ABSTRACTS OF SELECTED DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS IN CURRICULUM: 1983–84

VIRGINIA MACAGNONI, University of Georgia
MARY PHILLIPS, University of Georgia
MARY BEAR, Brenau School of Nursing

Curriculum Theory/Conceptual Research


This study examines a comprehensive instrument, Toward Intellectual Excellence—Some Things to Look for m Classrooms and Schools (TIE) (Gibboney, 1980) from theoretical and practical perspectives. The researcher examined other schemes for curriculum analysts to assess TIE from a theoretical point of view to serve as a stepping stone for the practical examination of TIE represented in the Curriculum Analysis Study Project (CASP). The purpose of this study was to demonstrate a thorough examination of an instrument for curriculum analysis providing and applying an assessment methodology. The study includes detailed documentation of CASP, its underlying methodological deliberations, modes of execution, and data analysis. The study concludes that compared to other instruments TIE scored closest to an "ideal scheme." Results of CASP indicate that generally TIE is practical and the teaching strategy effective. The author offers recommendations for further improvement of TIE and the teaching strategy.


This study investigates the works of curriculum theorist James B. Macdonald to identify trends of thinking reflected in his writing, to describe this researcher's personal and professional journey that led to an awareness of the educational impact of Macdonald's concepts, and to apply these concepts to a personal perspective of special education. The method of inquiry was biography and autobiography, supplemented by personal interviews and study of writings of both Macdonald and special education scholars. An important assumption was that self-awareness is critical to an understanding of others, that interpretation and application of others concepts are affected by personal perceptions, which are influenced by curricula. The goal of the research was to attain a reciprocity of perspectives that enabled the writer to understand the significance of Macdonald's concepts for special education.


This study applies mainstream curriculum theory (represented by Bobbitt, Tyler, and Goodlad, and commonly understood as a comprehensive, scientific approach to curricular decision making) to problems of moral education in the U.S. public schools. Moral education was defined in terms of three critical issues—establishment of a general principle of morality, the system of compulsory, universal education, and pluralism. The researcher found that mainstream curriculum theory is closer to Aristotle's concept of praxis (a mode of knowledge for educating the good person) than to its proclaimed ideal of scientific curriculum making. A dilemma arose in reconciling metatheoretical discussions about role of values in theory building and need for specific decision making on concrete values to be taught. The research concludes that Bobbitt, Tyler, and Goodlad provide educators with the opportunity to apply self-critical rationality to both theory building and specific curricular decision making. Mainstream curriculum theory must be used in an ongoing self-critical discourse context that is both metatheoretical and specific on moral
values that should be taught. The study illustrates a specific application of critical rationality to problems of curriculum development.

Cannon, Robert Earl. "A Synthesis of Opposing Conceptions of Two Major Approaches Within the Field of Curriculum" Ph D Georgia State University, 1983, 114pp (44 8, 2339-A)

The purpose of this study was to synthesize two major divisions within the curriculum field (the traditionalists and the reconceptualists) in an attempt to provide a basis for new growth. This theoretical study employing the techniques of synthetic research includes a review of the literature, synthesis of opposing conceptions of two approaches to curriculum, recommendations for new growth, and conclusions. The findings reveal that the two approaches define each other in their opposition. Both provide useful constructs for practice, but alone neither satisfies an ontological priority of wholeness. The synthesis, based on a dialectical theory of development, included role of student, role of teacher, nature of knowledge, and role of the individual and society. The results of the synthesis provide recommendations for practice and the need for further research.

Dechow, Carol Sue Widney. "An Exploratory Interpretive Study of Cross-Cultural Communication Curriculum" Ph D The Ohio State University, 1983, 544pp (44 12, 3586-A)

This descriptive and interpretive study examines the intercultural/cross-cultural communicative process and experience for the development of understanding between American and international student curriculum participants from Latin America, the Middle East, and the Far East in the context of curriculum conducted at Ohio Dominican College, Columbus, Ohio. The study also explores methodologies for conducting research aimed at fostering understanding. The study was based on the theoretical framework of phenomenology and hermeneutics, phenomenology used in delineating the criteria necessary for understanding. The participant observation research design provided for triangulation of multiple researchers and data sources as well as for the constant comparative method of analysis. Multiple data sources included videotape, student journals, open-ended interviews, teacher/research field notes, and a course evaluation. The researcher used participants' reflections, cross-checked against the properties of understanding determined by the research team, to generate a theory of the development of cross-cultural understanding in the context of Ohio Dominican College.


