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Curriculum Development in Historical Perspective

Curriculum development is both timeless and context dependent. As a process, curriculum development is a contribution by the curriculum field that has stretched into all aspects of university life and indeed culture generally. Curriculum development is timeless because it deals with how to take knowledge of any kind and connect it with a group of students located in time and space. As long as there exist institutions for the purpose of schooling, the practice of curriculum development, in some form or another, will persist. Although meanings for curriculum development have shifted during the past 90 years, the idea that curriculum development implies the preparation and transmission of knowledge within an institution whose purpose is to educate has remained consistent.

I have focused this chapter primarily on curriculum development as it developed and grew in the United States. I recognize that the United States is not the only nation in which curriculum development has a notable history. At the same time, however, focusing on the United States makes sense because of the powerful role that America played in the creation of curriculum development. I have, however, connected the United States story, when appropriate, to major thinkers from other countries.

This chapter has three purposes. First, I will discuss how curriculum development was born in the United States within the context of the early years of the curriculum field. Next, I will discuss three classic works from the history of curriculum development: Ralph Tyler's (1949) *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*, B. Othaniel Smith, William O. Stanley, and J. Harlan Shores' *Fundamentals of Curriculum Development* (1950), and Hilda Taba's (1962) *Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice*. These three books are by no means the only works that matter to the history of curriculum development. They do, however, represent three of the most significant markers in the field. They provide significant insight into what curriculum development is all about, and they are representative of the many hundreds of curriculum development books that were published during the 20th century. The framework for this chapter derives from these three works, but readers should recognize that many other significant figures, from both the United States and elsewhere, could have been used to serve as the foundation for this chapter. Finally, I will explore how curriculum development has been challenged by curriculum theory during the late 20th century. I will conclude with some reflections on the future of curriculum development.

The Founding of the Curriculum Field and the Idea of Curriculum Development

The curriculum field came into existence when the modern techniques of control, measurement, and planning were all the rage in fields across the academic spectrum—including political science, sociology, and the natural sciences (M. Smith, 1994). John Franklin Bobbitt and W. W. Charters were nothing if not creatures of the age in which they lived. They could have rejected the scientism that dominated American culture, but such a choice would have kept them from producing works that impacted American society.

The idea of curriculum as a focused field, therefore, came about at the same time that modern science grew to prominence. Individuals interested in topics such as why to educate, the metaphysical purpose of schooling, or the relationship between moral and intellectual dimensions of curriculum could discuss ultimate ends and ideals, but the figures who were to shape American education had to present their work in the language of science. This meant
conducting empirical studies that reported objective results. Curriculum had to follow this larger pattern. During this time, political philosophy took a backseat to empirical political science, the classic moral philosophies of Plato and Aristotle were set aside to make way for moderns like John Locke and Bertrand Russell, and the curriculum field drew upon Bobbitt and Herbert Spencer instead of Aristotle and John Amos Comenius.

In his *The Curriculum*, published in 1918, Bobbitt does not mention or use the phrase curriculum development. He discusses curriculum making, educational experiences, and occupational efficiency at length, but he does not discuss a practice that he specifically labels curriculum development. We should be careful to note that Bobbitt was a professor of educational administration when he published *The Curriculum*. He was not a professor of curriculum. Bobbitt was an authority on educational administration whose specialty was making systems more efficient. Curriculum, to Bobbitt, was just another process like textbook ordering and plant management. We also should recognize that Bobbitt's field of educational administration grew out of a combination of political science, economics, and philosophy. As a result, Bobbitt, when he wrote *The Curriculum*, was part political scientist, part economist, part education expert, and even part philosopher. This genealogy matters for three reasons. First, curriculum and curriculum development have been interdisciplinary endeavors from the beginning. Second, Bobbitt's background demonstrates that curriculum must, can, and should change as the fields of political science, economics, and philosophy change. Third, and finally, Bobbitt's interdisciplinary approach matters because it indicates that political science, economics, and educational administration are inadequate—by themselves—to address the theory and practice of curriculum development.

In his second major contribution to the curriculum field, *How to Make a Curriculum*, Bobbitt (1924), expands on his earlier work and provides more specifics on curriculum making. As in his first book, the phrase curriculum development cannot be found in *How to Make a Curriculum*, but curriculum advancement, curriculum making, and simply development all hold a prominent place. The implicit social dimension of curriculum is evident throughout *How to Make a Curriculum*. Bobbitt predicated his discussion of curriculum making on the need for educational institutions to be in tune with the needs of society. This process of activity analysis, or the practice of looking at what Americans do each day to determine school objectives, was central to Bobbitt's approach to curriculum making. Once these activities had been catalogued, a curriculum could be made that would "produce" these types of citizens.

