

INTERACTIVE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT:
RATIONALE AND IMPLEMENTATION
IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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PREFACE TO THE REVISED EDITION

In revising the thesis, Chapter II has undergone major re-organization along the lines suggested, to achieve a clear focus and structure of ideas and arguments. Chapter IV was also rewritten from the same perspective and to include a more critical review of the related literature. Chapters III and V were revised to a lesser degree, in line with the critical comments received. An attempt was made in all these chapters to eliminate repetition and to draw together major ideas and findings at appropriate sections.

With respect to references, the author tried to correct all indicated errors and omissions, to support references to dated works by including more recent references, and by checking every cited work to ensure that it is correctly referenced in the bibliography and consistent with the citation in the text.

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a case for student participation in curriculum decision making, and provides advocates of the process with a rationale which sets the issue in a detailed and coherent framework, which should enable them to understand the links between the various theoretical arguments, see the relationship between goals and values more clearly, and deduce their implications for teaching and learning. The practical significance of the study lies in the presentation of a guide for action in terms of identifying the roles and relationships, the procedures, activities, and the organizational structures required for the effective implementation of the model.

The purpose of the study is, therefore, four-fold: to develop a model which accommodates the participation of students in curriculum development; to identify its theoretical framework; to indicate the conditions required for its implementation in secondary schools; and to examine the feasibility of applying the model to curriculum development in New South Wales (N.S.W.) schools and to English literature.

The study is divided into two components, a theoretical and a practical one. The theoretical part includes the formulation of an interactive model and the description of its essential features and components. Interactive curriculum development is defined as a social process of decision making in a group context in relation to three tasks: curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation. Each task is discussed from the perspective of student participation. Participation is defined as taking part in a thoughtful, deliberate, and responsible way, and is distinguished from being involved, informed and consulted. A theoretical framework is developed for the model, indicating its goals, values and assumptions, and their philosophical and theoretical orientations. Participation is justified in terms of its resulting benefits for the personal development of students.

(iii)

The theoretical component of the study is concluded by comparing and contrasting the interactive model with other models available in curriculum theory.

The practical component of the study is concerned with the implementation of the model. The focus is first on examining the general conditions required for implementing the model. These are derived from studies of state or public schools which have attempted to implement a policy of student participation in curriculum decision making. The second focus is on the N.S.W. educational system which is examined with a view to determining how favourable it is for implementing the model. The third focus is on identifying what conceptions of literature as a subject, and what teaching-learning activities are compatible with the interactive model, and on determining the degree of implementation currently possible in N.S.W. schools.

The analysis of the N.S.W. context, in general and in relation to literature study, leads to the conclusion that this system is not at present favourable to the implementation of the interactive model, in spite of the existence of some enabling and supporting conditions. Recommendations are made about the kinds of changes needed in the system to strengthen the favourable conditions and to enable implementation.

(iv)

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being currently submitted for any other degree.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	(ii)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	(v)
LIST OF FIGURES	(xii)
LIST OF TABLES	(xiii)
INTRODUCTION	1
Aims of the Study	2
Organization of the Study	2
Chapter	
I NATURE AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY	6
Nature of the Study	6
Definition of Key Concepts and Themes	11
General Context of the Study	14
Negative factors: alienation from and dissatisfaction with schools	14
a) Characteristics of alienation and alienated students	14
b) Bureaucracy, education and alienation	18
c) Family background and students' attitudes to school	23
d) Students excluded from decision making	26
Positive factors: participation and decentralization	27
a) Changes in education	29
b) Moves towards decentralization	30
c) Expectations of schools	36
d) Establishment of alternative schools	38
Specific Context of the Study	40
N.S.W. system of secondary education	40
Teaching of English literature	41
Limitations of the Study	42
Rationale and Significance of the Study	42

	Page	
II	A MODEL FOR INTERACTIVE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT	
	Introduction	49
	Overview of the Model	50
	Purpose of the model	50
	Components of the model	52
	a) Curriculum planning	52
	b) Curriculum implementation	56
	c) Curriculum evaluation	59
	Outcomes of interactive curriculum development	61
	The Decision-Making Process in the Model	64
	Nature of decision making	64
	a) Methods used in decision making	68
	b) Phases in decision making	69
	c) Decision modification	72
	d) Effect of social conflict	74
	e) Role of negotiation	76
	f) Arriving at consensus	78
	Process goals in decision making	79
	a) Dialogue	79
	b) Participation	81
	c) Collaboration	84
	Basic Requirements of Teachers and Students	84
	Knowledge	85
	Skills	86
	a) Curriculum development skills	86
	b) Communication skills	87
	c) Interpersonal skills	88
	Developmental Sequence for Implementation	90
	Summary	93
III	A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INTERACTIVE MODEL	94
	Introduction	94
	Values and Assumptions about Students	94
	Focus on the adolescent	94
	Students as persons: the philosophical perspective	97