This study was designed to: (1) explore the basis of conflict between and among the five Eisner and Vallance curricular orientations, (2) determine the adequacy of those orientations to describe current curriculum approaches, and (3) develop a framework as a tool for revealing potential future conflict. Methodology involved analyzing the literature for examples of various orientations, the framework used was Terry Moore's Educational Theory: An Introduction. Results of the analyses indicate that conflict between the orientations is philosophic in nature, stemming from unexplored values and external inconsistencies. Few examples of the orientations matched prototypes found in the Moore text, indicating inadequacy of categories in describing current curricular approaches. Attempts to label an approach narrow one's focus, leaving other positions unexplored. The emergence of problems when the framework was applied to two curriculums indicates the efficacy of the process for identifying potential controversy.


Preliminary research serving as the primary basis for the curriculum led the investigator to conclude that moral development from Stage 4 to Stage 5 (Kohlberg) includes a period of reflective questioning and that identity questioning/confusion and moral questioning/confusion are interrelated. A comprehensive range of conclusions from this preliminary research constitute an educational curriculum and the formalization of a way to determine its effect on moral development, which was the central purpose of the study. A second concern was to define more clearly the moral development process in relation to identity formation and moral relativism. The researcher then examines the findings within the context of the curriculum design in order to evaluate this particular approach for its use in moral education. This approach was based on the cognitive-development theory of moral development (Kohlberg, 1958). The curriculum was designed to extend the direction facilitating an objectification of self and moral reasoning through the use of a specific integrated system of essential philosophical concepts.
Urso, Ilia. "A Comparative Analysis of Four Approaches to Worldmindedness in the Field of Education in the United States" Ph D University of California, Los Angeles, 1983, 450pp (44 12, 3593-A)

The study was designed to gain greater understanding of the worldmindedness concept advocated and taught within two exoteric and two esoteric approaches to U S education The former are K-12 public school curricular materials and university/college-level peace and world order studies. The latter are transcendental education and educational thoughts on the "Ageless Wisdom" teachings of Lucius Trust. From these sources Urso researches and details specified entries with regard to four aspects: aims, methods, expected outcomes, and obstacles that challenge achievement of the desired state of worldmindedness. Urso presents entry ideas in both composite and synthesized lists from which she abstracts and presents certain factors. Comparisons and analysis are made regarding the four approaches. Summary statements become the basis for a thought form used to develop a synthetic and comprehensive approach to worldmindedness.

Curriculum History


This historical study investigates how scientific curriculum making, a conservative-progressive reform, became a major theory in the curriculum field by 1926. The underlying frame of reference interpreted movement in history as multi-dimensional and ambiguous, and was grounded in a perspective that situated curriculum formation in a political as well as an educational context. Kent examines the interaction between scientific curriculum-making theory and the conservative-progressive political environment to determine links. He concludes that (1) the concept of science as functional analysis was limited, (2) reform was directly linked with the larger progressivism of early 20th century America, and (3) theory developed in response to public criticism and concerned itself with the technical and mechanistic area of curriculum.


That social education has ignored its normative nature resulting in its serving relatively conservative ideological interests is the guiding premise of this study. The author builds the rationale for studying special education as a normative act by reviewing selected theorists within the new sociology of education, reviews 20th century literature associated with the major models of social education, and links it with either a positivist or interpretive rationality. Rationalities dominating the field do not provide fertile ground for a critique of existing society or for questioning normative interests which they serve. The author attempts to provide the theoretical elements for a more critical model of social education than those currently dominating the field.


Present universal support given the teaching of mathematics has led to neglect of the justification question and of consequences of invoking particular rationales. This study addresses the question why we should teach mathematics in order to provide some perspective for the present historical moment. Using the curriculum interest groups identified by Kliebard (humanists, developmentalists, social mohists, and social efficiency educators) as a framework for the research, the author traces the development of rationales for teaching mathematics from 1980 to 1940, and discusses the difficulty of making connections between justifications and the form and content of the curriculum. The conclusion points to a potential resolution of the differences among the interest groups identified by Kliebard.

Curriculum Development


The Al-TALAE/Furuwa organization employs a youth leadership curriculum. This study assesses demographic data of Iraqi parents of the participants in relation to their perceptions of the
organization. Data were collected by questionnaires from 176 Iraqi families randomly selected from three regions. Data analysis included percentages to describe perceptions and t-tests to determine significant differences in demographics. Only 4 percent of the questionnaire items received strongly positive responses. The t-test analysis showed significant differences between education levels and the perceptions of the curriculum, activities, and goals.


