People living in a democracy learn to live with tensions. Human judgment, sensitivities, and communication must be exquisite if democracy is to flourish. Basic values of justice, decision making, and compassion must constantly be treated problematically if all people are to exercise their human rights and learn to deal with the dilemmas of developing human uniqueness within a caring community. Living out the basic tenets of democracy is not easy.

Because various types of educational institutions are embedded in a democracy, the same tensions that thinking citizens face are also challenges for those responsible for curriculum development. The tendency frequently is, because of the complexity of the task, to simplify and thus to arrive at curriculum thrusts that primarily are unrelated lists of behavioral objectives, or to shirk the responsibility by laying the responsibility primarily on the individual to deal with curriculum at such a high level of abstraction that it is far removed from reality. For example, Adler's *Six Great Ideas*, although worthy of curriculum developers' consideration, needs to be brought down to a level where the ideas are made problematic and contextual.\(^1\)

Thus, anyone charged with the education of others must consider the tough issues facing those interested in preparing people to be contributing and adequate citizens in communities where basic human values are cherished and in an increasingly smaller world.

The formulation of normative inquiry presented here is based on the assumption that educators are most human when they are dealing with the meaning of schooling in all its complexity, in all its diversity, and in all its possibility. Furthermore, the task of the curriculum worker is uncovering, creating, and sustaining norms that account for the individual as unique and as community member. Also, inquiry into norms, values, standards, and judgment is the basis for curriculum development and the heart of the process.

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What is being suggested is not new. Curriculum theorists and developers have through the years called for attention to the purposes that shape education. Still, the recent spate of national and state tests, the perceived obligation of schools to respond to various pressure groups, and the increasing blandness of textbooks designed to offend no one (and so to challenge neither) call for a reconsideration of the development process. Because of pressures coupled with an inability to deal with the massive challenges faced, curriculum developers may be inconsistent in approach, fail to show the relationships among the parts of the curriculum, and create designs that lack integrity.

What is being proposed, therefore, is normative inquiry in curriculum (NIC). Basically, normative inquiry in curriculum is concerned about a substantive approach to values and ethics as contrasted with a primarily analytic one. It is concerned with an integration and an interrelationship among the parts so that the various aspects of the curriculum possess integrity, consistency, and congruity based on considered values. This formulation invites thought and action on the part of the reader, but probably not implementation in toto because the proposal is designed so that local contextual issues must enter into implementation. The formulation is not so unrelated to reality that it is characterized by pure utopianism.

What follows is a discussion of normative inquiry in curriculum, including a brief description of what is meant by normative inquiry, some characteristics and assumptions about normative inquiry, and an analysis of the role of curricular influences and curriculum realities on normative curriculum inquiry. The article concludes with suggestions for getting started and a surfacing of certain tough questions.

THE PROBLEM OF DEFINITION

Comprehensive curriculum texts basically provide guidance in determining the scope of the factors that must be considered in reality-centered curriculum development. Normative inquiry in curriculum ordinarily gives primary attention to the fit among the parts of a curriculum rather than to a consideration of all the factors that go into curriculum development and implementation. NIC is more deeply rooted in a philosophical stance than in political or economic realities, although these factors may be considered.

Although several curriculum inquirers have written curriculum texts that depict in some ways normative inquiry as described in this material, little
written guidance is available for the individual wishing to engage in NIC. Among the challenges in laying out the blueprint is presenting the case so that the curriculum inquirer's result may be "choice worthy," possess the potential for situating itself in reality, and introduce the possibility of developing more meaningful norms or values.

Therefore, the concern is with the design of curriculums that possess simultaneously visionary yet potentially situationally oriented elements, generic and yet contextually relevant ideas. The statement ordinarily accounts for the realities of the educative process, such as the substance of the curriculum and how the designated substance may be taught, the students for whom the substance of the curriculum is intended, modes of organizing, and plans for evaluation and possibly research.

According to Frankena, "A normative philosophy of education must contain statements and recommendations of a normative kind about the ends, principles, means, methods, subject matter, etc., of education, that is, statements about the ends that are desirable or good, the principles that should be followed, the means that ought to be used." Normative inquiry is difficult, for normative presumes standards, these standards may be discovered, unearthed, or created. They need not be merely regulative or prescriptive; on the other hand, the norms may be enduring ones such as justice or caring. A tension is created between dealing with norms found in the context or situation while developing norms that allow for new understandings, vision, and ethical behavior to emerge. NIC is developed so that it involves participation, a sharing in planning and events.

CHARACTERISTICS AND ASSUMPTIONS OF NORMATIVE INQUIRY IN CURRICULUM

1. NIC is embedded in a set of values that are consistent and pervasive throughout the proposal. Values, whether stated or inferred, are compatible with each other rather than contradictory.

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2. **NIC is characterized by a match among the parts of the curriculum.** Even as the values implicit in the curriculum are congruent with each other, so the match between the parts of the curriculum proposal, however such parts are identified, are consistent with each other and the underlying values.

3. **NIC is characterized by a sense of completeness.** Although exemplars of NIC may differ from each other in terms of the parts, whatever parts are included in the proposal form a body that has some sense of wholeness.

