CURRICULUM AND PLANNING:
VISIONS AND METAPHORS

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PREFACE

Sometime in 1981, Jim Macdonald and I agreed to write an article on the history and current status of curriculum planning for a book to be published in Israel and edited by Zvi Lamm of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The original idea was that this book would first be published in Hebrew and later in an English translation. We wrote the article, and it was translated into Hebrew and published in 1983 as part of a book. As far as I know, no English edition of this book has appeared.

Jim and I had planned to present the article for publication in America, and in 1982 we received permission to do so by the publisher. We have presented much of the material in the article to our classes, and many students urged us to get it into print. We never did get around to it.

Following Jim Macdonald’s death in 1983, I decided that it was important to share this work with our colleagues in the field. I have made some modest changes in the article in response to helpful criticisms from colleagues, but I believe that its essence is unchanged from the original. Some people have asked me to indicate which part of the paper is Macdonald and which is Purpel. I doubt I could answer this accurately even if I were convinced that it was necessary. Some passages are surely his and others surely mine, but much of it emerged from our joint effort.

However, aspects of this paper do evoke the significant legacy of Jim Macdonald’s contribution to education. Most broadly, and probably most fundamentally, Jim saw this paper as meeting the need to explore and to do serious rethinking about curriculum. He saw it as advancing new modes of analysis and expression and as a venture into largely uncharted realms of discourse. Second, I believe he was expressing his love of and commitment to the field of curriculum and was intent on breathing new life into a field...

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pronounced by some to be deceased. Third, he wanted very much in this paper to emphasize the enormous importance of the fact that the language and processes of curriculum and curriculum planning are embedded in metaphysical, philosophical, and moral concerns. Fourth, the article can be seen as an extension of the ideas on religion and curriculum that he presented in "A Transcendental Developmental Ideology of Education." Naturally, I hesitate to speculate on what he would have wanted or would have said on these matters. However, I do know that while we were writing this piece, he was particularly eager to encourage colleagues to present their own larger visions and thereby to stimulate debate and discussion on what as educators we can and should affirm. His life's work was dedicated to that task of affirmation, a task to which he continues to make an enduring contribution.

—DAVID E. PURPEL

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Curriculum planning both as fact and theory is so pervasive in education that it approaches a sense of inevitability. However, the field of curriculum planning, as well as curriculum itself, is a twentieth-century development. Certainly there have existed for centuries courses of study, programs, and categories of knowledge and skill, but the emergence of curriculum and curriculum planning as distinct enterprises with specialized knowledge and functions is a recent event. It is also clear that this field, like other professional fields, exists within a particular historical and cultural context. Thus, not surprisingly, curriculum planning is dominated by the main currents of technological, linear, and positivistic thinking of our contemporary culture. Its mode of thinking employs such basic metaphors as machine, engineering, utility, and quality control.

In curriculum planning, we have come to use the term "the Tyler rationale" as a shorthand way of referring to this overall conception of curriculum and curriculum planning. The Tyler rationale is essential to understanding today's curriculum planning process since it remains the foundational and functional paradigm for the profession. The rationale is related to classical economic decision-making theory and carries in it the ethos of our technical and engi-
neering culture. The rationale further complements the general climate of cost accounting, efficiency, and accountability with its focus upon student and teacher competency, and fits perfectly with metaphors of school as business or factory, and which requires quality control of the presumed product of schooling: student achievement. The rationale also lends itself well to certain political dimensions of schooling, inasmuch as it clearly communicates a simple and logical process to nonprofessionals, and so it functions to serve the status quo by focusing on how, not why, making sure that what “is” is taught more efficiently and effectively.

We believe, however, that the Tyler rationale has outworn its usefulness as the major paradigm for curriculum planning. It is proposed as an essentially neutral rational process where values, when they appear, are separated and treated as separate data in a rational decision-making process. There are many reasons for raising critical questions about the Tyler rationale, reasons that arise from a number of critiques of modernism.