This process of meeting society's needs through curriculum making was viewed as a major scientific contribution to American education. School principals and superintendents needed the scientific justification that Bobbitt (1918, 1924) and others like him provided. One of Bobbitt's students at the University of Chicago, Ralph Tyler, accepted this mantle of modern science. He picked up Bobbitt's project, stripped it of much of its industrial language, and gave birth to curriculum development as we know it today.

**Ralph Tyler and Curriculum Development as a Process**

Ralph Tyler was a behavioral scientist. This reality is central to understanding both how Tyler (1949) makes sense of curriculum development and how the practice of curriculum making unfolds following his influence. Curriculum theorists who adhere to the basic assumptions of behavioral science tend to agree with Tyler's conception of curriculum development.

Tyler's (1949) *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* put curriculum development on the map. In this concise text, Tyler gives curriculum development a language that is more
durable than Bobbitt's (1918, 1924). Prior to the publication of *Basic Principles*, Tyler had become well known due to his work with *The Eight Year Study*, which was designed to put to rest, once and for all, the battles that had raged since 1900 regarding progressive education. Tyler served as the study’s chief evaluator.

The well known “Tyler Rationale” that can be found in *Basic Principles* was developed as Tyler worked to establish evaluation procedures for the schools involved in the Study. To develop curriculum, Tyler (1949) argues that teachers and school administrators should answer each of the following questions:

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained? (p. 1)

These four questions were not intended to serve as a formula to be followed, but a series of steps that Tyler (1949) believed would make curriculum more effective. He did not wish for these questions to be used in a technocratic fashion, but he was providing educators with a scientific process that claimed to be value neutral. His process, moreover, was meant to be used to develop curriculum in all subjects (from mathematics to woodshop) and in all cities (from Los Angeles to Boston). Tyler aimed to put forward a process that stood above the fray from the thorny questions of purpose, morality, and ultimate ends. Teachers and administrators could use his process to achieve whatever ends they had in mind. With his four questions, Tyler is saying that curriculum development is about helping schools to achieve whatever ends they have in mind. He assumes no overarching purpose to curriculum or education.

The curriculum development process starts, according to Tyler, at the local level with the needs, interests, and goals of school leaders and the communities where they work. Once the leadership of a school has decided the school's purposes, the school community can begin to outline which “experiences” are most useful in helping students to achieve the school's goals. The influence of behavioral psychology on Tyler's thinking is most evident in this respect. He not only assumes that experiences can be “provided” to students, but he also assumes that these experiences can be “organized.” This organization ensures that students will experience the curriculum the way in which the designers want them to. Finally, Tyler calls upon curriculum makers to evaluate whether or not the experiences they provide have produced the desired effects.

Throughout *Basic Principles*, Tyler expands on these four questions to include discussion of the various sources of experience that curriculum developers should take into account. He explains, for example, that curriculum makers should draw upon the knowledge of learners, the insight of subject specialists, studies of life outside the school, philosophy, and psychology as they go about the process of curriculum development. The influence of Bobbitt can be found throughout *Basic Principles*. Bobbitt's shadow is particularly evident when Tyler discusses the need for curriculum workers to draw upon life outside the school to determine objectives. Tyler's point in emphasizing community needs is to say that schools should work to serve their immediate communities by providing solutions to the challenges that people are facing. In Tyler's (1949) words,

I would suggest that you collect sample information of several sorts. On the one
hand it might be well to draw upon your memory, your experience in a given area of life such as in your civic life, to jot down the activities that you engage in as a citizen. Also list the problems that you have encountered as a citizen. Imagine this information as being illustrative of what might be obtained from a considerable sample of adults in your community. In the light of such information, can you suggest possible objectives which are implied by these data? (p. 22)

Tyler is trying to get curriculum developers to see that future adult activities can serve as one source of curriculum objectives. Bobbitt began this task-analysis approach to curriculum work, and Tyler held onto it while at the same time clarifying the practice of curriculum development.

The reasons why Basic Principles was so successful are difficult to pinpoint. Like Bobbitt, Tyler was a creature of his times. He knew how to connect with powerful changes in American society and culture. Modern science, of course, remained highly influential during the 1930 to 1960 time period when Tyler was at the peak of his career. At the same time, however, Tyler was forced to speak a language that was different from Bobbitt's. The industrialism of the 1910s and 1920s had given way to the Cold War. The 1940s and 1950s gave rise to conceptions of science that were more specifically intellectual, rather than industrial, in nature. Instead of discussing efficiency tied to industrial productivity as Bobbitt (1918, 1924) had done, Tyler was in a position to speak of effectiveness and problem solving divorced from specific economic or political ends. Tyler (1949) adhered to the principle of parsimony, and he was careful to avoid tying his ideas to any historical or social context. He designed his system to help individual schools and school districts; at the same time, however, the system he sets forth is designed to remain firmly above the fray. Unlike Bobbitt, Tyler was successful at presenting the curriculum field with a way of thinking and speaking that rises above historical context. This shortcoming of Bobbitt's is evident in the radical transformation that his ideas underwent during the 1940s (Null, 1999, 2004). Tyler never went through a transformation like Bobbitt.

