From last week... Questions 5, 6, and 7 on page 22

- Ques 5: Reflect on some of the ideas, concerns, and activities associated with the humanistic curriculum.
  - Which of these are likely to prove fruitful and have a continuing effect on what is taught?

Ques. 6

- What is your stance on human nature? Do you believe evil is inherent or are persons essentially constructive?
- What are the curriculum implications of your answer?
Ques. 7

- Why have great thinkers throughout history called for freedom in learning, yet schools as institutions have chosen mostly to control learning?

Objectives

- Explain how one’s theory affects the curriculum.
- Explain your personal curriculum theory.
- Describe the humanistic concept of curriculum.

What is a Theory?

- A system of beliefs which guide or control actions.
Deriving a Curriculum Theory

- Theory furnishes those working with a particular realm of knowledge with a way of viewing the world and how it works.
- Theory provides a foundation for action -- shapes individual thinking along certain lines.
- Does theory represent an absence of sound knowledge?
  - No!

A theoretical framework is essential for the rational, orderly, and productive conduct of the curriculum enterprise.

- Not all answers are known of what to teach or how it should be taught.

Why have people developed theories?

- To guide study and aid in making predictions?
- Do you have theories of how best to instruct?
- Or on raising a family, or living the good life?
Kerlinger’s Definition of Curriculum Theory

- A set of interrelated concepts and propositions that . . .
- Presents a systematic view . . .
- Of a phenomena (situation) . . .
- By specifying relationships among variables (components) . . .
- With the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena (situation).

Substance of a Theory

- Provides a logically unified framework,
- Provides generality, and
- Provides an empirical (experimentally observed) basis.

Derivation of Curriculum Theory

- George Beauchamp - Curriculum theories are derived from -
  - Humanities
  - Natural Sciences
  - Social Sciences
Function of Theories

- Theories describe, predict, and explain phenomena, and they guide the practice of those who use them.
  - Description
  - Prediction
  - Explanation

Curriculum Theory is not Scientific?

- We should not feel "unscientific" when we acknowledge and advocate the value dimension of theory.

Sources of Curriculum Theory

- Curriculum theory draws heavily from our philosophical beliefs -- our understanding of knowledge and our understanding of the world.
- Curriculum development work is greatly influenced by the values we bring to the curriculum development process.
Classic Bases for Curriculum Theory

- **Scientific Theory**
  - General facts, laws, or hypotheses related to each other derived by purely logico-mathematical procedures or a larger set of empirical laws. These unify subject matter.

- **Philosophical or Humanistic Theory**
  - Based on values. Indicates what should or should not be included or done in action. Integrates the intellectual with the emotional and physical.

Functions of Theory

- Descriptive
- Predictive
- Explanation
- Guidance

Summary - Curriculum Theory

- We use theories in our daily lives for direction.
- They aid us in making decisions, i.e., family, finance, etc.
- Theories guide thought.
- They provide a basis for reasoned inquiry in practice.
Curriculum Theory

- **Meaning** -
  - A set of interrelated concepts, definitions, and statements that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among components with the purposes of explaining phenomena.

- **Characteristics** - Provides
  - a unified framework
  - generality
  - an empirical basis (experimentally observable).

- **Function** -
  - describe
  - predict
  - explain.
Curriculum Theory

- Result - Guide to those who subscribe to the theory.

Explaining Curriculum Theory

- Define the Topic
- Where is the Content Being Derived
- Rationale for the Contents and Structure
- Explanation of Structure
- Aim of the Book
- Goals for the Book

Break Time!
No single definition of philosophy is uncontroversial.

The field has historically expanded and changed depending upon what kinds of questions were interesting or relevant in a given era.

It is generally agreed that philosophy is a method, rather than a set of claims, propositions, or theories.

Its investigations are based upon reason, striving to make no unexamined assumptions and no leaps based on faith or pure analogy.

Different philosophers have had varied ideas about the nature of reason, and there is also disagreement about the subject matter of philosophy.

Some think that philosophy examines the process of inquiry itself. Others, that there are essentially philosophical propositions which it is the task of philosophy to prove.
Questions

- Do you have a philosophy for life?
  - Do you have "a recipe" to what a "good life" is?
  - Do you "know" what is "right and wrong"?
  - Do you know "what needs to be learned" for your students to be successful?
- From where did you develop these insights?
- Do these beliefs affect what and how you teach?

Basic Considerations

- Philosophical assumptions about the nature of the good life pay a significant role in determining how we live and how and what we teach.

Defining Philosophy

- A search for the wisdom of life
- An attempt to understand the universe as a whole
- An examination of our moral responsibility and our social obligations
- An effort to fathom the divine inventions and our place with reference to them
- The way we perceive the world around us
- How we define what is important to us
What is a Philosophy?

- Personal views of the "good life" based on one's own prior knowledge.

What is Philosophy?

- Two important facts about philosophy:
  - It is a reflective or meditative activity.
  - It has no explicitly designated subject matter of its own but it is a method or type of mental operation that can take any area as its object.

Educational Philosophy

- Ideas, attitudes, and beliefs about epistemology (nature of knowledge), society/culture, the individual, and learning.
- These foundational elements control the content and organization of the curriculum.
- Our views toward these factors make up our philosophy of education.
Philosophical Considerations

- Most lay people "adopt" a philosophy of life as it were by "osmosis" - from family, school, peer groups, church, and other components of the culture.
- Frequently, this philosophy of life is unexamined and operates at an unconscious level.
- As a result, it often is found to contain irrational elements, incomplete ideas, and inconsistent beliefs.