Curriculum planning in Tyler’s rationale accepts without question the existing political and social setting—status quo as a basis for planning. Social reality is what it appears to be, and so the existing authority relations and social hierarchy are assumed to be positive and acceptable in the surround of the curriculum planning process. With this acceptance there comes an aura of expert elitism, which permeates the planning context.

From an intellectual point of view there are two critical concepts of the Tyler rationale that must be considered: (1) the centrality of the process of rational decision making, and (2) the identification of specific behaviors to be selected, elicited, organized, and evaluated. Individual behavior becomes the focus of the planning process, which is a clear example of the philosophical liberal paradigm that sees each individual’s acts as separate and autonomous from the world around them and more or less meritorious in terms of the general success criteria of school and society. There is little or no mention of the impact of the students’ background and culture; hence context is not seen to be relational, but merely as facilitative. This lack of sensitivity to cultural diversity flies in the face of numerous studies of student behavior that dramatically indicate the impact of sociocultural factors that provide contextual and relational influences far transcending the simplistic rational, linear decisions of the Tyler model. Thus, the Tyler rationale may be said to fit easily in a hierarchical society with the use of an expert or elite group to create school learning settings that reflect the interests of those dominant groups on society. There is no clear statement of who plans, under what conditions, and in whose interest!

Systematic critiques of the Tyler rationale have come from several sources including neo-Marxist, sociology of knowledge, aesthetic, and religious perspectives. The neo-Marxist critiques have taken place in the context of critiques of the function of schooling in capitalist society. Their basic assertion is that schools function to preserve the class system by reproducing the status quo
via the differential distribution of knowledge to children of different social classes. The curriculum of the school is treated here as cultural capital. Those entering with more capital accumulate more capital in proportionately greater degrees than those entering with less. Further, those entering with less capital are often tracked into special classes or special curriculum tracks—thus effectively cutting off access to kinds of learning (capital) that others have. From this perspective, the dominant thought process and techniques of curriculum planning simply provide an efficient and effective reproduction of a class system, with its privileges and power.

Up to this point the neo-Marxist critique makes a decidedly deep cut in ordinary views of schooling. Nevertheless, it is not clear either historically or critically whether the rejection of a Tylerism is based upon its essential character or upon the fact that it serves the wrong master. Historical examples and the materialistic basis of Marxist philosophy lead us to think that it is the latter. Marxism, we suspect, is embedded in the same general culture as capitalism, and the assumptive base of each allows them to use Tyler's or Skinner's behaviorism with equal facility. We find the Marxist critique flawed on this basis, its acceptance of materialistic opportunism in the service of different ends. It is surely clear that Marx, like Machiavelli, searched for a base other than values for human action. If human beings are a random accidental occurrence in the cosmos and create themselves and their own destiny through the obtaining and justification of power by small groups of elites, then the Tyler model is a useful control mechanism to bring about desired ends. It seems clear that both capitalistic and communistic ideologies are embedded in the common dominant technological, materialistic culture.

Fortunately, we are not without other insights into the human condition. Though they may lack the grandeur of thorough systemic frameworks, they have appeared consistently and meaningfully upon the human scene. We refer here to three such frameworks. (1) methodological anarchism, (2) aesthetics, and (3) religion.

Feyerabend has presented an anarchistic theory of knowledge. His basic premise is that science is essentially an anarchistic enterprise and that "theoretical anarchism is more humanitarian and more likely to encourage progress than its law-and-order alternatives." He is referring primarily to scientific methodology for inquiry and suggests science is best served by a methodological motto—"anything goes." Feyerabend supports this position with a quote from Einstein:

> The external conditions which are set for [the scientist] by the facts of experience do not permit him to let himself be too much restricted, in the construction of his conceptual world, by the adherence to an epistemological system. He, therefore, must appear to the systematic epistemologist as a type of unscrupulous opportunist.

