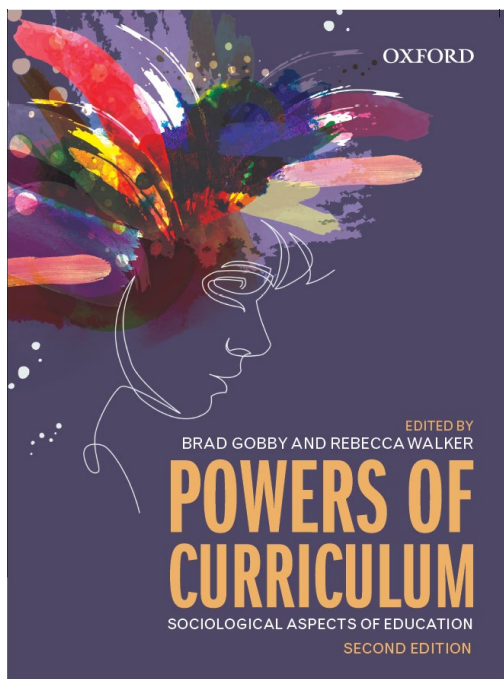# Instructor's Resource Manual

Powers of Curriculum

Second Edition

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IRM material for the second edition prepared by Elliot Sawers

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PREFACE

To meet the needs of learners in an increasingly complex and demanding world, educators must be equipped with knowledge not just of the methods of teaching and planning curriculum, but also of how social, cultural and political powers shape education, curriculum and the lives of learners and educators. The book explores this bigger picture of education and curriculum, and how it intersects with issues surrounding the content, planning, enactment and experience of curriculum. Our aim is to equip educators with ideas, concepts, theories and perspectives to transform education so they can make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people in the early childhood, primary and secondary phases of education.

We do this not by offering 'models' of what to think and what to do, because models and checklists of methods and strategies cannot adequately respond to the specific, complex and dynamic circumstances of education and learning. Our approach is to treat educators and pre-service educators as intellectual workers rather than technicians delivering somebody else's plans and ideas. The ideas, concepts, theories and perspectives of the book help readers observe, decipher and interpret education and the wider world, which might mean thinking against the grain of established ideas and practices. Our goal is to support readers to rise to the challenge of educating today's children and young people in systems of education that need transforming.

The text is organised into three Parts: Introducing Curriculum; Unpacking Curriculum Issues; and Creating and Enacting Curriculum. Part I (Chapters 1–5) introduces the notion of curriculum and how we should understand it in relation to society, culture, politics, the lives of learners and the role of formal education and educators. Part II (Chapters 6–12) introduces important issues when thinking about formal education and the creation and enactment of curriculum. Part III (Chapters 13–18) explores the practical dimension to your reading and learning about curriculum. The authors of the chapters encourage you to reflect on your opinions and experiences, and to explore ideas and concepts to open education to new thoughts and practices.

In the second edition, we have updated the research used in the chapters, revised theory in action cases and activities, and included a chapter on the use of educational technologies, which raises issues around child rights and child agency. The previous chapter on learner diversity has been added to Part I and expanded. In doing so, we recognise that how educators think about learners is a key driver of their practices, and therefore we need to reflect on our assumptions about learners, especially given the growth of learner diversities. Authors have also responded to recent world events and educational developments, with references to the climate crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and the datafication of education.

As with the previous edition, the book uses several features to support your comprehension of and engagement with the ideas being explored. These features include:

- Ask yourself

Often, the best place to begin your learning is with your own experiences. The 'Ask yourself' questions encourage you to use your knowledge, thoughts and experiences to reflect on your reading. You are encouraged to think about how these shape your views of education and

the world, and how education, society, culture and politics shape your views and experiences.

- Theory in action

Thoughts are tied to our practice, or what we say and do, and how we organise activities such as teaching and learning. The 'Theory in action' feature encourages you to think about how the ideas you are reading about surface in people's experiences and can be applied to educational contexts. Some of these require reading and investigating documents, and others are descriptions of experiences, scenarios or cases. The 'Theory in action' questions encourage you to use the concepts, ideas and perspectives explored in the book.

- Questions and activities

The questions and activities posed at the end of each chapter encourage you to apply, explore and extend the key ideas, concepts and practices presented. There is a range of different activities, which include further reading, discussing with peers, and reflection.

- Key further readings and resources

There is a list of useful readings and resources at the end of each chapter that will assist you in developing and extending your understanding of the ideas contained in the chapter.

- Glossary

There is a glossary of key terms and their definitions at the end of the book. We hope you find the book engaging, thought-provoking and useful.

BRAD GOBBY AND REBECCA WALKER

EDITORS

Using the Instructor's Resource Manual

This Instructor's Resource Manual has been developed to assist lecturers and tutors who are using *Powers of Curriculum: Sociological Aspects of Education* 2nd Edn in their university teaching.

