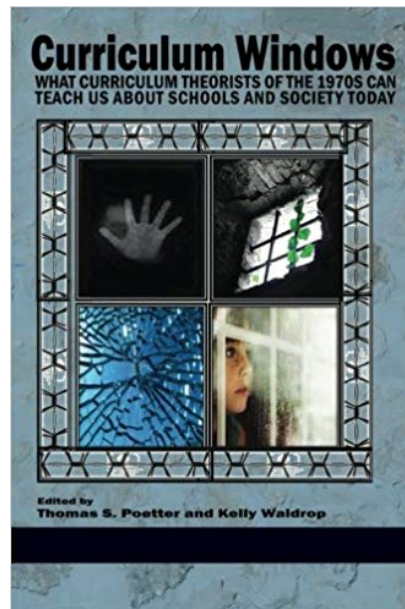


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## Curriculum Windows: What Curriculum Theorists of the 1970's Can Teach Us about Schools and Society Today Edited by Thomas S. Poetter and Kelly Waldrop

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*Curriculum Windows: What Curriculum Theorists of the 1970s Can Teach Us About Schools and Society Today* by T.S. Poetter and Kelly Waldrop (Editors) is a collection of contemporary and kaleidoscopic critical reviews of several hallmark books from the 1970s on education, curriculum, and pedagogy. The compilation of reviews serves as a reader for students in education, but can also encourage general audiences interested in issues related to curriculum studies to reflect on theories of the past that have inspired and continue to inspire today's educational thought and philosophy. Poetter and Waldrop (2015) provide the collaborative work of students and professors who recognize and decipher the philosophies, models, and ideas packaged in curriculum text of the 1970's and situate them in current times. The authors of each chapter share how the academic and social insights of curriculum theorists of the 1970's can help envision a future educational trajectory by encouraging scholar-educators to critique today's routes and consider new possibilities in education.

### Summary of Contents

The Foreword, by William H. Schubert, gives an extensive setting of the books from the 1970s by providing their contextual importance and historical background. A comprehensive background about curriculum pundits like Khlor (1980) and William Pinar (1975) is provided. The Preface, written by Kelly Waldrop, one of the editors of the book, describes the purpose of the book as a continuing process in an endeavor to dialectically relate stories from the past to the present educational theories.

The Introduction to the book is a "Tribute to 1970s" (p. xxxviii) and provides the comprehensive, contextual and political background of the 1970s in the United States by describing the music of the era, hippie culture, the Watergate scandal, Women's Rights, and The Civil Rights movements. Framing the era in the global events, like the Cold War and Space Race, helps the reader understand the

international scene by connecting local and world politics. It was a tumultuous time, and Poetter's windows metaphor allows "humans to use their power of cognition, perception, intuition, and understanding to connect the seemingly mundane of everyday life with the literal and figurative essence of light" (p. xxxii). The varying windows of perception, thought, philosophies, imagination, and fancy provide unique ways of thinking about curriculum, instruction, knowledge, students, learning, leadership, and institutions. Poetter shares the evolution of a project that began with evaluating curricula from the 1960s, and resulted in the titled *Curriculum Windows: What Curriculum Theorists of the 1960s Can Teach Us About Schools and Society Today* (2013) and spawned three subsequent books focusing on curriculum studies of the 1970's (the focus of this review), the 1980's, and the 1990's.

*Curriculum Windows: What Curriculum Theorists of the 1970s Can Teach Us About Schools and Society Today* has 16 chapters that provide commentary on the pioneering works of curriculum studies while covering topics like student surveillance, pedagogical systems, and the sociocultural relevancy of the education in schools. The book strategically transfers readers to the 1970s by reinventing stories from the past, and connects the relevancy and implications of the curriculum critique of that era to contemporary curriculum. The chapter authors and editors revisit and interpret several of the most important works of the 1970s by Michael Apple (1979), Eliot Eisner (1979), Mario Fantini (1976), Paolo Freire (1970), John Goodlad (1964), Maxine Greene (1973), Ivan Illich (1970), James MacDonald (1974), Norman Overly (1970), William Pinar (1975), William Reid (1978), Joseph Schwab (1970), Charles Silberman (1970), Daniel Tanner (1978), and Gerald Weinstein (1970).

An essential point of diverse criticism launched within curriculum scholarship in the 1970s was to question the faith that dominated previous work in the curriculum field. Faith in the functionalist and

progressive view of curriculum studies saw a backlash with the rise of critical scholarship, and it was beautifully captured by compiling and reviewing the whole decade in a single book.

