PGCE Secondary introductory reading

The reading we have provided is designed to encourage you to begin to engage with theoretical perspectives on education and to reflect on their implications for you as a secondary school teacher. It offers opportunities for you to develop your capacity for critical reading. A written task based on this reading will be set at the start of term in September.

Read the two extracts provided (one by Michael Young, the other by Haydon and Heilbronn) and the recommended reading from your subject tutor.

As you read, think about how can the main aims of the secondary curriculum be met through the teaching and learning in your subject.

1. **Reading critically means asking yourself these questions as you go:**

   - What is the purpose of the writing?
   - What questions or issues do the authors address?
   - How do the authors make use of existing literature?
   - What conclusions do they draw?
   - What are the implications and consequences of these conclusions?

2 - Your critical reading of the texts should prompt reflection on your own experiences as a learner. You may also reflect on any recent experience you have of observing teaching and learning in your subject, and to identify and reflect upon issues arising from this experience. You may find the attached document on reflection useful in this process

3 - Your reflection on the texts and on your existing experience may lead you to draw some tentative conclusions about how the aims of the National Curriculum can be met in your subject. However you may find it constructive to conclude your writing by raising questions in response to your reading, questions that you might explore during your time on the PGCE programme.

Notes on Young, Heilbronn and Haydon.

The Haydon and Heilbronn chapter is from the 7th edition of *Learning to Teach in the Secondary School* edited by Capel, Leask and Younie. The Young chapter is from *Knowledge, Values and Educational Policy* edited by Daniels, Lauder and Porter. Search for this work online to find relevant details, then use the referencing guide to find out how to cite and reference this work.

Look out for the subject based reading recommended by your tutor as well, that can be accessed from these Welcome Pages. This reading will help you prepare for teaching and for the first assignment.
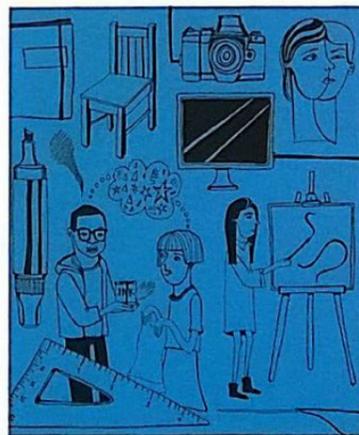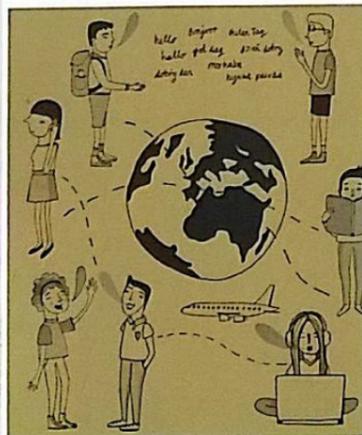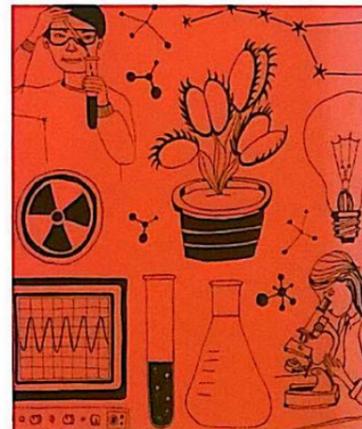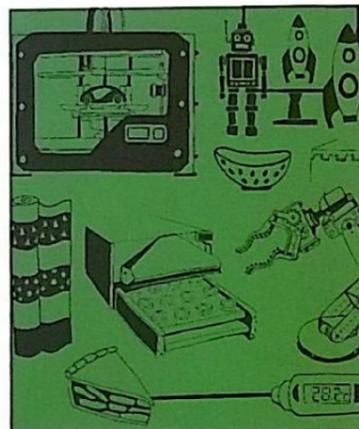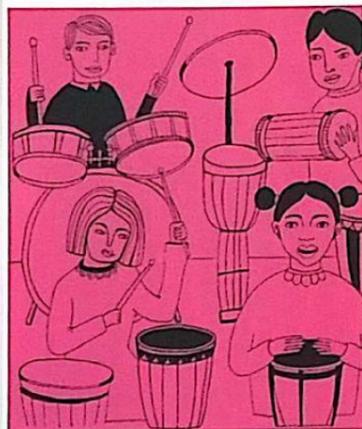
7.2 The school curriculum

Graham Haydon and Ruth Heilbronn

Introduction

This unit discusses the curriculum as one of the most important 'tools' through which educational aims can be realised; it is best read in conjunction with Unit 7.1.