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5. Ibid., p. 18.
This perspective is not far removed from our position here in relation to planning processes. The dominant planning paradigm, just as empirical experimental methodology, has preempted the thought processes of the profession. Feyerabend maintains that "a complex medium containing surprising and unforeseen developments demands complex procedures and defies analysis on the basis of rules that have been set up in advance and without regard to the ever-changing conditions of history." Surely the same may be said in the perspective of a monolithic planning paradigm like the Tyler rationale. The educational enterprise is too complex and holds too many unforeseen developments in the ever-changing conditions of planning to be restricted to one linear, rational, simplistic planning mode.

The critique from an aesthetic point of view addresses the basic problem of the separation of means from ends inherent in the technical planning approach. Thus, ends are stated and means are then emphasized. In many instances the means become another sort of ends in themselves. Aesthetically many activities are worth doing for the sake of engagement in them, and the value of such activity lies in the dynamics of participation. The outcomes of such pursuits are neither known nor relevant to the justification for doing them. Thus, inherent in an aesthetic concern is the realization that outcomes of any tangible sort are unknowable until after the fact.

This view has been developed in depth in relation to evaluation by Elliot Eisner, who suggests that the concepts of connoisseurship and educational criticism lead to a qualitative form of educational inquiry. J. Steven Mann in his work on curriculum criticism also calls for a basic transformation from a technological to an aesthetic mode: "from a framework in which the curriculum is input in a production system to one in which [curriculum] is regarded as an envisionary work of art that conveys meaning." Thus from an aesthetic viewpoint curriculum planning is planning for living environments, not productive outcomes of some larger system, and the planning activity itself should reflect the same qualitative concern for the personal and meaningful engagement with others in the process. The activity of the planning process must be to some extent self-justifying in human terms, not merely justified by some efficient and effective outcome.

 Religious critique focuses upon beliefs that correlate patterns in human experiences. Its purpose is to project interpretive models reflecting unitary wholes that share similarities with the aesthetic, especially those models that focus on a moral and ethical critique of human relationships. However, critique from a transcendentalist viewpoint is especially instructive and useful for the purposes here, because it previews the platform proposal that follows later.

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6Ibid.


An illustration of the meaning of transcendence here is the work of Peter Berger. Addressing religion from the orientation of "natural theology," Berger points out the existence of "signals of transcendence" in common human activity, that is, phenomena in our experience that appear to point beyond an everyday reality, a literal going beyond the normal, everyday world. The prototypical human gestures that constitute these signals are: (1) the human trait for order, (2) the basic human experience of play, (3) the capacity to extend into the future through hope, (4) the universal phenomena of damnation, and (5) the existence of humor.

All these experiences take us beyond the everyday, normal world, the world of Tyler’s behavioral objectives. Technical curriculum planning does not respond to this human potential. From a moral and ethical perspective, the Tyler rationale can be said to be amoral, which in itself is good reason for its rejection, since education is a moral enterprise. The curriculum as planned is a series of "shoulds," mastery of which will purportedly lead students to be "good" persons, to live a "good" life, and to make a "good" society. These are moral promises to the young, which lead to moral ends. However, there is no moral grounding for the Tyler rationale—no affirmation of basic beliefs, no reverence for life, no concern for compassion, or worrying about justice.

Moreover, this planning procedure is bankrupt in terms of nourishing a democratic community. If we assume that democracy means participation and community means people in communication and communion, then the Tyler rationale does not recognize the existence of a true democratic community. It is, indeed, most clearly an elitist planning procedure, from the top down, which is most effectively used to specify and isolate bits of culture and persons rather than build community. In this sense, the procedure is alienating. As a paradigm that deals with human affairs, the Tyler rationale is set in a view of humanity as infinitely perfectible and human society as characterized by progress. Each human being, if we are to believe Bloom, can be taught anything in his or her own time. The hubris and arrogance of such a controlling and manipulative approach are clear to see. It is, in fact, this very epitome of the linear rational planning approach that leads to the division and isolation of the individual to be manipulated for "learning" purposes around specific objectives, expert-selected and defined.

