

CONCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM:
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

CONCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

By

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Although the concept of curriculum has figured centrally in the educational discourse of both laymen and educators for some time, there is still no widespread agreement as to how this concept should be used. An examination of both the ordinary uses of 'curriculum' and the formal definitions of the concept given by curriculum experts reveals that this term is used to refer to an exceedingly wide range of phenomena. The purpose of this study was to critically examine and evaluate various prominent and widely held conceptions of curriculum.

The philosophical method of ordinary language analysis was used to examine the various conceptions of curriculum. This analysis was used to demonstrate the limitations and inadequacies of these conceptions for unambiguous and fruitful thinking concerning important educational problems of both theory and practice.

Analysis of 'curriculum' as used in ordinary discourse indicated that it functions adequately in contexts which require only gross distinctions at a very general level. However, when finer distinctions are required

ordinary usage proved to be inadequate. Therefore, the analysis was then focused upon conceptions of curriculum which were found in the writings of curriculum experts.

Definitions of curriculum which are stated in terms of experiences were analyzed and were found to be merely descriptive of some internal occurrences within students. As descriptive, these definitions carry no force of obligation for either educators or students. Additionally, these conceptions are not specifically related to teaching, learning, or the goals of the school. These "experience" definitions were then found to fail as stipulative definitions. The analysis showed that definitions of curriculum in terms of student experiences function as expressions of practical programs. However, curriculum experts should not attempt to advocate particular programs by definition, but rather that they should present their pet programs separately and support them with good reasons and evidence.

The analysis was extended to conceptions of curriculum defined in terms of acts of agents of the school which are intended to be instrumental in the realization of the purposes of the school. As with the "experience" definitions, these conceptions were found to be descriptive and hence to fail to provide the grounds of obligation necessary for the appropriate organization of action in a task-oriented institution which is increasingly marked by a

division of labor. In addition, such uses refer to the same acts as do other terms commonly used in educational discourse such as teaching and educating and are therefore both superfluous and confusing. These conceptions were found to fail as stipulative definitions. Programmatic functions of these definitions were located and it was again argued that it is intellectually improper to attempt to settle practical affairs by mere definition.

Examination of conceptions of curriculum found in recent attempts to build curriculum theories on the basis of "systems" models discovered that these conceptions were, like other expert definitions, descriptive. Analysis also revealed that these "systems" definitions fail to adequately distinguish between the curriculum and other fundamental terms in educational discourse.

It was recommended that future attempts to construct a fruitful conception of curriculum should be couched in terms which clearly allow the curriculum to function pre-scriptively with respect to the acts of educators and students. Further, such conceptions must address the problems involved in determining clearly how being obligated by a curriculum relates to academic freedom. It was additionally concluded that the relationships obtaining between curriculum and teaching, learning, and other key educational concepts must be clearly stated. It

should also be made clear just what should count as evidence in evaluations of curriculum as distinct from evaluations of teaching and learning.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It has become commonplace for authors and speakers to note that schooling has become the object of unprecedented concern, comment, criticism and study. Professional educators and lay groups alike have been engaged in a "Great Debate" over the conduct of schooling in the United States. We are now accustomed to the assertion that schooling is undergoing a revolution, and, further, that the conduct of schooling is in such dire need of dramatic changes that we are not shocked when we hear the call for changes described as "revolutionary."

While the particular interests and points of view about how schooling is being conducted and how it should proceed vary widely, it is clear that all of the participants in this debate are agreed that one of the primary objects of concern in the reformation of the schools should be the curriculum. Professional and lay critics alike have taken the curriculum as a primary focus for their attention. Curricula are criticized for being "watered down," "too academic," "geared to develop mediocrity," "based upon middle-class values," and the like. Present curricula are said to favor the affluent over the poor, to ignore basics

in favor of life-adjustment, to fail to meet the needs of the individual, state, and nation.

In recognition of the importance of curriculum in schooling, schools of education in our colleges and universities have increasingly devoted attention to the study of curriculum. Schools of education offer courses at every level which are devoted to the study of curriculum, and students in graduate programs are earning advanced degrees in the field of curriculum. Upon completion of these degree programs, curriculum specialists are being hired as professors to engage in research and theory construction in the field of curriculum and to teach others about this field. Other specialists in this field are hired by public school systems to fill the recently developed positions of "curriculum coordinator" or "curriculum supervisor."

Usually these positions are at levels near the top of the local educational hierarchy. Within most schools at every level, teachers and professors are engaged in work on curriculum committees whose charge is usually to examine and evaluate the curriculum and to propose changes where they are deemed to be needed, or, in some cases, to construct a new curriculum.

Books, articles, and speeches have appeared by the hundreds which take the curriculum and techniques for improving it as their primary concern. National curriculum studies, projects and "new curricula" have become common

on the educational scene. These are, in fact, so plentiful that the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development has found it necessary to establish the Commission on Current Curriculum Developments in order to help the curriculum worker keep himself well informed and up-to-date.

Amidst this agreement that the curriculum is a centrally important subject for criticism, study and research, it is somewhat surprising to find that those who are agreed about the importance of curriculum are not agreed about what it is that should be criticized, studied and researched. As the discourse about curriculum is examined, it soon becomes apparent that few educational concepts admit of such a wide variety of referents.

The word 'curriculum' enters into the discourse of education at various levels. In response to the question, "What curriculum are you in?" college students are likely to reply that they are in the Liberal Arts curriculum or the Teacher Education curriculum or that they are following the curriculum which leads to the Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering. High school students are very likely to respond to this question by indicating that they are in the College Prep or the Vocational or Commercial curriculum. Pupils in the elementary school will not normally be able to respond to such a question, although they will be able to indicate what subjects they are

studying. Hence, when used by students, 'curriculum' is normally used interchangeably with 'course of study.' It is perhaps because elementary school pupils are usually all taking the same course of study and normally do not have different options of courses or programs available to them in terms of various educational or vocational objectives that they fail to know about their curriculum.

School personnel also commonly use the term 'curriculum' to indicate 'course of study.' This may denote any one of the following:

1. A combination of subjects for groups of students which will lead to graduation from school and preparation for a particular objective, such as college entrance or some vocation.
2. The particular subjects which a given student is taking during a particular year, without regard to his over-all plan. Here a teacher might indicate, "John's curriculum this year is composed of Math I, English I, Spanish II and Biology."
3. The total program of studies which the school offers in all fields. In this use, the curriculum is the same as the program of studies of the school and includes all of the various combinations of subjects which individual students are pursuing. For example, a given high school which

only offered a college preparatory program last year could extend or broaden its curriculum by adding programs in vocational and commercial education.

4. The courses of study in a subdivision of a school such as the courses offered in the English department; hence, it is quite common to hear that the English department has extended its curriculum by adding courses in journalism to its offerings.

As has been indicated, each of these uses of 'curriculum' refers to a 'course of study.' However, the expression 'course of study' has several meanings which have been illustrated above. In ordinary discourse the particular course of study intended is usually made clear by contextual clues within the sentence. Hence, it may be indicated that a curriculum is (1) college preparatory, (2) John's, (3) Oakdale High School's, or (4) the English department's. As long as the concern is with naming various well known features of school offerings at this very general level, the term 'curriculum' serves our purposes with sufficient precision. For example, if Jones is a wealthy farmer who has a son he would like to be schooled for a career in farming, he might inquire 'at Oakdale High School about its curriculum. If he learned that this school had only a college preparatory curriculum

this would usually be sufficient information to indicate to Jones that Oakdale High School would not meet the special educational aim which he had for his son.

It is obvious, however, that our concerns often extend beyond the superficial naming of general types of school offerings. Suppose for example that farmer Jones was told that Oakdale High School did have an agriculture curriculum. It would still seem reasonable for Jones to remain undecided about sending his son there. The primary reason for this may be found by examining what Jones knows and does not know about Oakdale High School once he finds out that the school has an agriculture curriculum. If this is all that Jones knows about the school, it seems clear that Jones does not know anything about what, specifically, the school does. He does not know, for example, what proportion of the total school work that his son would take at Oakdale would relate to agriculture, nor does he know what aspects of agriculture will be addressed. He also cannot know whether or not the school program is directed at the training of farm workers, or at preparing students to enter post graduate training as county agricultural agents, or at educating students in such a manner that they will be prepared to manage a farm. Conceivably, each of these roles might entail quite different educational programs. Further, Jones would know nothing of the facilities used in the agricultural curriculum.

In brief, Jones' knowledge of the fact that this high school does have an agriculture curriculum does not tell him anything about what will happen to his son while taking that curriculum or as a consequence of having taken it. All that this information tells him is that the school will do something with his son that is intended to lead the son to know something about agriculture. It is also proper to infer that the "something" which the school will do with the son in the agriculture curriculum will be more than offering him a single course, since a single course is never described as a 'curriculum.'

From this it can be seen that if a school claims to have a curriculum, then it must be prepared to describe it. Or, if a school decides to offer a new curriculum or change an old one, then whoever is involved in making the new curriculum or changing the old one must know what it is that he is making or changing. Since answering questions about existing curricula, developing new curricula and changing established curricula are common activities among educators, it would seem that we might discover the nature of 'curriculum' by examining (1) the things which educators address themselves to when they are explaining a curriculum, or (2) the things which educators do when they are engaged in developing or changing a curriculum.

When we examine what educators say in explaining the curriculum of the school, we find that they speak of

various things such as the titles of courses which are required, the sequence in which the courses should be taken, the aims of the courses taken both individually and collectively, the knowledge or competences covered in the courses, or even the instructional tactics of the teachers who teach the courses, and the materials which they use. In brief, we find that when educators explain or describe curricula, they often include nearly every facet of schooling.

If we examine the things which educators do when they are engaged in developing or changing a curriculum, we find that they engage in activities ranging from merely changing course titles and numbers to attempting to settle upon the proper aims of education. They change the sequence of courses, decide who shall take what courses and how the students will be apportioned to teachers, concern themselves with the books and materials that will be used, make decisions concerning teaching methods and the means for evaluating the learning of the students. Hence, we find that when educators engage in curriculum planning and revision they may be concerned with nearly any or all the aspects of schooling.¹

We may see then that if we attempt to find the nature of 'curriculum' by examining what educators do or say when they are engaged in explaining, developing or revising a curriculum, we are left with an exceedingly

vague and ambiguous concept which may include as little as a list of course titles and as much as the total concept of 'schooling.' Clearly, the concept of 'curriculum' can and does mean all of these things to various general practitioners of education. It should be equally clear that such a vague and ambiguous term would prove to be the source of much confusion if it were to be adopted as an important concept in building a theory of education. One need only imagine the difficulties which would result from the attempt to engage in systematic curriculum research or the attempt to state specifically some useful procedures for engaging in curricular change. Hence, if we are to take what various general practitioners of education do or say when they are working with curriculum, then there is no non-arbitrary way of indicating the boundaries of a theoretically useful concept of 'curriculum.'

Earlier, however, we noticed that there are individuals working in the field of education who are known as curriculum specialists. It is also commonly understood that one may specialize in the subfield of curriculum and that such a specialization is distinct from other subfields of specialization within the field of education. This would seem to imply that there is a set of phenomena in curriculum which may be similar but not identical to any other set of known phenomena, and that these phenomena can be identified, described, and related to each other and to

other central educational concepts. We might expect, therefore, that even if 'curriculum' is a vague and ambiguous term to the general educational practitioner, among curriculum specialists the term would be conceptualized in such a manner as to reduce this vagueness and ambiguity. Thus, if curriculum is a subfield of specialization within the domain of the study of education, we might be able to discover in the writings of curriculum specialists a conceptualization of the term 'curriculum' which would reflect the dimensions and limits of the specialty.

To some extent we do find the expected limitations. This writer has been unable to find a single statement, definition or hint that any curriculum specialist considers 'curriculum' to be merely a listing of course titles or that curriculum construction or revision consists only in naming or renaming courses or in changing course numbers. However, if the curriculum specialists have succeeded in eliminating a conception of curriculum which includes only these trivial items, they have also succeeded in formalizing by explicit definition the all-inclusive nature of 'curriculum' that was suggested by the practice of the general educational practitioners. Again it is found that the definitions of 'curriculum' which appear in the writings specifically addressed to that subject commonly cover the whole range of items normally considered when schooling or education is being considered. In fact, it is quite common

for the curriculum theorist to define 'curriculum' in terms of the experiences which individual students have already had in the school. This is an explicit extension of the meaning of the term beyond that normally found in use by educators who are non-specialists in curriculum, which refers primarily to some aspect of planning for schooling.

It is evident that while curriculum specialists are agreed that 'curriculum' constitutes more than the naming of courses, they are disagreed about what does constitute 'curriculum.' While many definitions tend to resemble each other in various ways, there tends to be wide disagreement concerning the precise nature of 'curriculum' and how the term should function in educational discourse, theory construction and research. Furthermore, it is a matter of great disagreement as to how 'curriculum' should be related to other concepts which are central to educational thought, such as teaching, learning, and subject matter.

While it is recognized that there is wide disagreement concerning the concept of curriculum, there remains the possibility that some one of the extant conceptions is adequate. It appears to this writer, however, that this is a very unlikely possibility and that the disagreement that we have noted is, at least in part, due to the inadequacy of the widely held conceptions of curriculum for doing the work which is required by the nature of the

problems of education. Furthermore, attempts to explicitly define 'curriculum' have failed due to mistaken notions on the part of curriculum writers concerning the proper role of definitions of key terms within the fabric of the non-scientific universe of educational discourse.

This study then is an attempt to critically evaluate, through the employment of the methods of philosophical analysis,² various prominent and widely held definitions of 'curriculum,' both as found in ordinary discourse and in the writings on the subject by specialists in the field of curriculum. This examination will attempt to show that the current definitions involve crucial logical blunders which give rise to erroneous and unfruitful thinking concerning important educational problems of both theory and practice.

In the succeeding chapter we will critically analyze the concept of curriculum as it is often found in the discourse of both educators and laymen. In Chapter III several varieties of definitions of curriculum which are stated in terms of the experiences of students will be subjected to analysis and criticism. In Chapter IV our criticism will focus upon 'curriculum' conceived in terms of acts of educators and also in the terms of the recent "action-systems" approaches. Chapter V will contain a review of the major criticisms, plus some suggestions for future positive attempts at providing a logically adequate



and linguistically fruitful definition of the concept of curriculum.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM IN ORDINARY USAGE

Historically the term curriculum has been used to mean a pattern or listing of courses or subjects. This is still the dictionary definition of the term, and, as was seen in the previous chapter, it remains correct usage in popular speech. This use of 'curriculum' is helpful in making distinctions at a very general level. By examining the lists of courses of a particular school or department one may discover areas of emphasis and neglect in what the school offers. An examination of the courses offered by a college, for example, may enable us to say that the school is a liberal arts college or a technical institute or a multi-purpose university. Similarly, such an examination may reveal that a given high school emphasizes college preparation or that it is, to adopt James Conant's expression, a "comprehensive" high school. An English department at either level may be seen to be emphasizing literature at the expense of grammar or writing, although an examination of the actual instruction being carried on might be necessary in order to warrant any serious claim of this nature.