4. **NIC ordinarily transcends, at least to some degree, the present state of affairs and provides a vision as to what might be.** In this paper, we are not dealing with utopias, which might be so far removed from reality that the likelihood of implementation is not great. Utopian models may be normative, but their implementation is not likely or possible because of the lack of ties between new and old. Rather, our intent is to provide certain ideas for those who desire newness but are willing to deal with certain current practices to make critical linkages. For example, NIC may have ideas that transcend present thought but are couched in language familiar to those who will use the ideas. On the other hand, concepts may be developed in a language that is liberating, freeing, and creative.

5. **NIC deals with the tension between what is and what might be.** Although many might argue that normative inquiry deals basically with oughts, it is difficult to conceive of oughts without locating them at least tentatively within some kinds of settings. As settings develop, change, and develop new perspectives, so might the norms and values for the setting. NIC accounts for the tension between prevailing norms of the curriculum proposal and the values that are part of the situation in which the proposal may be implemented.

6. **NIC may take into account both curricular realities external to people and the evolving knowledge of those for whom the curriculum is intended.** NIC is concerned with the visible realities of the curriculum—the values that are stated, the ideas to be considered, the activities to be engaged in, the organization of what is to be learned, the role of teachers in the implementation of the curriculum. At the same time, NIC may be designed so that the internal and emerging knowledge of students and teachers may be the stuff of the curriculum.

7. **NIC lends itself to various modes of inquiry.** Statements might tie into a view of the person and then give conditions for educative practice. For example, "If you want a student to be able to communicate with persons representing diverse backgrounds, then give the student opportunities to interact with individuals from a variety of backgrounds." Such if-then statements may be composed at various levels of abstraction. Curriculum inquiry resulting from NIC does not necessarily have to follow from if-then statements only. Testing hypotheses illustrates one type of curriculum inquiry. Studies might be descriptive, interpretive, historical, or any combination of research methodologies.
8. NIC does not ordinarily make the change process a major area of concern, however, NIC can provide guidance on how to move from the current state of affairs to new ones. The purpose of NIC is to provide vision, consistency, and relatively complete frameworks that account for many curriculum variables. What is in place in many settings is frequently a mix of careful logical planning, political pressure, and tradition. To impose NIC would violate many beliefs held about the need for people engaged in an enterprise to have the opportunity to determine, at least partially, their own destinies. Thus, the problem of change, possible points of negotiation between the old and the new, and points at which NIC can be adapted may be part of NIC but not its central purpose. NIC may provide markers or a map to use in reality but is not the reality.

9. NIC serves primarily to raise consciousness. Although issues of match and fit between the components of the curriculum have been discussed as reasons for engaging in NIC, more critical reasons have to do with elevating the spirit, transcending mundaneness, linking contemporary and futuristic issues with history, and stimulating the imagination. Inquiry into any area may evoke images of here-and-nowness, constrictedness, precise use of language, and little attention to risk taking. Those interested in NIC need to give attention to consciousness raising, to imagination, to synthesis as contrasted with analysis. Thus, NIC may be characterized by several qualities designed to give the curriculum field a thrust rather than to locate the field only in the realm of the scientific, the descriptive, or the explainable:

- an ability to evoke new images
- the possibility of giving new life and direction to the field
- the potential for suggesting new ways to deal with old components of the curriculum or to find old ways to teach the fresh
- the use of metaphor, allusion, myth, and other literary styles that assist people in shifting perspectives and thus in dealing with the world in unique ways
- the strength to weed out curriculum irrelevancies and to encompass what needs to be included
- the determination of moral and ethical dilemmas necessitating major curricular revision
- the attainment of a fragile balance between the logical and the imagi-
nativeness that evokes transcendence of the banal and humdrum and movement toward new intellectual and moral heights in curriculum development
- the breaking of old structures and building of new, the forsaking of outworn questions, and the creation of more powerful ones
- the encouragement of risk taking and commitment to necessary change
- the allowance for the emergence of the unpredictable, the unexplain-
able, the possible, and the promising
- the dialectic with the real world and the world yet to be discovered and recovered

Although much of this language and the seemingly nebulous nature of some of the concepts may appear to be antithetical to scholarly inquiry, NIC invites a graciousness, gentleness, and sense of wholeness necessary to a creative approach to moving the curriculum field ahead.

**INFLUENCES ON THE CURRICULUM**

Although not always made visible, a number of influences have a bearing on the curriculum. These influences provide texture and body to it, in a sense, they provide a foundation for curriculum. The care given to thinking through curricular influences largely determines the quality of NIC. Integrity, clarity, and consistency may more likely characterize curriculum in which attention is given to influences than if such attention is not given.

Several overlapping influences are next considered in this section of the article—intentionality, freedom, orientation toward values, and significance of the lived experience. Not all NIC may call for attention to the same influences. The reader may define other more critical ones. Whatever influences seem critical to the curriculum being designed, careful attention should be given to those selected.

**Intentionality**

Intentionality is ordinarily inherent in NIC. Frequently, issues related to intentionality are couched in the language of objectives, behaviors, or means-ends. In a competency-based program, for example, means-ends may be visible, with little attention given to the unanticipated or to the inner workings of the person as he or she attempts to achieve an end. The relationship of means to ends is ordinarily direct, clear, and unencumbered by ambiguity of fit.