Once Ralph Tyler had published Basic Principles in 1949, the expansion of curriculum development was underway. His book was used widely at the K-12 and the higher education levels. Institutions with diverse purposes used it. Subject matter specialists from numerous specialties—for example mathematics and literature—adopted Tyler's process. Tyler had succeeded at giving curriculum makers a process that improved their status considerably.

The positive aspects of Tyler's Rationale (1949), however, should be viewed within the context of its shortcomings. The success that Tyler and his followers experienced came with a price, but this price would not be realized for at least 20 years after Basic Principles was published. In the meantime, other curriculumists seized upon the opportunity to build upon what Tyler had done. One such group was the trio of B. Othaniel Smith, William O. Stanley, and J. Harlan Shores (1950). With their Fundamentals of Curriculum Development (B. Smith et al., 1950), the curriculum field, for the first time, is provided with an extensive treatment of the specific task of curriculum development. A closer look at these men and their work helps us to understand how curriculum development has both changed and remained constant throughout its history.

Tyler and Much More: Smith, Stanley, and Shores on Curriculum Development

Curriculum development explodes into a theoretically advanced field in 1950 with the publication of Fundamentals of Curriculum Development. B. Smith et al. (1950) enlarge
curriculum development to include almost every aspect of American culture. Unlike Tyler's (1949) parsimonious treatment, their 780-page exposition of curriculum development includes chapters on science and technology, the role of values in making curriculum, sociological analysis, how to allot different amounts of time when designing curriculum, and much more. Despite this considerable expansion of curriculum development, the framework upon which Smith, Stanley, and Shores build their representation of curriculum development is borrowed—in almost identical form—from Tyler. In their preface, they describe curriculum development by outlining the following four steps:

First, the determination of educational directions; second, the choice of principles and procedures for selecting and ordering the potential experiences comprising the instructional program; third, the selection of a pattern of curriculum organization; and, fourth, the determination of principles and procedures by which changes in the curriculum can be made, evaluated, and sustained. (B. Smith et al., p. vii)

This description even follows the same four-step pattern as Tyler's (1949). Much like Tyler, B. Smith et al. (1950) emphasize that these four steps need not be followed in order, but that any effective approach to curriculum development must include these essential points. Their debt to Tyler is clear.

Curriculum development in the work of Smith, Stanley, and Shores seeks to become a theoretic discipline. The authors, of course, did not reject practice, but their book stands as an artifact that contains much theoretic reflection about curriculum development. The authors had become theorists of curriculum development, and their book inspired many others to do the same. Smith, Stanley, and Shores include almost every area of knowledge in their conception of curriculum development. Curriculum development comes to mean just about anything related to cultural change. Schools and curriculum workers are supposed to guide the cultural evolution that takes place in society. According to Smith, Stanley, and Shores, curriculum workers are to possess knowledge from a wide range of fields—for example, economics, ethics, and psychology. At the same time, however, they must also be highly skilled technicians who can work effectively in diverse contexts.

Although B. Smith et al. (1950) may have succeeded at including information that spoke to practitioners and social scientific theorists alike, they do not include any discussion of what should hold the theoretic and the practical dimensions of curriculum together. This task would be left to future curriculists. Despite its shortcomings, the *Fundamentals of Curriculum Development* by B. Smith et al. should be recognized for its success at expanding Tyler's (1949) formulation of curriculum development.

**Hilda Taba and Curriculum Development for the 1960S**

Like Smith, Stanley, and Shores, Hilda Taba (1962) expanded the work of Ralph Tyler (1949), but in a more targeted, evaluation-oriented way. Taba met Tyler in her capacity as curriculum director for the Dalton School in New York City, which was chosen as one of the 30 progressive high schools that took part in The Eight-Year Study. Upon meeting Taba, Tyler recruited her to work with him at Ohio State University. At Ohio State, Taba became director of the social studies evaluation portion of The Eight-Year Study (Bernard-Powers, 1999; Isham, 2003). She subsequently held positions related to curriculum development at the University of Chicago and San Francisco State College. During the last 15 years of her life, Taba worked closely with schools in the San Francisco area.
Curriculum development in the hands of Hilda Taba is a process dedicated to solving school problems. Taba's (1962) *Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice* set out to focus, clarify, and organize a field that she thought had grown out of control. To Taba, much contemporary scholarship on curriculum development took an eclectic approach that confused readers. This literature often hurt practitioners instead of helping them. As Taba put it,

One is struck by a seeming lack of rigorous, systematic thinking about curriculum planning. One cannot help but note in the literature about curriculum development the eclectic quality of the treatment of such basic matters as curriculum design ... There is little discussion of the methodology of designing curricula and less clarity about the elements that may constitute a design.  
(p. 2)

If *Fundamentals of Curriculum Development* is the kind of work that Taba (1962) had in mind with this critique, curriculum development had indeed expanded beyond the work of Tyler (1949). Taba wanted curriculum development to provide concrete guidance that helped curriculum developers to attack the problems that surrounded them.