Because such gross distinctions are possible, schools are often criticized by references to the curriculum in this sense. Albert Lynd¹ devotes a whole chapter to the criticism of the offerings of schools of education. The data which he uses consists almost entirely of course titles and brief descriptions of the courses found in college catalogues. In his assessment of American high schools, James B. Conant made several curricular recommendations which consisted of "courses" which should be offered. For example, he recommends that the graduation requirements for all students should include:

four years of English, three or four years of social studies--including two years of history (one of which should be American history) and a senior course in American problems or American government--one year of mathematics in the ninth grade (algebra or general mathematics), and at least one year of science in the ninth or tenth grade, which might well be biology or general physical science.²

Perhaps the main reason why matters of curriculum are so often discussed in terms of lists of course titles or subject names is that in schools in the United States there exists a great deal of commonality of such titles and names. In addition, for a large number of courses which are commonly taught to most students, this commonality has existed over the lives of nearly everyone who is currently discussing schooling. For example, nearly everyone who has obtained a diploma from a high school has taken a course in American history, and for this

reason there is a sense in which we can and do talk about it as if each of us had been taught the same things. The tendency to believe this is reinforced by such institutional practices as requiring it for graduation or for college entrance. And surely, there is some substantive merit for this belief. Until the post-World War II boom in the publishing of relatively inexpensive paperback books and a much larger variety of high school level text books, there certainly was a great deal of commonality of reading materials used in American history classes as well as many of the other courses which have made up the common education of Americans. Likewise, it is true that the topics considered in these courses have tended to be nearly identical. Indeed, 'American History' does denote a specific range of topics, events and men. Of course, there is a large area of vagueness in which we are unable to tell whether a given event is a clear case of American history or not. But the term is sufficiently precise to allow us to distinguish cases which clearly are American history from cases which clearly are not. Hence, if we were to visit a classroom where we had been told that we would be able to observe American history being taught, and what we observed was the teacher lecturing on such things as pyramids, Pharaohs, the Nile, and hieroglyphics, we could legitimately infer that we were not seeing American history being taught. It is evident also that

students make similar distinctions when they voice the not uncommon complaint that a particular teacher too often gets "off the subject."

It does not, however, take a great deal of conversation about the courses that we have taken as students or that we, as teachers, are teaching to discover that these courses are not identical. From the standpoint of the student, however, it is common for him to attribute such differences as he may find to different teacher styles, personalities, methods and materials used. Students commonly tell each other such items of information as "Teacher X covers the material better than Teacher Y." It is easy for the student to conclude that there is a set of "material" which is American history, which one teacher explains more completely than another. Hence, even when diversity in such courses is discovered, it is possible to attribute the differences to individual differences in the teachers and to continue to assume that the subject is the same. Hence, discussions of curriculum which focus upon course titles and subjects most commonly are using those titles to denote the conventional content of conventional subjects.

It is perhaps not until a student engages in course work in a field beyond the level commonly known as 'survey courses' that he begins to appreciate the difficulties involved in such a concept of 'course' and 'subject.' And

the whole problem is most clearly seen when one is faced with organizing his own course to teach, or when discussions are held regarding a course which is new or at least not within the common experience of most of those concerned in the discussion.

The difficulties assume crucial importance when the concepts of 'course' and 'subject matter' are used to define the concept of curriculum. Suppose, for example, that we seek to determine the subject matter of American History by observing the various teachers of courses labeled 'American History' with an eye to identifying what they are teaching. If this approach is used it is quite likely that we would find that the subject matter of American History varies from one teacher to another. For example, if we let capital letters stand for specified events, persons, generalizations and their relationships, we might find that in a given school

Teacher₁ teaches A, B, C.

Teacher₂ teaches B, C, D.

Teacher₃ teaches C, D, E.

Since we have already stated that American History is what teachers of courses labeled "American History" teach, we could conclude that the subject matter of American History consists of A, B, C, D, and E or any subset of these.³

This is a sensible use of the concept of subject matter, and there are various contexts in which it calls

attention to the differences which do obtain between what various teachers teach under similar course titles. However, as a basis for a concept of curriculum it suffers from several crucial defects.

Under such a conception, curriculum is defined in terms of that which is taught. Consequently, statements concerning any curriculum would, on this view, be reducible to statements concerning what teachers have been teaching. Curriculum statements might function as shorthand descriptions for detailed statements about the teaching that has been or is going on. While this clearly serves as a convenience in discourse about education, such a conception seems to have no other theoretical force since, if we were willing to put up with the inconvenience, we could eliminate talking about curriculum entirely by making our statements entirely within the realm of the concept of teaching.

This conception of curriculum leads to another difficulty. Suppose that we were to set about to tell a new student about the curriculum in which he had just enrolled. All that we could tell him would be what various teachers has taught or are teaching. There would not, of course, be any assurance that the same things would be taught again. The reason for this lack of assurance is that since statements about the curriculum are statements about what has been or is taught, they are descriptive and carry no force of obligation for teaching in the future. Any

teacher could teach anything, and whatever was taught would constitute the content of the curriculum. If a teacher of a course entitled English Literature decided to teach about the operation of the city sewers and actually conducted the class in such a way as to encourage students to learn about this sewer system, then we would be compelled to say that information about the city sewer system was a part of the subject matter of English Literature.

Since curriculum is defined in terms of what is taught, we could never legitimately speak of a teacher as getting off the subject or as failing to implement the curriculum. This would leave us in the position of being unable to evaluate teaching in terms of comprehensiveness, completeness or appropriateness except in the trivial sense of saying that whatever the teacher taught was, by definition, comprehensive, complete and appropriate. We could still assess the act of teaching by examining student achievement. We might also be able to assess teaching by examining the logical character of teaching acts, e.g., whether the teachers' definitions, explanations, etc., were conducted in a logical fashion.⁴ Yet it seems crucial for education to be able to evaluate the teaching going on not only in terms of its efficiency and logical correctness, but also in terms of whether what has been taught is

appropriate to the achievement of the functions with which the school has been charged.

It has previously been stated that since the curriculum is merely a description of what has been or is taught, any teacher may teach anything. Note has been taken that such a conception carries with it no force of obligation for the teachers to teach any particular content. This same point may be made from a different perspective. As anyone who has taught will recognize, it is a matter of continuing concern in organizing for instruction to decide what subject matter to include, in what depth and scope to treat it, and in what manner it should be covered. However, the teacher who is faced with these decisions with only descriptions of what has been or is taught available to him has no prescriptive principles available by which the selection of what to teach could be guided. When put into these terms, however, it might be objected that the teacher still has prescriptive principles by which such decisions can be guided even if the curriculum is conceived in terms of that which has been taught.

We have previously noted that the school is charged with the performance of various functions.⁵ The claim might be made that these functions furnish the grounds of obligation both for teaching certain things and for not teaching others. For example, Myron Lieberman states "that the American people are in substantial agreement

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that the purposes of education are the development of critical thinking, effective communication, creative skills, and social, civic, and occupational competence."⁶ Assuming for the purposes of analysis that Lieberman is correct, let us suppose that in a given school system we were to find that the school personnel are all agreed that the school should foster the ability to think critically. If, in this school system, the curriculum is taken to be a description of that which has been or is taught, then we must conclude that decisions concerning what and how to teach are matters for individual teachers to decide. Our concern here will be to inquire into how the acceptance of this purpose obligates individual teachers to teach anything.

Our first problem may be stated in terms of attempting to see what kinds of decisions are legitimized by the acceptance of this purpose. Suppose that we found a teacher who was teaching certain facts and definitions and demanding that the students memorize them, and that this is all that this teacher intended to teach in this class. If we were to ask her to justify this mode of teaching, she might respond to the effect that students must, if they are to think critically in the subject that she is teaching, know the facts concerning what they were thinking about and that she was teaching these facts. After all, to think implies that something is being

thought about, and since the development of the ability to think critically is an aim of the school, this necessitates the teaching of facts. Other teachers, conceivably all other teachers in this system, might arrive at the same teaching decision. Or, possibly, some teachers might decide that the way to foster critical thinking would be to place students in problematic situations and have them resolve them by mere trial and error. Other teachers might agree that students should be faced with problematic situations, but that instead of leaving the students to their own trial and error devices, they would encourage the students in the use of experimental methods. Still other teachers might decide to have their students memorize a list of steps for problem-solving. Still other teachers could decide to teach certain principles of right conduct and have their students practice applying those principles in various sorts of decision situations.⁷ Irrespective of any particular ideology chosen, students would be taught that critical thinking was the applying of prescriptive rules of conduct to the solution of what ought to be done in problematic situations.

The acceptance of the prupose of developing the ability to think critically can justify a wide variety of teaching acts, some of which may contradict others. The problem here may be stated in different ways. First, the statement of the general, overall purpose is ambiguous and

our hypothetical teachers are interpreting it to mean different things each of which seems to be allowed by common usage in this context. That is, we seem to have found a case where the teachers are in nominal agreement concerning the statement of the purpose but are offering differing programmatic definitions of the concept of critical thinking, each of which corresponds to some aspect of predefinitional usage. Secondly, the issue may be described as one where it is indicated that each teacher has the responsibility of deciding for him- or herself how to implement the broad purpose, thus yielding the possibility of self-contradictory and self-defeating teaching acts. What is lacking here is some organizing principle by which teachers may decide among various possible meanings of critical thinking and may choose among various possible modes of teaching which will likely be instrumental in the realization of the sought-after end.

The second problem may be illustrated by considering a school system which has agreed that the school should promote critical thinking. To avoid the problem which we addressed above, let us also assume that the teachers have agreed upon one meaning for the concept of critical thinking: the use of experimental methods in problematic situations. In such a situation it still seems quite possible for individual teachers to deny that teaching for this aim is their responsibility. The driver training

instructor, for example, may claim that his job is to get his students to know the rules of the road and to obey these rules while driving skillfully. He might insist that his job is to teach a specific set of knowledge and skills and that the teaching of critical thinking is the responsibility of the teachers of other subjects. He might justify his argument by showing how absurd it would be for a driver who was approaching a red traffic signal to go through the oft-listed steps of critical thinking; e.g., identifying the problem, collecting relevant data and organizing it to apply to the heart of the problem, formulating various hypothetical alternative solutions to the problem, selecting the best one for the situation, and then, finally, acting on the selected solution. This teacher might argue that his job is not to encourage critical thinking, but rather to lead students to habitually and skillfully make the appropriate responses dictated by the rules of the road. The teachers of other such "skill" subjects as typing, shorthand, cooking and sewing might make the same claim and advance the same type of arguments. However, the disclaimer of responsibility for the teaching of critical thinking need not be limited to the teachers of "skill" subjects.⁸ Elementary teachers might claim that their students are too immature and that they lack sufficient knowledge for the teaching of critical thinking to be fruitful. They could indicate that their main job as

elementary teachers is to give the children such skills as reading, computing, and resource-finding and using which will be of use later in the children's efforts to think critically. Similarly, the teachers of academic subjects could claim that their task is to teach their subject matter in order that their students might have sufficient knowledge to think critically later.

The point here is that almost any teacher could deny that teaching critical thinking is his responsibility even while holding that the school ought to foster critical thinking. Conceivably we could arrive at a situation in our hypothetical school system where all school personnel would be committed to the purpose of fostering critical thinking, while at the same time no teacher engaged in such teaching. The problem here is that the agreed upon purpose fails to indicate the particular class of persons obligated to work toward its achievement.

Up to this point the analysis has focused upon the conception of curriculum defined in terms of that which has been or is taught and the problems created by such a conception from the standpoint of school personnel. However, this concept may also be analyzed in terms of the student who enters a school that holds to such a conception of curriculum.

If this curriculum fails to obligate teachers to teach specified subjects in specified ways, it also fails

to obligate students to be taught any particular subject matter. Hence, we have a school in which one can make little sense of the notion of a pre-planned program where the idea of a program refers to such things as a sequentially ordered series of knowledge and skills set out to be mastered. This does not mean that there could be no prerequisites or graduation requirements. Rather, it means that such prescriptions for the student could be couched only in terms of course titles and numbers of credits. In such a school a student might, for example, be required to complete the required courses suggested by Conant in some particular order. Yet such a program would indicate nothing concerning what the student entering school would be taught in terms of subject matter nor would it indicate that the student who had completed such a program would have been taught anything in particular, except in the trivial sense of saying that the curriculum he had followed was comprised of what he had been taught.

For the student who has some specified objective that he wishes to realize, this sort of school poses serious problems. At the college level, a student might desire to become an engineer. The commonly recognized means of achieving this goal in our society is to be instructed in the knowledge and skills required for competence in the role of engineer by a teacher in a school. Yet a school of engineering which held to the conception of curriculum

which we are investigating would only accidentally offer a systematic program designed to teach the requisite knowledge and skills. That is, if the engineering curriculum is that which is taught by teachers of engineering courses, then, as we have already noticed, these teachers may teach anything which they choose with no obligation to teach those things which are deemed necessary for becoming a competent engineer. Further, even if it were the case that the teachers chose to teach the necessary knowledge and skills, they would be under no obligation to teach them in either a manner or sequence which would be likely to enable the student to learn or to become competent in them. That is, if it is necessary for a student to understand a certain principle or equation before he can understand another principle, there is nothing in this concept of curriculum that will obligate instructors to teach these principles in the requisite order.

While it has been indicated that a school could have prerequisites and requirements in terms of course titles and numbers of credits, it must be recognized that there is nothing in the concept of curriculum under investigation that demands these. Hence, it is possible that the student who wished to become an engineer might enroll in a school of engineering and be faced with the problem of selecting all of his courses without prior knowledge of what knowledge and skills are required to become a competent

engineer and without even the guidance offered by a system of requirements or prerequisites. Not only would he be unable to determine what would be taught in courses with various names but, even if he could somehow find this out, he would have no basis for determining which courses he should take from among those offered or in what sequence he should take them. Under these conditions it would still be possible for him to take those courses in which he would be taught those knowledges and skills required for engineering competence, but this could be done only by trial-and-error or by accident. Such a system is surely uneconomical and inefficient.⁹

At this point it might be argued that our analysis has led us astray in that we have been examining a conception of curriculum which no one holds. There may be, of course, a measure of truth to such a claim. We started our analysis of the concept of curriculum in this chapter by examining carefully the idea that the curriculum is a listing of course titles. When we found this concept to have serious limitations, our analysis proceeded to an examination of a commonly held extension of this idea: the curriculum as a listing of course titles where the course titles refer to the conventional content of conventional subjects. In attempting to clarify this conception we were led to the concept of curriculum in which curriculum is defined in terms of that which has been taught. We

have shown that this concept is quite fruitless on a number of grounds and, indeed, that if such a conception of curriculum were to be held, it could be entirely replaced and eliminated without loss merely by couching our statements in terms of teaching. It might be that the objection that we are analyzing a conception that no one holds merely indicates the success of the analysis in making the earlier formulations seem so untenable that it now seems impossible that anyone should hold such a view. There may, however, be other possibilities.

It might be argued that our analysis of the concept of curriculum as being listings of course titles which denote the conventional content of conventional subjects has not given sufficient weight to an important aspect of that conception, i.e., we have focused our concern upon the content aspect without giving due consideration to the fact that the content indicated in the original conception must be conventional. While some attention was given to how this idea of conventional content as the referent of the concept of curriculum might arise, it is true that scant attention was paid in our analysis to the claim that such content must be conventional. Up to this point, conventionality has only been used to indicate that our reference must be to that which has been or is taught as opposed to that which will be taught. Hence, it might be sensible to object to certain claims that we have made in the process

of the analysis. For example, it might be objected that the claim that a teacher could teach anything is unwarranted when we are talking about any particular subject. Earlier we noted that if we were to see a teacher of a course in American history lecturing about the Pharaohs, the Nile, and hieroglyphics, we could conclude that we were not watching him teach American history. Additionally, it could be claimed that this teacher was "off the subject" since Pharaohs, the Nile and hieroglyphics are not a part of the conventional content of American history. Our example of the teacher of English literature who was teaching about the city sewer system could similarly be attacked. At first glance, this objection seems to carry weight. However, this added weight given to the notion of conventionality seems to carry with it some crippling disadvantages.