On the other hand, if the curriculum tends more toward building on the personal meanings of the individual, the relationship of means and ends may be discounted or given little attention. In curriculums that emphasize personal meaning, intention might be seen as emergent or expressive rather than as pre-planned and as student-centered as opposed to teacher- or text-centered.

In curriculums that are almost entirely emergent, intention may need to be extracted from studying a transcription or a videotape of classroom happenings. Issues relative to intentions may center on questions of whose intentions are honored, the significance of intentions, the levels of consciousness of...

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intention, and the degree of acquiescence or initiation anticipated from the student.

**Freedom**

Like intention, freedom may be dealt with directly or indirectly. In certain types of curriculum organization, it is a major consideration. In other types, curriculum designers may not see it as a central concern. Like a small amount of a spice that may transform a bland dish into a more tasty one, freedom may be difficult to see in a proposal. Yet, whether it has been given adequate attention in NIC can make the difference between a proposal in which freedom is carefully explicated and one in which the concept of freedom is ignored.

Freedom may be defined as independence from, in harmony with, or as a unifying force. When defined as independence from, the curriculum gives attention to constraints and restraints that hinder the individual from carrying out what he or she wishes. Freedom is seen as negation, as "the eradication of obstacles." Curriculums defining freedom as the lack of hindrance may develop opportunities that are open but lacking in challenge, since it is up to the individual to determine what he or she is for as well as against.

When defined as in harmony with, freedom assumes a relationship, a sense of community, a commitment to rather than only a freedom from. Bergmann talks about freedom as a function of identification, of relationship. Only when people lack a sense of identity do they wish total independence. In community, in finding one's place in it, and in seeking to develop one's self so that community and self are simultaneously enhanced is a view of freedom with major implications for curriculum design. Choices that help define the individual within community mean careful planning in NIC to maintain the tension between individual choice and community cohesion.

If one accepts the concept that freedom is being in harmony with, then freedom involves giving the self an opportunity to develop through nurturing others and attempting to understand another's verbal and nonverbal language. It involves establishing settings where the imagination can leap. It involves establishing settings that are neither too permissive nor too authoritarian—settings that invite a deep enhancement of self through community with others.

Freedom may also be defined in terms of "the leading edge" of people. In this definition, attention focuses on purpose and the "conscious, rational, unifying, and discriminating element that leads us in one direction rather than

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"Ibid., p. 37
"Ibid., p. 48.
"Ibid., p. 125.
Freedom in this perspective gives attention to the peculiarly human aspects of the person that cause him or her to move ahead in unique and satisfying ways. Freedom is not a value "but a condition for the pursuit and realization of values."14

**Orientation Toward Values**

Even as freedom is a condition for values to flourish, so values are the glue—glue that holds the parts of the puzzle or the curriculum realities together. Values enable the match between the various parts of the curriculum—between activities and teachers and evaluation.

Besides dealing with the values that serve as the glue of the curriculum, those engaged in NIC need to be concerned with the possible value stances of students and the relation of various stances to students. They need to take into account whether the stance is toward eliciting values from students and dealing with them or teaching a selected core of values.

The dilemma posed in selecting an appropriate stance toward values by the person engaged in NIC is evident in Figure 1. Consider the dilemmas posed in each quadrant.

**Quadrant A.** The curriculum teaches a core body of values that students accept. Congruency between the student and the curriculum is evident here. However, the student may not develop the critical skills necessary to deal with value dilemmas or situations in which a fit may not exist between the values of the student and those evident in a situation.

**Quadrant B.** Here the curriculum is designed to help students deal with value dilemmas; however, the students unquestioningly accept the values they have been taught. Students have not developed critical skills necessary for dealing with value dilemmas.15 Students may be frustrated by the lack of perceived core values in the curriculum and lack skills to deal with problematic situations. A mismatch exists between the students and the curriculum designed for them. The curriculum may need to be adjusted to where the students are, for students may move in gradual steps rather than in big leaps in their moral and ethical development.16

**Quadrant C.** Here students are used to examining and dealing with their own values; however, the curriculum is designed to teach selected core values. Thus, a dysfunction may exist between students and the curriculum.

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13Ibid.
14Ibid., p. 22
Quadrant D. The curriculum is designed to help students deal with their own values. The students are attuned to dealing with value positions. Congruence exists between the curriculum and the students undergoing it. The outcomes of Quadrant D may be students able to deal with multiple value perspectives.

Congruency between student and curriculum relative to perspectives on values is possible in Quadrant A, although a dysfunction may occur if the students' core values are different from the core values of the curriculum. In Quadrant D, the possibility of a fit also exists. Here caution needs to be exercised that the curriculum and the students develop critical skills so that a possibility exists for the development of community values as well as individual values.

Although attention to the scope of values that might serve as bases to NIC is not the intent of this article, examples of central values include justice, caring, goodness, involvement or intensity, and ethics and morality. Besides

defining values for NIC, we must consider the possible outcomes of the attention to values. Is the anticipated outcome a given kind of behavior? a conviction? a principle?8 Essentially, NIC involves basic spadework in the nature and quality of the moral life before curriculum can be developed that goes beyond a purely technical curriculum.

