

## ***Perspectives and Imperatives***

### **A COMMENT ON HAWKINS'S MODEL**

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Hawkins certainly places some critical issues before us on restructuring and the contributions that the curriculum field could and should make. He touches on the diverse topics of curriculum theory, content and process, and structure and sequence.

Curriculum theory should indeed contribute to the conceptual apparatus driving the school-reform movement. The movement tends to lack a well-articulated theory base and, therefore, has difficulty examining the ends to which it aspires. What kind of learners should exit our schools? The products of a school system driven solely by economic assumptions are workers. Should we not also consider preparing our clients as parents, citizens, recreators, philosophers, coworkers, and individuals?

Hawkins suggests some provocative notions surrounding curriculum content and process. Certainly, content focusing on solving social problems is praiseworthy, but what should we expect from trend analysis? Shouldn't we be alert to the dangers of placing undue faith in a form of analysis that tends to promise more than it can realistically deliver? I assume from his pro-constructivist stance that Hawkins would champion a development process where the curriculum implementers (teachers) would necessarily be the curriculum developers. But what form should the deliberation process take? What would be the guiding principles? Which stakeholders should be involved and when?

Also, Hawkins generates issues of curriculum structure and sequence. "A discourse of simplicity" that structures or restructures curriculum using the principles of integration and depth seems like a good idea, but again, process issues arise over how and when structure occurs. Do we simply take the old objectives-laden curriculum and pare it down? This solution seems like placing yourself on a diet by cutting off your arms and legs. On curriculum sequence, Hawkins states that we should use learning theory, or developmentalism, to present appropriate educational experiences to learners and that before learners are ready for in-depth experiences they need to have internalized a knowledge base. I question this point of view. Some of the latest research on

thinking indicates that the conception of lower-order versus higher-order thinking may be a false dichotomy and that learners develop their thinking holistically.

To return to structure and the key issue generated by Hawkins's model, I have to wonder whether technology truly integrates the elements of the model. How? Why? I need to hear more about this thesis before I can understand it.

Hawkins has presented us with several important issues, and he certainly points us in the right direction, toward the task of theorizing. However, his brief statement raises more questions than it answers. This, I suppose, is as it should be.

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Page, Reba, and Linda Valli, eds. *Curriculum Differentiation: Interpretive Studies in U.S. Secondary Schools*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990. 261 pp. \$49.50/\$16.95.

This book informs the debate over whether curriculum should be common for all or differentiated for diverse student populations. Studies reported here show how differentiated-knowledge distribution and related practices interact with social differentiation by age, race, class, and gender in nine school settings. The interpretive research approach is followed and its value demonstrated in understanding each setting's curriculum-in-use from students' perspectives.

Klein, M. Frances, ed. *The Politics of Curriculum Decision Making: Issues in Centralizing the Curriculum*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991. 236 pp. \$44.50/\$14.95.

Analysts Goodlad, van Geel, Piphoo, Schubert, Griffin, Brooks, Schwartz, McClure, and Klein examine the sociopolitical, legislative, judicial, administrative, historical, professional, theoretical, and practical educational aspects of the recent shift in the locus of curriculum decision making in the United States from local officials and educators to state and national authorities. The authors have explored the issue of curriculum centralization from the perspective of curriculum specialists.

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