Like Tyler (1949), Taba (1962) describes a set of steps for the curriculum development process. Whereas Tyler identifies four guiding questions, Taba outlines seven steps:

- Step 1: Diagnosis of needs
- Step 2: Formulation of objectives
- Step 3: Selection of content
- Step 4: Organization of content
- Step 5: Selection of learning experiences
- Step 6: Organization of learning experiences
- Step 7: Determination of what to evaluate and of the ways and means of doing it (1962, p. 12)

Taba’s indebtedness to Tyler is evident. In some respects, curriculum development takes a somewhat more formulaic turn with Taba (1962). She uses social scientific language such as diagnosis, design, and treatment, to make her point that curriculum development needed to refocus on clear directions for practitioners. In her words, “formulation of clear and comprehensive objectives provides an essential platform for the curriculum” (Taba, 1962, p. 12).

At the same time, however, to present Taba as a technical-minded behavioral scientist would be incomplete. She calls for serious attention to both theory and practice. With Taba (1962), theory, for the first time, takes on a prominent role in curriculum development literature. Taba was looking to create a curriculum theory that unified the dichotomies that had plagued curriculum, teaching, and education for at least 50 years.

This desire on the part of Taba (1962) is noteworthy not so much because she succeeds, but rather because she points toward a rich conception of theory. Bobbitt (1918, 1924) and the others who undertook the early work on curriculum making were interested in facts, measurement, and production. They had little patience for the kind of theory building that interested Taba. For example, in a section of *Curriculum Development* entitled “Needed: A Theory of Curriculum Development,” Taba attacks the problem of integrating theory and practice. She presents curriculum making as a task that arrives at judgments. In her words:
Curriculum development is a complex undertaking that involves many kinds of decisions ... These decisions are made on several different levels. Some decisions about what content to include in the curriculum are made by state legislatures, such as requirements to teach the constitution on the inclusion of driver training in California schools. Still others emanate from state departments of education, such as the requirement to teach American history a requisite number of times, or suggestions regarding the framework of topics to be covered in social studies. Still others are made by the school districts. Finally, many decisions which shape the functioning of curriculum are made by local schools and by teachers, either in groups or individually. (Taba, 1962, pp. 6–7)

Taba’s (1962) ability to see through the problematic dualisms of content versus process, curriculum versus instruction, and students’ interests versus Subject matter, also merits comment. The curriculum theory she sought had to find a way to bridge these gaps. As she put it, “An emphasis on a single basis, such as the content, the needs of society, or the needs of the learner, have [sic] produced an unnecessary versus thinking with its unfortunate juxtaposition of considerations that should be combined into one comprehensive curriculum theory” (Taba, 1962, p. 3). The master narrative that Taba presents may be rooted in a conception of psychology that misrepresents the full range of human nature, but Taba, nonetheless, is pointing to the need for serious scholarly and practical attention to curriculum theory.

Taba (1962) reviews all of the major thinkers whose work was prominent at the time— including Arthur Bestor, John Dewey, George Counts, and William Heard Kilpatrick. Although she argues that curriculum development had grown unwieldy during the previous decades, she finds much to agree with in the work of Smith, Stanley, and Shores. She presents her book as a contribution to a line of thinking that began with Tyler (1949) and that expands through the work of Smith, Stanley, and Shores. She draws especially on the work of B. Smith, whom she identifies as someone who approaches curriculum development from the perspective of a social reconstructionist. Taba’s own philosophical and psychological perspective is not easily captured with labels such as child centered or social reconstructionist. Nonetheless, she draws heavily upon behavioral psychology and similar theories of learning.

Even though a connection can be drawn between Taba (1962) and the earliest figures in curriculum development, the broader vision that she brings to curriculum should be acknowledged. Taba believed in objectives, but these goals were not to be prescriptions that merely dictated what teachers must do. Objectives, to Taba, also had to emanate from the practical world of schools and classrooms. As Mark Isham (1984) has noted,

Rather than simply deriving objectives logically from widely accepted educational values, such as “good citizenship” or “healthy living habits,” Taba challenged educators to examine the meaning of the good society ... She echoed Dewey’s assertions that education is life and that the aims of education, therefore, must reflect the aims of life and growth. (p. 64)

Taba’s (1962) curriculum development is open-ended in that she believes that objectives should be reexamined as situations and problems change. To make the best decisions, Taba argues that curriculum developers must draw upon facts, data, and a deep knowledge of the
latest advancements in learning theory.