The linear rational planning approach is almost entirely technical talk, though some scientific talk is inherent in the early part of the Tyler rationale (needs assessment, etc.). There is, however, no built-in way to recognize the political, aesthetic, or moral aspects of life in the dominant language systems. Further, the recognition and the concern for qualities of humanness that are

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necessary for any full view of human nature are excluded in Tylerism. There is no opportunity for intellectual play, creativity, or expression of our essentially subjective nature, the reflection of compassion, or love and justice, joy, awe, or wonder goes unrecognized. No suggestion of the need for critical consciousness or a just community resides in this paradigm. What we have is a planning process that denies by omission and intention the essentially spiritual quality of human existence and the essential "sovereignty of the Good" where development of environments for living and learning are concerned.

PLATFORMS AND CURRICULUM PLANNING

We propose that curriculum planning as process must embody the transcendent, both in its cultural and spiritual meanings. The process must facilitate transcendence of the status quo through cultural consciousness and active subjectivity (art, play, etc.); it must embody the recognition of the essential spiritual qualities of human existence. In order to generate a model for such a process we believe it necessary to articulate a platform for curriculum planning. Whatever platform exists for the technical approach is neither clear nor stated. The need for a platform, is, however, a critical part of any planning procedure. Thus, as Michael Polanyi has clearly stated, our thinking and perceiving always proceed in a "from-to" relationship. There is, in other words, a necessary tacit platform from which we project a planning procedure.

The importance of "platform" has been discussed at length by hermeneutic philosophers. The work of Hans Gadamer is especially instructive. Each situation represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Thus, the concept of a "horizon" is an essential part of each situation, and many thinkers have used the word to characterize the way in which thought is tied to a platform. It is this platform that allows us to see beyond what is nearest to us. Without such a platform we are limited to and overvalue what seems to have a sense of immediacy to us. We must be concerned with both the limiting and liberating power of the metaphors that shape our ideas on what education is to be.

Technical rationales have not explicitly presented their horizons. They do in part proceed in a manner described by Gadamer as "overvaluing what is nearest to them." Partly this is due to the ahistorical quality of technical thinking. We propose that a platform is a critical part of any planning process, and its historical and transcendent metaphysical qualities as well as its moral, ethical, political, and aesthetic characteristics are fundamental to understand-

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ing and evaluating any planning procedure. And in this spirit we address the problem of platform.

The use of the term platform in curriculum talk appears in Walker's work. Walker posited and described a model of the process of curriculum development that consisted of three elements. (1) platform, (2) design, and (3) deliberation. Concerning platform, Walker says.

The curriculum developer does not begin with a blank slate. He could not begin without some notion of what is possible and desirable educationally. The system of beliefs and values that the curriculum developer brings to his task and that guides the development of the curriculum is what I call the curriculum's platform. The word "platform" is meant to suggest both a political platform and something to stand on. The platform includes an idea of what is and a vision of what ought to be, and these guide the curriculum developer in determining what he should do to realize his vision.

The platform for our proposed model of curriculum planning to a very considerable extent relies on the use of religious metaphors because we believe they help to focus attention on the scientific, political, moral, aesthetic, as well as the religious, contents. Ian Barbour contrasts models in science and religion, both of which he believes make use of analogy and metaphor. Each should be taken seriously, but not literally, for neither are literal pictures of reality. Religious models, however, serve a diversity of functions that differ from scientific or technical models.

Religious models often recommend a way of life or are an endorsement of a set of moral principles. They may express and evoke a distinctive self-commitment to a communal creed that often engenders a characteristic set of attitudes toward human existence. But beyond these noncognitive uses, a religious model can provide a cognitive perspective that directs our attention to particular patterns in events, a perspective that allows us to interpret history and human experience.

