Educational Practices Series

Curriculum Matters: What Teachers Should Know and Do

by William H. Schubert
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The Series was started in 2000, as a joint venture between the International Academy of Education (IAE) and the International Bureau of Education (IBE). So far 34 booklets have been published in English and many of them have been translated in several other languages. The success of the Series shows that the booklets meet a need for practically relevant research-based information in education.

The series is also a result of the IBE’s efforts to establish a global partnership that recognizes the role of knowledge brokerage as a key mechanism for improving the substantive access of policymakers and diverse practitioners to cutting-edge knowledge. Increased access to relevant knowledge can also inform education practitioners, policymakers, and governments on how this knowledge can help address urgent international concerns, including but not limited to curriculum, teaching, learning, assessment, migration, conflict, employment, and equitable development.

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The IBE recognizes the advancements already made, but also that there is still much more work to be done. This can only be achieved through solid partnerships and a collaborative commitment to building on previous lessons learned and continued knowledge sharing.

The Educational Practices booklets are illustrative of these ongoing efforts, by both the International Academy of Education and the International Bureau of Education, to inform education policymakers and practitioners on the latest research, so they can better make decisions and interventions related to curriculum development, teaching, learning, and assessment.
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Introduction

Curriculum matters far more than most people realize. This title, Curriculum Matters, which was suggested by Lorin Anderson, is clever in its double meaning. To realize how much curriculum matters, educators must reflect on key dimensions of curriculum — i.e., curriculum matters. All educators need to ponder matters that pertain to curriculum because they matter so much. This especially includes teachers. Too often teachers are omitted from the curriculum equation and are overshadowed on deciding curriculum matters by school or district leaders, policymakers, and evaluators or testing specialists. To leave teachers behind is akin to leaving the Prince of Denmark out of Hamlet! In contrast, it is crucial for educational policymakers and educational leaders to provide policy that enables teachers to be curriculum creators. Teachers are much more valuable than being relegated to the status of implementors. Teachers have situational knowledge and expertise that are essential to curriculum in the ever-changing lived experience of learners.

Restated, curriculum matters a great deal, and there are many central dimensions of education that should be called curriculum matters. When I was invited to write this booklet, my early experience as a teacher emerged strongly within me and I recalled experiencing attempts to teacher-proof curriculum and de-skill teachers (Apple, 1986), depressingly converting teachers into functionaries who simply carry out orders of policymakers and their designated supervisors (Nunez, 2015). As a teacher, I knew that curricula cannot primarily be made in advance. It needs the astute insight of teachers who are continuously in touch with educational situations and can adjust or revise purposes and practices in action.

Thus, in this booklet I share foundational and fundamental curriculum concerns that teachers should consider and build upon in the hope that they can regain their rightful position of curricular experts. Practice-oriented versions of scholarly matters (not watered-down ones) are what teachers also need to employ. Teachers are positioned to address scholarly ideas and constructs in complex situations because they engage directly with the ongoing transformations of practice — its spontaneity, flow, continuing reposition, imposition, and situational nuance.

Finally, I was pleased to accept the invitation from my colleagues in the International Academy of Education (IAE) to focus this booklet on what teachers should know and do about curriculum. Since today’s
technology enhances availability of resources, I offer an array of ideas, sources, and questions that interested readers can explore digitally or in print. My colleague in IAE, Nicholas Burbules, chose a valuable term when he founded the Institute for Ubiquitous Education at the University of Illinois–Urbana-Champaign. Education is indeed ubiquitous, so available at our fingertips, and that especially pertains to curriculum matters for teachers. Thus, I encourage readers to explore topics highlighted here in greater depth. I see this booklet as a heuristic device that calls readers to study and imagine broader and deeper practice-oriented questions and topics that flow from those I note here. So, I begin by entreating you to wonder and wander widely among curriculum matters as you consider how curriculum should matter immensely to teachers who strive to enrich their educational practice.
1. **Multiple Meanings of Curriculum**

Varied conceptions of curriculum influence both teachers and students in many different ways, some of which are purposeful while others are unintended, imposed, or incidental.