Significance of the Lived Experience

Related to the concept of the place of values is the orientation of the proposal's originators to the significance of the lived experience of students. To what degree does the curriculum permit dealing with "insiders' situations and views"?19 Is the curriculum based on "communicative understandings of meanings given by people who live within the setting"?20 Is the student's perspective on text significant? A curriculum based on the assumptions that individuals give meanings to objects, persons, and places, and that knowledge is constantly reconstructed in terms of new images and perceptions may differ considerably from ones in which such considerations receive little priority.

If the curriculum is slanted toward the "outsiders'" view of knowledge, the lived experience of learners has little direct bearing on the curriculum. Principles, facts, theories, laws, and maxims as developed by scholars in the field become the critical aspects of the curriculum. The negotiation of the student with such predetermined knowledge is not so important as the mastery of the substance of the curriculum.

Figure 2 offers some possible ways of thinking about the lived worlds of students and the relationship to the proposed curriculum. Although Figure 2 overly simplifies the considerations relative to the significance of the lived experience, it draws attention to the fact that students are not clean slates. Decisions to deal with or ignore the experiential worlds of students are intentional.

Quadrant A. Here a congruency exists between the purpose of the curriculum and the lived worlds of the learners. The lived worlds of students

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10Ibid.
Figure 2. Possible Orientations Toward the Lived Experience of Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT</th>
<th>CURRICULUM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lived World of Students Significant to Them</td>
<td>Lived World of Students Evoked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum invites sharing of inner knowledge. Lived world of students significant. Congruency between curriculum and students.</td>
<td>Curriculum designed to evoke lived experience. Students not used to dealing with lived experience. Incongruency between expectations of students and curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>(C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B)</td>
<td>(D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Imposed—Lived World of Little Significance</td>
<td>Curriculum deals primarily with experts' knowledge. Students expect to deal with &quot;outsiders'&quot; knowledge. Congruency between expectations of students and curriculum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students Not Used to Dealing with Own Experience—Accept "Outsiders'" Knowledge are seen as significant to them. Students wish to deal with their own realities, to engage in dialogue. They are interested in constructing their own principles, generalizations, and laws. In a sense, they are interested in constructing their own histories and in sharing their inner knowledge. The curriculum is designed to evoke their ideas and to assist them in negotiating their thinking with outsiders' thinking.

**Quadrant B** Here an incongruency exists between the intent of the students and the purposes of the curriculum. Students are used to dealing with their own inner dynamics, with disclosing their own meanings, with raising their own questions. The curriculum, however, is designed to "teach" outsiders' generalizations and principles.

**Quadrant C**. Incongruency again exists, this time because the curriculum is designed to help students address and act on their own personal knowledge, but students are not equipped to do so. Their tendencies, for whatever reasons, are toward the imposition of knowledge.
Quadrant D. Congruency exists here. The curriculum is designed to teach outsiders’ knowledge, and students are attuned to dealing with others’ knowledge rather than with the dialogical process in which others’ knowledge is made personal.

In dealing with the lived worlds of students, we are not dealing with black-and-white issues. Students are more or less used to dealing with the dialogical process in constructing knowledge. Curriculums may be designed on a continuum in terms of dealing with the dialogical, transformative, reconstructive processes. Aoki also deals with the issues addressed in this section; see the Appendix, “Perspectives on Competence.”

In summary, a number of normative dilemmas associated with critical influences on the curriculum must be resolved through NIC. Reviewed here have been those associated with the influences of intentionality, freedom, orientation toward values, and orientation toward the significance of lived experience.

Curriculum Realities

Certain curriculum realities also pose normative dilemmas that must be resolved in curriculum development. Curriculum realities are considerations that must be accounted for as philosophical beliefs about curriculum become translated into practice or proposed practice. For example, Schwab has written about “commonplaces of education,” referring to the “teacher, student, what is taught, and milieu of teaching-learning.” Schwab’s commonplaces are useful because they help organize the masses of considerations that must take place in curriculum planning. Those engaged in NIC may select to use Schwab’s items, to develop their own set of realities, or to use a set of questions. For example, Tyler asks about the purposes of the school, the selection of learning experiences to achieve stated objectives, and the organization and evaluation of learning experiences.

Although both Tyler and Schwab provide useful handles for curriculum planning, a reconsideration of the organizing questions or principles for NIC creates certain difficult dilemmas. A major problem is the development of comprehensive NIC if the curriculum proposed is concerned about the inner world of students, including their lived worlds, their personal meanings, and their ability to deal with value situations. If people see themselves as building on the inner worlds of students, how is NIC possible either in terms of some
of the traditional examples, such as Stratemeyer and associates, or in terms of certain modifications of traditional approaches?

An assumption is made that NIC can occur only when the ground rules for curriculum development allow for a comprehensive design permitting attention to the relationship between a fundamental view of the person and a series of curricular statements compatible with the view of the person. Lacking these two qualities, a curriculum proposal is not normative inquiry in curriculum.