In each chapter, a summary of **Key Points** from the corresponding textbook chapter is provided to help direct and focus your classroom discussion. You will then find a selection of *Ask yourself* questions and *Theory in action* activities from the textbook, compiled for easy reference and accompanied by useful suggestions for how these might be expanded on and integrated as part of effective tutorial discussions, whether you are teaching face-to-face or online.

Finally, the **Links to Other Chapters** section recommends other chapters in the textbook that are thematically connected and could be studied together, or used as additional tutorial reading.

Chapter 1 What is Curriculum?

Key Points

- Curriculum is a contested term among teachers, politicians, policymakers and educational theorists. It is much more than a document or plan—as it often involves a struggle for power, control and influence over what young people come to know, value, feel and believe to be true.

- Curriculum encompasses all that a learner experiences in a learning context, whether these experiences are intended, unexpected or hidden.

- Given that curriculum encompasses so much, we cannot confine the study of curriculum to the study of official curriculum documents. Rather, curriculum studies must encompass the study of the plethora of influences on learning contexts, the decision-making of educators, and the lives of learners.

- Curriculum design must attend to the political, social, cultural and economic forces and relations that impact on the experiences of learners and educators.

Links to Other Chapters

- Chapter 3 A History of Schooling and the Making of Children
- Chapter 12 Child and Youth Identity Formation: Consumerism and Popular Culture

Power and Education

The power that exists in education is held by different people. Topics such as climate change, are often contentious, omitted or taught from a particular perspective as a result of who or where the power is held.

Ask yourself

- What are arguments for and against schools supporting students' participation in the climate protests?

See textbook p. 5

- Ask students to make some notes about the history and politics of the School Strike for Climate movement.

- Use the question above as the starting point for a discussion (either whole class or online). **Ask:** Why is the issue of climate change volatile and contested? Why do you think this has been left out of the official curriculum?

- Share this article with your students
  https://theconversation.com/curriculum-is-a-climate-change-battleground-and-states-must-step-in-to-prepare-students-172392
  and ask students to share their response.

Contesting Curriculum

Ask yourself

- Was there homophobia or transphobia at the school you attended?

- If yes, what were your thoughts and feelings about this at the time?

See textbook p. 7

- Ask students to make some notes about the history and politics of the Safe Schools Coalition.

- Use the questions above as the starting point for a discussion (either whole class or online). **Ask:** Why are issues of 'identity' sometimes volatile and contested? Why do you think the political argument became so heated? Was the Safe Schools argument really about the safety of students in schools—or about the fight to control what can be talked about in schools?

The intended/official curriculum

The intended curriculum is imposed by authorities from above, with the intention of organising or regulating the teaching of educators and the learning of children and young people.

Ask yourself

- How much of the official curriculum should be about preserving and conveying the knowledge and values of the nation, and how much should be about preparing children and young people for a future where these may change?

- Think back to your days as a primary and secondary student. Was there a hierarchy of subjects at school? Which subjects were at the top and which were at the bottom? Why was this the case? Did this hierarchy

enable the formation of a social hierarchy of learners? Explain your answer.

See textbook p. 12

- How do you think the hierarchy of subjects at school reflected or contributed to the hierarchy of knowledge within society more broadly? For example, Australia has had a Chief Scientist since 1989, but there has not been an equivalent Chief Artist, or Chief of Humanities. Does that mean Arts and Humanities are of less value than Science?
- Which subjects were at the bottom of the hierarchy? Why do you think this was?

The enacted curriculum

Educators shape how the intended curriculum is taught in the classroom when they translate it into teaching strategies and learning experiences in (and for) specific contexts. The enacted curriculum applies particularly to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

Make sure students have access to *Belonging, being & becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (DEEWR, 2009) for this activity.

Theory in action

The EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) contends that children's lives are characterised by belonging, being and becoming.

1   What is your interpretation of each of these terms?

2   Are your interpretations like others' interpretations?

3   What might be the consequences (in terms of your professional priorities and practices) of your differing interpretations?

   Read the EYLF descriptions of belonging, being and becoming (DEEWR, 2009, p. 7).

4   To what extent did your interpretations align with those provided by the official document?

5   What might this activity suggest about the relationship between the intended curriculum and interpretation?

6   What other parts of the EYLF may be interpreted differently?

See textbook p. 13

- Have students record their understanding of the key words *belonging, being* and *becoming*. Select several students to share their understandings, then discuss them. Do the understandings differ? Investigate further to find if these differences depend on:

    o cultural background

    o prior schooling experiences

    o parenting experiences

    o personal experiences

    o family background.

- Discuss the possible consequences and implications of maintaining a Belonging Being Becoming (BBB) model throughout primary and secondary schooling. **Ask:** What might primary and secondary schools look like if the BBB framework was adopted?

- Have students research why the EYLF does not have a formal curriculum within the Australian Curriculum. **Ask:** Why do you think there is no EYLF curriculum? Why do we need primary and secondary curriculum frameworks if we don't need them at the Early Years level?

- For deeper understanding, see also chapters 17 and 18.