**Research/Theory**

One often hears phrases such as “we covered that curriculum,” when the slightest reflection brings realization that no curriculum is really covered; it is at best sampled and then not proportionally. When teachers claim to have covered such-and-such curriculum, they convey the wrong idea that study of the topic has been completed. On the contrary, when a class has been studied well, it should be deemed a beginning that inspires continued study.

We might do better to uncover curriculum, recover it, or discover it with students, parents, and communities, as well as with educators and scholars of special expertise. Such variations on coverage open the door to curriculum as being a much more expansive influence than merely intended influences on students in schools and other educational institutions. The entire context of our lives is replete with curricula that influence the education of teachers, learners, and everyone. Teachers can be helped to see expanded versions of curriculum by briefly surveying multiple meanings of the term: intended, taught, studied, tested, experienced, hidden, applied, null, outside, learned, enacted, embodied, lived, and more.

**Practice**

It is important for teachers to:

1. Understand the many conceptions of curriculum and how each one functions in the teaching and learning of students.
2. Pay attention to the ways in which students experience a curriculum, whether the curriculum be official or taught.
3. Be aware of hidden curricula and the ways in which they impact students.
4. Examine the intended and taught curriculum and determine what is missing or underemphasized (i.e., the null curriculum).
Teachers’ varied interpretations of the intended curriculum are mediated by their personalities and repertoires of experience.

**Research/Theory**

Teachers focus on actualizing the *intended curriculum*, which is the curriculum of textbooks, other instructional materials, unit plans and lesson plans, and especially tests and test-preparation. Teachers’ varied interpretations of the intended curriculum are mediated by their personalities and repertoires of experience. These varied interpretations lead to a second curriculum, the taught curriculum. The *taught curriculum* affects learners in diverse ways, which are complicated by students’ wide range of experiences from their out-of-school experiences (the *outside curricula*) and public pedagogies. The *hidden curriculum* is a combination of messages teachers and learners glean from both in-school institutional matters and organizations and structures of the larger society — social, psychological, economic, political, cultural, geographical, and historical.

Corporate values have shaped today’s structural influences for more than a century as informal governing forces throughout the world, sometimes referred to as “the BIG curriculum.” The large influence of these curricular forces and their meanings also involves the *null curriculum*, that is, aspects of the *possible curriculum* that are not taught or are given short shrift, especially during budget cuts: arts, health, psychology, philosophy, and critical studies. Thus, the overall impact of these varied curricula often provides contradictory meanings of the curriculum that learners actually experience — that is, the *experienced curriculum*. The experienced curriculum is sometimes accepted, applied, or enacted and at other times unperceived, rejected, or ignored. A pervasive question, then, is: What aspects of the experienced curriculum are *embodied* and *lived* in the processes of becoming, overcoming, and being in the world?
Practice

It is important for teachers to:

1. Inquire about the fit between the intended curriculum (that is, the content standards and the variety of instructional materials made available to teachers) and the explicit and implicit messages of their teaching.

2. Seek to know more about the repertoire of understandings (derived from outside curricula) that their students bring to school and use as lenses through which they interpret school experiences.

3. Strive to uncover and comprehend ways in which instructional structures and common practices of school life carry societal messages or hidden curricula that influence how their students’ lives should be lived.

4. Critically examine the null curricula — that is, what could be taught but is left out of the official curriculum.

5. Look for what students glean from the experienced curriculum and how it influences perspectives they embody as they reconstruct their lives in the world.

6. Strive to be increasingly mindful of experienced, null, hidden, learned, and embodied curriculum, in addition to the taught and intended curriculum, in the course of teaching.
2. The Primary Curriculum Question Is “What Is Worthwhile?”

Those concerned with curriculum must address key questions about what is worth knowing, experiencing, becoming, overcoming, and improving.