Implicit and irrational as it may be, our philosophy represents a deeply felt commitment and is a powerful determinant in the decision-making process of every individual as well as of the society as a whole.

How does philosophy influence the curriculum?

- It gives meaning to the decisions and actions of curriculum workers.
- The philosophy of the curriculum worker is reflected in his/her work.
- Their life experiences, common sense, social and economic background, education, and general beliefs about people are brought into and reflected through their work.
- The philosophy advocated or reflected by a particular school or business and its officials influences its goals and content as well as the organization of its curriculum!
John Goodlad on Educational Philosophy

- "Philosophy is the beginning point in curriculum decision making and is the basis for all subsequent decisions regarding curriculum."

- It helps curriculum developers to answer questions such as:
  - What subjects are of value,
  - How students learn, and
  - What methods and materials to use?

- It also provides them with a basis for dealing with precise tasks and for making such decisions as:
  - What workbooks, textbooks, or other cognitive and non-cognitive activities to utilize and how to utilize them
  - What homework to assign and how much of it
  - How to test students and how to use the test results
  - What courses and subject matter to emphasize.

Major Philosophical Views
Idealism
- Emphasizes moral and spiritual reality as the chief explanation of the world.
- Truth and values are seen as absolute, timeless, and universal.
- It would teach the liberal arts to everyone (philosophy, literature, history, mathematics, and foreign language).

Realism
- Stresses logic and lessons that exercise the mind and cultivate rational thoughts.
- It would teach the 3Rs, science, and the arts.

Pragmatism
- Emphasizes that knowledge is a process that is constantly changing.
- Knowing is considered a transaction between the learner and the environment.
- It would teach problem solving and critical thinking in an active learning environment.
Existentialism

- Emphasizes individualism and personal self-fulfillment.
- A person creates his/her own definition and in so doing makes his/her own meaning of life.
- Many critics feel that this philosophy has limited applications to K-12 schooling.

Philosophy becomes the principles for guiding action!

- Do we provide educational programs that -- develop a society or the individual?
- Do we wish to make good citizens and workers? or
- Do we want to make human beings who will live life to their fullest?

Organization of Philosophical Positions

- Ontology - Nature of Reality
  - What is real?
- Epistemology - Nature of Knowledge (truth)
  - What is true?
- Axiology - Nature of Values (good)
  - What is good?
Perennialism

- Rooted in realism
- 3Rs, moral and religious training: Greek, Latin, grammar, logic and geometry; the liberal arts.
- Expounds the past and teaches universally agreed upon knowledge and cherished values of society.
- Teacher is a master of subjects and guides discussion.
- Common curriculum for all students; student interests are irrelevant.

Essentialism

- Rooted in idealism and realism
- Curriculum should be geared to the fundamentals or essentials.
  - 3Rs at elementary level; 5 core subjects at high school.
- Not rooted in the past; concerned with contemporary scene.
- Rejects electives for their costs.
- Parallels today's secondary schools with academics and cognitive skills + computers -- SOLs.
Progressivism

- Rooted in pragmatism
- Reform social and political order in society (early 20th century).
- How to think; not what to think.
- Teach problem solving, inquiry, cooperation and self-discipline.
- Teach through activities, experiments, problem solving, projects and thematic approaches.

Reconstructionism

- Rooted in existentialism
- Emphasizes society-centered education; appropriate for a society in crisis - some believe our society and international society today.
- Curriculum emphasizes cultural pluralism, equality, and futurism.
- Look at global issues and the larger social order.
- Study empirical analysis and scientific approaches plus social, political and economic ideology.

Philosophies - Their beliefs and translation into education

- Realism -- Tradition Perennialism
- Idealism -- Conservative Essentialism
- Pragmatism -- Contemporary Progressivism
- Existentialism -- Liberal Reconstructionism
A Summary

- Philosophy gives meaning to our decisions and actions.

- We should recognize the pervasiveness of philosophy in determining:
  - our views of reality
  - what values and knowledge are worthwhile
  - decisions in education in general and curriculum development in particular.

- No single philosophy, old or new, should serve as the exclusive guide for making decisions about education or the curriculum.

- What we need is a prudent education philosophy: one that is politically and economically feasible and serves the needs of the students, company and society.

- The kind of society or company into which we evolve is in part reflected in our educational/training systems which is influenced by the philosophies adhered to by their leaders.

- Leaders need to scrutinize their curriculum in regard to their mission and philosophy.
Closing Thoughts

- Do curriculum workers/trainers need to provide assistance in developing and designing instructional practices that coincide with their organization’s vision?
- Do the major philosophical beliefs influence occupational-technical education, i.e., science, technology, and computers?
- How do the philosophies of state leaders, CEOs, and school leaders effect curriculum design?

Assignment

- Annotation 2 Due (Blue)
- Draft your own Philosophy that will guide your personal curriculum development directions.
  - What should be taught?  Why?
  - How should it be taught?  Why?

- Do not send this in. Keep it for your own information as we discuss the curriculum the next few weeks. See it you don’t add to it and modify it before we are through.