A second assumption is that although NIC might deal with the lived worlds of students, with their being, with the insiders' points of view, other realities also exist, such as an "outside" body of knowledge, modes of inquiry, content, texts, skills, or attitudes that are important to the curriculum proposal. These knowledges, texts, skills, or attitudes may be the "inheritance" of the culture and are seen as at least needing to be acknowledged and accounted for in curriculum development. The knowledges and skills may also be central to a profession. Entrance to a profession may be determined by students' indications that they have mastered what "experts" in the professions deem essential. NIC, where appropriate, for example, within professions, indicates that the classical elements traditionally ascribed to the field of study have been considered and frequently appropriated. NIC is not ahistorical but is frequently grounded in the field while simultaneously exhibiting futuristic and integrative features.

A third assumption is that NIC may allow for real-world dilemmas, for problems, for the lived worlds of students. NIC may focus on the beings of people living within a real world. Although NIC ordinarily assumes certain preplanned aspects of the curriculum, the preplanning may include criteria for dealing with the total being the student brings to the classroom.

Curriculum realities are briefly considered below in terms of dilemmas posed in relation to context, purposes or focus, substance of the educative process, and evaluation. Other realities may also be identified.

Significance of Context

A major dilemma for those who engage in NIC is the relationship between the product of NIC and contexts in which it may be implemented. For example, if the researcher believes that a proposal may be developed in a generic sense without concern for the group who will be implementing it and the students who will be undergoing it, the proposal may be different than if the developer believes that the teacher and learner should participate in shaping the environment for learning and that the perceptions and beliefs of those in the setting are critical to curriculum development. Context-free proposals may differ from those that are context-bound or those that are amenable to context adaptation.

Those engaged in NIC might consider several questions and issues in their preliminary work:
1. To what degree is the culture of the immediate setting—ethnic groups, socio-economic groups, interests of key persons in the community, central to the view of curriculum held by those engaging in NIC?

2. To what degree is the history of an intended group and the desires of the group critical to those engaged in NIC? Basically, those considering NIC might place themselves on the following continuum to help determine the degree to which the culture and the history of a particular group are important in the application of NIC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Particular Context in NIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context-Bound</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Matters to Consider**
- Importance of History of Group
- Significance of Group Desires
- Nature of Students and Teachers
- Previous Kinds of Curriculums Used in Setting

3. Another contextual dilemma is the degree to which individual perceptions of learners and teachers, those for whom the curriculum is intended, should be included in NIC. If NIC focuses primarily on the learning of public knowledge, individual perceptions may not be as important as if the personal knowledge and perceptions are deemed important. However, if individual perceptions are considered significant in curriculum development, then attention will need to be given to such factors as (1) the rate of change in the community and individuals' perceptions of that change; (2) individuals' views of power, authority, and control, and the degree to which people want to be in control of their own destinies; and (3) the relative weight people within the setting give to the institution as the developer of individual uniqueness or as the disseminator of common knowledge. Consider the continuum:

**Beliefs about the Individual Reflected in NIC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Perceptions Significant in Curriculum Development</th>
<th>Individual Perceptions of Little Significance in Curriculum Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Matters to Consider**
- Individual's View of Power, Control, and Authority
- Stability of Individual Perceptions over Time
- Individual's Acceptance of and Possible Participation in Common Experiences

4. Another area of concern in NIC relates to the use of language. Does the use of language highlight common meanings or "the outer" use of language? Is a structural approach to language important to people in the context? Or is the emphasis on the multiple meanings people bring to language of
significance? Structural language gives attention to dictionary definitions of words, to analyzing meanings from a linguistic point of view. A viewpoint that focuses on multiple meanings considers language both within the context of the speaker and within the broader context within which the speaker is embedded.

**Structural Use of Language Significant** \[\rightarrow\] **Multiple Meanings of Language Significant**

Language is used to represent objects, to express interactions, and to establish interpersonal relations. To what degree is a shared intersubjectivity important to those in context?

**Focus**

NIC is characterized by a clearly delineated focus or purpose. The focus may be characterized as the point where the various aspects of teaching come together.\(^{24}\) Curriculum writers may select a view of the person, a philosophical perspective, or certain views of the person or society to serve as the center or focus of NIC. The purpose must have the capacity to provide integrity, congruity, and consistency to other curriculum realities.

For example, Stratemeyer and associates embed their curriculum proposal in the necessity of the school's designing curricular experiences around recurring and persistent life situations.\(^{25}\) This focus for the curriculum grew out of an analysis and philosophic statement of the society and children and youth. Similarly, Berman and Berman and Roderick arrived at the necessity of developing process-oriented people as a result of an analysis of the individual within society.\(^{26}\) NIC ordinarily emerges from a penetrating look at the nature of the world where the proposed curriculum might be considered, but the focus highlights what the authors see as a better way to live in that world.

The focus provides a means of determining what may be included in and excluded from the curriculum. For example, nursing curriculums frequently are built around a process including assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation.\(^{27}\) Matters that do not relate to the process may not be considered or may be given lower priority.