In chapter 1, “Revealing the Hidden Through a Curriculum Window,” Yue Li reviews *The Unstudied Curriculum: Its Impact on Children* (Overly, 1970). Li unravels the hidden curriculum and describes how the unstudied curriculum was not only hidden but also oppressive. The chapter juxtaposes the relationships among learners’ affect, emotional attachment, and their learning goals within the pedagogical systems of current schools and those of the 1970s. Inspired by the idea of the “unstudied curriculum” from Overly (1970), Li compares it to today’s US school system and the strict controlling measures of police presence. While discussing the system of control, Li emphasizes the need to include stakeholders (educators, students, and parents) in dialogue to eliminate the “hidden” part of the system. Li argues that the discussions about the systems of oppressions reveal the hidden nature of the oppression that exists in the name of security. Portraying schools as policing institutions, she argues in favor of creating awareness among students by their teachers. She alludes to Overly’s advice on how educators can play a better role in including students in problematizing the hidden curriculum.

Chapter 2, “Eyes Wide Shut” by Robert Hendricks, presents Weinstein and Fantini’s *Humanistic Education* (1970), a book about compassion, love, and sociocultural relevancy in pedagogical practices. Weinstein and Fantini’s book laments the absence of affect and emotions from a curriculum that should treat students as individuals rather than subjects. Hendrick critiques the American school system for objectifying students and assessing them through a “cookie cutter” approach (p. 23). “Cookies” are churned out by the standardized education system; however, the commentary about the book in this chapter cries for reintroducing humanistic values in education. At the end of the chapter, a social and humane model in education is

emphasized by the author to promote a trusting environment at school that also make students feel comfortable.

Similarly, Illich’s *Deschooling Society* (1970), reviewed by Rayshawn Eastman in chapter 3, titled “The Second Read,” aggressively addresses the notion of the corporate model adopted by schools. The reviewer hints at opening new avenues to meet the learning needs and interests of people by abolishing the old corporate-style schools. This critique of schooling shows the importance of de-schooling the social thought process and transforming it into one of critical and intellectual thinking, a prerequisite for a free society. The resilience of humanizing education is tested against the age-old issues of race, class, and discrimination to find discrimination as still a bane. Through a model presented here in the chapter, Eastman hopes to advance the movement to free society from “sexism, racism, agism [sic], homophobia, xenophobia, and classism” (p. 58).

In Chapter 4, “Kaleidoscope Dreams,” critical race theorist Johnnie Jackson embarks on the journey of analyzing Freire’s (1970) thoughts on oppression and reiterates the need to see our modern world through a Freirean lens. The author magnifies Freire’s role as an example to set our priorities in a way that can empower people of color and those belonging to a disadvantaged class. Jackson claims that *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) changed his life because he could see problems in the contemporary world by using the racist and oppressive lens used in 1970s education. The reviewer discusses critical Freirean concepts like banking education, critical consciousness, and Praxis. The reviewer of this inspiring book by Freire uses a kaleidoscopic metaphor that helps to explain the problems with Eurocentric approaches in the curriculum. As the result, people from “margins” (people of color) gain consciousness to critique each other and allow the reader to see Freire’s concept in education, which was critical and emancipatory.

Ashley Warren reviews Silberman's book *Crisis in the Classroom* (1970) in chapter 5, "Mindlessness—It's Not so Crystal Clear." Using a scientific lens, Warren calls the American education "mindless" for the reason that education is used only in running the school machinery and is failing to produce critical citizens. She criticizes the Common Core Standards (Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang, 2011) and claims that these standards have infected students with boredom and uniformity. She advocates mindfulness in education through the introduction of critical thinking and the requirement of teachers to be the catalysts for a positive change. Through this chapter, the author draws our attention to the current issues in education that can be addressed through the mindful, responsive teaching lessons of Silbermann.

Chapter 6, "STEAMing STEM: Insights from Joseph Schwab and the Ideal of a 'Liberal Education'" by Kurtz Miller is comprised of Schwab's critique of curriculum inquiry through his 1978 essays on science, liberal education, and curriculum. In this edited volume of *Science, Curriculum and Liberal Education*, Schwab's essays and the curricular window from Drayton Regional STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) School (DRSS) are compared and critiqued. The chapter encourages the reader to envision a curricular reform movement incorporating Humanities and Arts education. Schwab's "practical" versus "theoretical" curriculum model functions as the framework for the STEM education reform. That is why, in the light of Schwab's essays (1978), Miller proposed to rename STEM as STEAM to include society's humanly connection to Arts and Humanities. He critiques the STEM reforms and considers the Arts and Humanities as an integral part of our education system. He hypothesizes that if Schwab were alive today, he would have reacted to the current reform movements in STEM with mixed sentiments. Schwab would have been pleased with the "practical" value of the STEM curriculum; however, he might have reordered the hierarchies of disciplines and would have placed Humanities and Arts at the top. Therefore, there is an

emphasis on STEAM instead of the STEM, where A stands for Arts.

