

Review of Knowledge Base: Curriculum and Instruction

RELED950 Synthesis in Religious Education

June 2003

1. Definitions:

“curriculum”

- Derived from Latin verb “to run.”
- Cicero applied the term metaphorically to mean *vitae curriculum*—“the course of one’s life”; *curricula mentis*—“the (educational) course of the mind.”
- Caswell & Campbell (1935)/American Educational Research Association Encyclopedia of Educational Research (1961): “All the experiences that a learner has under the guidance of the school.” [Limited for religious educators because excludes home, church, etc.]
- Pratt (1994): “A plan for a sustained process of teaching and learning”; “a blueprint for instruction.”
[Definitions cited in Pratt (1994), Chapter 1.]
- Brantley (class notes, 1996): “A matrix around which to structure and teach important information.”

“formal/informal/hidden curriculum”

- *Formal*: Planned, written curriculum.
- *Informal*: Extracurricular activities curriculum. Can be planned to support philosophy.
- *Hidden*: Curriculum of the wider culture, i.e. media, norms, *zeitgeist*. Cannot be planned, but can be responded to.

“instruction”

- Learning experiences intentionally designed by an educator to achieve desirable student outcomes related to knowledge, attitudes, behavior/skills.

“integration of faith and learning”

- “[T]he process of bringing together the knowledge discovered through the search for truth . . . with the special revelation of truth through God’s communication with humans. . . .” [Anthony, M. (2001). *Evangelical dictionary of Christian education*. Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 365).

2. Classic questions:

- What is sufficiently significant to be worth teaching?
- What are the relative merits of various subjects?
- What are the critical “ignorances”?
- What is the consistent, congruent message to be conveyed?
- What is the best sequence for teaching this knowledge?
- What is appropriate to be taught at various developmental stages/age levels?

- What are the desired student outcomes?
- What instruction strategies will be most effective in achieving these outcomes?
- What kind of environment will maximize learning?

- What is the process of curriculum development?

- How can faith be integrated into all aspects of the curriculum/learning experience?

3. Contemporary issues:

- What is the necessary impact of social, technological, political, environmental, economic, and human health and well-being changes on the curriculum?

- Does this instruction help to remove important obstacles to well-being?
- Does it promote the future well-being of our students and society?
- Are we using curriculum content and instructional techniques that maximizes student interest, enjoyment, and enrichment?

- How must the curriculum framework and instruction be contextualized to be most effective in a particular cultural setting.

4. How do the questions and issues relate to religious education?

- The same questions are as pertinent in a religious education setting as in the school setting, however they are often not carefully considered.
 - The development of a curriculum framework is the primary interface for the integration of faith and learning. It is the time for answering such questions as:
 - “Does the Bible speak to this issue?”
 - “Are there general Christian principles which apply?”
 - Is this position in keeping with absolute standards of morality/value?
 - Is the Holy Spirit leading the community of faith to this perspective?
 - Is this a core belief about which it is important for the community of faith to be in full accord, or is there room for plurality of belief?
- [Questions adapted from Anthony, M. (2001). *Evangelical dictionary of Christian education*. Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 367.]

5. Important perspectives on curriculum and instruction:

- A unifying theme among most curriculum-instruction theorists is the belief that “curriculum is a vehicle for helping people construct meaning in their lives. Human beings are, first and foremost, meaningmakers, and a sense of meaning is a critical component in human happiness” (Pratt, 1994, p. 8).

a. Prominent perspectives/proponents and theological critiques:

