

EDUC6775 | Topic 1A.3
Understanding Curriculum
Four Influential Curriculum Ideologies

Associate Professor
 Robert Parkes

1

Understanding Curriculum Theory

1. Pinar, W. F. (2004). *What is curriculum theory?* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
2. Wiegman, H. K. (2009). Nothing left to the wall: The pasting power of ideas of the art curriculum theorizing. *Educational Researcher*, 39(5), 4-13.
3. Joseph, P., Brauman, S., Wiedrich, M., Miel, E., & Green, N. (2009). *Cultures of curriculum*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.


- "Curriculum theory is a distinctive field of study, with a unique history, a complex present, an uncertain future . . . [that] has its origin in and owes its loyalty to the discipline and experience of education" (p. 2).¹
- The practice of curriculum theorizing and design is not singular or uniform but *multiple, fractured and contested*;² and conceptions and cultures of curriculum vary, sometimes dramatically.³

2

Competing Curriculum Ideologies

<p>To induct students into powerful subject knowledges?</p> 	<p>To support students to achieve their full potential?</p> 
<p>To produce workforce ready graduates?</p> 	<p>To develop students into critical and informed citizens?</p> 


3



Academic Idealist Ideology

DOMAIN	DETAIL
Content Focus	Knowledge, skills, and values as produced through the scientific rigour of academic disciplines
Curriculum Goal	To enhance learners' intellectual capabilities, and to teach them how to function using disciplinary modes of inquiry
Teaching-Learning Methods	Expository teaching and the promotion of inquiry skills following disciplinary procedures
Assessment Purpose	Tests students' academic rigour, and ranks students for a future in the disciplinary field


4



Techno-Rational Ideology

DOMAIN	DETAIL
Content Focus	Focus on knowledge, skills, and capabilities relevant to future employment in the workforce
Curriculum Goal	To develop students' capabilities in the most effective and efficient way possible, providing for the current and future human capital needs of a society
Teaching-Learning Methods	Emphasises practical application and skill mastery
Assessment Purpose	Assesses learners' ability to apply knowledge and skills so they can be certified as competent for a future employer


5



Learner-Centred Progressivist Ideology

DOMAIN	DETAIL
Content Focus	Focuses on the student and the learning process in a holistic way, often placing emphasis on individual goals
Curriculum Goal	To stimulate individual growth and assist students' to realise their full potential, enhancing opportunities for personal and intellectual development
Teaching-Learning Methods	Emphasises learning over teaching. Teacher understood as a facilitator and guide
Assessment Purpose	Focuses on qualitative measures that are often diagnostic, attempt to analyse the learning process, and consider the student through multiple lenses

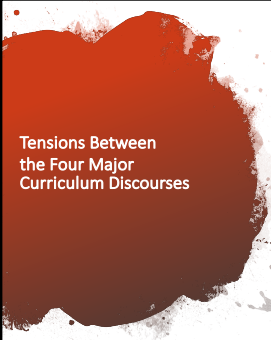
6



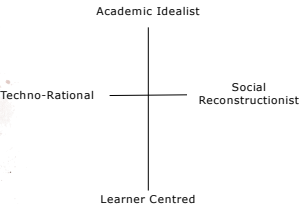
Social Reconstructionist Ideology

DOMAIN	DETAIL
Content Focus	Focuses on social needs, issues and ideals
Curriculum Goal	To liberate, emancipate and empower students' to critique culture and transform society towards a more just and fair world
Teaching-Learning Methods	Focuses on social interaction and group works, and learners' involvement in community activities, to encourage personal and social transformation
Assessment Purpose	Focuses on the need to involve learners in their own assessment, and emphasises self-reflection

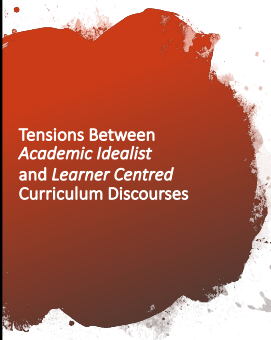
7



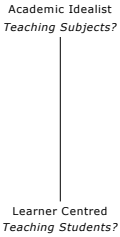
Tensions Between the Four Major Curriculum Discourses



8



Tensions Between Academic Idealist and Learner Centred Curriculum Discourses



9

**Tensions Between
Techno Rational
and *Social Reconstructionist*
Curriculum Discourses**

Techno-Rational
Education as Social
Reproduction?

Social
Reconstructionist
Education as Social
Transformation?

10

**How do teachers
respond to, and
negotiate, these
multiple and
conflicting curriculum
ideologies?**

Academic
Idealist

Techno-
Rational

Social
Reconstructionist

Learner
Centred

According to Schiro (2008):

- Dualistic
- Hierarchical
- Relativistic
- Contextual

Schiro, M. S. (2008). *Curriculum theory: Conflicting visions and enduring concerns*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

11

**Curriculum needs to be
understood as a *Complicated
Conversation***

- “Curriculum discourse should be marked by richness, diversity, discordant voices, fecundity, multiple rationalities, and theories, and should be touched by humanity and practicality in a hundred thousand contexts.” (p. 487)

Reference: Pinar, W. F. (2006). *What is curriculum theory?* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

12