The negotiated curriculum

With negotiated curriculum, educators reach out to their students, and learning is opened up to input from learners, parents and the community.

Ask yourself

- Were you given many opportunities in your schooling to be involved in decisions about the curriculum or your experiences of learning? If yes, what were they? If no, what do you think about not being given these opportunities?

- Were these opportunities successful or were they miserable failures? Why?

See textbook p. 14

- A negotiated curriculum alters the distribution of power in the classroom and school. Discuss the alterations that might take place. **Ask:** What kind of commitment would a school need to adopt a negotiated curriculum? How might a negotiated curriculum help students acquire the skills to become active, participating members of their community (classroom, or society)?

The emergent curriculum

The emergent curriculum, mostly seen in early childhood settings, is implemented with minimal planning where learning experiences come out of interactions between the environment, the children and the educator.

Ask yourself

Think back to your days as a primary and secondary student.

- To what extent were your teachers curriculum-centred or learner-centred? Why do you think this?

- Should educators prefer one form of learning over the other?

- An emergent curriculum focuses on the children, their needs and the learning environment. Discuss what might happen in the lives of children or the learning environment for an educator to engage with an emergent curriculum. **Ask:** What are the benefits of a learning environment in which children's needs are taken into account?

The hidden curriculum

The hidden curriculum exists in the choices educators make that reflect their knowledge, beliefs and assumptions.

Ask yourself

Think about the hidden curriculum through your primary or secondary school experiences.

- How was 'success in school' understood? How was this definition conveyed to students?

- What and who was rewarded and punished? What messages did this convey to students about schooling, learning and life?

- What messages did your teachers send about the behaviours acceptable for, and expected of, students? How was this conveyed? Did these differ according to gender?

- Which subjects were valued, and how did you know?

- As a whole class, discuss the curriculum models outlined so far (intended, enacted, negotiated, emergent and hidden). **Ask:** What was your notion of curriculum before you read this chapter? How has that notion been challenged because of what you've read? Has it been modified?

- In your responses, encourage students to tease out how they can use their insights to inform their approach to becoming teachers/educators.

- Encourage students to keep 'personal learning journals' to accompany their use of *Powers of Curriculum*, so that they can enter their personal thoughts, feelings and reflections about the questions and issues raised. This will help them to clarify why they decided to teach what they teach, and in the way that they choose to teach it.

Theory in action

Watch the classic and still-relevant film *Dead Poets Society* set in the 1950s and starring Robin Williams. If you don't have the time, then watch the first 15 minutes. Williams plays an unorthodox English Literature teacher, Mr Keating, who begins teaching at an elite traditional boys' school. He ruffles the feathers of parents and teachers through his unusual attitudes and teaching approaches, which seek to inspire free-thinking among his teenage students. As you watch the film, consider the ideas about education, learning, students, teachers and the routines of school life that are being challenged by Mr Keating.

1   What is the hidden curriculum in Mr Keating's class? How is it different from the traditional classroom?

2   To what extent is Mr Keating's approach child-centred or curriculum-centred?

3   What do the reactions of the students as they get to know Mr Keating tell you about their education?

4   How easy is it to be an unorthodox teacher like Mr Keating?

5   What do you want the hidden curriculum to be in your learning centre or classroom?

- In discussing students' responses, focus on what it might be like to work deliberately with the notion of learning being 'in transition'. **Ask:** What are the benefits of such an approach for classroom organisation and curriculum planning? What might be the possible problems? What obstacles could you encounter?

The lived curriculum

The notion that curriculum is an experience, determined by the choices made by educators. In this sense, educators are more than implementers of curriculum: they are powerful curriculum creators.

Theory in action

Unplanned curriculum experiences occur in the interactions between individuals, facilitated by teachers' planning and actions. In an English lesson in a metropolitan secondary school, a teacher set the task of scanning Dolly, a popular teen website. The teacher explained that the task's purpose was to explore how texts reinforce sex-gender stereotypes. The students busied themselves, talking about their observations. In the whole-class discussion that followed, many of the students demonstrated insight. One student identified how the images conveyed the dominant culture's norms of feminine beauty as white, blonde and slim. Another observed how some images portrayed females as confident, independent and career-focused. Unfortunately, it appeared that a small group of male students did not take the lesson seriously. As the discussion was winding up, one of them piped up, "They should be in the kitchen anyway!" The student's comment was audible to the entire class, but interestingly the teacher did not question or scold him. The comment was left to hang in the air, absorbed by all the students. This moment illustrated the power of the unsaid: "What did the teacher's silence teach the students?"

1   Share with others an experience of the hidden curriculum, such as when a teacher's actions, comments or silences communicated specific ideas to their students.

2   What might have been a suitable course of action that the teacher could have taken following this incident, not only immediately afterwards but also in the medium and long term?

- In discussing students' responses to the above, focus on the role of popular culture and the importance of representation in media. **Ask:** What other types of representation in the media could be reviewed in similar lessons? How does pop culture and representation of diversity in society impact on what is taught in the classroom?