Research/Theory

Curriculum questions coalesce around matters of what is knowing, experiencing, becoming, overcoming, and improving. Prerequisite to deliberations about what knowledge is worthwhile are considerations about what humans need and how these needs change over time as they develop and mature. Answering What is worth knowing? requires a focus on the intended academic outcomes of education. But what about the educational processes? That is, What is worth experiencing? Beyond the intended academic outcomes, one can conceive of education as a process of becoming. But What is worth becoming? As teachers share with their students in the process of becoming, they need to consider the question What must be overcome? Ultimately, overcoming implies improvement. Thus, both students and teachers should work toward answering the question What is worth improving? Asking, studying, and living these five questions are salient sources of curriculum. The process of reflecting on these questions in each teaching situation can provide powerful answers, answers adapted to the needs, interests, nuances, and exigencies of practical circumstances and of the lives of learners.

Practice

It is important for teachers to:

1. Think long and hard about what is worth knowing. Tests and related accountability measures are an insufficient basis for determining what is worthwhile.
2. Have a vision of the expansive and subtle contexts outside of schools since students are shaped by these contexts at least as much as they are shaped by what educators officially design and implement.
3. Address not only what the students know but also who they will and should become. Teaching is enhanced when the focus is on the process of becoming.

4. Continually improve in order to overcome obstacles and ultimately move forward in promoting the learning and development of their students.

5. Design curriculum that inspires students as they strive to become good persons (which most certainly should be an ultimate outcome of schooling).

Suggested readings: Schubert, 2009a, 2022; Tillett, 2017
3. **Curriculum News** (and Relevant *Olds*)

Just as journalists often convey that every good story tells **what, why, who, where, when, and how**, so one way for teachers to focus on curriculum is to think about its **what, why, who, where, when, and how**.

**Research/Theory**

**What** is the substance of what is taught – the content, activities, opportunities, and experiences from which learning is to be derived. For many, the **what** is synonymous with the *curriculum*.

**Why** is the reason for **what**. **Why** is concerned with the assumptions, rationale, or sources of defensibility that delineate and defend the benefits of what is taught and expected to be learned. The **why** is sometimes referred to as the *curriculum theory*.

**Who** is the person, persons, or groups who make decisions about **what** and **why**. Concomitantly, **who** also refers to those **who** benefit from (or may be harmed by) the substance of the curriculum. The **who** is sometimes considered central to the *politics of curriculum*.

**Where** refers to the location in which the curriculum is delivered and/or experienced. Curriculum is often thought to take place in schools or other institutions deemed educational. It can, however, be situated in any contexts or situations that shape students’ perspectives, knowledges, skills, dispositions, appreciations, insights, understandings, or practices. The **where** is sometimes referred to as the *curriculum environments, cultures, or contexts*.

**When** can be interpreted as pertaining to the historical circumstances of the time of a curricular event. It can also be considered a question about prerequisite knowledge or *curriculum sequence*; that is, what should be taught before and after any given educational enactment. Determining **when** involves considerations of the past and future with curricular activities of the present.

Finally, **how** is the complex process of deliberation, reflection, and action that results in orchestration of learning experiences, environments, scope and sequence, learning and teaching or instruction,
evaluation, and revision. **How** involves considering who should be involved in key decisions and the means of that involvement. Sometimes matters of **how** also refer to curriculum development, or curriculum and instruction, or curriculum and pedagogy.

**Practice**

The process of exploring the new and old (what, why, who, where, when, and how) in curriculum involves study. Thus, in this case practice means acquiring a reading knowledge of curriculum by all educators, including teachers. Three broad sources are useful for acquiring a reading knowledge: synoptic texts, reference works, and curriculum histories.

1. **Synoptic texts** are designed to identify and conceptualize salient theory, research, and examples of the curriculum field at a given time. Teachers should study synoptic texts, much akin to ways doctors, architects, and other professionals avail themselves of knowledge of their fields. See, for example, Smith, et al., 1957; Taba, 1962; Tanner & Tanner, 1975; Schubert, 1986/1997; Marsh & Willis, 1997; and Paraskeva, 2011.

2. **Reference works** (e.g., handbooks, guides, and encyclopedias) provide often relatively brief articles by noted scholars on key topics within curriculum. Teachers should use these books to prevent unnecessary rediscovery of what is already known. See, for example, Connelly, et al., 2008; He, et al., 2015; Jackson, 1992; Kridel, 2010; Lewy, 1991; Malewski 2010; Schubert & He, 2022.