Taba's (1962) work fits squarely within the expanding progressive education tradition that began with the application of modern science to public schooling. As her career expanded, Taba held firm to her faith that modern science provides the best hope for solving the problems of curriculum and schooling. In her words,

"[I]n order for research to function productively in curriculum development, it is necessary not only to draw on existing research, but for those who are involved in curriculum development to become researchers also—at least in a sense of acquiring a research orientation in making curriculum decisions and evaluating their results."

(p. 492)

Like Tyler's work in the 1950s, Taba's *Curriculum Development* found a receptive audience in the 1960s.

The theory of curriculum development that is found in Taba's (1962) work also played a prominent role in the work of Lawrence Stenhouse, whose scholarship emphasizes the role that teachers play in the implementation of any curriculum (Stenhouse, Rudduck, & Hopkins, 1983). Stenhouse (1975) stresses the need for high-quality teacher education that helps teachers to see their work as both an art and a science. Even though their ideas developed on different continents, the work of Stenhouse and Taba share many points of agreement. Stenhouse (1975), in fact, praises Taba, as well as Tyler, in his first and most significant book on curriculum. The impact of Tyler on Stenhouse (1975) is clear:

"I have chosen to define this model of curriculum development by drawing on Tyler and Taba because in my view Tyler offers the clearest statement of the basic principles involved and Taba the best exposition of the relation of those principles to the study of education and to the practice of curriculum development."

(pp. 55–56)

As this quotation demonstrates, the plan for curriculum development created by Tyler and Taba found its way to England. The years when Taba and Stenhouse made their most significant impact on the curriculum field—the 1960s and early 1970s—can be viewed as powerful decades for curriculum development. Their way of speaking and writing, however, would soon receive a blow that continues to reverberate in the 21st century.

**Development Meets Deliberation: The Impact of Joseph Schwab**

The calm and serenity that marked American society during the 1950s masked several underlying revolutions. These revolutions found their way into academic discourse during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Taba's (1962) *Curriculum Development* became a popular text, but the foundations upon which curriculum developers had built their enterprise would soon be met with opposition. Criticism had been leveled against progressive education in the United States throughout the 1950s, most notably by Arthur Bestor (1953) and his widely read polemic, *Educational Wastelands*. Attacks on public schooling received increased notoriety in 1957 when the Russian spacecraft *Sputnik* struck fear in the hearts of many Americans. The presumption on the part of many politicians was that the Russians were winning the space race. Schools were then blamed for the perceived lack of scientific rigor in the public school curriculum. The Cold War dominated political discourse during the late 1950s and throughout
the 1960s. Curriculum and curriculum development had to take into account the need for increased attention to science and technology.

To address this problem, the United States federal government began to recruit university specialists in numerous scientific fields—most notably biology, physics, and chemistry—and charge these scientists with remaking science curriculum. The purpose was to make sure that America could once again compete on a global scale. Federal officials bypassed curriculum development specialists and instead asked the scientists themselves to attempt the creation of new science curricula. The federal government’s goal was to encourage scientists to reproduce themselves and help America win the Cold War (Rudolph, 2002).

One scientist who was asked to take on this role was Joseph J. Schwab, a biology professor at the University of Chicago. Schwab began his college career in 1925 as a student at the University of Chicago. In the 1960s, he was a professor of biology, but he was anything but a narrow figure who only studied biology. By 1969, Schwab had been involved in curriculum matters at Chicago for 30 years. He was knowledgeable in the fields of biology and chemistry, but he was widely read in many other fields as well (Levine, 2006, pp. 114–145). Schwab could help the federal government with science curriculum, and he could do much more. He was a well-informed participant in the discussions that were taking place at the time about the nature of science and scientific inquiry (Schwab, 1949). The behaviorism that dominated curriculum development since it began in the late 1910s was about to be challenged at its most fundamental level. The cognitive revolution put behaviorists on the defensive.

Most people who study the history of psychology trace the “cognitive revolution” to the late 1950s when Sputnik was launched. Cognitive psychology, or the study of the mind, had been almost completely forgotten by American psychologists. The path the behaviorists chose for American psychology turned out to be a dead end. Psychology had become narrow, barren, and devoid of life. Beginning in the 1950s, interdisciplinarity was on the minds of the next generation of scholars. Younger psychologists like Jerome Bruner recognized the need for change. As Bruner (1990) tells the story,

> The cognitive revolution as originally conceived virtually required that psychology join forces with anthropology and linguistics, philosophy and history, even with the discipline of law … I think it should be clear to you by now that we were not out to ‘reform’ behaviorism, but to replace it. (p. 3)

Bruner and the new generation of scholars sought to return psychology to the interdisciplinary study of the mind. Behaviorism was being severely criticized for neglecting the human mind, for forgetting the concept of agency, and for not taking into account the social and cultural nature of knowledge (Royer, 2005).

