

Curriculum Development and the Influence of Curriculum Theory

Joseph Schwab is famous for once claiming during an annual meeting that the field of curriculum is moribund. This was mainly due to his belief that curriculum was not facing the tasks placed before it. Schwab viewed that curriculum need to answer the practical problems (Schwab, 1970). This was also echoed by Hlebowitsh (1999) who suggested “the separation of curriculum theory from curriculum development is practically, impossible because, in the words of Ralph Tyler, it results in denying the essential purpose of the theory” (p.348). The Reconceptualists would prefer that curriculum critiqued emerging judgements and left the practical business of curriculum development to individual educators (Hlebowitsh, 1999). Interesting though is the idea that emerging judgements need to be critiqued; this would suggest that those emerging judgements have an element of influence. The question would be where does this influence reside? Is it not curriculum development?

Curriculum Theory may becoming more about critical theory and examining thematic issues and various perspectives facing the educational field but it is also about offering choices and providing guidance that can be put into practice. Questions such as (a) How does education adjust to our changing appreciation of society? (b) How does education overcome injustice? Though curriculum theory may seem far removed for some from curriculum development, in the end, the influence it provides is why it exists. Curriculum theory challenges the way curriculum is developed and thus enables the development of reason, judgement, critical thinking and a desire to examine the truth behind situations that individuals.

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References

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