3. **Curriculum histories** place the legacy of contributions to curriculum thought, practice, and policy in perspective. By reading curriculum histories, teachers are able to place what is currently believed or practiced in the long history of curriculum, specifically, and of education, in general. A valuable illustration is *Curriculum Windows*, a set of seven books edited by Thomas Poetter and published by Information Age Publishing. The chapter authors are teachers and school leaders who write about the contemporary relevance of selected curriculum books published from the 1950s through the 2000s. See https://www.infoagepub.com/-series/curriculum-windows. See also Baker, 2009; Kliebard, 1986/1993/2004; Marshall, et al., 2007; Pinar, et al., 1995; Schubert, et al., 2002; Seguel, 1966; Willis, et al., 1993.
4. Illustrative Schools of Thought or Curriculum Orientations

Research/Theory

Over the past half century, I have developed a framework composed of six orientations (intellectual traditionalist, social behaviorist, experientialist, critical reconstructionist, postmodernist, anti-imperialist). In my presentations I exemplify how each orientation plays out, often by performing the orientation as characters. The following quotations are illustrative of the beliefs of those who would identify with each orientation.

1. **Intellectual Traditionalist:** “I am convinced that it is most worthwhile to help students focus on the great works and disciplines of knowledge. This acquaints them with the great ideas, such as truth, wisdom, beauty, goodness, liberty, equality, justice, virtue, along with life’s mysteries and predicaments, such as birth, death, love, tradition, success and failure, anxiety, war and peace. I ask you to think of a great work that has influenced you profoundly and to ask how its creator (author, artist, scientist…) knew how to influence (teach) you without knowing you personally and to consider how that work was a curriculum that reached and inspired you.”

2. **Social Behaviorist:** “I am a firm proponent of science and empirical-analytic thinking; thus, I propose that what is worth learning is what leads to success in life. So, I ask that you identify qualities of persons who are successful and find out what they know and can do. Translate these skills, knowledge, and dispositions into purposes and objectives. Find educational research to help you select learning experiences, organize them via scope and sequence, learning environments and instructional strategies to enable students to become more successful. Evaluate or assess your results formatively and summatively and revise to improve your curriculum. So, I urge you to identify a hallmark of success and work your way through the process.”
3. **Experientialist:** “It is obvious that we learn from experience. John Dewey called for education to be a continuous reconstruction of experience that gives meaning to subsequent experience. Curriculum is the substance of this ongoing process of living and learning. I ask you to think of something that you are glad to have learned, something that gives meaning to your life (perhaps a value or belief, maybe a skill or an appreciation, or a body of knowledge). What characters and events of life inspired and enabled you to grow in this path of meaningfulness? The kind of answers you derive from this self-inquiry will be keys to how to provide curriculum and teaching that is meaningful for your students. You might even ask students to reflect on the same questions. You will be surprised at what you learn introspectively and together!”

4. **Critical Reconstructionist:** “I hope you will learn to focus on those who are oppressed, privileged, and in-between. I hope you can look at your students and empathize with what they can and cannot do and be due to their race, gender, class, beliefs, ideas, memberships, ability/disability, age, language, culture, ethnicity, and treatment by others. I encourage you to reflect on times you have experienced support or oppression because of your status on one or more of these dimensions of life. I ask you to list 6 things that you hate to do (with extra credit for things you cannot do well), and then imagine yourself a child who awakens each morning to go to a place for 6 hours, 1 hour for each thing you hate and cannot do well. How would you feel and respond if that happened for 5 days a week for almost 200 days per year, for at least 13 years? What if your success in life and opportunities for achievement were based on experience in that setting, and from peers from that setting on social media and in face-to-face interactions? That is how too many students feel in educational institutions daily.”