Schwab was aware of these changes in psychology when he focused his attention on curriculum (Schwab, 1957). Because of his standing as a philosopher of science, Schwab was aware of even deeper revolutions that were taking place in science generally. Thomas Kuhn's (1962) Structure of Scientific Revolutions, for example, hastened the integration of science and humanistic inquiry. Among other points, Kuhn presented scientists with the idea that their project may not be value-neutral after all. Schwab, consequently, was not acting in isolation when he sought to bring a revolution to the field of curriculum. Schwab's intent was not to replace curriculum development with something else. Schwab's goal, rather, was to awaken curriculum theorists to new possibilities. Through his work in developing curriculum
as part of the federal government’s Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS) committee, Schwab had come to recognize the difficulties that lay behind making curriculum. Taking a highly theoretic body of knowledge like biology and transmitting it to a particular group of students at a particular place and time, Schwab discovered, is not an easy task. Schwab recognized that curriculum making is the practice of connecting students with knowledge. When he went to the curriculum development literature for guidance, however, Schwab was not impressed with what he found.

Within this context, Schwab (1969) made his now famous declaration that the curriculum field was moribund. In “The Practical: A Language for Curriculum,” Schwab shocked his audience with the statement that curriculum was “unable, by its present methods and principles, to continue its work and contribute significantly to the advancement of education” (p. 1). To correct this problem, Schwab (1970), in a slightly revised publication of his 1969 article, argued that curriculists would have to establish “new principles which will generate a new view of the character and variety of its problems” (p. 1). Schwab (1970) further declared that the new direction he was proposing would require “new methods appropriate to the new budget of problems” (p. 1). Curriculists had not prepared themselves to deal with the new problems that had arisen:

> Educators, including curriculum specialists, were massively unprepared to cope with the problem of integrated education … The problem posed by the current drives toward ethnicity in education finds curriculum specialists even more massively oblivious and unprepared. And until recently I found myself alone with respect to the curriculum problems immanent in the phenomena of student protest and student revolt. 
> (Schwab, 1970, p. 19)

The times had changed, new problems had come to pass, and curriculum developers had better begin to change and change quickly. If they chose not to find new ways of addressing curriculum problems, the imminent death of the field would become a reality.

As his title makes evident, Schwab’s (1969) main goal was to bring a new language to curriculum. The language of development was in need of transformation. Schwab had been friends and colleagues with Ralph Tyler, so he knew the foundations of curriculum development as well as anyone. He considered himself firmly within the Tyler tradition, while at the same time seeking to transform it (Jackson, 1992). To initiate a renaissance, Schwab took the Tyler Rationale and infused it with a new language. This language derives from a literary and philosophical tradition that has its roots in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*. In short, Schwab sought to replace the process of development with the language of deliberation. Development, according to Schwab, had given rise to a great deal of theoretic reflection that did not translate into solid advances for curriculum practice. He distinguishes between problems that arise from states of mind and other problems that derive from states of affairs. He uses this distinction to make the point that curriculum problems, properly understood, are problems that arise within states of affairs (Reid, 1999, pp. 7–15). They are not matters of pure theory. Rather, curriculum is a social and political activity that requires judgment and action.

Curriculum is not like chemistry or history or literary criticism. The purpose of these intellectual specialties is to explain a problem or to solve a mental puzzle. The purpose of curriculum making, on the other hand, is to do something beyond explanation and understanding. Curriculists must take knowledge and do something with it. This point is quite similar to what
Aristotle does in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. In the *Ethics*, Aristotle argues that the purpose of the practical sciences—which include politics and ethics—is not “in order to know what virtue is, but in order to become good, else there would be no advantage in studying it” (trans. 1999, p. 35). Curriculum, to Aristotle as well as to Schwab, is a practical science. It exists to shape society in the direction of goodness. It does not exist simply to understand. Schwab based his points on deep issues within the history and philosophy of science (MacIntyre, 1984). Due to the depth of his challenge, the curriculum field is still trying to come to grips with the significance of Schwab's challenge (Westbury & Wilkof, 1978).

The path that Schwab laid out for curriculum could not have been more different from the ideas of Bobbitt and Charters (Charters, 1923). Schwab infused rhetoric and ancient philosophy into curriculum deliberation. These are humanistic fields that are found at the opposite extreme from the economic and managerial disciplines that supported early curriculum writing. Schwab uses terms such as commonplace and the arts of eclectic that are rhetorical and philosophical in origin. The fact that this new, humanistic approach to curriculum making came from a prominent scientist makes Schwab's declaration even more ironic. It took someone who was both a scientist and a philosopher to bring humanity to curriculum.

