by most of the contributors. Whereas the final product should be clear and concise, the process of creating good technical writing, like all composition tasks, is an often messy and confusing business. This book offers a repertoire of strategies meant to help the student through that confusion to clear technical prose. In his preface, Stevenson claims that "Students taught by the method suggested in this collection should be unusually well prepared to assume the writing tasks they will encounter in their careers beyond graduation" (p.ix). If that is so, it will be due to the many imaginative and thoughtful assignments presented, such as case studies, collaborative writing projects, simulation games, and writing for publication.

In a chapter entitled "Technical Writing Class: Day One," Dean Hall describes a first day activity which is amusing and probably effective. Each student places three sheets of paper on his or her desk. One sheet is used to make a paper airplane; the second sheet is used to write instructions on how to build the plane the student has just made; the third sheet is used to build another plane following the written instructions of a fellow student. Another intriguing idea is presented by Herman Estrin, who describes how he had engineering

students write books for children about difficult, technical subjects. The students reportedly enjoyed the challenge of adapting highly technical language for young children, and the books were donated to a library; some were published.

The technical writer in professional situations often faces a bewildering array of information and of possible audiences. In order to simulate real writing contexts, the case studies described here provide all the necessary memos, letters, and background information that an interested instructor needs for classroom use. The students involved in these case studies must then select pertinent details and potential audiences from the material provided. Many of the cases require a range of written responses that includes interdepartmental memos, informal reports, and a variety of letters, and to help identify the successful writer, some of the contributors suggest procedures for evaluation. Lawrence Johnson, Linda Flower, and Peter Klaver in particular describe useful cases and simulations.

The majority of chapters in the book are interesting, and some are excellent. Only two (8 and 9) are disappointing and seem strangely archaic, because the author encourages the use of published technical literature as models or examples of good writing. The technical writing student should certainly have access to good technical writing, but currently there are some persuasive arguments against the use of models.

Another disturbing aspect of the book is the number of skills implied to be the responsibility of the technical writing instructor. In the one semester normally granted to courses in technical writing, can a teacher who is building a repertoire of writing strategies, preparing case studies, reading and responding to assignments, and stage-managing simulation exercises give the necessary time and effort to teaching technical illustrations, oral reports, and library research as well? The technical writing teacher thus could become, like the high school English teacher, solely responsible for all instruction in language and communication. That eventuality would run counter to the spirit of cooperation in this very useful book. The discerning writing teacher will have to pick and choose from it those exercises which can realistically be included in a one semester course, and must urge his or her colleagues in the technical fields to participate wherever and however they can.

**Anthony Paré**
McGill University

# Le McGill Journal of Education



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## ERRATUM

McGill Journal of Education, Vol.XVII No.2, Spring 1982

The photographs in this issue are by Claire Chaput, whose name is wrongly recorded in the Table of Contents and on page 109 as Claire Dupuis.

The **Journal** invites contributions on any aspects of issues of current public concern in education. It is particularly hospitable to the discussion of problems and developments occurring on the educational scene in Quebec. The target readership is of persons ready to think clearly about education, whether as professionals in schools, as academics and students, or as parents.

The **Journal** looks for English or French articles in the form of essays, interviews, descriptive reports of research, and critical reviews of books. Lighter pieces, humorous material, poetry and graphics of quality are also welcome. All written material should be furnished in the original typescript, double-spaced, together with two copies; each should have a separate title page containing the author's name, which should not appear on the manuscript itself. A desirable length of article is between 2,000 and 3,000 words.

All such contributions should be addressed to the Editor, McGill Journal of Education, 3700 McTavish Street, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 1Y2.

Le **Journal** invite les auteurs à lui soumettre des manuscrits traitant de questions d'actualité dans le domaine de l'éducation. Il s'intéresse particulièrement à l'étude de la conjoncture de l'éducation au Québec. Il vise un public constitué de lecteurs capables de discernement en matière d'éducation tels que les personnels scolaires, les universitaires, les étudiants et les parents.

Le **Journal** recherche des articles rédigés en français ou en anglais, sous forme d'exposés, d'entrevues, de rapports descriptifs de recherche, ou d'études critiques d'ouvrages. Il accueille aussi des articles de style plus léger, des éléments humoristiques, des poèmes et des illustrations graphiques de qualité. Tout article doit être soumis dans sa forme dactylographiée originale accompagnée de deux copies; chaque article doit comprendre une page de garde portant le titre de l'article et le nom de l'auteur, mais celui-ci ne doit pas apparaître sur le manuscrit même. La longueur ordinaire d'un article varie entre 2000 et 3000 mots.

Tout manuscrit doit être adressé comme suit: Le Rédacteur en chef du McGill Journal of Education, 3700 rue McTavish, Montréal (QuÉbec), Canada H3A 1Y2.