First, it has become commonplace to note the tremendous advances which have been made in nearly all fields of knowledge. The "knowledge explosion" of the current century amounts to, among other things, the addition of new articles of knowledge to our traditional storehouses of knowledge. It also means that some of the items in our storehouse which were once regarded as knowledge have now been discarded as false or as not possessing as much explanatory power as the new items. However, if we were to adopt the view that the curriculum should be seen in terms of the conventional content of conventional subjects,

it seems clear that anything which is taken to be new knowledge could not be included in the curriculum. Whether it could be taught or not is another question, the answer to which depends upon whether we take the curriculum to be a description of what is conventionally taught or to include the prescriptive force of obligating teachers to teach only that which is conventional. On this question there seems to be three possibilities.

The first possibility is that the curriculum is merely descriptive of what has been conventionally taught. In this view the teacher could teach anything. If teachers taught the conventional content, then we could merely note that what they had taught was the curriculum. If a teacher did not teach the conventional content of the subject, then similarly, all that we could do is note that this teacher did not teach the content of the curriculum. No evaluative judgment could be implied in either case.

The second possible alternative is that the curriculum is descriptive of what has conventionally been taught and that it carries with it the obligation that it should be taught. In this view a teacher must teach the traditional content. If a given teacher fails to do this, then a negative judgment would be made concerning this teacher. However, if the teacher did teach the conventional content, there is no proscription against teaching any of the new knowledge. However, the teaching of the new knowledge is

by definition extra-curricular in that it does not meet the requirement of conventionality. Perhaps after several years of teaching it, some items of this new knowledge might become conventional and be included within the domain of the curriculum. When this occurs, then it becomes non-optional teaching content; that is, its inclusion in the things to be taught is mandatory and teachers are obligated to teach it. It is important to note, however, that any additions to the curriculum must occur in this fashion, thus leaving the whole matter of the inclusion of new knowledge up to whether or not teachers are disposed to teach such non-required material in addition to that content which is required by virtue of its conventionality.¹⁰ There is nothing in this concept of curriculum which prescribes that teachers should include new, non-conventional items of knowledge in their teaching. Conversely, there would likely arise many pressures which would mitigate against teachers including new knowledge in what they teach. The main pressures working against this inclusion arise from the fact that this conception of curriculum makes no provision for the dropping of any "old" knowledge from the content of what should be taught. Teachers are obligated to teach the conventional subject matter, including those items of newer knowledge which have become conventional. Therefore, there is no legitimate way for any content to be excluded from the curriculum once it

has become conventional. The obvious result is that for the teacher of any course there is the problem of fitting in more and more content into the same amount of time. Even if we grant that most teachers have sufficient professional dedication to keep them at the chores involved in adding new material to their courses, there is some point of saturation in the process of adding new material to courses when old content may not be eliminated. In addition, it must be noted that if no conventionally taught subject matter may be eliminated, there arises the possibility that some new item of knowledge might be included which has actually replaced one of the conventional items in the work of scholars in the field but which cannot replace it in the curriculum. Hence, under this conception, the curriculum might well contain self-contradictory items which teachers are obligated to teach.

A further consequence of holding this alternative concept also has to do with the "knowledge explosion." As is well known, whole new fields of study are emerging, fields which existed as either parts of previously established studies or which have arisen as almost entirely new areas of concern. As with new items of knowledge, the only way for these new fields to become a part of the curriculum in this view is for them to be taught as extra-curricular until they become conventional. While this seems to resemble closely the actual process of adding

new fields to the curriculum, it does not represent an intelligent or examined approach.

The results of holding to this second alternative yield the possibility, at any given time, that large and important parts of our modern fields of inquiry could legitimately be excluded from being taught in schools. Even if they were taught they could not be considered as a part of the curriculum until they had become conventional. Certainly such a concept of curriculum is, in itself, anti-intellectual and would have the effect of reinforcing the status quo while retarding intelligently examined organized change in the content for teaching in our schools.

A third alternative entails that the curriculum is descriptive of what has been conventionally taught and that it is also prescriptive of what should be taught in the sense that teachers are obligated to teach the curriculum and only the curriculum. This view suffers from all of the defects of the second alternative and, in addition, rules out any possibility of any legitimate changes in that which can or should be taught. The adoption of such a conception would quickly make a curriculum irrelevant to the concerns of a world where outside of the schools, change and increases in knowledge are occurring at an increasingly rapid pace.

It has been shown that a conventionality criterion either rules out too much or that it is unfruitful. In its

prescriptive senses it provides rules which actually restrict us from considering in an intelligent fashion some of the very issues which a conception of curriculum should enable us to deal with. Therefore, we argue that the conventionality criterion should be rejected and that arguments against our analysis which use this criterion as their basis must be rejected.

We still may have failed to answer fully the objection that we are attacking a man of straw: a concept which no sensible person holds. At this point, however, it would seem that if there is still merit to this claim, it must arise from the possibility that we might have been demanding more precision from the concept we were investigating than the concept will allow. Without attempting further justification of the object of our analysis, we must at this point insist that our analysis still has merit. Even if we have been to some extent using a man of straw, we have shown what the straw man fails to accomplish and have therefore laid out suggestive criteria for what a real man, a cogent and useful concept of curriculum, might be expected to do.

To review what our analysis has shown to this point let us examine the implications for schooling if such a concept of curriculum were in operation. First, it is clear that any school in which teaching has occurred has a curriculum and that this curriculum is constituted by what

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has been taught. Put the other way round, it would be logically impossible under this conception for a school in which teaching has occurred to suffer from the defect of not having a curriculum. Second, no sense can be made of statements to the effect that the curriculum of the school is not being implemented or that it is being implemented poorly. Third, since the curriculum is descriptive of what has been taught, any teacher may teach anything at all. In the current idiom, each teacher would be "doing his own thing," i.e., teaching whatever he wanted to teach. Further, in deciding what and how to teach, teachers would have no public, unifying prescriptive principles available by which to guide their selection. Even when we consider that the personnel in a given school may subscribe to common general purposes, such purposes, if they are general enough to apply to all teachers, fail to rule out uncoordinated and/or contradictory and self-defeating acts of teaching. Additionally, such general purposes fail to obligate any particular teacher or class of teachers to work toward their realization. In response to the objection that we had not placed sufficient weight on the conventionality criterion, we found that such a criterion fails in that it rules out too much from curriculum considerations.

CHAPTER III

CURRICULUM AS THE EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS

So far in our analysis we have critically examined the concept of curriculum as it often appears in the ordinary discourse of laymen, educational critics and educators themselves. We found that for the purposes of making gross distinctions at a very general level these uses function adequately. It was at the point where we attempted to add the precision necessary for the concept of curriculum to function well as a theoretical term in a useful theory of education that we found these ordinary uses to be inadequate in several ways.

As noted in our introduction, however, there are many educators whose special claim to competence lies in the study of curriculum. These curriculum experts have attempted to formulate theories of curriculum and, as is usually found necessary in such endeavors, they have given attention to the explicit definition of the concept which indicates the object of their concern, the concept of curriculum.

When viewed in an historical perspective, it is clear that there have been a number of predominant conceptions of 'curriculum' among curriculum experts. Doll states:

Forty years have brought into being several discernible trends in the process of curriculum improvement. The commonly-accepted definition of the curriculum has changed from content of courses of study to all the experiences which are offered to learners under the auspices or direction of the school.¹

While there are variations of the concept which Doll suggests as the currently prevalent one, they are similar in that the curriculum is defined in terms of experiences. In this chapter we will focus our attention upon these "experience" definitions as they are found in the writings of various curriculum experts.²

As the title of Doll's book indicates, his central concern is with decision-making in the process of improving the curriculum. Hence, to grasp the full meaning of his definition it might be well to inquire into just what sorts of decisions are denoted by his definition. To do this, however, it is necessary for us to see more clearly what is entailed in offering experiences to learners.

The use of the term 'offering to' suggests that the curriculum is brought into being by some activity. Further, since the activity of offering experiences is done to learners, the agent of this activity must be someone other than the learner himself. That is, some agent (non-learner) acts (offers experiences) to someone else (learner). If someone were to say that he had been engaged in offering experiences but were to deny that he had been offering them to someone, he would be taken to be

uttering nonsense. Also, since only those experiences offered under the auspices or direction of the school will count as curricular, it seems sensible to conclude that the agent who does the offering will be an agent of the school.

Our first problem here is in coming to some clearer idea of what it means to offer an experience, that is, to note what sorts of activities will count as offering experiences. In order to accomplish this we will center our attention on the term 'offering.'

If a gentleman offers his seat on the bus to a lady, we would normally take this to mean that the gentleman intended to make his seat available to that lady and that he communicated this intention to her. If, on the other hand, he merely got up and walked away from his seat we would be unlikely to say that he offered her his seat. We could say that his getting up and walking away made the seat available to her, but, unless we know he intended that the lady take his place in the seat, we would not be inclined to say that he offered his seat.

A recent television commercial asks, "Should a gentleman offer a Tiparillo to a lady?" The picture shows a man and a woman sitting at a table in a restaurant. The man leaves the table momentarily, leaving his burning Tiparillo in the ashtray within easy reach of the young lady. The young lady acts to communicate to the viewer

that she would truly like to smoke (or at least taste) the cigar, but her desire to pick it up and try it is thwarted by the return of her escort. The commercial announcer then asks the question, "Should a gentleman offer a Tiparillo to a lady?" with the clear implication that the gentleman in the commercial did not. The gentleman had made his cigar available to the lady, but did not communicate to her any intent on his part that she was welcome to try it. If he had asked the lady if she would like to try one of his cigars, then we would say that he had offered her one. Hence, to offer something to someone is normally to show your intent to make something available to them.

This central use of the term 'offer' also implies that the person to whom the offer is made must have the option of declining or rejecting what is offered. If a corporal in the army were court-martialed and, as a result, demoted to the rank of private, we would not say that the army had offered the soldier the rank of private. The reason we should not be so inclined is that the soldier had no choice in the matter of whether or not he would go down to the rank of private. In other circumstances, the army could give a corporal the chance to take a lower rank, and, if the soldier actually had the choice between remaining a corporal or reverting to the rank of private, then we would say that the army had offered him this chance. Similarly, to draft or conscript a civilian into the service

is not to offer a man a job as a serviceman. To indoc-
trinate your political ideas into your son is not to merely
offer him your thoughts on politics. If our gentleman of
the Tiparillo commercial had shoved a cigar into his date's
mouth, we would hardly say that he had offered her a
Tiparillo. Hence, whatever will count as an experience,
we see that to offer it is to intentionally make an experi-
ence available to learners who may accept or refuse it.

Our problem now is to determine what would count as
an experience which can be offered. From the very begin-
ning this task will be difficult since in ordinary discourse
we do not commonly speak of offering experiences. Experi-
ence is most often referred to by indicating that someone
has had or is having one. In this sense, experience is
the sort of thing which happens within someone. The prime
reference is to some internal or subjective event, i.e.,
experiences are not found in the "out-there" world, like
Platonic Ideas, independent of individuals. Without
attempting to analyze the precise nature of experiences,
we may nonetheless see that to offer an experience is to
offer to someone else some internal occurrence.

However, if nothing will count as an experience
unless it occurs within some individual, then there is
something logically odd in speaking of 'offering an experi-
ence.' If that expression is taken literally, it asserts
something which seems impossible: that one person has an

experience which he will give to someone else if the latter so desires. Even if we accept Dewey's view that experience is a transaction, we would have to admit that if nothing happened in an individual's stream of consciousness, then an experience did not take place.³ Experience, in this sense, is always personal.

It is, however, no large problem to provide a reinterpretation of Doll's statement. Dewey, himself, indicates the way. In Experience and Education, he makes an assertion similar to Doll's statement:

Hence the central problem of an education based upon experience is to select the kind of experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences.⁴

Later, however, Dewey clarifies this assertion:

An experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment, . . .

.
The environment, in other words, is whatever conditions interact with personal needs, desires, purposes, and capacities to create the experience which is had.⁵

Then he asserts:

The immediate and direct concern of an educator is then with situations in which interaction takes place. The individual, who enters as a factor into it, is what he is at a given time. It is the other factor, that of the objective conditions, which lies to some extent within the possibility of regulation by the educator.⁶

Hence, Dewey's use of the term "experience" in indicating that "selecting experiences" is the central problem of educators is meant to focus the attention and

concern of educators on the fact that their selections of objective conditions have subjective consequences.

If we may assume that Doll's definition used the term in the same manner, then the definition may be reformulated to indicate that the curriculum is all of the objective conditions which agents of the school offer to learners. This reformulation escapes the difficulties inherent in the notion of 'offering experiences' and, additionally, remains neutral with respect to the various emphases which differing philosophical positions might make regarding the kind or quality of conditions offered. That is, any kind or quality of condition would qualify as curricular under this conception.

It would, however, be well to return to the statement that the conditions which constitute the curriculum are only those which are offered. To indicate that curricular conditions are those which are 'offered' implies that those conditions which a school imposes do not fall within the realm of the curriculum. Such a view could, of course, be consistently held. However, to do so would produce rather odd conceptual effects. From the standpoint of what actually happens in schools, it seems clear that the vast majority of the acts of agents of the school would fall outside the boundaries of the curriculum. Insofar as the acts of teachers, for example, impose conditions upon students, they are non-curricular. When we consider

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'teaching' to be a series of acts which are intended to induce learning, it is obvious that most of such acts are non-curricular. Teachers, in the act of teaching, engage in presenting to students all manner of conditions. It is normally not a matter of indifference to the teacher whether or not the students experience those conditions. Put the other way round, teachers present various conditions with the explicit purpose of having students experience them. When a teacher lectures to the class, gives a demonstration, assigns something to be read or written, or administers an examination there is the intent present that the students should have the experiences involved in that act. Normally, lectures in school are not "offered"; they are "given." Teachers seldom indicate to a class that they have such-and-such a lecture which the students may have if they so choose. When a teacher demonstrates something, it is expected that the students will attend to the demonstration on the grounds that the students will likely learn from their experience of what is demonstrated. In most classroom situations, sanctions are applied on the occasion of student inattention to teaching acts. This is not to say that teachers never offer conditions to students for their acceptance or rejection. Some teachers at all levels present conditions which are truly optional. Rather, the point here is that the force of this definition, taken as a non-inventive

stipulation, is to indicate that only those conditions which are presented to students in such a manner that the students do in fact have the option of undergoing them or not will be classified as curricular. The problem with such a use of the concept of curriculum is that it serves no other purpose than to name this class of conditions, and that, in the process, it departs from predefinitional usage so radically that it is more likely to confuse the language of education than it is to add precision and clarity. Such a definitional move seems to be of especially dubious value since we could describe the same thing denoted by this definition by merely indicating that some conditions provided by the school are optional for students. In the light of pre-definitional usage, to call these conditions 'curricular' is to misdescribe them and needlessly confuse our discourse.