We need first to be clearer about what the term 'the curriculum' refers to. The planned or formal curriculum is the intended content of an educational programme set out in advance. We refer later to the informal and hidden curriculum. Like other aspects of the context of your work (the school buildings, say, or the administrative organisation of the school), the curriculum (whether formal or not) forms a 'frame' to what you are doing, even when you are not explicitly thinking about it. But often you find that you do refer to the curriculum, in your everyday conversations with colleagues, and less frequently perhaps in meetings with parents or in talking to pupils in a pastoral role. It might seem that the curriculum is so clearly part of the context of your work that it must be obvious what the curriculum is. In which case, why does a book of this nature need units on the curriculum?

The purpose of this unit is to show you that once you think about it, it is not so obvious what the curriculum is and that it is not something you should, as a teacher take for granted. Rather than relying on implicit assumptions about the curriculum, you should be able and willing, as part of your professional role, to think about the curriculum, about its role in education and about ways in which it is controversial and might be open to challenge. In doing this, you will, of course, need to keep in mind the relevant legislation and government documentation for the country within which you are working. National curricula undergo revisions and sometimes radical changes are made, and you need to refer to the latest version for your school's jurisdiction, using the relevant websites. In England, the National Curriculum underwent a major review recently. At the time of writing, the latest version was published in September 2013 and updated in July 2014. You should bear in mind also that the education systems, including curricula, of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are, in varying ways, different from that of England (see the other units for Chapter 7 on the companion website).

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

■ distinguish a number of different conceptions of the curriculum;
■ discuss ways in which the curriculum may or may not help to realise educational aims;
■ see why the content of the curriculum, even if often taken for granted, is potentially controversial;
■ discuss the place of your particular teaching subject within the broader curriculum.

Check the requirements of your initial teacher education (ITE) programme to see which relate to this unit.

The curriculum in general and within particular subjects

It helps to avoid confusion in the rest of this unit (and hopefully in your thinking more generally) if we distinguish between the curriculum of a school (or even of schools in general) and the curriculum within a particular subject. Sometimes, this distinction is marked by speaking of the 'syllabus', rather than curriculum, of a particular subject. The term 'syllabus' usually refers to a specific course of study in a specific subject set out in detail in advance, possibly designed by a particular teacher, but often laid down by an examination board or other body external to the school. But it is common now to speak of, say, 'the science curriculum' or 'the arts curriculum'. In the official documentation for the *current* National Curriculum (NC) for England (DfE 2013i), the term 'curriculum' is used throughout the document: 'syllabus' is not used.

For most of this unit, the focus is on the broad curriculum. Questions are raised about the role of particular subjects within the curriculum in general, more than about what goes on within the teaching of particular subjects. But we shall have to say something about the latter point as well, because the role of a subject within the curriculum partly depends on what is done within that subject (see the subject-specific and practical books that are a part of this *Learning to Teach* series, p. ii). (So far, the term 'the whole curriculum' has been avoided because that too may carry some ambiguity.) In Task 7.2.1, we ask you to compare two curricula.

The formal curriculum

There *could* be considerable variety in what you and other student teachers have written for Task 7.2.1, because the term 'curriculum' can be used in various ways. But it is likely that what you have written down, for both schools in the comparison, is a list of subjects. What this illustrates is that when people refer to 'the curriculum' without qualification, most often they think of what we can usefully label 'the formal curriculum'. This is the intended content of an educational programme, set out in advance.

At a minimal level of detail, the formal curriculum can be stated as a list of names of subjects. At this level, it is likely that there is considerable overlap between the lists for the two schools that you compared in the task, and in the lists that you and other student teachers have compiled. Indeed,

at this level, the list of named subjects in the typical curriculum of an English school has changed relatively little over a long period. When the National Curriculum in England was first introduced in 1988, a historian of education pointed out its similarity to the curriculum in the secondary school regulations in England of 1904 (Aldrich 1988: 48). There are even recognisable overlaps with the curriculum parodied by Lewis Carroll in *Alice in Wonderland* (published 1865) when Alice and the Mock Turtle compare their respective curricula.