To help curriculum move forward, Schwab sets up a committee whose job is to take action. The members of this committee are to consist of people who represent five commonplaces, or sources of knowledge, that curriculum makers must consider as they deliberate. Schwab (1973) labels these five commonplaces teachers, learners, subject-matter, milieu, and curriculum making. He argues that all five commonplaces must be considered in all curriculum deliberations. Psychologists who do not share Schwab's humanistic background, however, often miss this crucial point. Behaviorists frequently omit the commonplace of curriculum making (Berliner, 2006, p. 5). The curriculum making commonplace, however, is crucial because it puts all of the other commonplaces in their perspective. It also puts them in motion toward the end of serving the public good.

In *Basic Principles*, Tyler (1949) at least mentions these commonplaces, although he does not use the same language as Schwab. Tyler also does not recognize Schwab's distinction between theoretic and practical activities. Tyler, moreover, does not emphasize the commonplace of curriculum making, nor does he discuss the art of deliberation. Deliberation is essential because it is the method that the committee is to use as it draws upon the constituencies who are represented by the commonplaces. The chairman of the curriculum committee is responsible for ensuring that all interests are considered as the committee makes judgments. The bad news, according to Schwab, was that curriculum development had to change significantly. The good news, on the other hand, was that curriculum specialists were now entrusted with a responsibility that was far greater than ever before. The committee now had constituencies to keep in mind, much like any good political statesman.

The most central concept that Schwab (1969) develops in “The Practical” is deliberation. Deliberation is radically different from development in that deliberation aims toward an end. Deliberation also is different because nobody deliberates for the sake of deliberation (unless they misunderstand the nature and purpose of deliberation). The end of deliberation is a decision about action within a particular state of affairs. Schwab wanted to get curriculum specialists away from the theoretic activity of describing curriculum development. Instead, he urged them to get involved in the daily actions of public school leaders. Because of Schwab, curriculum development now had an end, or telos, toward which it should move. This end is action that serves the public good. Development had met deliberation, and a new day had
Curriculum scholarship began to change immediately following Schwab's (1969) pronouncement. A new generation of scholars, referring to themselves as reconceptualists, took Schwab's challenge seriously, but they chose not to embrace Schwab's insistence on deliberation. Instead, the reconceptualists began to draw upon postmodern writers like Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and others to seek to transform the curriculum field. The target of their efforts, however, was not the improvement of institutions of public schooling. Rather, they seized upon theorizing as the goal of their efforts. Rather than discuss curriculum per se, William F. Pinar (1975) pioneered the concept of currere, which stresses the biographical journey that a learner takes. Schwab may not have succeeded at convincing the majority of curriculumists to practice the art of deliberation, but he was successful at changing the conversation. For the first time, the question of human nature was at the heart of curriculum discourse.

In the wake of the changes wrought by Schwab, curriculum philosopher William A. Reid characterized four traditions within the curriculum field. In The Pursuit of Curriculum: Schooling and the Public Interest, Reid (2006) identifies these traditions as the systematic, existentialist, radical, and deliberative (pp. 12–18). The systematic tradition is largely in keeping with the Tyler (1949) framework that began with Basic Principles. This tradition emphasizes the production of efficient systems that are supposed to “work” in all contexts and with all subjects. In contrast, the existentialist tradition emphasizes personal meaning making, imagination, and autobiography. Existentialists focus on the individual experiences of learners and subsequently de-emphasize the institution building that is crucial to systematic curriculum development. The third tradition that Reid (2006) presents, which he calls the radical tradition, calls for the rejection of current institutions of curriculum and schooling. In their criticisms, radicals find little positive to say about curriculum, past or present. Last but not least, Reid (2006) provides the curriculum field with an in-depth discussion of a deliberative tradition, which Reid considers to be consistent with the work of Joseph Schwab (pp. 65–145). Reid's deliberative tradition seeks to balance the positive contributions of the other traditions while at the same time not forgetting that the purpose of curriculum making is deliberation—not efficiency, imagination, or criticism. All of these traditions were active in the curriculum field by the late 20th century.

Theoretical Challenges Amidst Widespread Acceptance: Curriculum Development at the Turn of the Century

Curriculum development came under heavy fire during the decades following Schwab's critique. Reconceptualists maintained that the curriculum field should divorce itself from almost all previous thinkers. The work of previous curriculists, to the reconceptualists, is tainted with a desire for efficiency, management, and social control. Curriculum development died, according to the reconceptualists, as soon as Schwab delivered his essay in 1969. As William F. Pinar, William M. Reynolds, Patrick Slattery, and Peter M. Taubman (1995) put the matter in Understanding Curriculum,

The main concepts today are quite different from those which grew out of an era in school buildings and populations were growing exponentially, and when keeping the curriculum ordered and organized were the main motives of professional activity. That was the time of curriculum development. Curriculum Development: Born: 1918. Died: 1969 ... We live in a different time. True, in science and mathematics education, traditional curriculum development still occurs, as these privileged areas
still receive significant amounts of federal and private grant monies … However, the general field of curriculum, the field interested in the relationships among school subjects … is no longer preoccupied with development. As we shall see, the field today is preoccupied with understanding. (p. 6)