It is, of course, possible that the sort of definition given by Doll is intended to serve other purposes. In the course of his examination of various types of definitions, Scheffler⁷ notes that definitions of the term 'curriculum' similar to Doll's are both programmatic and non-inventive stipulative definitions, and hence, do not purport to describe predefinitional usage. He states that the point of such programmatic definitions is "precisely to apply the familiar term in a strange way, in order to re-channel the practice associated with it."⁸

In the case of the definition which we are examining, it could be argued that Doll deliberately used the term 'offer' in order to recommend to educational practitioners that this is the manner in which objective conditions should be presented to students. The practical purport of the definition is that agents of the school should cease to impose conditions upon students and that they ought to present objective conditions to students in such a manner as to make them optional for students.

Scheffler advises that "in evaluating this double-purpose definition, it is clearly beside the point to dwell on its violation of predefinitional usage. Rather, the definition must be appraised as programmatic and as stipulative simultaneously."⁹ In the case of Doll's definition, then, we must ask if agents of the school ought to present conditions for the students to experience in such a way that the students may opt to have or not to have the experience. Additionally, we must ask if Doll's definition is helpful to him for the purposes of his exposition. As Scheffler indicates,

Neither question alone is sufficient for the appraisal of the definition, for a positive answer might be forthcoming to one but not to the other. We might, that is, agree that the program is sound, without agreeing that the stipulation is consistent and helpful for the discussion at hand. We might, more seriously, agree that the stipulation is formally sound and convenient for the purposes of the author's discussion, but feel that the program expressed is wrong. In order to allow for such important divergences, both questions need to be asked with respect to definitions of the sort we have been considering.¹⁰

In order to assess the program suggested by Doll's definition, we would first have to know the purposes of the school and then determine if this program was in fact instrumental in achieving those purposes. We have previously indicated that this task falls outside of the scope of this study, hence, we will be unable to assess the programmatic aspects of Doll's definition in these terms. It is important to notice, however, something about the use of programmatic definitions in the context of discourse about education.

A programmatic definition may be offered on any grounds whatever: on the basis of solid evidence or of personal prejudice or whim, that is, the program suggested by the definition is quite likely to be an arguable issue. If it were not, there would seem to be little point to the offering of a programmatic definition of the stipulative sort. Yet, to state the issue in terms of a definition functions to obscure its status as arguable, as amenable to the weight of evidence for or against the program which it recommends. In the case of the definition we are currently considering, the recommendation is that agents of the school should not coerce children but rather should enable them to choose from among various experiences. To offer this proposal in terms of a definition of the programmatic sort seeks to withhold whatever authority and legitimacy the status of 'curriculum' confers from the

practices of teachers which involve such things as requiring and commanding. In turn, it seeks to transfer this authority to the manner of teaching characterizable as 'offering.' The problem is that this transference of status is accomplished by definitional fiat rather than by rational argumentation and the presentation of relevant evidence.¹¹

With Scheffler, we recognize that perhaps no definition can be completely neutral with regard to programmatic functions. It does seem, however, that when we take note of the wide range of disagreement and controversy in the literature of education concerning the various aspects of education in theory and practice and the attendant paucity of conclusive evidence relevant to these issues, educators would be well-advised to couch their definitions of such key terms as 'curriculum,' 'teaching,' and 'learning' in terms which are as devoid as possible of such programmatic features. In the case of Doll's definition, for example, much of the programmatic element we have been examining could easily be eliminated by merely using a word which is more neutral with regard to the manner in which the objective conditions that give rise to experiences are presented to learners. Instead of indicating that the curriculum is all of the experiences offered, it could have been stated in terms of experiences provided. This would leave the matter of the manner in which

experiences should be provided open for argument and the presentation of relevant evidence.

In the case of Doll's definition, it seems likely that the use of the term 'offered' was not actually intended to convey the meaning which our analysis has shown. When we assess the definition as a non-inventive stipulation as suggested by Scheffler, we find that the term 'offered' is not used consistently. We also find that it is not helpful in his later exposition, that is, Doll, throughout his book, is concerned with more than those experiences which have been 'offered.' In the same chapter in which he states the definition which we have been considering, he goes on to say that this "broader definition has magnified the task of curriculum improvement because all the experiences of learners over which the school has control may now be eligible for improvement."¹² Also, in the summary of this same chapter he states that "the curriculum is now generally considered to be all the experiences that learners have under the auspices or direction of the school."¹³

We may see now that Doll's original definition was most likely not programmatic in the sense which our analysis suggested. However, we may also see that his carelessness in stating the definition of the central concept in his book causes it to fail as a stipulative definition. It does not even mark off the subject which he wished to address.

However, now it could be objected that we have distorted the meaning intended by the definition given by Doll. It might be claimed that Doll perhaps erred in his use of the term 'offered' and that the major purpose of this definition was to define 'curriculum' in terms of the actual subjective experiences of the learners. Thus his mistake was in using the term 'offered' and ours was in being distracted by this from the prime feature of the definition. Many curriculum experts take this view and define 'curriculum' as the actual experiences that pupils have in the school.¹⁴ Hence, our task will be to examine this concept of curriculum and some of the variations of it found in the literature on the subject of curriculum.

The first thing which we must note is that this conception refers strictly to the subjective side of experiences. We cannot reformulate this definition in terms of objective conditions as we did in our attempt to add precision to Doll's definition. It was Doll's use of the term 'offered' which enabled us to infer an agent who was offering objective conditions which pupils could experience. However, in the definition which is currently under investigation there is no way in which such an inference may be made. The only non-subjective reference made in this conception occurs when it is stated that the experiences which constitute the curriculum are those which are had in the school. This phrase merely serves to mark off

the locus of curricular experiences from those which are non-curricular, i.e., it enables us to indicate that experiences which are had in the school corridor are curricular while those which are had in the home or the corner drug store are non-curricular. In the case of Doll's definition we were able to construe the curriculum to be that which gives rise to or, in some sense, causes experiences in pupils. But in the case of our current definition, 'curriculum' denotes an effect in pupils. In fact, this definition remains silent concerning the sources of curricular experiences. Hence, any experience which a pupil has in school will qualify as a part of the curriculum. One who accepts such a definition will be forced to admit that the abdominal pain suffered by the student who experiences a stomach ache in school is as much a part of the curriculum as is any experience which the student has as the result of interacting with objective conditions which have been deliberately contrived to promote learning by agents of the school. It would also be necessary to concede that when the student with the stomach ache leaves the school, the same pain which he experiences ceases to be a part of the curriculum.

It is difficult to see cogent reasons for the use of this definition. In the first place, it is clear that this definition departs even more radically than Doll's original formulation from predefinitional usage and is,

therefore, a non-inventive stipulation. However, before we assess the definition strictly as a stipulation, it would be fruitful to examine how the adoption of this concept of curriculum would function within the fabric of educational discourse.

If we were to define 'curriculum' as all of the actual experiences that pupils have in the school, we would find that the curriculum bears only an accidental relation to teaching. It would not even be necessary for teaching to occur in the school for a curriculum to exist.¹⁵

Using this definition we could not evaluate teachers on the basis of how well or badly they had implemented the curriculum, for it makes no sense to speak of "implementing" experiences which have already been had by students.

In a similar manner, it is at best unclear how the curriculum is related to learning in this definition. Our student who experiences the pains of a stomach ache in school may learn from this experience or he may not. Learning is not an inevitable outcome of having an experience. Further, even if we know that a student has had some particular experience, we cannot tell from that knowledge specifically what he has learned.¹⁶ Yet, teaching is very much concerned with getting students to learn specific things. Further complicating the issue is the fact that students experience all manner of things in schools, and they learn from some of the experiences which

teachers have contrived for them to have as well as those experiences which are totally unaffected by teachers' actions.

If we are correct in our analysis thus far, we may conclude that the only logical reason for calling experiences had by students in school 'curricular' is to mark them off from experiences had elsewhere. If we were called upon to describe the curriculum of a school, our description would be of what students now in the school had individually experienced. We could not, in our description, refer to what had been taught or learned and most certainly not to our intentions concerning what should be taught and learned.

It seems equally clear that under this definition the curriculum could bear no prescriptive force for the teaching acts carried on in the school. Teachers would not be obligated to teach any particular subject matter nor would they have an obligation to teach in any particular manner.

In his analysis of this concept of curriculum, Scheffler states:

The definition, it should be noted, has as an intended consequence that no two pupils ever have the same curriculum and, further, that no two schools ever have the same curriculum, each school having as many curricula as it has pupils. These consequences clearly violate the standard predefinitional usage of the term "curriculum." For such usage surely allows us to speak truly of the (unique) curriculum of a given school, of a number of schools with the same curriculum,

and of the curriculum of a school as enduring for a longer or shorter interval during which its pupil population is completely changed.¹⁷

Under this definition of curriculum therefore, the only curriculum of which we can have any knowledge is constituted by those experiences which have been had by some student. Curricula are 'had.' They cannot be "implemented" or "constructed" or even "revised." Yet, the books written by the men who use this definition of curriculum to define the primary object of their study concern themselves at great length with how to construct, revise, implement and even improve a curriculum. In fact, such matters are their prime concern. It seems clear then that those writers who use this definition find it impossible to consistently use their own conception of their topic. As Goodlad notes, "those who define curriculum as 'something that happens to learners' devote their attention to problems involved in developing a curriculum plan or design."¹⁸ Hence, this definition fails when it is taken as a non-inventive stipulation.

Scheffler, however, holds that this definition of curriculum is an example of the overlapping of programmatic and stipulative definitions and, as we have seen, argues that it must be evaluated on its programmatic point as well as whether it succeeds or fails as a useful stipulation. Scheffler states that the programmatic point of this definition is "to extend the school's responsibility,

hitherto limited to its so-called formal course of study, in such a way so as to embrace the individual social and psychological development of its pupils."¹⁹

As Scheffler notes, there are several ways of dealing with this definition depending upon one's view of the program which it recommends. However, it seems that, as in the case of Doll's definition, this program (the extension of the school's responsibility) would best be advanced through direct argumentation and the presentation of relevant evidence. Surely this may be accomplished without further muddying of the conceptual waters of educational discourse. We may, without distorting our ordinary usage of the concept of 'curriculum,' put the matter quite succinctly and openly by arguing the merits of the various positions with regard to the scope of the responsibility of the school. If we are able to reach agreement on this matter, then we may return to examine how the curriculum of the school relates to the responsibility of the school. Even if we do not reach such agreement, it will be clear to any serious disputant that we are disagreed about the scope of the school's responsibility and not about the "true" nature of the curriculum. In the meantime, we will have preserved in our standard usage of 'curriculum' the distinctive functions which that use makes possible.²⁰

Several curriculum experts, apparently recognizing some of the difficulties which our analysis has shown in

the two previous forms of "experience" definitions, have attempted to overcome them by making additions or amendments to these original formulations. It is to these changes that we now direct our attention.

We have previously noted that both forms of the "experience" definitions examined thus far were found to have difficulties in marking off in a manner that would serve to facilitate discourse just which experiences would count as curricular. Doll's definition was found to be too constrictive in counting only those experiences which had been presented to learners in a manner characterizable as being 'offered.' The second definition was found to be too inclusive in counting any experience which students have in the school. One way of attempting to escape both of these difficulties while still couching the definition in terms of experiences is by indicating who initiates or is responsible for those experiences which will count as curricular. In the literature of the curriculum field this attempt is phrased in various ways. For example, Halverson indicates,

For a long time it has been evident, both to professional educators and to some lay persons, that a more adequate concept of the curriculum would include all experiences boys and girls have under the guidance of the school.²¹

Another statement indicates that "curriculum consists of all the experiences of the learners--what they undergo, feel, and react to under the guidance of the school."²²

Disregarding for the moment any possible programmatic or emotive connotations concerning the manner of the school's involvement with the experiences of the learners, it seems clear that the attempt here is to indicate that the only experiences which are relevant to the concept of 'curriculum' are those which students have had "under the guidance of the school." While this addition would seem to limit the range of curricular experiences to some extent, there remains such a large area of vagueness as to render this definition useless in helping us make decisions in vast numbers of cases. It is, for example, unclear how we should rule on such common cases as a child's experience of boredom during a spelling lesson or of frustration in working at an arithmetic assignment.

Other phrases commonly substituted for "under the guidance of the school" include "under the administration of the school,"²³ or "under the auspices or direction of the school."²⁴ These phrases seem equally vague and unhelpful in reducing the number of borderline cases. When we consider, however, that the vast majority of the "experience" definitions offered by the curriculum experts contain some such qualifying phrase, it does seem sensible to conclude with Scheffler that the intent in giving such a definition lies in the attempt to extend the traditional scope of the school's responsibility. That this is the intent in using these definitions is often made explicit

by their authors. Upon giving the definition cited above, Halverson indicates why he thinks that his conception is preferable.

A narrow concept of the curriculum will inevitably focus upon a single primary task of the school, that of intellectual development, but such attention will make the meaning of the curriculum very close to its classical derivation--"a racetrack." That a well-balanced development will take place in such a setting seems highly unlikely. We need, therefore, to turn to a definition of curriculum that comes closer to reality.²⁵

Halverson obviously feels that the responsibility of the school lies only within the curriculum, that for something to be excluded from the curriculum means that the school will not accept the responsibility for it. However, his argument is wrong-headed in several respects.²⁶ In the first place, there seems to be no reason to believe that if we adopt a narrow curriculum that the only task of the school will be that of developing the intellect. Certainly there have been schools having "narrow" curricula which have taken as their primary task the development of other human capacities, e.g., vocational schools. Secondly, it seems clear that in schools that presently conceive of their curricula primarily in terms of the courses which they offer, responsibilities extending far beyond intellectual development are accepted. Such schools commonly provide personal and social counseling services and a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are intended to serve a broad range of functions. Funds are expended,

facilities are provided, and specialized personnel are hired precisely because these schools have accepted these tasks as within the domain of the responsibility of the school. Apparently recognizing that schools have currently accepted the broader range of tasks, one author demonstrates the conceptual confusion brought about by the adoption of the sort of "experience" definition which we are currently considering when he states that we should "consider the curriculum as being made up of all the experiences, both curricular and extracurricular, which children have under the administration of the school."²⁷ Apparently agreeing with Anderson that "it is impossible to define curriculum without exhibiting a point of view,"²⁸ Gwynn has been led to assert a flat contradiction. Hence, not only does this form of definition fail, as we have previously indicated, to facilitate the curriculum experts' exposition of their own topics, but the adoption of such a view needlessly serves to add to the conceptual confusion within the language of education. Without attempting to argue Anderson's claim that it is impossible to define "curriculum" without expressing a point of view, it seems clear that we should attempt to state our definitions in such a way to at least minimize the extent and force of particular points of view rather than to seek to embody our point of view within the concept itself.