Barbour describes certain distinctive types of experience that are addressed in a religious framework: (1) awe and reverence, which remind us of our dependence, finitude, limitation, and contingency; (2) mystical union as expression of the unity of all things; (3) moral obligation in the form of ethical decisions and assumption of responsibility and sometimes subordination of our own inclinations; (4) reorientation and reconciliation related to acknowledgment of guilt and repentence, which may be followed by the experience of forgiveness; (5) interpersonal relationships as experience of dialogue between persons characterized by directness, immediacy, and mutuality; (6) key historical events of the corporate experience of the community, which help us

15Ibid., p. 52.
understand ourselves and what has happened to us, and (7) order and creativity in the world, the intricate complexity and interdependence of forms. Religious models also go beyond the interpretation of experience. According to Barbour, they have the capacity to express attitudes, to disclose realities that lead to harmonizing whatever events are at hand, and to contribute to constructing metaphysical systems.17

A PROPOSED PLATFORM

In constructing our platform, we believe it is imperative that we first try to make clear that which has been traditionally tacit in models of curriculum planning, namely, those assumptions about ultimate meaning and about the relationships between humanity and the universe. In so doing, some of our language will perforce be quite different from the conventional curriculum rhetoric, which tends to be technical, neutral, and detailed in tone. Largely because of the enormous dominance of the technical model of thought, educators typically find themselves uncomfortable with the language and metaphors of personal belief and religious affirmation. Many equate "religion" with denominationalism and organized religion. A good many educators have a great deal of antipathy toward organized religion for a variety of reasons, such as painful personal experiences, matters relating to the separation of church and state, and historical considerations including organized religion’s stance toward civil liberties, human rights, and social justice. For many, the term religion evokes sanctimony, excess piety, rigid tolerance, sentimentality, and the like.

Our view is that, however legitimate these concerns may be and we certainly share some of them, they constitute an unnecessary barrier to the basic impulse to search for ultimate meaning and purpose that is common to us all. We must not allow this impulse and the language of this impulse to become the sole property of a separate and distinct group of clergy, theology professors, or churchgoers. We must recover the language of religion and metaphysics as integral parts of our individual and communal searches for meaning, even though this can and will continue to create discomfort for those of us educated to be skeptical if not scornful of religious inquiry.

We have ourselves experienced this discomfort in writing this paper, as our hope has been to place curriculum within a framework that speaks to basic personal, social, and spiritual values. Our fear has been that our language might seem sentimental, fuzzy, and pious, thereby repelling many of our readers. Our conviction, as we have said, is that these concerns are common to all even though there are obviously enormous differences in the way we relate to them. Our decision is to accept the risk based on the faith that our readers would resonate with the spirit and intentionality if not the specifics

17Ibid., pp. 49-70.
of our effort. We therefore present some of our basic beliefs not as an attempt
to demonstrate their superiority but to indicate what lies beneath our pro-
posed model and to broaden the nature of the dialogue on curriculum
planning. We believe that the metaphors of control, certainty, and elitism
implicit in the Tyler rationale are not appropriate for questing for our highest
human aspirations. We believe that the use of religious metaphors can help
us in the continuing efforts to understand the process of curriculum planning
and, more particularly, can help to develop a model that goes beyond tech-
nology, control, and alienation.

We choose to view the world as part of a larger transcendent reality, and
our task as humans to be that of being in harmony with it. We believe that
much is already known about these divine intentions, though we still have
much to learn about them and much to do before they are fulfilled. We believe
that humans are intended to be participants in the development of a world in
which justice, love, dignity, freedom, joy, and community flourish. We believe
that we are meant to pursue a path of truth, beauty, and goodness. We believe
that the world exists in an imperfect and incomplete state but that man and
woman possess the aesthetic and intellectual sensibilities to re-create them-
Selves and the world in unity with the divine; the wholeness of body, mind,
and spirit; earth and cosmos; and humanity and nature. It is well to remind
ourselves of the common derivation of these words—whole, holy, and heal—
so that we may see education as a sacred process that can lead us to be whole
again and heal the wounds of history.