In Chapter 7, "In Whose Interest?" by Crystal White, *Schools in Search of Meaning: ASCD Yearbook* (1975) by Macdonald and Zaret presents the organization of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), with an impetus for collaborating with schools. The book's task was to call for greater contributions by the schools to enable students to make meaning and associate their lives with the greater good of the society. Public schools are expected to engage the parents and children in an environment where they are "facilitated in a way that provides opportunities to individual children" (p. 106). White considers Macdonald and Zaret's book to be a difficult read; however, he also claims that the book transformed his views on teaching effectively and has a better understanding of the problems with teaching today. White concludes that the purpose of the book is to understand the role curriculum has in education, prompting questions about prejudices in today's curricula.

Maxine Greene's book *Landscape of Learning* (1978) is reviewed by Yvania Garcia-Pusateri in chapter 8, "My Lens, My Landscape." To inspire our minds, the author endeavors to craft the familiar as strange by identifying the essence of Greene's major themes about teachers facilitating students' self-exploratory journeys. Greene believed that curriculum needs to pave a way for a quest that makes our students question and think more. Pusateri claims that "*Landscapes of Learning* prepares educators for a quest into educational and societal disillusionment" (p.110), but it also shows a glimmer of hope in the form of a window of opportunity towards consciousness and hope.

Chapter 9 is an excellent example of bringing history to life. Kelly Waldrop writes about the insights of Tanner and Tanner's book *Curriculum Development: Theory into Practice*

(1975). She traces the synoptic works in curriculum reviewed by the Tanners from the early 1800s to 1960s in a progressive way, following the path of educationists like John Dewey, Ralph Tyler, and Hilda Taba. Just as Tanner and Tanner's book talks about the importance of history as a source of knowledge for the future, Waldrop stretches the wisdom from the book beyond the 1960s into the present day. This chapter highlights how Tanner and Tanner's maintenance of the convention of synoptic curriculum texts enabled curriculum leaders, school administrators, supervisors, and teachers to understand the legacy of the curriculum field's attempt to design educational content and experiences for the following generations.

In Chapter 10, Tela Bayamna turns the reader's attention to 1975 by critiquing William Pinar's book *Curriculum Theorizing: The Reconceptualists* (1975). Her chapter, "A Rainbow of Colors: My Life Experiences, Currerre Moments, and Curriculum Theorizing" focuses on the importance of theory as a living entity. Bayamma claims Pinar valued theory more than as a result of a process; instead, he believed a theory needs to be dynamic and vibrant for learning and teaching practices. This concept, Pinar believed, is not just a static entity. Rather, he looked at it with dynamism and argued that theory has life within lively human subjects, thriving to become a reality. He verbalized the noun *curriculum* into something we know now as *curre*, "a verb form of curriculum in which teachers and learners negotiate their emergent lives based on a regressive-progressive-analytical-synthetic method of autobiographical and cultural study" (pp. xvi-xvii). In today's educational system, which has become standardized, Bayamna suggests looking through the window of hope where the *curre* is "not divorced from the environment, the culture and experience" (p. 152).

In chapter 11, Angie Meissner writes about Berman and Roderick's *Curriculum: Teaching the What, How and Why of Living* (1977). Both Berman and Roderick believed in the curriculum that asks the

essential questions about life. In this chapter, "Becoming the Whole Human," Meissner posits that schooling could only help students if it caters to all the needs of becoming human. The author of the chapter captures the vital aspect of Berman and Roderick's work where both of them highlighted creation as precedence to behaviorism in the education sector. The author in this chapter reflects on the book's idea of living curriculum that can benefit students in their real lives. She also believed that the integration of life into schools and vice versa can make the process of learning as a whole, reciprocal cycle.

Chapter 12, "Curriculum Problems and Professional Conscience in a Democratic Society," by Angela Trubceac, covers the works of William Reid's (1978) *Thinking about Curriculum: The Nature and Treatments of Curriculum Problems*. Reid treats curriculum as an epistemological study that necessitates deliberation in administrative fields of education. The chapter highlights how the function of curriculum is to facilitate the policy-makers and question the status quo. Trubceac envisions the work of Reid in the post-Soviet country of Moldova and reveals that reading a 1970s book helped her gain new perspectives about the education in Moldova, where she taught. The chapter shares Reid's (1978) hopes and courage that advises the reader to reject the bigoted narratives developing around the world and become a beacon of hope instead. The importance of alternatives and emancipatory discourses in curriculum is emphasized by the author.