Perhaps the major reason why the point of view of curriculum experts so often shows up in their definitions is that they are most concerned with advancing the case for some particular curriculum. The major press of their occupational positions calls upon them to make improvements and revisions in already existing operations of schools. This practical activity cannot be done from no point of view whatsoever. When engaged in fulfilling their major function, they must be concerned with this or that curriculum. They must make decisions which presuppose that there is some specific content "filled in," some point of view with regard to what a good or the best curriculum is. But it is clear, however, that there are two separate and distinct operations involved in (1) deciding what is a curriculum matter and then (2) in determining whether some specific instance of that matter is better or worse than some other. The first concern is conceptual, while the latter is empirical and valuational. In his discussion of the current state of curriculum theorizing, Mauritz Johnson states:

Teachers, administrators, and even those with titles indicating specific responsibility for curriculum development--while interested in curriculum, are not particularly concerned with curriculum theory. After all, they feel, their concern is the practical one of improving the curriculum, not studying it. A perusal of the curriculum literature of the past twenty years will reveal, moreover, that the professors of education who have achieved reputations as "curriculum specialists" have chiefly been experts on how to organize and direct professional and lay

groups effectively for curriculum improvement by applying principles of group-dynamics and human-relations.²⁹

Another device for the clarification of "experience" definitions which is often found in curriculum literature consists in qualifying the quality or kind of student experiences which will count as part of the curriculum. The authors of one curriculum text define the curriculum "as the educational experiences that children have in the school."³⁰ If we were to reach agreement on what would constitute an "educational experience," this definition would serve to limit the concept of 'curriculum.' However, the definition still suffers from the defects that we noticed earlier with regard to other "experience" definitions. First, experiences, educational or otherwise, are subjective and may only be described or assessed upon their being "had" by someone. Thus, the curriculum is always something that has already happened. Secondly, since experiences occur uniquely within individuals, it follows that each child has his own curriculum and, therefore, we cannot speak of the curriculum of a school or indicate that two schools have the same curriculum. Further, it must be noticed that two children who have experienced the same objective conditions may, nonetheless, react differently to them. This renders the possibility that the same conditions may provide an "educative experience" for one child while providing the other child with an

experience which is "mis-educative" or "non-educative." However, even the task of deciding which conditions are relevant is complicated when Beck and his colleagues, upon stating their definition, go on to assert:

This is a broad definition and includes far more than any mere outline of facts, skills, attitudes or ideals, though these are important too. The personalities of the teacher, the principal and the janitor, must be included. In fact, the whole community--and beyond that the total culture--affect the children in school and, to the extent that they do, are a part of the curriculum.³¹

Certainly the inclusion of personalities and the total culture (Why not, "the world?") within the curriculum renders this conception so broad as to be virtually useless in making fruitful distinctions when distinctions are so vitally important in educational and curricular discourse.

Another author attempts to qualify his definition in a slightly different manner. In the process, he exemplifies--perhaps in an extreme form--the tendency to smuggle in his own bias concerning how schools should operate. He states:

The elementary school curriculum is, essentially, a process of living and learning within a democratic, problem-solving climate for children, each of whom has a unique developmental growth pattern. The curriculum process encompasses the total of all experiences children have under the guidance of the school. Since each child differs from every other child in a host of ways and looks out upon the world from his unique behavioral field, the curriculum is different for each child.³²

While we are left with a good idea of where this author stands on certain matters of school policy and

operation, we are left with a definition which not only suffers from the defects previously mentioned for other "experience" definitions, but which contains another defect: in the first sentence, experiences which occur in a non-democratic, non-problem-solving climate are apparently ruled out of the curriculum, while in the second sentence, they seem to be ruled back in. Also, it is unclear how, if the individual subjective experiences of each child constitute different curricula, we should interpret those statements where the definition refers to "the curriculum" of a school. It seems equally unclear how such experiences constitute a "process." Such are the confusions of those who attempt to define the curriculum in terms of the subjective experiences which pupils have in the school.

In this chapter we have critically analyzed various formulations of what we have called "experience" definitions of the concept of curriculum. We have found that these definitions consistently refer 'curriculum' to some "internal" or subjective occurrence or event within the student. Hence, we were led to conclude that a curriculum is something which has been "had" by students. While most of the writers acknowledge that learning is something that occurs through or by experience, none of them state just what is involved in this relationship. Hence, we are unable to tell just what the curriculum has to do with

learning. This was seen to be a rather odd situation, since schools are ordinarily established not to merely enable students to "have experiences," but rather so that they may learn from experiences which they have.

If the relation between curricular experiences and learning is unclear, any intended connection between curricular experiences and teaching is at least as difficult to determine. The only connection which we were able to make between these two concepts was at the point where we attempted to reinterpret one of Doll's definitions which had been couched in terms of "experiences offered." We reinterpreted it to mean that a teacher controlled external conditions which the students then experienced. Here, 'curriculum' would have referred to the acts of teachers in controlling the objective circumstances of schooling, but this view was later contradicted by Doll himself. In addition, even our reformulation seems to refer to 'teaching' rather than 'curriculum.'

To see better what is involved here, we might ask what we would know of a school if we found that it had a curriculum in this "experience" sense. Clearly, this knowledge would not constitute much of a discovery since no school with students could fail to have a curriculum. Hence our knowledge would consist of the not-too-surprising fact that the students in that school had experiences. Since no connection has been made between what these

students have experienced and what they have been taught (or even what they have learned), we would have come to possess a piece of information which would be nearly useless to us in dealing with the ordinary concerns of educators which involve deciding what we ought to do to enable the students to best achieve the goals of the school. Put somewhat differently, these "experience" definitions are descriptive. Hence, the curriculum cannot be seen as providing the prescriptive role with regard to teacher or student behavior that it does in its standard usage. And, since these curriculum experts made no provision for a concept which would provide this prescriptive function, then it must be assumed that teachers may teach whatever they choose to teach and that the decisions regarding what and how to teach will properly be made on any basis whatever.

The various forms of these "experience" definitions were evaluated as non-inventive stipulative definitions according to the criteria of consistency, economy, and helpfulness in furthering the author's discussion. All were found to fail on all three grounds. We also found, however, that the "experience" definitions function as programmatic definitions which must be evaluated in terms of the practical and moral programs which they advocate. While this task falls clearly outside the scope of this study, we did recommend that in the interests of clear

communication and intellectual honesty, it would be preferable if such programmatic content could be ruled out of the definitions of key educational terms insofar as this is possible. It would be clearly in the interests of intellectual rigor if curriculum theorists stated their definitions in such a manner that their pet programs could be stated and examined separately.

CHAPTER IV

CURRICULUM AS ACTS OF EDUCATORS AND AS BEHAVIORAL SYSTEMS

In the preceding chapter we examined certain variations of the concept of curriculum which we have called "experience" definitions. Our analysis found them to present various difficulties. While curriculum authorities are in general agreement that these "experience" definitions represent the predominant conception, there have been continuing attempts by some writers in the curriculum field to offer major alternatives. The characteristic common to these alternatives is their rejection of definitions of 'curriculum' which are couched in terms of the subjective experiences of students. In this chapter we will critically examine the outstanding examples of these non-subjective definitions.

Implicit in the formulations of the first major alternative conception which we will examine is a recognition (seldom stated) that the "experience" definitions limit the domain of the curriculum to "within" pupils. The writers who offer these alternative formulations apparently agree with our analysis in that if 'curriculum' is limited to the subjective experiences of pupils, then

the term does not have any significance for the acts of educators. As we have argued previously, to indicate that "X is curricular" is merely to note that X has been experienced by some pupil. Such a statement does not even bear any obvious relationship with the aims of the school which are commonly stated in terms of what the student should come to know, learn, appreciate or understand. Hence, even if we were able to know that a student had had a particular experience, we would not thereby be informed concerning either what agents of the school had done or what the pupil had learned.

The proponents of our first alternative conception hold that a conception of curriculum ought to be more importantly and directly related to the process of schooling and the acts of educators. In fact, they indicate this in their definitions by making 'curriculum' co-extensive with 'schooling.'

It should be noted at this point that most of the authors holding this general conception retain the disposition to couch their definitions in terms of "experiences." However, in what they say concerning their own definitions it often seems clear that their primary reference is to the acts of agents of the school and not to subjective occurrences in students. Insofar as their statements are not translatable in this fashion, however, we have dealt with them in the preceding chapter. Hence,

our concern here will be with the non-subjective import of their definitions. In stating his definition of curriculum one author recently made this point directly:

In this view the commonly used definition of curriculum as all of the student's experiences under the direction of the school that contribute to his growth is technically correct. However, since the school cannot control the student's experiences except as it stimulates them through the environment it provides, the emphasis should be on the nature of the school's activities for providing stimulating experiences appropriate to the desired learnings. Accepting the fact that experiences are not subject to control by the school, the curriculum has generally been taken to be all the activities which the school provides for the education of the youth.¹

The definition given by Firth is, of course, similar to Dewey's conception of "providing experiences" which we noted in Chapter III. Other authors, while stating their definitions in somewhat different terms, hold essentially the same position. Oliver, for example, indicates that the curriculum planner is someone who attempts to create conditions that will improve learning. He asserts that direct teaching in the classroom, school activities such as clubs and sports, and school services such as libraries, health services and guidance are parts of the curriculum. He even goes so far as to include the "climate of interpersonal relationships prevailing in a school at a given time" in the curriculum.²

Saylor and Alexander make the point briefly by indicating that "the school curriculum is the total effort of the school to bring about desired outcomes in school and

out-of-school situations."³ Another text states that "curriculum includes all the means employed by the school to provide students with opportunities for desirable learning experiences."⁴

In spite of differences apparent in these and similar definitions, 'curriculum' clearly refers to the acts of agents of the school which are intended to be instrumental in realizing the purposes of the school. Such a conception escapes the criticisms of the definitions considered in the previous chapter by directing our attention not to some feature of the learners, but rather to the acts of agents of the school.

It should be noted at this point that these writers do not address the further problem of how to describe these "curricular acts" of agents of the school. It is clear that what the teacher, for example, does in order to promote the aims of the school must be described. What remains unclear is whether this should be described in terms of the teacher alone or whether the description should include reference to the related intent and/or student behavior. For example, the following are all true descriptions of what might be called the same action of teacher T:

1. T exercised his vocal cords.
2. T talked.
3. T lectured.
4. T had his students listening to his lecture.
5. T excited his students' imaginations.

The fundamental issue here is that it is quite possible to describe an act in various ways. A failure to attend to this possibility creates problems for anyone who would wish to construct, identify or observe a curriculum. In addition, another serious problem would result. If a curriculum is to be evaluated, even in part, by an examination of its consequences, the above list of descriptions should make it abundantly clear that decisions regarding the form of description of an act will have a direct bearing on the identification of what will count as a consequence of the act being described. Hence, if we were to take statement (3) as our description of a curricular act, then statement (5) describes its consequence. Yet we could take statement (5) as our description of the same curricular act. If we were to do this, then we would have to look further for the consequence(s) of that act. For example, we might find that T's students eagerly engaged in research on the subject of T's lecture. Whether a certain phenomenon is classified as an "act" or as a "consequence" will, therefore, make a great deal of difference in how we state and how we evaluate a curriculum. Clearly the two categories function differently in evaluation. Until we know the criteria for a proper curriculum description, we will be unable to know what sorts of things will count as evidence of success or failure.⁵

The failure of those who espouse the conception of curriculum under investigation to attend to this important problem in no way refutes their general position. It remains quite possible that this defect could be remedied. There are, however, other serious problems in this conception.

First, as we have noted, this conception of 'curriculum' as being all of the acts of agents of the school which are intended to be instrumental in the realization of the purposes of the school makes 'curriculum' equivalent to 'schooling' or 'education.' One text explicitly recognizes, states, and accepts this conceptual consequence. It indicates that "curriculum is viewed almost synonymously with the term 'education'" ⁶

Clearly, this is not the standard predefinitional use of the term 'curriculum.' This would lead us to suspect that this definition is a non-inventive stipulation. However, as Scheffler points out, the function of such stipulation is abbreviatory. He indicates that we should choose and evaluate a particular definition of this sort by assessing whether it is helpful in facilitating discourse, whether it can be consistently followed, and whether there is another familiar term available which will not be likely to arouse unwanted associations. ⁷

Following these criteria, it would be proper to stipulate this inclusive definition of 'curriculum' if there were no

other familiar term available. As we have seen, however, it has been taken to be equivalent to 'education' or 'schooling' in some standard sense. If there is already available a term with a standard usage (in this case, 'education' or 'schooling') corresponding to the description in question, then it is certainly unclear what advantage is to be gained by using the term 'curriculum' as an abbreviation for that description. In the first place, we already have terms which are apparently adequate. (At least no author who uses this inclusive definition has bothered to show how either 'schooling' or 'education' is inadequate.) Both of the available terms are approximately the same length (one letter shorter) than 'curriculum,' and hence, serve the abbreviatory function equally well. Finally, the term 'curriculum' has a predefinitional usage, vague and ambiguous as it is, which does not correspond to the description in question. Therefore, 'curriculum' is more likely to arouse unwanted associations than either of the alternative terms. It would follow from this that this definition of 'curriculum' should be rejected on the grounds that it will not be helpful in discourse and that there are already available terms which in their standard usage are more appropriate to the phenomenon being described.

It is, of course, still possible that this definition is programmatic. It is possible that the programmatic

point is the extension of the school's responsibility after the fashion of the "experience" definitions which we dealt with in the previous chapter. There is, however, another possibility which requires separate treatment here. Since the curriculum is defined in terms of what agents of the school do, this definition has the force of extending the authority of the curriculum expert. We need not, however, interpret this as some insidious power-play being made by some people in the curriculum field, and no such interpretation is being suggested here. This extension of authority is quite intelligible when viewed in terms of the demands made upon the curriculum worker in modern education. When the curriculum was conceived as a course of study in the sense of a written guide, educators held out great hopes that many of the problems of learning and instruction would be solved when we had available good written guides. For more than a decade curriculum workers were busy developing revised and improved written guides, or in enlisting teachers in the development and writing of such guides. However, it was realized (after several years) that the new guides had very little effect upon the conduct of schooling. Convinced that these guides were good but generally disappointed with the reception given them by educators, those in the curriculum field turned their attention to the problems involved in getting their curricula off the shelves and into an effective role in

guiding teaching. Curriculum workers became concerned with making changes in teaching and exhorted teachers with such slogans as "curriculum is made in the classroom" which suggested that the existence of a written guide was useless unless teachers took it upon themselves to follow it in their teaching. However, under the old conception of curriculum these curriculum workers lacked the authority to interfere with the classroom teaching decisions which teachers made. If, after all, a person is a curriculum director and the curriculum is seen in terms of a written guide, then his proper role would be the preparation of written guides. However, given the expectation that these guides would produce better education, the curriculum workers began to see their field in a different light which, in turn, demanded a reformulation of the concept of curriculum. Hence, since they were being held responsible for the improvement of instruction, they began to offer definitions of curriculum which encompassed the teaching act itself. If, under the newer conception, the curriculum has to do with the acts of the agents of the school, then a director of curriculum will have authority over such acts and he will be in a much better position to wield influence in the social system into which the guides are introduced. Without regard to the merits of extending the influence and authority of the curriculum worker directly, it does seem that those who advocate this larger

role for the curriculum worker should present their case directly rather than engage in a sort of definitional imperialism. It is quite possible that the original expectations concerning the work of the curriculum experts were misguided. If this is the case, then it will remove the prime reason for the extension of authority and the concomitant extended definition of curriculum.

This is not, however, the only objection to defining 'curriculum' in terms of the acts of agents of the school. In the first place, it seems odd to define 'curriculum,' a noun, in terms of actions. When we come at this the other way around and attempt to describe the sorts of things agents of the school do, we find a set of terms already available. For example, teachers lecture, explain, motivate, instruct, evaluate, demonstrate, and the like in order to achieve the aims of the school. Similarly, principals and deans plan, supervise, lead and evaluate. These readily available terms have predefinitional usages which refer to actions of agents of the school. If, however, instead of using these terms, we were to indicate that the teachers in a school were engaging in "curriculum-ing" we would be saying something quite strange. Our statement would leave most readers puzzled about what these teachers were doing until we explained the special sense in which we were using the word. Upon hearing our explanation, the ordinary reader would likely respond, "Well, why

didn't you say so in the first place?" He knows quite well enough what 'educating' and 'schooling' mean. Similarly, in spite of existing ambiguities in usages, he understands the more specific terms which designate the specific activities involved in carrying out the general activities of 'educating' and 'schooling,' such as 'lecturing,' 'explaining,' and 'demonstrating.' This odd use of 'curriculum' seems to be not only superfluous but, in addition, actually misleading.