We also know that the path to that unity has been filled with uncertainties
and obstacles and that our education must be conducted in recognition of
that uncertainty and resistance. Although we have faith that humanity has
developed and will continue to develop morally and spiritually, we must be
mindful of the continuing presence of such evils as injustice, war, disease,
greed, violence, oppression, ignorance, fear, prejudice, and alienation. It is
evils such as these that provide the barriers to personal and cultural fulfillment;
that is, the ability to live a life of aesthetic and moral excellence, a life of joy,
creativity, abundance, and meaning. The most fundamental and highest goal
of education then becomes human liberation, in both a negative and positive
sense. Negatively, liberation means being free from unnecessary constraints
and barriers to human dignity and potential such as those that come from
being poor, frightened, misguided, ignorant, and unaffirmed—in a word,
controlled. Human liberation in a positive sense refers to the capacity for full
consciousness, fulfillment, joy, integration—in a word, freedom. Harvey Cox
makes reference to two categories of liberation as reflected in the Exodus-
Easter metaphor. The Exodus story reflects the deep human impulse for
political and economic freedom and escape from human subjugation and
hence becomes a metaphor for social liberation. Easter to Cox "... celebrates
the liberation of all men and women from 'sin and death.' 'Sin' is understood
as whatever chains people to the past, and 'death' as whatever terrifies them
about the future." It is in this sense that Easter becomes a metaphor for personal liberation. We believe that education should help in the process of re-creating and celebrating both Exodus and Easter, or as Cox puts it, "I suggest that Exodus and Easter add up to a vision of 'God' as whatever it is within the vast spectacle of cosmic evolution which inspires and supports the endless struggle for liberation, not just from tyranny but from all bondages 'God' is that power which despite all setbacks never admits to final defeat."19

We add our affirmation to the millions of others who have been and continue to be in touch with that awesome inspiration, support, and determination. We believe that mankind is also endowed with two incredible, albeit not fully realized, capacities that are the signal requirements for the struggle, that is, both a critical and an imaginative consciousness. As Michael Polanyi says, what is common to all thought and inquiry is human imagination and intuition.20 It is our faith that humanity will be liberated only when these consciousnesses are fully developed. We must be fully and keenly aware about how and what our lives and environment are and what they mean as the bases for guiding our imagination and intuition in the development of ever closer approximations of cosmic unity.

We are, therefore, clear on liberation as the goal for education, mindful, of course, that there are other very important and closely related educational goals such as skill mastery, informative knowledge, and explanation. However, we are also clear that in our present condition, we experience much of life as paradoxical and confusing. We are always confronting dilemmas, uncertainties, and ambiguities as we try to unravel mystery and as we seek deeper and broader understanding of the meaning of life. More specifically, professional educators continually confront such paradoxes, uncertainties, and dilemmas as they try to develop educational experiences that resonate with their values. Compulsory education to teach freedom? A prescribed curriculum as a way of promoting creativity? Can we have equality and excellence? Community and efficiency? Socialization and liberation? Control and freedom? Moreover, adding to the difficulty is the reality of a pluralism and diversity among educators and the lay public about the nature of the educational process. Indeed, this is still another paradox, that of recognizing and celebrating diversity while at the same time pursuing unity and integration.