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\(^{24}\)James B. Macdonald, Dan W. Anderson, and Frank B. May, eds., *Strategies of Curriculum Development Selected Writings of the Late Virgil E Herrick* (Columbus, Oh. Charles E. Merrill, 1965), Chapter 7


\(^{26}\)Louise M. Berman, *New Priorities in the Curriculum* (Columbus, Oh. Charles E. Merrill, 1968), Louise M. Berman and Jessie A. Roderick, *Curriculum: Teaching the What, How, and Why of Living* (Columbus, Oh. Charles E. Merrill, 1977)

Schön's work, with reflecting in action as the core or purpose, similarly lends itself to NIC. The designers work from a "generative metaphor," and even as they apply rules of the profession they must do so authentically. 28

In a sense, Miel and Brogan's work is somewhat similar to Schön's. 29 Based on an analysis of the "discipline of democracy," they show how teachers can implement the principles of democracy by reflecting on its meaning in particular situations. Again, their work allows for generativity and authenticity on the part of the curriculum implementer. Moment-by-moment decisions in the classroom reflect a commitment to overriding principles. A focus that provides a compelling view of knowing is another way of organizing the curriculum. 30 Views of the person provide useful organizing schemes. For example, Foshay considers six aspects of humanness—the intellectual, the emotional, the social, the physical, the aesthetic, and the spiritual—as the basis of curriculum design. 31 Higher order human qualities, such as thinking, justice, or caring, may also serve as foci for curriculums. 32 Most NIC might have a mix of human qualities. The individual engaged in NIC frequently deals with higher order values, relationships among such values, and the meanings of them for curriculum commonplaces. The worth of a proposal growing out of NIC is frequently determined by the generative and enduring power of the focus. Foci have implications for teacher and student thinking, feeling, and action, and for substance and evaluation.

Substance of the Educative Process

All curriculums exist because something is to be taught. As soon as knowledge is removed, no reason exists for curriculum planning. NIC presupposes a body of knowledge or at least guidelines for selecting a body of knowledge compatible with the selected curriculum focus. NIC may also

include means of eliciting the inner knowledge of the student or means of helping students negotiate inner and outer knowledge.

With the recent attention to the sociology of knowledge, fresh dimensions are added to the traditional curriculum question. What should be taught? Giroux forces a critical consideration of what is to be taught by raising such questions as:

- What counts as school knowledge?
- How is school knowledge organized?
- What are the underlying codes that structure such knowledge?
- How is what counts as school knowledge transmitted?
- How is access to such knowledge determined?
- What kind of cultural system does the school legitimate?
- Whose interests are served by the production and legitimation of school knowledge?33

Tension exists between those who want to determine what should be taught and use techniques such as mastery learning in the process of teaching and those who believe that individual learners have the right to initiate inquiry to possess ownership of ideas.34 Concurrent with the thinking of the sociologists of knowledge is the influence of the existentialists and phenomenologists who explore the personal nature of knowledge and being.35 Such inquiry highlights the notion that real knowledge is shaped by the individual and in a sense becomes the very being of the person. The traditional view of the curriculum, however, presupposes a body of predetermined knowledge and skills to which students must be exposed even if they do not learn it. Witness the development of curriculum guides, or consider the place of the textbook in curriculum. The task of NIC is to ensure curricular congruity, consistency, and integrity within a larger framework.

**Selection of knowledge.** A major dilemma posed by NIC centers on the selection of knowledge. The concept of the ownership of knowledge posed by sociologists, coupled with the idea of personalized knowing posed by phenomenologists, must be balanced by the need to match the substance of the curriculum with the curricular focus discussed earlier. Questions such as the following need to be raised and considered:

- What knowledge is most central to the curricular focus?

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What knowledge generated by the community can become part of the curriculum design without losing the focus?

What can be done to ensure that personal knowledge is adequately considered in the curriculum design if it is relevant to the curriculum focus?

NIC deals not only with the selection of knowledge, accounting for dilemmas of ownership and personal knowledge, but with knowledge's organization and its scope and sequence. One way to deal with such issues is to deal with the inner-outer dilemma, a recurring theme in NIC. Should curriculum knowledge be organized around the inner meanings of students? Should curriculum knowledge be organized into small, detached units or into large blocks? How such questions are answered will go back to the curriculum focus and the relative emphasis placed on the individual as meaning-maker or the individual as the absorber or assimilator of predetermined knowledge.

Knowledge for whom Besides dealing with questions pertaining to the derivation, initiation, and selection of knowledge, NIC may deal with questions pertaining to what knowledge for what students. What knowledge—if any—should be common for all students? What about uncommon knowledge? Is the concept of universals, specialties, and alternatives useful in thinking about who has access to what knowledge?

A major concern of educators is the matter of equal access to knowledge. If students have equal access, do they necessarily want to learn what they have access to? Does the knowledge deemed significant by those outside the learner necessarily have meaning for the learner? In selecting themes and organizing principles for NIC, attention has to be given to these difficult questions.

The plethora of national reports basically advocate much commonality in the curriculum. Knowledge, however, about individual differences raises many questions about attending only to commonalities in curriculum development. Deliberations relative to dealing with what knowledge for what students might center on these questions:


What knowledge is necessary for students to survive now? What knowledge is necessary for a satisfying existence? Whose judgments enter into answering these questions?

What obstacles may block a student's gaining a seemingly necessary body of knowledge or skills later?

To what degree is a student locked into a given socio-economic position if a designated body of knowledge is not acquired at a customary age or point in career? Are opportunities for advancement in a profession diminished?