Further difficulties result from the adoption of this conception. If curriculum is taken to be all acts of agents of the school, then it seems clear that no operating school could fail to have a curriculum. Conversely, we could not speak of the curriculum for a school which had not yet opened. Our standard uses of this term, however, allow us to speak of the curriculum of a new school which is about to open but where no teaching has taken place. When some group has just decided that a new school will be opened, it would be quite likely that they would take, as one of their first tasks, the development of a curriculum for that school. They would see it as desirable to do this before teaching took place. Our standard uses of the term 'curriculum' allow us to have some idea of what a school that lacked a curriculum would be like, while under the definition we are currently considering, such a school is a logical impossibility.

Under the conception of curriculum as all of the acts of agents of the school which are intended to promote the achievement of the purposes of the school, we could not logically speak of a teacher who taught in order to achieve the aims of the school as failing to implement the curriculum. Yet it would seem that this is an important distinction. In an organization in which there occurs a division of labor in order to facilitate the realization of the purposes of the organization, it is a matter of no small consequence to take care that the acts of one agent of the organization do not conflict and cancel out the acts of other organizational agents. It would, in fact, seem wise to devise some way for the acts of individual agents to harmonize and reinforce each other. Yet this current definition allows a situation in which each agent of the school may make up his own mind about how he will act in order to achieve the school's purpose without any consideration for the acts of other agents. This conception of curriculum is silent with regard to the crucial questions of what should be taught, when (in terms of sequence) it should be taught, and to whom it should be taught. Actually, it is logically possible that no teaching at all might occur in a given school that could still be referred to as having a curriculum in this current sense. That is, not all acts of agents of the school which are instrumental in realizing the aims of the school are characterizable as

teaching. One would be hard pressed to make a case that the school bus driver's act did not help in the achievement of the school's aims. Hence, his act is clearly curricular. But if agents of the school each individually decided to do this same curricular act and no other, then we would have a curriculum which would be made up of the "bus-driving" acts of the several agents of the school.

Essentially the same situation might obtain, however, even if everyone decided to teach. Since, in the modern school, there are almost no teachers who have any students for the student's whole school career, it is highly improbable that any teacher could meet all of the school's aims alone. Each teacher must select certain purposes to be met and, given the limitations of time, some to be neglected. Under our standard usages of 'curriculum,' this situation works passably well since the curriculum prescribes certain subjects to be taught by certain teachers at various points in a student's progression through the school. If one teacher does not teach for mathematical competence, another will have that obligation. However, the conception which we are currently examining does not provide any principles by which such selections might be made. It is quite conceivable, for example, that all of the teachers in an elementary school could decide to devote all of their energies to the realization of the school's aim of enabling students to read well.

Hence the total effort of the school (the curriculum) would be devoted to this one aim. Yet the school might have additional aims, such as the development of competence in, understanding of, and appreciation for mathematics, art, music, social studies and the like. The point here is that this concept of curriculum leaves the school with its stated aims, but provides no principle to guide the organization and selection of what should be taught by individual teachers. Hence, while the acts of any individual teacher might be quite understandable in relation to the purposes of the school, it remains quite possible that the acts of the several teachers, taken collectively, would be quite unintelligible and indefensible.⁸

In recent years, some few writers in the curriculum field have begun to depart from the conceptualizations of the vast majority of their colleagues and have started to conceptualize 'curriculum' from a fresh perspective. This new approach is widely known as the "systems" approach. Ryans,⁹ for example, has proposed a "curriculum system" based upon an "information-systems" model. In one of his postulates, Ryans states that "teacher behavior and/or the function performed by a teaching device or medium (and pupil behavior as well) can be described in terms of information processing or information systems."¹⁰

While Ryans calls his theory a theory of instruction, he uses the terms 'instruction' and 'curriculum' indiscriminately. His confusion of these two areas is perhaps understandable in the light of the more than three decades of such conceptual confusion that we have seen in our analysis up to this point. However much we may understand how he might come to this confusion, it remains clear that it is a confusion. It seems clear that one may engage in instructing without having a curriculum in any of the standard uses, and, also that one may describe a curriculum which has never been implemented through instruction.

We may also question the wisdom of his "single-track" view of education. He holds that the processes of teaching and learning are reducible to terms of information processing and transmission. While it would be difficult to argue that these were not important factors in schooling, Ryans' conception rules out other modes of learning. Even if a student comes to possess the information which has been taught and only information, we would describe him as "well informed" but would not be inclined to say of him that he was "educated." To possess information relevant to some problem is not to be able to solve it or to have the disposition to use the information thoughtfully. Surely education (and a curriculum designed to facilitate education) aims at other ends in addition to the obtaining of information by students. This is, of course, not to

say that Ryans' theory is not useful. Insights gained from the uses of the information-systems model could prove quite valuable in curriculum construction wherever the goal is the transmission of information. However, few educators would take information transmission to be the defining characteristic of education. Hence, the adoption of Ryans' conception would seriously distort the meaning of education and of curriculum.

There is, however, no logical reason why educators could not adopt the transmission of information as their sole task even if they have not done so at this point. There are, however, other serious objections to Ryans' view as an adequate characterization of either 'curriculum' or 'instruction.' First, Ryans clearly indicates that his theory is descriptive. It purports to describe and explain what happened after it has happened. A theory of curriculum (or instruction) is, we have tried to show, prescriptive and is concerned to set forth the best means for realizing educational purposes regardless of whether these means have ever been used or not.¹¹ Ryans is concerned with explaining and describing information transmission and there is no need whatever for him to appropriate usages which are both broader and prescriptive when he could call his theory by the much less misleading title of "An Empirical Theory of Information Processing."

Another recent attempt to formulate a "curriculum system" has been proposed by Duncan and Frymier.¹² In stating their problem, they indicate that "we still need to know what curriculum is. More accurate conceptual descriptions and valid theoretical formulations are needed. . . ."¹³ Then, without any attempt to find out "what a curriculum is," they immediately proceed to stipulate that "for our purposes, the elements essential to curriculum are actors, artifacts, and operations."¹⁴ In the next paragraph they reiterate this statement. "We are proposing that actors, artifacts, and operations be considered as the basic ingredients of curriculum."¹⁵ In explaining their use of "actors" they indicate that "one purpose of the term 'actors' is to define some people inside curriculum and others outside, thus, helping to establish a bounded concept."¹⁶

Granting the need for establishing bounded concepts, it seems curious indeed to include people within the boundaries of the concept of curriculum, especially as necessary or basic ingredients. Surely this departs radically from ordinary usage. We commonly talk of the curriculum without in any way intending to include any person within the concept. The same is true for artifacts and operations. For example, while it is clear that blackboards, desks, and paper may be useful in the implementation of a curriculum, we may surely have a curriculum

without them. We may quite sensibly speak of a curriculum failing to be successfully implemented precisely because there are insufficient or inappropriate actors or artifacts available. This does not mean that this lack indicates that there is no curriculum. Rather, it indicates that there is a curriculum which cannot under the circumstance be successfully implemented. The conception proposed here is, therefore, stipulative.

As a stipulative definition it must satisfy the requirements of consistency and helpfulness in facilitating the authors' discourse. It is almost immediately apparent that the authors find it awkward to use their own stipulation consistently, for they begin to speak of people (who are inside the curriculum) as planning, implementing, being affected by, and affecting the curriculum. Such locutions indicate that these people have a status of causes or effects of curriculum, while their original formulation indicates that they are a part of the curriculum. This inconsistency renders their conception of exceedingly dubious value in facilitating the exposition of their topic.

It seems quite likely that the authors are attempting to provide a conceptual framework that would more appropriately apply to those aspects of schooling which are commonly referred to as "instruction." When we consider the phenomena which they have included in the concept of

curriculum, we would commonly indicate that these are the variables involved in making statements concerning the teaching-learning processes. However, even this is somewhat dubious in that it becomes clear that the conclusions which their theory purports to yield are descriptive. As was the case with Ryans' proposal, we could hardly deny that such descriptions are potentially useful in curriculum making, but we must reject the view that such descriptions are appropriate for the concept of curriculum itself. To find out how actors, artifacts and operations do interact does not, in itself, tell us how they ought to act. Yet curricula perform precisely this latter function.

Another curriculum theorist who has attracted the largest following of the "systems approach" oriented people in the curriculum field is James B. Macdonald. He has more fully developed and explicated his "curriculum system" than have any of his colleagues. Further, he takes note of several of the conceptual confusions which abound in current curriculum theory and which our analysis has shown. He states this point explicitly:

At present it is well to recognize that there is no consistently clear distinction in the use of much educational terminology. One definition of curriculum may well turn out to be the same as the next definition of instruction, and this definition of instruction could quite likely be synonymous with another's definition of teaching. It is in fact indicative of the general level of the total field that educational definitions are fuzzy and conflicting. Until such time as there can be common agreement upon at least the basic phenomena we are labeling, there will be little chance of making conceptual progress.¹⁷

Upon making this perceptive comment, Macdonald then proceeds to offer a clarification of the concepts of teaching, learning, instruction, and curriculum based upon the concept of systems developed by Parsons¹⁸ and Parsons and Shils.¹⁹

Since Macdonald acknowledges his debt to Parsons and Shils in each of his writings addressed to this topic²⁰ we should immediately be put on our guard as to the nature of this theory. The concept of action and the theory of systems which Parsons and Shils have developed purports to be descriptive. We should expect, then, that the aim of Macdonald's "curriculum-system" will be the description and explanation of a set of actions in a given context. And this is in fact the case. Like most other contemporary curriculum writers, Macdonald's prime concern is with curriculum development. This objective leads him to the formulation of concepts which will provide the person who seeks to be more effective in the school context with accurate descriptions concerning the structure of action in that context. His system will serve its purpose if predictions made from it work out regardless of the intent or content of the system of action being investigated. This is quite appropriate for empirical investigations. If it turns out that his theoretical system allows us to make accurate predictions, then we will be in a much improved position with respect to devising tactics for

planned changes in our school systems. It must be noted, however, that when Macdonald offers his definition of 'curriculum,' he is concerned not to identify 'curriculum' itself, but rather to conceptualize what people do with respect to the curriculum. This has led him to be very careful and consistent concerning his descriptions of the concept of "curriculum system," but to say rather different sorts of things about the curriculum itself. He states:

The curriculum system consists of persons who are a part of a social system which eventuates in the development of curriculum, in the sense of plans for action. The important distinction for purposes here is the boundary between curriculum and instruction. They are essentially two separate action contexts, one (curriculum), producing plans for further action and the other (instruction), putting plans into action.²¹

Several things must be noted about this statement. In the first sentence, Macdonald distinguishes between the "curriculum system" and the curriculum. Here he indicates that 'curriculum' is used in the sense of plans of action, a result of the actions of people. This must be interpreted as being different from a "curriculum system" in order to keep the definition from being hopelessly circular. This point must be made explicit because Macdonald has the annoying tendency to refer to the curriculum-system (the system of action) by either the term 'curriculum-system' or 'curriculum.' This tendency is illustrated by the last part of the statement where he says that the curriculum is an "action context." Elsewhere in each of his articles he

indicates that curriculum is the output of action-systems, but he also refers to the action-systems themselves as the 'curriculum.' This failure to consistently employ terms as they have been defined has led Johnson to wonder just what the curriculum is. He states that he "finds it difficult to identify the curriculum itself, either as or in the system. Surely curriculum does not consist of people."²² At least with respect to this one statement by Macdonald, we can furnish a consistent interpretation merely by reading "curriculum-system" where Macdonald has written "curriculum" in the last two sentences. We can do this on the assumption that Macdonald was merely careless in his statement.

However, even if we do take care to make this Macdonald statement consistent, we are left with other problems. If we view 'curriculum' as referring only to plans of action resulting from a system of action, then we must include all plans in the curriculum, ranging from the plans made by those devising a national curriculum to those made by the teacher in the classroom to meet some spur-of-the-moment situation. Hence, while Macdonald's scheme has the virtue of separating 'curriculum' from 'instruction,' it seems to include items which might better be excluded from the realm of 'curriculum.' As we have previously noted, it is necessary for us to distinguish between a teacher who implements the curriculum and one who fails to do so.

However, under Macdonald's conception, the mental plan formulated by a teacher in the classroom is at least a part of the curriculum. This means that the only way in which that teacher could fail to implement that part of the curriculum would be by failing to act on those plans. Yet when we say of a teacher that he failed to implement the curriculum, we would normally be taken to be saying something quite different, i.e., that the teacher did not follow the plan established for the school. In other words, the teacher did not do what he had an obligation to do.²³

Earlier we suggested that we could make Macdonald's conception of curriculum consistent by replacing 'curriculum' with 'curriculum-system' wherever the word 'curriculum' is used to refer to actions. We may do this without doing violence to Macdonald's ideas so long as we have good reason to believe that this is in line with his intent and that he would agree with our substitution. We have, on this assumption, attempted to hold the original definition of 'curriculum' as a plan for action, an output of the curriculum-system of action.

Other statements of Macdonald's position throw our assumption in doubt. After indicating that the curriculum is partially influenced by each of the sub-systems of the school (the administrative, curriculum development, personality, and instructional), he states that "the

concrete embodiment of the curriculum is the artificially constructed environment within which schooling takes place."²⁴ He then indicates that the environment is composed of the unique mixture of personalities, and social values, their interaction patterns, their unique use of time, space, and so forth. Further, he indicates that curriculum planning is the construction of the contrived environment. Now, there is a great deal of difference between a plan and an environment. In addition, Macdonald's description of the composition of this environment corresponds closely to his description of the action-system of the school. Hence, in the various conceptualizations of 'curriculum' we have come full circle. We must, therefore, agree that we cannot identify the curriculum.

Our analysis in this chapter has been focused upon various conceptions of curriculum which have been presented by curriculum experts as alternatives to the subjective "experience" definitions. We found that the authors of these definitions have apparently recognized that if 'curriculum' is defined in terms of the experiences of students, then the concept is of little significance to those who are concerned with teaching and learning. In an effort to formulate the concept so that it would be relevant to attempts to better the processes of schooling, these writers have defined curriculum in terms of the acts of educators or in terms of interaction systems within the

school. While these definitions have managed to avoid some of the pitfalls found to exist in the "experience" definitions, they were found to suffer from other serious flaws.

Those definitions which were stated in terms of actions were found to lack any criteria for stating a proper description of a "curriculum action." It was found that since there are several ways in which the "same" action might be described, we are unable to know (1) how to properly describe a curriculum act, and therefore (2) how to differentiate between an act and its consequences.

We also noted that those definitions of curriculum which are couched in terms of actions seem to serve no useful purpose. There are already available a range of terms--verbs, such as 'teaching,' 'lecturing,' 'demonstrating'--which have predefinitional usages which apparently refer to the same actions indicated by the curriculum-action definitions. This renders these definitions of curriculum both superfluous and confusing.

None of the definitions examined in this chapter were found to imply any prescriptive force for those who are involved in the educational process. Hence, according to these concepts, "to have a curriculum" would be to "possess a description of the acts which those involved in schooling have done." While such information could be valuable in terms of making predictions concerning future acts, it does not provide prescriptive principles by which

future acts of educators might be guided. Such conceptions which function in a purely descriptive manner fail to provide the grounds of obligation necessary for the appropriate organization of action in a task-oriented institution which is marked by a division of labor.