In Chapter 13, "Open Your Windows... Window Shopper..." Brian Collier urges readers to delve deeper into curriculum studies and its practicality in education while discussing J. I. Goodlad's *Curriculum Inquiry*. Goodlad's book is the continuation of his lifelong research that later resulted in the best seller, *A Place Called School* (Goodlad, 1984). The author of the chapter, however, has tried to look out the windows into the future where curriculum studies are liberating and democratic. Collier understands and appreciates the academic liberty that Goodlad

expressed in his book. Giving agency to teachers, where they can explore new possibilities in the curriculum and not just follow it mindlessly, is a valuable argument for the readers.

In chapter 14, Goodlad's student Elliot Eisner's book *The Educational Imagination of School Programs* (1979) is discussed by Ryan Denney. This chapter, "Becoming an Educational Critic: Strap on Your Backpack," combines curriculum with evaluation. According to Denney, Eisner (1979) wanted to understand curriculum theory in a more significant institutional structure rather than following the traditional model of efficiency and uniformity. The book reviewed has a more artistic value for curriculum instead of treating it as a scientific project and deals with curriculum as a form of art, ready to be explored.

In Chapter 15, "The Two Way Mirror" by Amy Baldrige, on *Ideology of Curriculum* by Michael Apple, contends that the intention of the government official is cynical and often results in undesirable outcomes. Apple (1979) suggests here the need to make decisions in a broader spectrum rather than a non-negotiated top-down model. Baldrige brings an essential educationist like Apple to the limelight for the contemporary scholar. Apple is a strong advocate of freeing education from the hegemonic powers that reproduce inequities through education. As an educational administrator, Baldrige draws a comparison of the administrative structure of education at the US schools with the role of political ideology that Apple (1979) mentioned. The author highlights the role of ideological decision making in the structuring of curriculum and how they needed re-structuring.

In the last chapter (16), "The Pursuit of Lifelong Learning," Deborah Heard talks about Overly's *Lifelong Learning, a Human Agenda* (1979). Throughout the review, Heard speaks of human action and the role of an individuals to shape their own lives. The book also has a message for educators that self-growth and self-reflection are

interrelated. With this chapter, the journey of curriculum studies heralds the end of the decade, an era where thought, practice, and philosophy of curriculum all converged. Heard pays homage to Overly's work by stating that it helped her stay motivated and graduate as a scholar of curriculum studies.

## Discussion

This book is a time machine of curriculum studies that gives us a vision for the future. It uses the wisdom from an era 40 years ago to help us see the perspectives in today's schools and education system in the U.S. The blend of time travel metaphor (Wells, 1895) with the narrative style of the book adds a fiction-like fluidity to the narrative. Sixteen different authors have critiqued sixteen of the most influential books on education in a personalized, living, and compelling voice. This book is a beautiful delineation of metaphors, evident from the book title as well as section titles, like "Curriculum Window," "Eyes Wide Shut," "Kaleidoscope Dreams," "A Rainbow of Colors," "Becoming a Whole Human," "Open Your Window," "Window Shopper...", and "The Two Way Mirror." The metaphor of window is a recurring motif, beginning with the cover of the book, which contains pictures of a window and paintings with imagery of hope, confusion, and political turmoil. Almost all the chapters and the authors have adhered to the metaphor window. Life, at large, is seen through the "window," as we usually look through a car's window or a house window, pondering and thinking about the complexity of life. The authors not only use the real window as a metaphor and a piece of architecture but also borrow the concept from the figurative world of poetry, philosophy, and even to modern day computer "windows." The window is a symbol of hope, beauty, happiness, and opportunity and runs parallel to the academic discourse throughout the book.

As an essential toolbox for contemporary educationists and students, the book has a

uniquely impressive style of writing and lucid prose. It is, no doubt, a persuasive way to reconnect with the proverbial wisdom of the 1970's to be inspired and motivated and to learn ways to address the problems in today's world's education, as in the summaries about Freire (1970) and Illich (1971) for instance. This review provides a window to the prudence of the past, and the audience can find the treasure of knowledge by reading this edited book review in detail. Lastly,

the book offers an excellent opportunity for educators to be reflexive and practice their skills to grow as an academic. Reading this compilation of concise reviews entices us all to revisit the academic stalwarts and re-read their works with a critical mind.

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