5. **Postmodernist:** “Please try to overcome master narratives. I am afraid that the other commentators here are guilty of providing a dominant image of what is worthwhile. How can you, as teachers, balance the impact of master narratives with multiple other narratives? For instance, when you think of a curricular event in a school, try to imagine more outlooks than that of the major policy proponents. How do different groups of students see the event? How do the lunch workers, teacher aides, security workers, secretaries, and bus drivers see it? How do the teachers, social workers, guidance counsellors, special education teachers see it? How about the leadership team? How do diverse groups of parents see the event, and how about the
nonparent community members? How can the perceptions of all of these and more have input into what the curriculum becomes? The need is to listen to and learn from all who participate or are influenced by any curricular event.”

6. **Anti-Imperialist:** “I advocate a worldwide expansion of curriculum that continuously is on a quest for what is worthwhile for all in a world that seeks for people to live well together and to learn and grow from knowing one another. I challenge you to see how ways in which we lead good lives are often built upon lives oppressed and impoverished by actions we cannot or do not want to see. I challenge you to reflect on propaganda that wears an educational mask. I challenge you to find the oppression in nations or cultures and to overcome what you can of it. I challenge you to look for ways that greed and acquisitiveness prevent justice and therefore just education that must evolve from kindness and, yes, love of one another.”

**Practice**

1. Which of these six orientations is closest to your perspective on schooling and the curriculum?

2. Which of these six orientations is the one that exerts the most influence on the curriculum in your school?

3. How can you learn more about these and other curriculum orientations, whether they have commentators or not?
5. Traditions and Challenges in Curriculum Planning

Traditional curriculum planning follows a Treatment Specification Model. There is, however, an alternative model, one stemming primarily from the grassroots (often from teachers themselves).

Research/Theory

The Treatment Specification Model is characterized by the following seven steps:

1. Define purposes (based on analysis of tasks or activities deemed important to teach).
2. Do a needs assessment (learner capabilities compared with criteria for success).
3. State goals clearly (using behavioral and measurable terms).
4. Align learning activities with goals and objectives.
5. Select organizational plans that deliver goals (scope, sequence, environment, instruction).
7. Revise for improvement based on evaluation results.

The Treatment Specification Model is often connected with the framework developed by Ralph Tyler almost three quarters of a century ago. Tyler developed four analytic categories that require attention throughout curriculum development and revision: purposes, learning experiences, organization of learning experiences, and evaluation. Policymakers and educational leaders influenced by the Treatment Specification Model have translated Tyler’s categories into a recipe format that has affected lesson and unit plans, curriculum guides, and teacher evaluation instruments from the 1950s to today, with worldwide impact. Tyler, however, criticized this recipe orientation, thus agreeing with some of those who developed alternative models.
One such alternative model, developed by Pressman and Wildavsky, is based on a general sense of direction or disposition that evolves over time. The reader should note that the actions associated with this model are bulleted rather than numbered since they can occur in a variety of orders.

- Discuss and clarify sense of direction.
- Let direction evolve in practice.
- Continuously inquire into how the experience affects teachers, learners, and all involved.
- Deviate from or modify initial sense of direction or disposition if benefits are predicted.
- Realize that formative evaluation should become the basis for designing a new track on the run, not just for pushing the project back on an original track.
- Continuously observe, reflect on, and learn from unintended and intended consequences.
- Enable the sense of direction to continue to evolve over time.

The reader should also note that in contrast to the Treatment Specification Model, the alternative model relies on inquiry, formative evaluation, observation, reflection, and modification. Unfortunately, this model has had little influence on curriculum policy because of governmental or corporate opposition in numerous countries.

**Practices**

It is important for teachers to:

1. Hone their empirical and analytical skills to develop and clarify their learning objectives, perhaps using taxonomies in the cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and social domains.

2. Establish criteria they can use to help them design or select learning experiences. The criteria may include societal needs, tradition, fit with structures of disciplines of knowledge, usefulness, publisher endorsement, political and economic pressures, teacher and learner interest, and democratic ideals.
3. Learn to deal with learning prerequisites or other ways of ordering learning experiences according to students’ maturity, needs, and interests.

4. Decide the appropriate scope of the curriculum. In this regard, they should consider what experiences or content can be best learned by framing curriculum as individual subjects, combined subjects, broad fields, and projects that draw understandings from many areas of study.