	Page
a) Respect for persons	97
b) Authentic choice and self-determination	104
Students as persons: the psycho-social perspective	108
a) Individual differences	109
b) Development of logical and abstract thought	110
c) Concern with social and moral values	117
d) Emotional commitment	126
e) Development of a sense of identity	128
Values and Assumptions about Knowledge and the Learning Process	137
Personally meaningful knowledge	138
Integration of knowledge	144
Reconstruction of experience	146
Social construction of knowledge	151
Values and Assumptions about the Teacher's Role and the Learning Environment	157
Nature and value of the teacher's input	158
Establishing personal relationships	164
Fostering democratic structures and procedures	167
Values and Assumptions about the Aims of Education	172
Summary	179
IV THE INTERACTIVE MODEL IN THE CONTEXT OF CURRICULUM THEORY	182
Introduction	182
Three Models of Curriculum Development	184
Centralized model	184
a) Development as a scientific process	185
b) Technological orientation	193
c) Development as deliberation and as artistry	200
Centralized co-operative model	206
School based model	213
a) Democratization	217
b) Professional service	220
Summary of comparisons	222

	Page
Interactive Model and Curriculum Designs	224
Focus on subjects	226
Focus on society	240
Focus on students	244
Summary	248
V CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR IMPLEMENTING THE INTER- ACTIVE MODEL	249
Introduction	249
A framework for analysing the literature	250
Types of schools to be considered	252
Conditions at the Macro Level	254
Changes in values and attitudes	255
Governmental support	258
Support from educational agencies	260
School size and location	267
Review of key points	268
Conditions at the Meso Level	269
Parental and community support	269
Clarity of purpose	275
Agreement and commitment	279
Situational analysis	281
Structures for participative decision making	290
Time and resources	297
Review of key points	299
Conditions at the Micro Level	301
Affecting the teacher's role	301
Affecting the student's role	310
Summary	315
VI CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE INTERACTIVE MODEL IN THE N.S.W. CONTEXT	322
Introduction	322
Enabling Frames at the Macro Level	324
Socio-political climate	324
Criticism and questioning of school's function	328
Multicultural and multiethnic society	330

	Page
Enabling initiatives in N.S.W.	334
a) The "Willis Report"	335
b) The "Aims" document	337
c) The "Base Paper"	339
d) The "Three-Tier" document	341
e) "Managing the School"	342
f) The Education Commission	342
g) The Innovations Program	473
h) The McGowan Report	344
i) Future directions	346
j) Support from teachers, parents and citizens	346
Inhibiting Frames at the Macro Level	350
Academic and prudential traditions	351
Pressure for recentralization	353
Persistence of centralized, bureaucratic control	357
Innovation discouraged	361
Top-down challenge	362
Enabling and Inhibiting Frames at the Meso and Micro Levels	366
Mixed responses to change	367
Need for support in curriculum development	369
Problem of implementation	372
Influence of the Higher School Certificate	374
Subject-based organization	375
Students and parents excluded from decision making	376
Summary and Conclusions	379
 VII	
IMPLEMENTATION FOR THE STUDY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE	386
Introduction	386
Conflicting Positions in the Teaching of English	388
The student-centred rationale	391
The literature-centred rationale	391
Student-Centred Study of Literature	404
Reading and interpreting literature	405
Creative, expressive writing	415

	Page
Implementing the Interactive Model	423
Curriculum planning	423
Curriculum implementation: the teacher's and student's roles	427
a) Before reading	428
b) During reading	430
c) After reading	438
Curriculum evaluation	442
The teacher's role in creative, expressive writing	444
Implementation in the N.S.W. Context	449
Australian trends in the teaching of English	449
The trend in N.S.W.	452
a) The 1971 English syllabus	452
b) The degree of implementation	454
c) Obstacles of implementation	456
d) Facilitating frames	469
Summary	474
 VIII SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	 475
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 486
 APPENDICES	 547
Appendix 1: Categories and subcategories of responses to literature	547
Appendix 2: H.S.C. Examination for 2 Unit English Course	548
Appendix 3: Examiner's Report on 2 Unit English H.S.C. Examination	560

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Flow diagram indicating the interrelationship between different components of the study	5
1.1	The domains of the field of curriculum research	9
2.1	Components of the interactive curriculum development model	51
2.2	Teacher and student inputs and areas of interaction in curriculum planning	54
2.3	Involvement and participation in curriculum decision making	83
2.4	Developmental sequence for curriculum development	92
3.1	Learning in terms of relation to the self	139
4.1	Skilbeck's model of curriculum development	215
4.2	Responsibility for decision making in models of curriculum development	223
4.3	Curriculum design with the generic focus on students/teacher interaction	246
5.1	Conceptual framework for analysing the literature	225
5.2	Model of alternative school development	283
6.1	Key persons/agencies currently involved in determining curriculum policies	360
7.1	Paradigms of English teaching	389
7.2	Possible outcomes of planning at junior and senior levels	424
7.3	Profile of the 1980 2 Unit H.S.C. English Examination	464

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
2.1	Bernstein's invisible-visible pedagogies	57
4.1	Curriculum design classified in terms of formal and generic focus	225
5.1	Differences between conventional and alternative secondary schools	253