Understanding the field, the reconceptualists argue, trumps both development and deliberation. To these writers, the new postmodern era will forever change curriculum development. As Patrick Slattery (1995) makes the point,

Curriculum development in the postmodern era will see the emergence of more journals, portfolios, and autobiographical methodologies. The Reconceptualization in curriculum studies has reminded educators that we can no longer remain ahistorical, detached, impersonal, and “behaviorally objective” … we can no longer separate the context of historical events from the autobiographical experiences of teachers and students. (pp. 65–66)

To Slattery (1995), curriculum development will never be the same now that postmodernism has made its impact.

Other scholars, however, largely disagree with Pinar and Slattery. Instead of emphasizing autobiography, they have taken curriculum in a direction that stresses the radical transformation of our public institutions. These scholars also reject the historic emphasis on systematic curriculum development. Michael Apple (1990), for example, draws attention to concepts such as the hidden curriculum that point out how curriculum can reproduce societal inequalities based upon race, class, and gender. The history of curriculum development takes on an entirely new look when individuals like Apple apply their radical critique. They argue not for curriculum development or deliberation or understanding per se; rather, they advocate political change in the immediate future.

British curriculum scholar Ivor F. Goodson (1994) argues for a curriculum that is similar to Apple’s, although Goodson has focused his attention on countries other than the United States. Goodson (1993) has been particularly concerned with how curriculum—and specifically subjects like biology, geography, and vocational training—relates to the reproduction of class inequalities. None of these critical approaches deals directly with the practice of curriculum development. Because of their critical nature, they do not seek to extend the curriculum development tradition, which they see as irretrievably flawed. Although they agree on the point that curriculum development should be marginalized, theorizers such as Pinar and radical critics like Apple and Goodson disagree on the direction that the curriculum field ought to take (Reid, 2006, pp. 14–15).

Other curriculum scholars, however, continue to hold firm to the systematic curriculum development tradition. Daniel Tanner and Laurel Tanner (2007), for example, have continued to publish a widely used textbook on curriculum development. The work of Tanner and Tanner echoes many of the themes found in Fundamentals of Curriculum Development (B. Smith et al, 1950) and Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice (Taba, 1962). In the words of Tanner and Tanner, “Throughout the text, curriculum development is treated as a problem-solving process, and the need for using the best available evidence in the process of determining practice and making progress is emphasized” (p. viii). The Tanners’ indebtedness to Tyler (1949) and his rationale is especially evident when they write,
Tyler's handbook has been widely used in curriculum courses and widely discussed in the curriculum literature from mid-century to the present day. Although various modifications have been proposed, Tyler's explication of the curriculum paradigm has not been fundamentally changed.

(p. 134)

Tanner and Tanner (2007) see no problem with extending Tyler's (1949) paradigm, and they see no need for it to be reformulated or rejected.

Many scholars from outside the ranks of professors of curriculum and instruction agree with Tanner and Tanner. Curriculum development continues to be used widely not only in mathematics and science education, but also within literature and the humanities generally (Richards, 2001). Curriculum development also continues to play a prominent role in professional fields outside of education, especially nursing and medicine (Keating, 2006; Kern, 1998). If publications are any indication, curriculum development is far from dead (Finch & Crunkilton, 1998; Wiles & Bondi, 2007). Criticisms from reconceptualists such as Pinar and sociologists like Apple, consequently, take place within a larger framework of widespread acceptance of curriculum development.

Conclusion: What Should Curriculum Professors Do with Curriculum Development?

Curriculum development experienced widespread success during its first 90 years of existence. The language of curriculum development pervaded all areas of education. At the same time, however, there exists considerable unease about the foundations upon which curriculum development has been built. Curriculum development is consistently criticized, yet it thrives. In the face of this paradoxical situation, what should curriculum professors do with curriculum development? Rather than rush to an extreme and call for the abandonment of curriculum development, curriculum theorists would do well to support curriculum development while at the same time looking for new possibilities. Curriculum development will be around as long as modern science is around. Critical discussions about modern science take place each day, but we continue to benefit from modern science in many ways. Curriculum development is part of this larger appreciation for science.

The philosophical principles upon which curriculum development was founded have been challenged, but few curriculum professors could argue persuasively that curriculum development will be anything but alive and well when its centennial arrives in 2018. Understanding curriculum, of course, has its role, but curriculum development should be acknowledged as a powerful contributor to curriculum and teaching. At the same time, however, Schwab's contribution of curriculum deliberation seems to provide a method for putting these and other curriculum traditions into proper perspective. Professors of curriculum will be wise not to toss out curriculum development altogether, but rather to make use of its noteworthy history as we practice deliberation and serve the public good.

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