This descriptive study was designed to determine (1) the relationship between school board attitudes and decisions and quality and quantity of lay participation in curriculum planning, (2) if school board decisions and attitudes affected lay participation in curriculum planning, and (3) if there was a schema for school board attitudes and decisions through lay participation. The researcher used a survey questionnaire, analysis of three districts' board minutes, board policy documents, and interviews with laymen, teachers, and administrators. The most significant conclusions are (1) lay involvement in curriculum planning was vigorously advocated in curriculum theory literature; (2) generally, the quality of lay participation in curriculum was deficient; and (3) board members held a consistently low level of desired influence for laymen in curriculum planning compared with other potential participants. The researcher observes that educators and laymen seemed relatively unaware of persuasive arguments favoring lay participation in curriculum development. Another concern was lack of training for educators and laymen in techniques of democratic group dynamics and related skills.

Blandy, Douglas Emerson. "Printing Poetry in Blissymbols: An Arts-of-the-Book Apprenticeship for Four So-Called Moderately Mentally Retarded Persons," Ph D. The Ohio State University, 1983, 450pp (44.9, 2657-A)

This study was designed to determine if Blissymbols could be used as a notation for original and translated poetry and what qualities would characterize participation of persons from educational/vocational programs for the mentally retarded in a small press and papermill. The researcher used qualitative research methodology modeled on artistic inquiry "bricolage," incorporating certain concepts presented by aestheticians who view artists as agents of transformation via introspection. Four moderately mentally retarded persons who apprenticed at the OSU Logan Elm Press produced two books of poetry in Blissymbols and demonstrated that they could typeset, print, bind, and make paper. Findings imply that not only can poetry be made accessible to nonphonetic readers (using Blissymbols) but also that mentally retarded persons can apprentice in the various crafts. Recommendations for further study include problems in translation, poetics, art education curriculum/practice, and special education curriculum/practice.


Primary research questions concerned the consequences of adults sharing collectively the responsibility for establishing their own educational intentions, the kinds of decisions they would make, and how subsequent programs would differ from traditional religious education classes. The methodology was participatory and ethnographic, grounded in theorists such as Dewey, Rogers, Goulet, Illich, and Freire, and as applied to nonformal educational research by Hall and Brigham. Two participatory research groups met under the general theme "What are the social issues that should concern Christians?" The groups identified generative themes and then intentionally established topics and procedures. Data generated were analyzed through theory grounding (Glaser and Strauss). Categories to emerge were consistent with participative educational theory. Contributing factors were beginning apprehension, unity through acceptance, problem-posing dialogue, and praxis. Deterring factors were identified with a traditional perspective authority and control, prescriptive methods, prescriptive planning, and the modernizing church. A final category described effect upon the researcher. Conclusions were expressed through a hypothesized verbal and dialogue model entitled, "Contrasting Approaches to Adult Religious Education."


The study was designed to develop a curriculum diffusion model based on General Systems Theory in order to help students in educational institutions transcend knowledge acquired in...
specific academic subjects. In addition, students should gain expertise in solving complex problems interdisciplinary in nature. The conceptual model was derived from a synthesis of literature in curriculum and innovation implementation, conceptual model building, and General Systems Theory. Four sequential systems were interrelated, and interdependent components were identified in the model: (1) the Initiation System, (2) the Diffusion Formulation System, (3) the Scrutiny System, and (4) the Heuristic System. The study suggests the following implications for General Systems Theory: (1) the developed diffusion model should be piloted in a school to determine utility, effectiveness, and areas needing refinement; (2) industrial business sectors should examine the model for possible use in management training programs; (3) additional studies pertaining to General Systems Theory in all areas of education should be addressed; (4) a graded course of study should be developed; and (5) researchers should determine the type and size of educational organization most open to piloting the diffusion model.


This paper investigates La Danza de los Tastoanes, a Mexican Village ritual dance held in celebration of Santa Santiago. The author describes the dance event as one example of a larger network of ritual dramas set within the religious cargo system of Mexico. She analyzes the elements of time, space, energy, and the multivocative nature of the dance symbol, and addresses the issue of alternative forms of education through an examination of the festival system as a nonschooling cultural institution with educative consequences. Focus is on the festival as a formal and an informal teaching and learning device for transmitting cultural values. The methodology is generally ethnographic, supplemented by interviews as well as by treatment operations of a selected sample. Two audiovisual displays (a 20-minute slide/tape presentation and a 30-minute super 8 sound film) are addenda to the written dissertation.