We found also that no writer whose conception of curriculum we analyzed in this chapter (with the exception of Macdonald) distinguished between his concept of 'curriculum' and other fundamental terms in educational discourse, such as teaching, instructing, and educating. Duncan and Frymier, for example, used 'curriculum' to refer to actors, artifacts, and operations. Their definition of this term corresponds closely to many aspects of the predefinitional usage of 'instruction.' Hence, 'curriculum' as used by them serves no useful purpose and has been definitionally prohibited from carrying out its predefinitional functions. Ryans' information-systems approach was found to be much too narrowly focused to allow for even the usual sorts of curricular concerns.

Of all of the writers examined, only Macdonald has seen the necessity of specifically defining and relating various educational concepts. His overriding concern with curriculum development, however, led him to pay insufficient attention to the identification of the curriculum itself within the "curriculum development system." This has led him to say things about the curriculum which are either circular or contradictory.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study began with an examination of the standard usage of the concept of curriculum. Our analysis showed that this usage functions adequately for many of our ordinary concerns which require us to make only gross distinctions. However, we also found that when our interests led us to make more precise distinctions, the standard usage fails on a number of grounds. We then turned our attention to the various sorts of conceptions of curriculum found in the writings of curriculum experts. We have then, in the course of the preceding chapters, given our critical attention to the major concepts of curriculum which are currently the coinage of the realm of educational discourse. And, without exception, we have found these conceptions to be inadequate in that they fail to provide educators with a clear and precise concept which will facilitate clear and rigorous thinking on a certain range of educational matters.

In this final chapter we shall review the major features of our criticisms of the definitions given by the curriculum experts with the aim of making explicit certain criteria which we have argued should be met by a more adequate concept of curriculum. Then we will return to the

standard usage of 'curriculum' to see if it can provide us with directions which could prove fruitful in the formulation of a more adequate concept.

We have noted that the men who are known as experts in the field of curriculum are, in the main, men who are not much concerned to study curriculum itself in order to see what it is and how it functions. Rather, they are concerned with the making of relatively large-scale improvements in the conduct of schooling. While the curriculum experts had traditionally focused their energies on the production of written documents which would serve to guide instruction, the failure of these guides to improve schooling to any great extent led to a rather wide-spread disillusionment with curriculum in these terms. Educational practitioners, including the curriculum experts, began to think that if these guides did not produce better education, then there must be something wrong with the manner in which they had been conceiving of curriculum.¹ Thereupon followed a period which has continued to the present, a period of continuing attempts to redefine 'curriculum' in such a manner that the building of a good curriculum would be effective in bringing about better schools. Apparently the disenchantment with the written guides was quite strong since they have been almost completely left out of the newer formulations. Instead, as we have seen, curriculum has been variously defined in terms of experiences, the

acts of educators, and in terms of various "systems" of behavior.

It seems remarkable, however, that until very recently those who gave "new" definitions to 'curriculum' did not see fit to redefine any of the other terms which are basic to educational discourse. The new definitions were stated in terms which made them indistinguishable from 'teaching,' 'schooling,' 'communicating,' and the like. The result in each case, as we have seen, is a morass of overlapping terminology which has served to seriously confuse rather than to clarify educational thought and discourse. If a new definition is proposed which refers to things already referred to by the standard usage of some other term or terms, then it would be wise to redefine those other terms in such a way that each may refer to a separate and distinct domain. In addition, it is necessary to state the relationships which would obtain among the terms in the new vocabulary as well as to indicate how they will relate to terms which have retained their common usages.²

A further consideration which the authors of the "new" definitions of curriculum failed to take into account is that the standard use of 'curriculum' performed several valuable functions which, under the newer definitions, could no longer be performed. Hence, under the new definitions, 'curriculum' could not be used as a standard by

which to judge whether specific instances of teaching are incomplete, or not sufficiently comprehensive, or inappropriate to what other teachers have been or will be doing. Yet these are precisely some of the distinctions which the standard usage of 'curriculum' enables us to make.

Other functions which the standard usage of the term 'curriculum' performed which have been ruled out by the newer definitions include distinguishing between a plan and the act of planning, and, concerning the plans themselves, distinguishing between the plan of a program and the plan for carrying out the program in a specific context. We have argued that these distinctions are quite important in an institution which has been, almost daily, becoming more complex and more and more marked by a division of labor. Therefore, our analysis suggests that if one is to stipulate a new usage for 'curriculum,' then care must be taken to provide the means for making the distinctions which the predefinitional usage allowed.

It has also been noted that many of these new definitions advanced by the curriculum writers are programmatic as well as stipulative. We have argued that definitions of key educational terms should reduce, insofar as it is possible, the programmatic aspects. If curriculum writers take care to redefine other important educational terms as we have suggested above, at least part of this problem could be avoided. In addition, where there is some

unavoidable programmatic function performed by a definition, then, in the interest of intellectual honesty, the writer should make explicit just what practical matters are at stake when the proposed definition is used. After all, a definition which functions programmatically must be evaluated by an examination of the relative merits of the program itself. Hence, it would seem reasonable to expect our writers to accept the obligation to state precisely what it is that their definitions recommend.³

Another pervasive criticism has been leveled at the various definitions of curriculum which have been given by curriculum writers. We have indicated that in each case 'curriculum' has been conceived in a manner which makes it logically impossible for any curriculum to function prescriptively for the people engaged in schooling. In each case the definitions have been couched in terms of events or actions or experiences which have already happened. That is, 'curriculum' refers to de facto events, and, presumably, a curriculum theory would be descriptive of those events. However, we have argued that it is crucial that 'curriculum' be defined in such a way as to allow it to function prescriptively with regard to the acts of educators. Perhaps more than any other educational term, 'curriculum' in its standard usage enables us to see what a school intends to do in order to realize its purposes, as distinct from what the individuals within the school

separately intend to do about their purposes.⁴ While accounts of past events in a school may lead us to be in a better position to predict future events of a similar kind, these descriptive accounts do not indicate what events should occur.

Having reviewed the critical aspects of this study, it will be appropriate to conclude the study with a re-examination of the standard usage of 'curriculum' as a vehicle for finding suggestions for the conduct of future studies aimed at the construction of a more defensible and fruitful concept of curriculum.

In ordinary discourse 'curriculum' is used to indicate that a school or department does or does not have a particular program. Similarly, we may use the term to differentiate between programs which are designed to serve quite different educational functions, such as the "Engineering curriculum" and the "Liberal Arts curriculum." When the term is used in these standard ways it refers specifically to a "program," a group of courses a school offers which purports to promote the achievement of some educational objective for the student who successfully completes it. If, however, a school does not have some specific curriculum, an art curriculum, for example, this cannot be taken to mean that the school does not offer courses in that field. Rather, it signifies that even though the school may offer courses in that field, those courses cannot be considered to constitute a program.



We distinguish between a collection or aggregation of courses and a curriculum by noting that the courses offered in a curriculum are organized in such a fashion that they are thought to be instrumental to the realization of some announced purpose, whereas a mere collection of courses has no announced purpose⁵ and is, therefore, not intentionally instrumental in the accomplishment of a specific educational end. This is not to say that a student who elects to take a collection of courses in a field in which there is no curriculum cannot accomplish the same end as the student who is enrolled in a curriculum in that field at another school. A student might, for example, come to a college hoping to learn a great deal about art. The college in which he enrolls offers courses in art but does not have an art curriculum. Through his experiences and study in the art classes which he chooses to take, the student could become an accomplished artist. Of course, it is also possible that he could have become an artist without ever going to college and taking courses. This indicates that we cannot distinguish between a curriculum and a collection of courses on the grounds of what is in fact taught, since it is possible that the same things could be taught in a collection as could be taught in a curriculum. This, of course, raises the question of how does having a curriculum (in the standard sense) function differently from not having one. We may better see what

is involved here if we compare the problems of a student who takes a collection of courses with one who enrolls in and follows a curriculum.

First, the student who takes the courses from some collection offered (non-curricular) will lack authoritative guidance in making decisions concerning which courses to take and what sequence to take them in. He will normally be described as "electing" to take the course which he takes. The basis for his election of courses may be of any sort whatever: advice from experts in the field or from people who know nothing of the field, personal prejudices, intuitive awareness, mere personal whim, or chance. While advice of experts would normally be considered as "authoritative," our student might be in no position to tell an expert from a layman with strong opinions. Hence, the student's selections will depend upon his estimation of what he should take.

On the other hand, the student who enrolls in a curriculum in that field will be guided in his progress through that field by some publicly stated system of required courses, prerequisites, and, perhaps, electives which have been designed to "fit together" in a way that is intended to be instrumental in helping the student reach the stated goal of that curriculum.⁶

The student who takes courses in a field which does not have a curriculum has no assurance that courses in

that field will continue to be offered. Since there is no over-all goal to which the courses contribute, then there is no reason other than instructor choice, or perhaps student demand, for any particular course being offered.

However, when a school or department announces that it has a certain curriculum in which students may enroll, the curriculum then functions something like a promise in that it assures the student that some combination of courses which purport to meet the stated objective will be offered over a period of time of sufficient duration to allow the student to achieve his objective if he progresses through the curriculum normally.⁷

From the standpoint of the faculty, if there is no curriculum, then it may teach whatever they choose. The school or department has given no commitment to offer anything in particular if it does not have a curriculum, even though the instructors may be required to teach in order to draw their salaries. On the other hand, if a department does offer a curriculum, then the matter of what courses will be taught (after the curriculum has been decided) is not a matter of mere personal preference on the part of the instructors in that department. For example, if a department offers a curriculum, then it must be sure to offer the courses prescribed by the curriculum. In most cases the department will also be concerned to offer the curricular courses in some sequence. When there is a

curriculum, then there is good reason for taking care to know what is taught in each course so that the things taught may build upon and complement each other.

Our standard usage, then, seems to suggest that where there is a curriculum, then the behavior of those involved (both students and instructors) becomes in some sense non-optional. The curriculum is prescriptive with regard to some range of behavior within schools. One who follows a curriculum, whether student or teacher, is acting according to some rule of behavior which the curriculum prescribes. For a student, to enroll in a curriculum is to come to have an obligation, an obligation to obey the curricular rules. To follow a curriculum is, then, to act in conformity with or obedience to the curricular rules. This applies to both those who teach and those who would learn.

There are, however, different ways of being obligated not all of which are appropriate to the standard way in which we use the term 'curriculum.' For example, a teacher might threaten a student with a beating if he did not take a particular course. It would seem quite proper to describe this student as being obliged to take that course. If the teacher continued to similarly coerce the student into taking all of the courses which the teacher deemed necessary for the student to take in order to become competent in the field, we would appropriately say of the student that he was obliged to take those courses.

We would hesitate, however, to say that he followed the curriculum. Similarly, there are situations where a school official orders a teacher to stop teaching a certain thing or to teach it in a different manner. However, these simple face-to-face situations do not reflect the standard way in which the curriculum functions, if for no other reason than that no school system could afford the number of school officials necessary to insure that every member of the school was officially and separately informed of every act which he was required to do.

It would seem, therefore, that the standard form of a curriculum statement is that of giving a general direction. These general directions do not name and are not even addressed to particular individuals, nor do they even seem to indicate a particular act to be done. Rather, the standard form of a curriculum statement indicates a general type of conduct, and applies to a general class of persons who are expected to see that it applies to them and to comply with it. The individual who follows or implements a curriculum would be described not as being obliged, but more accurately, as having an obligation or as accepting an obligation.⁸

What we are suggesting here is that curriculum statements are typically analogous to standing orders which are to be followed time after time. They would, therefore, have a relatively persistent and settled character and

would not be intended to obligate the individuals involved for merely a single occasion.

While the foregoing seems to be involved in our standard usage of 'curriculum,' there are, as we have seen, important points at which the standard usage fails to be sufficiently precise. We have held that these points must be examined and the usage of 'curriculum' clarified in order for the term to function adequately in educational discourse.

One area in which we encountered difficulty was related to the vagueness and ambiguity of the terms 'course,' 'subject matter,' and 'methods of instruction' in terms of which the concept of curriculum is often defined. If 'curriculum' is to be defined in these terms, then they must be analyzed and stated in such a fashion that their clear reference to the intent of the school is evident. As we have seen, such notions are often conceived in terms of what has been done rather than what should be done.

A second problem which we encountered when we attempted to add precision to the standard usage was that the line between 'teaching' and 'curriculum' became blurred and we found a large area of overlapping usage. Specifically this indicates that any attempt to formulate a fruitful concept of curriculum must address the problems involved in determining how the acceptance of an obligation to follow curricular prescriptions affects the act

of teaching. In what sense does the freedom to teach as one chooses become non-optional? Similarly, it must be determined how curricular obligations affect the selection of the subject matter to be taught. Fundamentally, a cogent and fruitful conception of the curriculum must come to grips with the problem of how the demands for organization and order in a task-oriented corporate institution are related to the requirements of academic freedom for both instructor and student.

Another problem encountered as we examined the standard usage of 'curriculum' stems from the overlapping usages of basic educational terms as has been indicated above. A more adequate and justifiable concept of curriculum must make clear the grounds upon which a curriculum should be evaluated. Nearly all modern attempts to evaluate curricula have used some measure of student learning of the relevant subject matter as the measure of success for a given curriculum. Since most of the definitions of curriculum which we have examined have confused 'curriculum' with 'teaching,' or have, as in the case of the "experience" definitions, simply ignored teaching and learning in their relationship to "curricular experiences," we may understand this tendency. However, our understanding of how a conceptual confusion has led to confused evaluations neither justifies those confused evaluations nor does it specifically tell us what should be done. Our

analysis has, however, at least pointed out the nature of the confusion and has indicated some of the problems which must be addressed in order to eliminate it. While it seems sensible, for example, to assess the success of teaching by examining the extent to which students have learned what they have been taught, it seems that we would make a fundamental mistake if we were to assess a curriculum solely on the grounds of what students have learned while following a curriculum. There are several reasons for this and they are reviewed here in order to further clarify the tasks which confront anyone who would construct a more adequate conception of curriculum.

A school adopts a curriculum in order to provide principles which, if obeyed, will coordinate the acts of the several teachers in a manner which is believed to be likely to facilitate the realization of the stated goals of that school. Teaching is adopted as a primary way in which the curriculum is implemented. However, it has been made clear that a given instance of teaching may or may not implement the curriculum. That is, a teacher may decide to ignore his obligation to follow curricular prescriptions. If teachers ignore the curriculum in their teaching, then an assessment of student learning would not be likely to tell us anything about the curriculum. Or, it seems quite possible for a teacher to choose to implement the curriculum but, due to some professional

inadequacy, he might teach poorly. This teacher might, for example, explain some concept prescribed by the curriculum, but give an illogical explanation. Hence, even if teachers did follow the curriculum, the students might generally fail to learn. The reason for their failure could be found to lie with the teaching and not the curriculum.⁹ Additionally, it seems clear that there are other factors which could result in a failure to learn even where the curriculum was faithfully implemented by skillful teaching. Students might lack sufficient intelligence, or the school might fail to provide appropriate teaching materials or conditions, and these deficiencies could be responsible for the failure of the students to achieve the objectives of the school. Hence, we would have to be assured that the curriculum was in fact being implemented by teachers who were teaching well in a school setting in which appropriate conditions and teaching materials were made readily available, etc., before we could legitimately assess the curriculum in terms of student achievement of the goals of the school.