5. Design learning environments that best support given learning experiences or sets of learning experiences. Within school settings, one might consider small group, large group, independent study, seminar, or conference styles. Other possibilities include field trips, natural settings, walks though communities, theatrical performances, artistic experiences, team endeavors, apprenticeships, clubs, participation in the range of mass media, social media, video games, and much more.

6. Understand that teaching is a means by which the curriculum is delivered to students. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to learn about different models of teaching. Among the most common models of teaching are (i) information processing (inductive thinking, inquiry training, scientific inquiry, concept attainment, cognitive growth, the use of advance organizers, and memory); (ii) social interaction (group investigation, social inquiry, laboratory methods, jurisprudential, role playing, social simulation); (iii) personal (nondirective teaching, awareness training, classroom meeting); and (iv) behavioral (contingency management and self-control, relaxation, stress reduction, assertiveness training) (see, for example, Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2022).

7. Know if, and to what extent, their intentions are realized. Typically, this requires some type of evaluation on the part of teachers or by others. Although evaluation can be used for many purposes, I believe that the central purpose of evaluation should be curriculum improvement. That is, teachers should learn how to use evaluation results to improve the quality of their teaching and student learning.
6. Curriculum Improvement Ideas for Teacher Reflection and Action

Teachers should reflect carefully on what *curriculum improvement* means.

**Research/Theory**

*Improvement* embodies a sense of direction, a better disposition. Unlike frequently used terms such as *revision* (to see differently), *reform* (to reshape), *renew* (to make novel), and *reconstruct* (to build differently), *improvement* is much more than mere *change*. Improvement is about making better. But how do we make schools better? Curriculum scholars have differed in their response to this question.

For example, more than a century ago, John Dewey argued that education is better when the curriculum is based on societal concerns and the needs and interests of learners. Scholars known as social reconstructionists have argued that education is better when the curriculum is more democratic, humanitarian, communal, and peaceful (in contrast to a curriculum that is autocratic, selfish, and competitive).

Making schools better requires a different perspective on curriculum planning, one constructed on the evolving disposition or sense of direction mentioned in the previous section. Such a perspective draws on Schwab’s (1970) practical inquiry that requires that ongoing attention be paid to interactions among four curriculum commonplaces: teachers, learners, subject matter, and milieu or environment. Building on Schwab, Walker (1971) observed that curriculum planning begins with members of curriculum committees sharing their personal agendas and values, engaging in deliberations, and arriving at some degree of consensus, which becomes the design. Facilitating a different perspective, curriculum improvement could also profit from new languages of curriculum discourse (political, ethical, aesthetic, and spiritual, as derived from Huebner, 1966). The development of such languages requires the participation of groups who traditionally have not been involved in curriculum design, e.g., artists, activists, religious leaders, and others, including teachers and students, who have been marginalized in the traditional curriculum-development process. This new perspective could include concepts such as diversity and pluralism, political and social reconceptualization, and new forms of knowledge and culture. Finally, an important question for
teachers is how larger societal issues, such as socioeconomic class, race, and gender, are reproduced in curriculum, teaching, textual materials, and learning in schools and other educational institutions, and how their adverse effects can be determined and overcome.

**Practice**

As they practice their craft, teachers are encouraged to reflect on the curriculum improvement efforts in which they are asked to be full participants. Teachers’ insight, perception, knowledge, skill, and disposition can contribute markedly to curriculum improvement.

It is important for teachers to:

1. Reflect on the driving purposes of their work. In this regard, they are encouraged to identify and marshal human and material resources to overcome forces that may restrict or inhibit curriculum improvement.

2. Reach deeply into first-person accounts of other teachers about their teaching; learning from other teachers is central to curriculum improvement.

3. Evaluate their curricular planning meetings and derive suggestions about how to make these meetings more productive.

4. Imagine what it would be like if curriculum focused on the lived experiences of educators — namely, an analysis of how the past lives in the present and shapes possible and actual futures.