- See Table 1.
- Summary of a few of many perspectives from Pratt (1994), Chapter 1:
 1. Cultural transmission (IDEALists):
 - Emphasizes cultural transmission by means of the traditional academic disciplines.
 - Goal of curriculum is to transmit the best products of the intellectual culture.
 2. Social transformation (George Counts, Paolo Freire, Leo Tolstoy, Alan Webster, some shared ideas with HUMANists):
 - Emphasizes school as potential agent for societal reform.
 - Educators are advocates for youth, particularly the disadvantaged.
 - Goal of curriculum is developing in students maximum capacity for choice (students know who they are, are conscious of their free will, take responsibility for their choices, and can explain them on the basis of their values).
 3. Individual fulfillment (HUMANists):
 - Emphasizes personal growth, relationships, and self-actualization.
 - Goal of curriculum is to make provision for significant experiences within a cognitive-based curriculum to allow students to grow as human beings.
 4. Feminist pedagogy (Carol Gilligan, Margaret Grumet, Carolyn Shrewsbury)
 - Emphasizes a more equitable balance among gender-related characteristics and interests.
 - Goal of curriculum is to reflect more fully the nature of humanity—both male and female. Belief that to be adequate for both men and women, the traditional curriculum which is detached, dispassionate, and rational [representing the traditional perspective of white, Western, elite males] must give way to one which gives place to the emotions, to intuition, to physical being, and to caring.

Prominent perspectives/proponents of integration of faith and learning

Neibur's (1951) 3 basic models of integration:

- "Christ against culture": view of those who tend to be suspicious of secular knowledge and believe Scriptural knowledge to be sufficient for human need.

Theological critique: Protects primacy of Scripture, but does not allow for revelation through natural world.

- “Christ of culture”: view of those who generally embrace science as long as it doesn’t conflict with basic purposes of the Bible.

Theological critique: allows latitude for scientists to wrestle with hard questions, but creates additional questions about inspiration and the historicity of Scripture.

- “Christ above culture”: view of those whose primary loyalty is to Christ, but who recognize the value of human knowledge in the pursuit of truth.

Theological critique: recognizes primacy of Christ but may be reluctant to address hard issues.

Jones & Butman’s (1991) three ways in which faith and science may be integrated:

- “Ethical integration”: attempts to evaluate science on the basis of religious moral principles.

Theological critique: tends to be suspicious of science, but does attempt to work at principled levels thus promoting moral development..

- “Perspectival integration”: sees faith and science as separate disciplines addressing the common issues from different perspectives.

Theological critique: Not really integration. Raises questions about inspiration and historicity of Scriptures. A possible way for scientists to deal with incoherence in their worlds.

- “Christianizer of science integration”: reviews science in the light of scriptural absolutes and principles with a strong bias toward Scripture, while viewing science as useful in the pursuit of truth.

Theological critique: bias toward Scripture is strong, but may not give adequate credence to revelation through the natural world.

[Descriptions of Neibur and Jones/Butman models drawn from Anthony, M. (2001). *Evangelical dictionary of Christian education*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, p. 366.]

b. Process of curriculum development:

1. Recommended curriculum
2. Written curriculum

- Student outcomes

- Levels of Understanding:

- Familiar with: what students might read, view hear—broad-brush knowledge

- Know and do: declarative and procedural knowledge

- Essential understanding: of foundational value, heart of the discipline, has potential to engage, needs “uncoverage” because it’s abstract/misunderstood

- Comprehensive curriculum framework

3. Taught curriculum.

- Contextualized educational/ministry resources

- Learning Dimensions*

- Dimension 1: Attitudes and perceptions

- Environment: safe
 - orderly
 - positive relationships

- Task: value
 - able
 - clear

- Dimension 2: Acquiring and integrating knowledge

- Declarative knowledge
 - construct meaning
 - organize
 - store

- Procedural knowledge
 - construct model
 - shape
 - internalize

- Dimension 3: Extend and refine knowledge [compare, classify, abstract, inductive/deductive, construct support, analyze error, analyze perspectives]

- Dimension 4: Use knowledge meaningfully [decision-making, problem solving, invention, experimental inquiry, investigation, systems analysis]

- Dimension 5. Habits of the mind

- Critical thinking
 - Creative thinking
 - Self-regulated thinking

Domains of Learning

Cognitive [Bloom's taxonomy]