What opportunities exist for people to gain skills and knowledge throughout a lifetime as opposed to at any given stage of development or career preparation?

Dealing with substance. Ordinarily, the questions of what and how to teach are treated separately. Such a dichotomy in curricular thinking causes the breakdown frequently encountered between inner and outer knowledge or personal knowledge and knowledge of the text. Dealing simultaneously with the substance of the educational enterprise as method and content enables the use of varieties of knowledge. It allows dealing with responsiveness to text as well as interpretation of text.

Consider the relationship of the what and how to teaching in the following instances:

Curriculum "is a set of intentions about opportunities for engagement of persons-to-be-educated with other persons and things... in certain arrangements of time and space." 41

Students make sense by talking. 42

Teachers are partners in curriculum development through being user-developers. 43

Teaching involves the practical, that is, "prudence and deliberation, and arts of eclectic." 44

The curriculum is "generic/scholar-dominated" with implementation as directed. 45

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42Arthur Lewis and Alice Miel, Supervision for Improved Instruction New Challenges, New Perspectives (Belmont, Calif. Wadsworth, 1972), p 27


Method may go all the way from eliciting predetermined responses from the student to shaping knowledge through a negotiation of public knowledge and the private knowledge of learners. Method may also seek to start from the lived worlds of learners to help students make sense of their worlds. NIC seeks to deal with the issue of a match between the view of knowledge of the educator and the method used in shaping or focusing that knowledge. Sometimes knowledge and method are so closely intertwined that it is difficult to separate them.

**Evaluation**

Even as the concept of match is critical in selecting content and method, so the concept is important in selecting the process of evaluation. Open-ended kinds of evaluation, including observations, self-reports, open-ended questions, and interviews, may be consonant with perspectives on the curriculum that purport to be concerned about individual meanings and transformed or reconstructed knowledge. Procedures directed toward the knowledge of the culture are appropriate to curriculum based primarily on theories of knowledge as being based outside the learner.

Besides dealing with the problems of match, those responsible for evaluation in NIC need to consider the meaning of competence within the curricular orientation. Competence means different things in different orientations. Competence implies knowledge and authority. But it also implies criteria by which competent performances are judged. The criteria by which performance is judged have value premises and value judgments that enter into the application of the criteria. Thus, evaluation must be closely linked to the basic value premises of NIC. The problem of NIC relative to evaluation is basically twofold: (1) identifying appropriate criteria for evaluation, criteria consistent with the other aspects of the proposal emanating from NIC, and (2) applying the designated criteria.

In summary, several normative dilemmas associated with curriculum realities must be resolved through normative inquiry in curriculum. Among those discussed here have been ones related to the significance of context, to the focus of the curriculum, to the substance of the educative process (including the selection of knowledge, access to knowledge by various students, and methods of dealing with curriculum substance), and to evaluation processes. These dilemmas, along with those described earlier related to curriculum influences, are ones that become critical in doing NIC.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR GETTING STARTED

NIC is a plan for continuous inquiry into curriculum development. NIC presupposes a non-linear approach to the development process in which attention is constantly given to the values underlying the curriculum, the meaning of identified values in context, and the interfacing of the values with the influences and realities outlined in the article.

For example, an individual or group wishing to engage in NIC might engage in the following activities:

1. Analyze the values or norms that might be prevalent where NIC is being proposed. The arena may be as small as a school or portion of a school or as large as a general statement designed to be made more specific by smaller units. In the process, values need to be considered in terms of their worth. Attention also needs to be given to unearthing norms that may be hidden through visiting schools, talking to students and local citizens, and searching for the norms reflected in the popular question. While uncovering the norms, the curriculum worker might consider norms that need to be created, norms that may be obsolete, norms that may need to be transformed, and norms that may have been appropriate at one time but may need to be rethought. Obviously, when this process is carried out in a smaller setting, the task is not so large.

2. Using what has surfaced as values to be considered, created, or changed, begin to think about the influences on the curriculum here. If a given value is to be implemented or changed, what is the meaning of intentionality? To what degree are objectives formulated outside the individual, and to what degree in curricular planning is openness encouraged for student objectives to surface and be acted on? The same kind of attention needs to be given to other influences, such as freedom, orientation toward values (see Figure 1), and significance of the lived experience (see Figure 2).

3. Deal with curriculum realities, taking into account decisions made about values and influences on the curriculum. Here attention is given to such matters as the degree of influence the immediate context should have on the curriculum; the purpose or focus that provides integrity, congruity, and consistency to the curriculum; the substance of the curriculum; and evaluation practices congruent with these things.

TOUGH QUESTIONS

This article raises more questions than it answers. Part of the problem is that curriculum development in reality is messy, uneven, and based on assumptions that are frequently incompatible with each other. If NIC is neat and tidy, it may fail to account for the realities of the marketplace. If it is overly shaped by the realities of the marketplace, it may fail to provide the vision, the transcending power necessary to providing newness to the field. Thus, we may ask: Can NIC really exist? Is it a ploy on the part of persons who think
they can accommodate the many complexities to be considered in curriculum development based on reasoned values? I think not. Seemingly, a place exists for NIC, but those engaging in it may need to point out the inadequacies as well as its logic.