A MODEL FOR CURRICULUM PLANNING

Curriculum planning of the logical sort is not inevitable, nor is it necessarily desirable since there are valid situations in which significant curriculum

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19Ibid., p. 153.
planning is not appropriate. For example, in an educational orientation that stresses a student-centered curriculum, planning would seem to be limited to arranging for instruction appropriate to students' expressed interests. It has been said that the single most critical question for curriculum planners is "What should be left to chance?" If and when there is some positive response to that question, curriculum planning becomes appropriate, that is, when there is a need for considered and informed organization of learning activities. Curriculum planning becomes a modest task if we use "interesting" as a criterion for content selection, since the major task is simply to find out what students consider to be interesting. However, if we decide also, or instead, to teach what is "important," we are faced with a much more problematic situation, one that requires experience, dialogue, and a decision-making process. We have already indicated in our framework that education should be something more than responding to student interests, in that education involves the most important questions of human existence. We, therefore, accept the importance of curriculum planning and present an alternative model, one informed by the educational framework described and the exercise of reason.

Three critically important points must be made initially as background for our model. First, we see our curriculum process as being an important educative opportunity for the participants. The hope is that this curriculum planning process will provide liberating experiences that will promote the personal and social development of the curriculum planners. Second, the process is not to be seen as prescriptive except in the sense that it is designed to be in harmony with the educational framework. A key element in this model is that it provides a diversity, pluralism, and most importantly is intended to allow for openness. This model definitely does not assume or posit any particular curricular form such as the teaching of disciplines or any specific instructional format such as homogeneous grouping. The model assumes that major questions will cut across settings but that there will be a wide variety of local response to these questions. Third, curriculum planning is seen here as more than a problem-solving process in that we see it as having an important critical function as well. Curriculum planners are not technicians only, although there are technical aspects involved; they are also inquirers and critics of education responsible for conceptualizing and posing problems and issues. We assume that this process is a continuous and ongoing one; it is characterized by constant reexamination, research, and reevaluation.

Given our framework of assumptions and values and given the three initial aspects of the model, we need to address three additional related issues: what is the nature of the process? who is to be involved in it? and how are decisions to be made?

In Seduction of the Spirit, Harvey Cox describes techniques that he used in learning about different religious groups and forms, techniques he calls
"participatory hermeneutics" and "experimental liturgy". We have blended and adapted aspects of these techniques to serve as the basis for our suggested process of curriculum planning. We offer three elements of the process.

1. **Data gathering and analysis.** In this phase, curriculum planners need to gain perspective on the particular issue. They will need to know the history and background of the larger issues and how they are manifested in the particular setting. It is also the stage where the issues are analyzed against the basic framework, that is, how the particulars relate to matters of liberation, personal and social development, and the rest of the fundamental values. The planners will need to review the research field, become aware of the various conceptual orientations, and be able to make and produce connections between the field in general and the specific in particular situations. This phase provides an opportunity to gain historical and theoretical perspectives, thereby providing the planners with a background on the meaning and significance of what is involved.

2. **Participant observation.** In this phase, curriculum planners actually become involved in the issue by actively participating in related activities. The planners can do this in a context of ongoing, related programs in their own setting or in other settings. They can also perform this function by developing and participating in experimental, pilot programs. The essential aspect of this stage is that planners have the opportunity to gain insight from being directly involved with practice and their own experience of it. Although valuable insight can be gained from being involved with the programs in place, more creative planning is likely to emerge from involvement in highly imaginative, far-out, even daring experiments, some of which could be specifically designed for this purpose. One effect of this phase would be to temper the detachment of planners from educational activities and other colleagues. The data gathering and the participation set the stage for a dialectic of theory and practice as well as between the abstract and the concrete.

3. **Interpretation.** At this stage the curriculum planners share the individual meanings each has derived from the process. It is not a time to "compute pros and cons" and grind out a "solution" but an opportunity to deal honestly with individual interpretations. Curriculum planners will need here to indicate part of their own biographies—their own values, assumptions, backgrounds, orientations, and life views. Out of a thorough and open sharing process will emerge the decision and recommendations. Our faith is that this decision is likely to be a wiser one since it will reflect at least some degree of the diversity of human feelings, ideas, and judgments.

Cutting through these three elements of the process, of course, will be considerable dialogue. We do not wish to prescribe the nature of the dialogue except to indicate some general criteria for its form and substance.