- Knowledge: recalling information
- Comprehension: understanding information
- Application: using information
- Analysis: breaking down info; seeing relationship between parts
- Synthesis: reorganizing information to create
- Evaluation: making judgments about information

Affective (Krathwohl's Taxonomy)

- Receiving: willingness to attend to phenomena/stimuli
- Responding: active participation—learner attends and reacts
- Valuing: worth or value learner attaches to phenomena/behavior
- Organization: bringing together different values, resolving conflicts between them, beginning construction of internally consistent value system

Psychomotor (Simpson's Classification)

- Perception: use of sense organs to obtain cues that guide motor activity
- Set: readiness to take a particular type of action
- Guided response: early stages of learning a complex skill—imitation, trial and error
- Mechanism: Performance acts where learned responses become habitual and movements can be performed with some competence and proficiency
- Complex Overt Response: skill performance of motor acts that involve complex movement patterns
- Adaptation: skills so well developed that learner can modify movement patterns to fit special requirements or meet a problem situation
- Organization: creating of new movement patterns to fit a particular situation or specific problem

Interpersonal (Rachman's Categories)

- Seeking/Giving Information: asking for/offering facts, opinions, or clarification from/to another individual or individuals
- Proposing: putting forward a new concept, suggestions, or course of action
- Building and supporting: extending, developing, enhancing another person, his or her proposal, or concepts
- Shutting out/bringing in: excluding/including another group member from/into a conversation or discussion
- Disagreeing: providing conscious, direct declaration of difference of opinion, or criticism of another person's concept
- Summarizing: restating in a compact form the content of previous discussions or considerations

4. Learned curriculum.

- Evidences you have that the curriculum has been internalized.

Assessment (acceptable evidence)

Quiz/test: acceptable evidence for “familiar with” and “know and do” learner outcomes

Paper/pencil with selected/constructed response: acceptable evidence for “know and do” learner outcomes

Performance/tasks/projects that are open-ended, complex, authentic: acceptable evidence for “know and do” and “enduring understanding” learner outcomes

Growth in knowledge, attitude, behavior/skills.

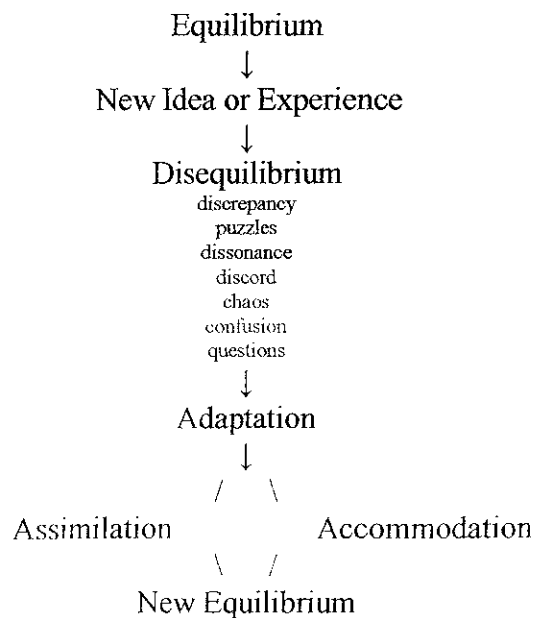
5. Evaluated/revised curriculum

- Field-test/critique at every step.

c. Metaphor for goal of curriculum and instruction: Expanding “boxes”

- Matt. 20:25: Knowledge, attitudes, behavior/skills can be learned/changed.
- 1 Tim. 4:7, 15: Growth as testimony.
- 1 Cor. 15:10; Eph. 4:7-13; 2 Peter 3:18: A response to grace.
- John 16:12; 1 Cor. 3:1, 2; 13:11; Heb. 5:11-6:3: An appropriate sequence for the introduction of content and skills.