This research focused on developing a method of curricular planning based on needs assessment for the supplementary Jewish school in order to improve significantly the religious school system. The researcher attempted to (1) develop a survey instrument, the Jewish Community Educational Needs Survey (JCENS), based on authentic Jewish dictates, values, historical precedents, contemporary concerns, and issues to be used in assessing needs, (2) outline a needs assessment procedure for Jewish education, and (3) implement the procedure in three individual Jewish schools and explore the possibility of regional planning using this procedure. The researcher found marked differences in beliefs about curriculum purposes of knowledge and practice. She exposed conflicts between preferences and needs, set standards and community choices, and adherence to values versus practices in the studied communities. JCENS can be a useful needs assessment procedure for curriculum planning but should be implemented on a localized basis due to considerable differences that occur even in a small geographic area. JCENS can be used as a basis for development of curricular planning guidelines.

Leukhardt, Joan Carosso. "Students in Special Program for Gifted Female Adolescents: A Conceptual Case Study for Planning Curriculum" Ph.D. University of Pittsburgh, 1983, 228pp (448, 2344-A)

Using case studies of 48 gifted female adolescents in a special program, the researcher generated four Interpretive Profiles and six Principles of Curriculum for Gifted Female Adolescents. She collected data from student volunteers learning about nontraditional careers and collected anecdotal information, school records, students' scores on the Ohio Vocational Interest Survey, and selected literature to quantitative and content analysis. The study generated six principles of curriculum development, which involved educators' knowledge of content and affective skills, importance of students' self-concept, optimum times for scheduling career education, expanded special education programs, and teaching mathematics in a special format, all recommendations for curricular intervention.


This study, focusing on the Farmer Training Center in Kenya, East Africa (an experimental rural development program), suggests that both formal and informal education have emerged from the same curricular theory. Methods used in this study were library search, structured interviews, mail questionnaires, and the researcher's personal observations. Results of the study indicate the program's continuing experimental status, neglect in implementation of major
reforms, nonspecific objectives, and incomplete information about trainees. Researcher recommends a major reorganization emphasizing staff development and resource centers for the agricultural extension system.

Curriculum Evaluation


This study was designed to gather and summarize the data necessary for planning a graduate level program in nursing. Three central questions evolved from an extensive search of curriculum planning literature related to expressed needs of potential graduate nursing students, needs of society, and resources available at sponsoring institutions. A 20-item questionnaire sent to nurses in Western New York and Canada investigated needs of potential graduate nursing students. A literature search, structured interviews, and an 11-item questionnaire assessed societal needs. The researcher analyzed resources relative to a graduate nursing program at Niagara University (used as a model for the sponsoring institution), and identified a need to decrease the dichotomy between nursing education and practice by utilizing curriculum theory and planning. The data suggest that any Western New York school offering a Masters Program in Nursing focusing on Oncology and/or Gerontology and including home licensure in administration would fulfill a student/community need not being met anywhere in New York State.


Dissatisfaction of elementary teachers with district-required curriculum in Eugene, Oregon, led the researcher to use identified teacher concerns as the basis for planning curriculum improvement. The researcher sought answers to questions about teachers' perceptions of curriculum components, instructional materials, and work experiences as teachers and as curriculum implementers, using illuminative evaluation techniques of British researcher Malcolm Pawlett. Findings indicate teacher satisfaction with their work as well as with clarity and developmental appropriateness of goals. Major job frustration stems from the overcrowded, elaborate curriculum with numerous complex goals. Teachers believe curriculum developers have unrealistic time expectations for competent teaching. Plans for improvement include setting curriculum priorities, suggesting time allocations for subjects, using "consumer satisfaction" research for evaluation, and continued assessment of actual time needs and curriculum demands.


This study traces documents and evaluates a high school interdisciplinary Global Education program in Livonia, Michigan, from origins through development. Descriptive in nature, the study is ethnographic in method. It reviews the political, economic, ecological, and intercultural sources of global awareness and traces the historical emergence of Global Education concepts. Swift gathers many definitions and rationales of Global Education and identifies common elements. Major findings include (1) the School of Global Education meets goals, (2) an effective developmental language arts/social studies curriculum can be developed, (3) the teaching staff must have special inservice instruction, (4) teachers use both a global perspective and other identifiable characteristics, (5) a supportive family pattern develops among students, (6) much of the effectiveness depends on the curriculum experiential components, (7) language arts can be as effective as social studies as a carrier of Global Education, (8) Parent Advisory Association support contributes to program success, (9) students are most effective recruiters, (10) once implemented, such a program should cost no more than regular program, (11) commitments from local teacher bargaining units and central direct administration are needed to protect teachers.

---

Virginia Macagnoni is Professor of Curriculum and Supervision, College of Education, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30605

Mary Phillips is Graduate Assistant, Department of Curriculum and Supervision, College of Education, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30605

Mary Bear is Associate Professor and Director, Brenau School of Nursing, Gainesville, Georgia 30506