Social and Historical Foundations of Curriculum

Chapter 3 ...Monday 20th February 2017
Anna B Smith
Focus Questions

1. Why is it important to know curriculum’s historical foundations?

2. In what ways did U.S. nationalism influence West Indian curriculum during the first half of the 19th century?
More Focus Questions

3. What unique problems were evidenced in the 19th century as the secondary school curriculum developed?

4. Discuss how our local curriculum has evolved since Independence
5. In what ways (if any) has our local curriculum been adapted to reflect the rapidly occurring societal changes?

6. How can you influence possible changes in today’s modern curriculum?
Why is curriculum history important?

- To provide guidance for today’s curriculum makers
- To pass on historical knowledge to younger generations
- To make critical comparison between past, present and futuristic societal needs
Curriculum change in early America

- Basic curriculum was developed by English speaking individuals
- British established colonies and three major types of education evolved
- Essentialism perspective dominated
- Everyone followed a core curriculum - ‘one size fits all’
- Teacher-centered approaches utilized in the classroom
The Colonial Period

- Curriculum in the Colonial period consisted chiefly of teaching the three R’s, religious knowledge and lessons in manners and morals.

- Religious and political competition hindered the colonies from educational investments.

- Parochial and independent schools showcasing different ethnic and religious groups evolved.
Colonial Schools

Five types were espoused:

1. **Town schools** - locally controlled, public, rote learning, teacher centered approach to learning, poor student attendance

2. **Parochial and Private Schools** - private; curriculum offerings included reading, writing, religious instructions; vocational skills
3. Latin Grammar schools for boys; ages 8/9 years- 16/17 years

- Curriculum consisted of classic offerings... Latin, Greek, rhetoric, logic, arts and sciences, grammar school
- Curriculum catered to those who were desirous of entering the field of business, medicine, law, teaching, religious ministry
Colonial Schools continued

4. Academies - established in 1751

Ascribed to the curriculum offerings of Benjamin Franklin for those not desiring to attend college

Diversified curriculum offering included, English grammar, classics (three R’s) composition, rhetoric and public speaking
Prepared children for life not just college by offering subjects modern in nature

Other subject offerings included Greek, English grammar, geography, natural philosophy, French, chemistry, astronomy
Academies
Colonial Schools Continued

- Latin was removed from the curriculum and a foreign language could have been chosen by students pursuing a vocational subject.
- Other skills such as carpentry, cabinet making, farming, printing were gradually added to the curriculum.
5. **Colleges** - these were chiefly Harvard or Yale Colleges

- Students pursuing religious ministries were entertained in these colleges

- Curriculum catered for Latin and Greek studies alongside grammar, logic, astronomy, arithmetic, metaphysics, natural sciences and many more
The National Period
The National Period 1776 - 1850

- Political call for curriculum to be linked to the futuristic societal development, espoused by President Madison and endorsed by Thomas Jefferson
- Political commitment for the advancement of education, whilst giving the state autonomy over state and local schools
The National Period Continued

- Curriculum saw a reduction in religious studies and new enlightenment in the natural sciences. Reading, writing and arithmetic continued, alongside, the arts, German, English, sciences, good manners and moral development.

- Dr. Benjamin Rush (1745 - 1813) a significant influencer of this era.
Curriculum Development 1860 - 1890

- Children were seen as blank slates (tabula rasa) to be filled with knowledge
- The three R’s dominated the curriculum: standardized and limited
- Limited expenditure in education
- Rote learning e.g. rote and mental arithmetic
- Gradual addition of other subjects to the curriculum e.g. Sciences, literature, business subjects
The National Period Continued

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The National Period Continued

- Noah Webster (1758 - 1843) - significantly influenced the curriculum transformation paradigm in the US
- Establishment of a unique US language to stamp out any European traits and promote the US culture
- Meticulously wrote several books to be included in the national curriculum for students to read. These writing, reading and spelling books were instrumental in shaping the curriculum of US schools, thus giving them a language, identity and nationality
1890 - 1920

- William Holmes Mc Guffey (1800 - 1873) provided the first graded pictorial Reading Primer to the US school’s curriculum and introduced the graded system in the curriculum
- Integrative approach to learning and development in the curriculum
- Axiological perspective adopted...espoused values added to the curriculum
Larger schools were established and more approved courses were added to the taught curriculum e.g. history, bookkeeping, geometry.

Experientialism and scientific approach to the curriculum and learning slowly evolved.
The Scientific Movement in Curriculum 1828 - 1930?

- This movement was highly influenced by Charles Eliot who tried to include psychology in the curriculum
- Marriage of two Ages - Ages of Absolution and Age of Enlightenment
- Discovery of new knowledge led to frequent review of curriculum content
- Concept mapping in scientific education
The Secondary School Curriculum
1800 - 1900
### TABLE 3.3  EVOLUTION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM, 1800–1900

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Nineteenth Century European Educators

- German educators e.g. (Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746 - 1827)
- Significantly influenced curriculum through the fields of natural science, psychology and sociology
- Revamping of traditional curriculum instructional methods to more psychologically oriented student-centered ones
Curriculum transformation saw a decline in the popularity of Latin, Greek and Classic content.

New and improved pedagogical practices replaced corporal punishment, rote learning and memorization.
19th Century European Educators Continued

Friedrich Froebel (1782 - 1852): The Kindergarten Movement encouraged a child-centered curriculum similar to that of Pestalozzi’s

Encouraged the use of colours, stories, games as part of the formal curriculum
Admonished teachers to use five steps in curriculum instruction when in the classroom

1. What do my students know?
2. What questions should I ask?
3. What events should I relate?
4. What conclusions should be reached?
5. How can students apply what they have learned?
19th Century European Educators
Continued...

German philosopher Johann Friedrich Herbart (1976 -1841) -

Advocated the inclusion of morality in the curriculum alongside, History, English, Mathematics, and Science
Utilitarian and Scientific Education

English Social Scientist Herbert Spencer (1820 - 1903)

- A believer in Darwinism
- He was dis-enchantment with the present curriculum which in his view did not adequately represent contemporary society
- An advocate for the curriculum to include a scientific and practical undertakings to accompany the industrialized revolution that was occurring at that time
Utilitarian and Scientific Education

- Spencer’s curriculum embodied activities to enhance life and societal needs to embrace the radical societal changes that were taking place.
- His notion’s influenced the embodiment of discovery learning as he felt students should be taught how to think and not what to think.
- His ideas like that of many of his predecessors did not escape unscathed.
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From the colonial period to the turn of the twentieth century, the traditional curriculum dominated the teachings of both elementary and secondary schools. The number of subjects being added to the curriculum kept growing. Three curriculum committees were established to decipher the best content for students.
Curriculum Reformation
Key Players

William Harris (1834 - 1926)

- Supported the traditional curriculum; a blend of essentialism and perennialism.
- His elementary curriculum comprised mathematics, geography, history, grammar, literature, art.
His proposed secondary curriculum was saturated with academia and included the classics, Greek, Latin and Mathematics.

He advocated a *one size fits all curriculum* for students and was in strong disagreement to a vocational or practical curriculum.
Charles Eliot (1835 - 1909)

Jefferson, Rush and Horace Mann - (progressivism)

Insisted that mass education was necessary for intelligent participation in a political democracy and for a country’s economic growth and development
The Transitional Period 1893 - 1918