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The tone of the dialogues will need to reflect the major values expressed in our framework, they will be personally nonjudgmental and characterized by a celebration of diversity with a sensitivity to personal dignity. They will require intellectual rigor, aesthetic sensibility, and free-flowing imagination. They will very likely be conducted in a context of inadequate information, insufficient understanding, differing interpretations, that is, with uncertainty. The substance of the dialogues will deal with the dialectical quality of the issues involved. Discussions will deal with the abstract and the concrete, with the individual and the group, with understanding and meaning, with the relationship between the educational setting and larger units including society and culture, between the ideals and the actual. Nothing in this description of the dialogue should be interpreted as meaning that we intend to prescribe anything except as we urge a congruence between the values of the framework and the dialogues. We reiterate that our framework posits openness, experimentation, diversity, variety, and freedom.

The matter of who is to be involved in the dialogue is best determined within the context of each setting and the particular issue. However, a few guidelines are appropriate. Clearly the decision of who should be involved ought to be made within a framework of democratic principles, professional requirements, and efficiency. There needs to be representation of those who are directly involved in and affected by the issue, the process certainly requires the use of talent—expertise, experience, imagination, and knowledge. Since curriculum planning is in part a task-oriented process, attention must be paid to logistical concerns such as size of the group and extent of involvement of its members, for such concerns affect the group’s ability to meet its responsibilities.22

Finally, there is the question of how decisions are to be made. Within the framework, decisions will need to be made with full regard for the legitimacy of each person’s orientations and for the need to affirm each one’s dignity and at the same time in awareness of both the importance of making a decision and the significance of making no decision. We favor an approach that is directed at achieving as much consensus as is possible, though we are aware that in some situations achieving full consensus may seem unnecessary or unreachable. However, we are very much taken by the commitment to and success within a consensus approach by such groups as the Society of Friends. Such groups extend their principles of individual affirmation and trust in the process of open and honest sharing to the ultimate test of requiring decisions to be made through consensus rather than the more prevalent democratic forms of vote-taking. The difficulty with vote-taking, as a Quaker colleague once indicated, is that “it fails to take intensity of feeling into account.”

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22We are assuming that curriculum planning will occur in groups, but this is not to preclude the possibility that in certain circumstances it would be appropriate for one person to do the curriculum planning. Of course, in this situation the basic framework could and would apply.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CURRICULUM PLANNING

We are very much aware that our orientation is not, and cannot be, the last word in the development of a conception of curriculum planning. An enormous amount of critical and imaginative work must be done in order to forge powerful and compelling alternatives to the existing technical orientation. It is not just that this work would be a useful and interesting task but that we see such efforts as a metaphor for the urgent and critical task of freeing ourselves from the narrowness of the existing mechanistic and control-oriented paradigm that shapes so much of our culture.

We have argued that any model of curriculum planning is rooted in a cluster of visions—a vision of humanity, of the universe, of human potential, and of our relationships to the cosmos. These visions, though dimly viewed and rarely articulated, nonetheless have a profound impact on our day-to-day educational practices and upon our more theoretical formulations. It is for this fundamental reason that we are so troubled when we encounter the notion that curriculum planning is a separate function divorced from its human, social, economic, political, and religious context. Curriculum planning is but an index, a reflection, an aspect, an activity that emerges from an orientation and vision of who and what we are, where we come from, and where we are going.

What is of the most extraordinary import, of course, is which particular vision we decide to choose, for the choosing of a vision allows us to become that vision. The vision implicit in the Tyler rationale is a needlessly limited and distorted one, a vision that posits the status quo, the necessity for control, and the possibility of objectivity and neutrality. We believe that we as a species do indeed search and yearn for profound meaning, that we aspire to freedom and are endowed with the genius that will make this possible. It is to this vision that curriculum planning and all other educational processes should be directed.

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