A second question is: What use is NIC? Knowing the process can help curricularists at any level detect unnecessary illogical thinking. It can assist those seeking to have a match between the parts of the curriculum. Using examples of NIC developed by others can provide a vision of the possible, if not the probable.

A third question is: What values should provide the basis for NIC? To answer this question adequately would take several volumes. The process, however, of weighing values, of seeing whether the implications of holding a given value position can be implemented within the influences on and the realities of the curriculum, provides the basis for considering both what should and what can be done in an educational setting.

A fourth question is: Once the focus moves from predetermined objectives, knowledges, and activities, how can NIC take place? The place of students' will, purpose, and knowledge makes conducting NIC more difficult, and we must deal with the dilemmas created by accounting for students' lived worlds if NIC is to be more than a mechanistic exercise. Perhaps this fourth question poses the greatest challenge to the educator.

Fifth, how can we deal with problems of match among the various parts of the curriculum when the lived worlds of students are considered significant in curriculum development? Allowing for serendipities and yet ensuring consistency among the parts of the curriculum is a challenge that may be better handled in the multifaceted possibilities of action than in the linear aspect of the written word.

Sixth, what is the nature of teaching and instructional processes when NIC is considered? The topic is too large for attention here. NIC has been carried out by thoughtful individuals who frequently have worked in a logical, intuitive manner. The process takes thought and time. The time has come to explicate methods for curriculum inquiry that have possibilities for creating closer linkages among values held and opportunities for learning proposed within frameworks that account for the lived worlds of students.

At no time in the history of education have teachers and other educators been more highly educated. Yet in many communities never have teachers had so little curriculum decision-making power. As educators become more comfortable in making difficult decisions, in combining responsiveness to community with consideration to democratic values, and in doing the tough work associated with NIC, perhaps we will develop curriculums consonant with the problematic nature of life in a democracy.48

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48I extend my appreciation to Emily Slunt, Professor and Coordinator of Nursing, Howard County Community College, for her gracious assistance with this article. Particularly in its preliminary stages, Professor Slunt provided useful perspectives in terms of her field of nursing.
**APPENDIX: PERSPECTIVES ON COMPETENCE**

**PEREPECTIVE A: COMPETENCE AS INSTRUMENTAL ACTION (THEORY AND PRACTICE IN LINEAR RELATIONSHIP)**

**Interest in:**
- Interest in controlling teaching situation through psycho-social theories
- Instrumental interest in applying reason to teaching practice (thought to action) effectively, efficiently.
- Interest in applying theoretical understandings in curriculum and instruction into classroom practice.

**Assumptions about teacher and classroom world:**
- The classroom is a world that can be changed with certainty by the application of theory
- Thought and action (theory and practice) are separate realms linearly connected.
- Practice is the actualization of theory.
- The theoretical world is paramount reality (therefore, theoretical knowledge is more important than applied knowledge)
- Instrumental knowledge is applied knowledge.
- The teacher is the instrument of theoretical knowledge.

**Approach**
- Teacher applies theoretical rules to practical situations, therefore, instrumental in approach
- Planning lessons, managing class, and teaching guided by theoretical rules

**ACTS ON CLASSROOM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Acts on</th>
<th>Classroom</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guided by Theory</td>
<td>World</td>
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Subject Controls Object

**PEREPECTIVE B: COMPETENCE AS PRACTICAL ACTION (PRAXIS) (THEORY AND PRACTICE IN DIALECTICAL RELATIONSHIP)**

**Interest in:**
- Interest in venturing forth together with students.
- Interest in self-improvement by reflecting on and freeing self from socially or self-imposed constraints.
- Interest in the teacher interpreting the classroom world, acting with and on that world, and reflecting and acting on both self and world

**Assumptions about teacher and classroom world:**
- The teacher as the acting person is in a dialectical relationship with the classroom world.
- Reality is not given directly in appearance and thus requires critical reflection to enable the teacher to discover the deep structure not given in appearance.
- Theory and practice are in integrated unity (praxis). (Praxis is thoughtful action; action full of thought.)
- The teacher has unlimited possibilities for growth.
- Teachers are engaged in writing their own history
- Praxical knowledge is critically reflected knowledge.

**Acts Dialectically on Classroom Reflecting on World**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Acts Dialectically on Classroom</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflecting on</td>
<td>World</td>
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</table>

Subject Reflecting on Object

**Approach**
- Acting and reflecting on the world, the teacher helps students to construct and transform reality
- Becoming aware of own teaching acts as possible object-in-view.
- Reflection as going beyond the framework of everyday instrumental action.
- Seeks moment for conscious connecting of teacher’s awareness and the teacher’s intentional world
Becoming aware of the writing of history in which the teacher is engaged—the history that is the activity through which the teacher creates self. (The teacher is maker of own history.)

Becoming aware that personal praxis involves social praxis.

Becoming aware of the personal, social, cultural, and political context in which praxical activity is conducted.

**Evaluation question:**

How efficiently was theory implemented in “practice”?

**Evaluation question:**

What is the quality of the underlying perspective of my action? What makes it possible for me as a human being to act the way I do in my pedagogical activities? Is it adequate?


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