▪ Religious educators draw heavily from cognitive learning theory. The expanding “boxes” metaphor is rooted in a Piagetian belief that when new ideas disturb our thinking, we have an opportunity to expand our cognition with a broader and deeper understanding.



Adaptation occurs in two ways:

- reinterpreting new experiences so that they fit into, or *assimilate* with, the old ideas.
- revamping old ideas so that they can *accommodate* the new.

[Diagram adapted from Berger, K. S. (2001). *The developing Person through the lif espan* (5th ed.). New York: Worth Publishers.]

6. Seminal books:

Bloom, B. S. (Ed.). (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: Cognitive domain*. New York: David McKay.

Kraft, C. H. (1979). *Christianity in culture*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Niebuhr, H. R. (1951). *Christ and culture*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

White, E. G. (1952). *Education*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Assn.

7. Current books:

Jones, S. L., & Butman, R. E. (1991). *Modern Psychotherapies: A comprehensive Christian appraisal*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Kagan, S. (1994). *Cooperative learning*. San Clemente, CA: Kagan Cooperative Learning.

Marzano, R. J., & Pickering, D. J. (1997). *Dimensions of learning* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., & Pollock, J. E. (2001). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Pratt, D. (1994). *Curriculum planning: A handbook for professionals*. New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Table 1
Impact of Worldview on Curriculum and Instruction

Questions Affecting Curriculum Design	IDEALism	THEism	REALism	HUMANism
Ontology "What is real?"	Resides in pure realm of ideas beyond changing world of sensory perception.	Resides in God, I AM, Creator and Sustainer of all that is real.	That which you perceive with your senses is real.	Human beings and their experiences constitute reality.
Epistemology "What is true?"	Truth lies in perfect realm of ideas, in an Absolute Mind.	Truth embodied in God; discernable, but incompletely. Sources: Scripture, nature, reason, authority, intuition.	Truth lies in the observable; what makes sense through inductive reasoning; what can be empirically demonstrated through scientific method	"Truth" is subjective, relative.
Axiology "What is of value?"	Knowledge, wisdom, virtue; that which best approximates the ideal.	That which lifts up Christ and results in the restoration of His image in humankind.	Progress; discovery of natural laws that provide basis for aesthetic and ethical judgment.	Freedom, choice, love.
Nature of learner	Savage needing cultivation	Fallen image-bearer with finite capabilities but potential for growth and restoration.	Born "tabula rasa" but programmable; machine that responds to external stimuli.	Innately good.
Role of teacher	model; superior to learner because has more knowledge.	Disciplemaker, model, make Christian values winsome.	Demonstration; pass on what has been empirically "proven."	Nurturer of the good in the learner; fellow learner.
Teaching methods	Lecture, library study, seminars.	Positive relationships, high value on student, real life illustrations, encourages inquiry/thinking, cooperative learning, service.	Experiment, demonstration, scientific method.	Decentralized classroom; child-centered, individualized approach; freedom of movement; no harsh discipline, fear of failure, competition.

Table 2
Impact of Worldview on Curriculum and Instruction
Historical Development/Key Proponents

Date	IDEAism	THEism	REALism	HUMANism
Creation		Eden School		
Patriarchal Period		Family School		
Prophets		Schools of the Prophets		
600 B.C.		Daniel		
500 B.C. ?				Protagoras
400 B.C.	Plato			
350 B.C.			Aristotle	
30 A.D.		Jesus, Paul		
70 A.D.				Quintillian
500 A.D.		Augustine		
1200		St. Thomas	Acquinas	
1400		Oxford		
1500		Erasmus Luther		
1600		Harvard Comenius	Bacon, Locke	Comenius
1700		Berkley Wesley, Raikes		Pestalozzi Froebel Rousseau
1800		Moody	Darwin, Spencer	Mann
1900	Committee of 10 Adler, Hutchins Perennialism Essentialism	EGW Marian	Skinner Essentialism	DeWey Maslow, Rogers