Further, we have noted several times that standard usage permits us to speak of a curriculum which has been designed for a school which has not yet opened. This suggests that there may be other grounds (other than student achievement) upon which a curriculum may be evaluated, since it is quite likely that we would wish

to maintain that it is possible for such a curriculum to be better or worse than other such curricula. Surely an effort to construct a more fruitful concept of curriculum would have to deal with this possibility and determine appropriate standards for the evaluation of a curriculum in terms of its own internal structure and components in addition to criteria of pragmatic effectiveness.

The distinctions which we have suggested are necessary if educators are to locate specifically the various strengths and weaknesses of the schools and if they are to have the conceptual means necessary for analysis and solution.

NOTES

NOTES

CHAPTER I

¹It is important to recognize that while educators might describe a curriculum in all of the ways mentioned above or might engage in all of the activities suggested, they could also be known to be describing, developing or revising a curriculum if they were to be engaged in only some of these. For example, it is not uncommon for a college curriculum to be revised by merely renaming and/or renumbering the courses which are already offered, or by changing the position of a single course within a sequence of courses.

²More specifically, the methods employed in this study are those of "informal" or "ordinary language" analysis. This mode of analysis holds that the meaning of words is found in the conventions governing their use. Hence, these analytical techniques involve examining the various actual and possible uses of terms and expressions and noting in which contexts and combinations they make sense. Informal analysis assumes that the best guide to the meaningful use of a word or expression is its standard use in ordinary language. The primary aim of ordinary language analysis is the clarification of thinking through the examination of the logical features of the words and expressions in which this thinking is expressed.

NOTES

CHAPTER II

¹Albert Lynd, Quackery in the Public Schools (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1950), pp. 136-166.

²James B. Conant, The American High School Today (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959), p. 47.

³It should be noted that we could equally well describe each of these sets as being a different course in American History since each teacher teaches some subject matter not taught by all other teachers of the subject. This use of the concept of course sometimes appears in contexts where a student inquires into the nature of a particular course. A common response to such a query is that "it all depends on who you take it from. Teacher₃ really teaches a different course from Teacher₁." While this is an understandable and sometimes useful way of speaking about courses, it is subject to the same difficulties which will be noted for the conception indicated above. Hence, it will not be analyzed separately.

⁴This last possibility has been most fully developed in the work of B. Othanel Smith at the University of Illinois and has been explained in various publications and addresses. See for example, B. O. Smith, "A Conceptual Analysis of Instructional Behavior," The Journal of Teacher Education, XIV, No. 3 (September, 1963), 294-298.

⁵The problems of assessing the propriety of any particular set of stated purposes and of inquiring into the proper methods of arriving at, justifying or establishing educational purposes are beyond the scope of this study. We are only concerned to assert that education does have purposes; i.e., that it is logically contradictory to claim that we are educating but that we have no purpose.

⁶Myron Lieberman, The Future of Public Education (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 17.

⁷It is quite possible that the teachers might all be committed to some particular political ideology and derive the principles of right conduct to be taught from that ideology, e.g., fascist, communist, classical liberal. If all were committed to the same ideology, then instruction would amount to the attempt to indoctrinate, while if they were each committed to different ideologies, the effect of instruction could well be confusion. Hence, in one class studnets might be taught that one principle of right conduct is that of placing the welfare of others prior to one's own self-interest. In the next class the students might be taught that each person should live for himself first and that the object of any interpersonal relation should be to gain some private advantage.

⁸The use of this particular concept of critical thinking and the identification of certain subjects as "skill" subjects that are unrelated to the teaching of critical thinking should in no way be construed to indicate that the writer agrees that either the conception of thinking or the characterization of these subjects is adequate, appropriate or fruitful for education. They do not constitute a covert recommendation.

⁹It is interesting to note that while we have been addressing ourselves to one possible concept of curriculum, most people would argue that the school which we have pictured does not have a curriculum at all. This suggests that in terms of common usage, this conception fails in at least some important regard. This problem will be addressed specifically later in the analysis.

¹⁰There are additional problems in the formulation of a workable "conventionality criterion" such as determining how long some bit of content must be taught and how many teachers must have taught it before it could be considered conventional.

NOTES

CHAPTER III

¹Ronald C. Doll, Curriculum Improvement: Decision-Making and Process (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1964), p. 15.

²Doll's claim that "experience" definitions of 'curriculum' are commonly accepted is supported in the writings of many authors in the field of curriculum. For example, Vernon E. Anderson states that "the definition of curriculum in terms of pupil experiences under the guidance of the school is a point of view which has generally been accepted in the professional literature on curriculum since . . . 1935." (Principles and Procedures of Curriculum Improvement [2d ed.; New York: The Ronald Press, 1965], pp. 5-6.)

³Our point here does not demand that we hold that experience is merely subjective. All that we are concerned to show is that some subjective reference is a necessary condition for anything to count as an experience.

⁴John Dewey, Experience and Education (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), pp. 16-17. (*Italics mine.*)

⁵Ibid., pp. 41-42.

⁶Ibid., p. 43.

⁷Israel Scheffler, The Language of Education (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1960), p. 23.

⁸Ibid., p. 24.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 24-25.

¹¹In making this point concerning programmatic definitions in connection with the definition offered by Doll, the writer is not suggesting either that Doll is the lone curriculum author who uses this kind of definition or that the definition which he states is the most outstanding example. As we shall see later, many of the

'experience' definitions are of the programmatic type and, additionally, that there are many which go far beyond Doll's in the programs which they implicitly recommend.

¹²Doll, p. 15.

¹³Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁴See, for example, O. I. Frederick, "Curriculum Development," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, ed. W. S. Monroe (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1941). Frederick states that "in recent educational literature and in this report the school curriculum is considered to be all the actual experiences of the pupils under the influence of the school. From this point of view each pupil's curriculum is to some extent different from that of every other pupil."

¹⁵We might hesitate to call an institution where no teaching ever occurred a 'school.' However, it seems quite possible for us to apply the concept of school to a situation where there is temporarily no teaching occurring. Such an occasion might arise if the teachers in a school were suddenly to leave their rooms for a period of time to protest or to attend an emergency meeting. Under these circumstances, no teaching would be occurring, yet children would continue to be in the school and would continue to have experiences which would, by definition, be considered part of the curriculum.

¹⁶John Hanson, in his article on "Learning by Experience" (Language and Concepts in Education, ed. B. O. Smith and Robert H. Ennis [Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1961], pp. 1-23), analyzes the ambiguities in that expression.

¹⁷Scheffler, pp. 23-24.

¹⁸John I. Goodlad, School, Curriculum, and the Individual (Waltham, Mass.: Blaisdell Publishing Co., 1966), pp. 127-128.

¹⁹Scheffler, p. 24.

²⁰While Scheffler notes that his "programmatic definitions" differ from the "persuasive definitions" described by C. L. Stevenson (Ethics and Language [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944], Chap. IX), we are holding that, as found in the literature of curriculum, programmatic definitions are amenable to the same criticisms which may be leveled against persuasive definitions. Richard Robinson, for example, argues that a persuasive definition should

not be used because it "is at best a mistake and at worst a lie, because it consists in getting someone to alter his valuations under the false impression that he is not altering his valuations but correcting his knowledge of the facts." (Definition [Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1954], p. 170).

²¹Paul M. Halverson, "The Meaning of Balance," Balance in the Curriculum, 1961 Yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (Washington, D.C.: The Association, NEA, 1961), p. 10. (Italics mine.)

²²The Work of the Curriculum Coordinator (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1955), p. 2.

²³See for example, J. Minor Gwynn, Curriculum Principles and Social Trends (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), p. 240.

²⁴Doll, p. 15.

²⁵Halverson, p. 11.

²⁶Halverson's argument is not unique. Rather, it has been selected for analysis because it is representative of the arguments put forth by those who seek to justify the "experience" definitions which they put forth.

²⁷Gwynn, p. 240. (Italics mine.)

²⁸Anderson, p. 4.

²⁹Mauritz Johnson, Jr., "Definitions and Models in Curriculum Theory," Educational Theory, Vol. XVII (April, 1967), p. 127.

³⁰Robert Beck, Walter Cook, and Nolan Kearney, Curriculum in the Modern Elementary School (2d ed.; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1960), p. 1. (Italics mine.)

³¹Ibid.

³²W. Ray Rucker, Curriculum Development in the Elementary School (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), p. 3.

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CHAPTER IV

¹Gerald R. Firth, "Youth Education: A Curricular Perspective," Youth Education: Problems/ Perspectives/ Promises, 1968 Yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (Washington, D.C.: The Association, NEA, 1968), p. 87.

²Albert I. Oliver, Curriculum Improvement: A Guide to Problems, Principles, and Practices (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1965), p. 12.

³J. Galen Saylor and William M. Alexander, Curriculum Planning for Better Teaching and Learning (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1954), p. 4.

⁴Edward A. Krug, et al., Administering Curriculum Planning (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 4.

⁵The task of explicitly stating criteria for proper curriculum descriptions is important to any theory of curriculum. It is, however, of special significance for those who state the theory in terms of acts and which purport to evaluate in terms of the consequences of those acts.

⁶Marshall C. Jameson and William Vernon Hicks, Elementary School Curriculum: From Theory to Practice (New York: American Book Company, 1960), p. 39.

⁷Scheffler, p. 15.

⁸This is the same sort of criticism which was leveled at the conception of curriculum that was stated in terms of that which has been taught (Chapter II, pp. 7-13). There is however, a fundamental difference to be noted. The conception analyzed earlier was couched in terms of subject matter and, as such related to that which teachers taught. The conception currently under analysis refers to any act by any agent of the school which is intended to implement the aims of the school. Both conceptions, however, suffer from the common defect that they are both descriptive. The standard usages perform clearly prescriptive functions. Yet those who offer these descriptive conceptions fail to

offer any substitute for this prescriptive function. Hence, if schools were to adopt either of these conceptions, they would be left without prescriptive organizing principles.

⁹David G. Ryans, "A Model of Instruction Based on Information Systems Concepts," Theories of Instruction, James B. Macdonald and Robert L. Leeper, eds. (Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1965), pp. 36-61.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 41.

¹¹This point has been made directly concerning a theory of instruction by Jerome S. Bruner, Toward a Theory of Instruction (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 39-72.

¹²James K. Duncan and Jack R. Frymier, "Explorations in the Systematic Study of Curriculum," Theory Into Practice, Vol. VI, No. 4 (October, 1967), pp. 180-199.

¹³Ibid., p. 180.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 181.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷James B. Macdonald, "Educational Models for Instruction," Theories of Instruction, James B. Macdonald and Robert R. Leeper, eds. (Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1965), pp. 2-3.

¹⁸Talcott Parsons, The Social System (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1950).

¹⁹Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils, Toward a General Theory of Action (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952).

²⁰In addition to the article by Macdonald in Theories of Instruction cited above, the same view has been stated by Macdonald in "An Example of Disciplined Curriculum Thinking," Theory Into Practice, Vol. VI, No. 4 (October, 1967), pp. 166-171, and in "Structures in Curriculum," Report of the Conference on Curriculum Leadership (Madison, Wisc.: Department of Public Instruction, 1966), pp. 28-46.

²¹Macdonald, Report of the Conference . . . , p. 29. A nearly identical statement by Macdonald appears in his article in Theories of Instruction, pp. 2-4.

²²Johnson, Educational Theory, Vol. XVII, No. 2 (April, 1967), p. 129.

²³This same point may be made with respect to the "curriculum-systems" concept. If we follow Macdonald's formulation, then we would have to admit that while the teacher is engaged in that activity of planning what to do, then that planning would fall within the "curriculum-systems" concept and we would describe the teacher as engaged in curriculum planning. This seems to confuse the issue since we would commonly hold that the teacher, in making such decisions about teaching, should "follow the curriculum."

²⁴Macdonald, Theory Into Practice, Vol. VI, No. 4 (October, 1967), p. 171.

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CHAPTER V

¹It should, perhaps, be noted that educators have for decades been subject to a pervasive belief in the magical powers of various schemes for improving the educative process. There is a tendency among educators to believe that some new teaching method or organizational plan will automatically usher in the long sought-after educational millennium. Beliefs about the curriculum have been no exception. It is our claim, however, that while a good curriculum may be a necessary condition for good schooling, it is not a sufficient condition. A good curriculum will not cause good teaching, appropriate working conditions, and dedicated students. Yet so powerful is the belief of the educator in curricular magic that when the Good School fails to materialize after expenditures of time and resources in the building of a curriculum, he feels that he has given his allegiance to a false god.

²Surprisingly, of the works which we have examined in this study, only Macdonald's reflects an attempt to systematically relate a special use of 'curriculum' with other key terms.

³We have made this point with regard to stipulative definitions which also function programmatically because all of the "expert" definitions which we have examined have been non-inventive stipulations. However, we would urge that the same course be followed if a proposed definition of curriculum were descriptive-programmatic. Such a case would likely arise if the new definition purported to accord with prior usage, but only with some aspect of the predefinitional usage. Since the predefinitional usage of 'curriculum' is both vague and ambiguous, it is quite possible that a new descriptive definition will rule one way rather than another with regard to certain borderline cases. In that event the ruling could function programmatically. Following our argument, then, the writer should assume the obligation to make explicit the programmatic point involved.

⁴We are here adopting the view that it is possible to assert that a school acts without this statement being reducible to statements about the actions of the individual educators involved. Gerald M. Reagan has argued this same point with specific reference to the act of teaching. He shows that 'teaching' may refer to either the acts of individual teachers or to the act of the corporate institution, the school. See, "Do Institutions Teach?" Proceedings of the Twenty-first Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society (Lawrence, Kans.: The Society, 1965), pp. 75-79, "Toward a More Justifiable Theory for the Evaluation of Teachers and Teaching" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, College of Education, Michigan State University, 1964).

⁵Of course each course in a collection will have intended goals. The point here is that the collection itself has no intended goal. Each course, therefore, may be designed to meet some particular interest without regard for whether or not what is taught in one course will "fit" with other courses in that field. Such non-curricular courses need not be concerned to systematically build upon knowledge taught in other courses in the field or to teach knowledge upon which later courses in the field may proceed. Typically, non-curricular courses will not require other courses as prerequisites for enrollment.

⁶A curriculum might actually make it harder for a student to reach the goal, but that it is not normally the intent. If we did find that some curriculum actually did make it more difficult to obtain the stated goal than it otherwise would have been or if large numbers of students failed to reach the goal after going through the curriculum, then this could be grounds for assessing that curriculum as inefficient or ineffective. It would not, however, constitute grounds for saying that it was not a curriculum at all.

⁷Like ordinary promises, these "curricular promises" may be broken. Lack of sufficient funds, students, qualified instructors, etc., are often given as reasons for dropping a particular curriculum. The point here is that the school intends to offer some sequence of courses.

⁸Official face-to-face directions may have a secondary place in the curriculum. If the primary general directions are not obeyed by a particular individual, officials may draw his attention to them and even demand compliance.

⁹This situation is analogous in several respects to the automobile driver who knows the rules of the road and tries to follow them faithfully. However, his lack of skill in performing the operations of driving cause him to have an accident. The fact that he failed to drive successfully does not mean that the rules of the road are poor or inappropriate. Similarly, the lack of skill of teachers in performing the various acts of teaching can not be used to indicate that a curriculum is poor or inappropriate.

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