5. Examine how teachers’ images of curriculum and teaching expand if they see culture as a curriculum that shapes human skills, knowledge, dispositions, and outlooks alongside the school curriculum.

6. Speculate on how their curriculum and teaching might affect students differently if they drew on process categories, such as perceiving, communicating, loving, knowing, decision making, patterning, creating, and valuing, rather than being embedded in conventional subjects.

Throughout the evolution of curriculum orientations, several themes have become more robust. In this final section, I conclude with ideas that are being developed and reconstructed to enhance theory and practice in curriculum work. When I think of the evolving configuration of ideas, experiences, and perspectives that each learner develops, I see it as a living theory that gives meaning to contemplation and action. I refer to this as the curriculum within. As a consequence, teachers should construct curriculum of, by, and with students to make it more authentic for them. This requires listening to and learning from students. The challenge for teachers, then, is how to make curriculum become a matter of personal responsibility for students, not merely the following of pronouncements by authorities.

Cultural and racial matters have recently become emphasized with considerable intensity, as educators and policymakers recognize more cultures as relevant to education. Concepts such as culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, and culturally sustaining pedagogy have become important to understand as educators come to realize the importance of teaching in ways that speak to and connect with learners from different cultural backgrounds. One example is that provided by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, who enabled illiterate peasants to learn to pose problems from their own experiences rather than having problems bestowed by outside authorities (as in the form of textbooks).

Nel Noddings has emphasized the importance of caring for others in life and in schooling. Caring has been related to democracy, morality, relational ethics, justice, caregiving, happiness, belief and unbelief, peace, and educating citizens for global awareness. Similarly, Daisaku Ikeda has advocated incorporating value creation, dialogue, happiness, peace, hope, and joy across curricula.

7. The Importance of Teacher Reflection

One of the most important tasks of teachers is to reflect on and imagine about curriculum and teaching. The best result of any act of study, such as reading this booklet, is to reflect on how perspectives from theory, research, and practice lead to new ways of thinking and acting.
The immense value of lifelong learning is discussed in *Composing a Life*, a book by anthropologist Mary Catherine Bateson. She argues that lifelong learning is more than merely following directives about continued learning; it is the active construction of who we are and what we do in the world. Teachers can help students pursue this curriculum of lifelong learning by inspiring them to realize that composing their lives is an individual and shared process of education actualized through considering what is worthwhile to experience, know, be, do, overcome, improve, and become.

Unfortunately, with the exception of writings by scholars such as Freire and Ikeda, much written on curriculum derives from US and UK perspectives, which are often criticized for their colonial or imperialist origins. Worldwide influences on theoretical and practical curriculum matters are important and heretofore neglected in curriculum studies. Recently, however, curriculum scholars have begun to recognize historical and contemporary scholarship and practice from many parts of the world. Organizations that promote the understanding of curriculum insights from international sources include the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction, the International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies, and, on a much larger scale, UNESCO. Education in indigenous cultures offers promising possibilities as well.

**Practice**

Unlike the previous Practice sections, this Practice section includes a series of questions on which teachers should reflect. We present the questions without any additional discussion, but each relates to one or more of the points made in the previous section.

1. How will you understand the emergent theories within yourself, and how will you convey to your students the importance of personal theory?

2. How can you teach students through their interests, concerns, and needs and then draw upon extant knowledge as they need it to understand the problems they pursue or encounter?

3. How can you build curricular experiences upon cultural, racial, gender, and ethnic heritages that expand students’ emergent theories that guide their lives?
4. How can you build upon insights and understandings of your students, and how can you encourage other teachers and students to share them and to inspire one another?

5. How can you tap — for curriculum insights — the discernments of often-neglected cultures, and build upon them in practice?

6. How will you strive to convey the need for lifelong learning to both your students and their parents as an ultimate purpose of education?

7. How can you develop curricula that lead you to live a good life, and thus be in a better position to inspire students to do likewise?


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Schubert has served as vice president of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), president of The John Dewey Society for Education and Culture, the Society of Professors of Education, and The Society for the Study of Curriculum History, of which he was a founding member. He is an elected member and former factotum of Professors of Curriculum
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