✎ Task 7.2.1 School curricula: a comparison

(This task is deliberately parallel to Task 7.1.1 on aims in Unit 7.1.)
When you have carried out this task by yourself, try to compare your findings with those of other student teachers.
    Select two schools with which you are familiar; for example:

■ the school in which you received your own secondary education (or the majority of it, if you changed schools);
■ your current placement school.

    From memory, write down briefly what was in the curriculum of the school you attended as a pupil. Then (without referring to documentation at this stage) write down what is in the curriculum of your placement school. Compare the two accounts. Store your comparison in your professional development portfolio (PDP).

While the formal curriculum can be listed simply as a set of subjects, it is always possible to set out in more detail the content that is supposed to be taught and learned. Even when the curriculum is stated simply as a list of subjects, those who write it and those who read it have some implicit understanding of what goes into each subject. It is important to keep this in mind when comparing the curriculum offered in schools at different times. So far as named subjects are concerned, the typical curriculum of English schools has *not* gone through revolutionary changes, though some new subjects, including ICT/computing and citizenship, have been added. But it would be a mistake to conclude from the similarity of the lists that the curriculum has hardly changed at all. Even if we could set aside all changes in teaching method and concentrate solely on the content of the subjects, what is taught under the heading of history or science in the early twenty-first century is obviously going to be very different in many ways from what was taught under the same headings in the early twentieth century.

Another point to note under 'formal curriculum' is that the curriculum may contain parts that are optional. Even before the introduction of a NC in England and Wales in 1988 made certain subjects compulsory, it was normal for most of the curriculum in a secondary school to consist of subjects that all pupils were expected to take. But there may also be options within the curriculum, particularly in the later years of secondary school.

Related to the idea of a compulsory curriculum are the notions of a 'common curriculum'; that is, one taken by everyone in practice, whether or not it is actually compulsory, and a 'core curriculum', the part of a formal curriculum that everyone takes, around which there is scope for variations.

The informal curriculum and the hidden curriculum

The notion of the *formal curriculum* refers to the content that is, quite deliberately, taught by teachers in a school, usually in periods structured by a timetable and labelled according to subject. So the fact that something is on the curriculum means that it is taught (or at least that the intention of the curriculum planners or of the school management is that it shall be taught). But since some pupils may fail to learn what teachers are intending to teach, the fact that something is a non-optional part of the formal curriculum does not guarantee that pupils learn it.

On the other hand, pupils may learn things in school that are not taught as part of the formal curriculum. Many of the possible aims of a school, which you were thinking about in Unit 7.1, involve matters of this kind. If a school wants, for instance, to promote cooperation and consideration for others, then (if these are to be more than pious aspirations) it needs to do something to try to bring about cooperation and to encourage pupils to behave in considerate ways (see also Unit 4.5 for further discussion of promoting common values). Teachers might agree to build cooperative work into their lessons, whatever the subject; teachers and pupils might draw up a code of behaviour; there may be some system of rewards and sanctions; the school management may pay attention to the way that pupils move around the school during break times, and so on. All such arrangements can be counted as part of the *informal curriculum* of the school. The *curriculum* can be defined taking into account both the formal and informal curriculum in some way such as this: 'The school curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that each school plans for its pupils' (DfE 2014o).

But pupils may also learn things at school that the school does not intend them to learn. For several decades, sociologists have pointed out that many pupils at school were learning, for instance, to accept passively what they were told or to see themselves as failures, while some were learning to identify with and follow the mores of a rebellious subculture, and some were learning racist and sexist attitudes, and so on. Such learning was not normally part of what the school was intending its pupils to learn, and the school may not have been aware of many of the things that its pupils were learning; from the school's point of view, these outcomes were side effects of the pupils' time in school. The term 'hidden curriculum' is often used to cover such learning.

The side effects just mentioned are undesirable ones, but side effects could also be desirable ones; for instance, a side effect of pupils of different ethnic backgrounds learning and playing together might be the development of understanding and respect. The point about the idea of the *hidden curriculum* is not that its content is necessarily bad, but that the school is not aware of it. Today, teachers are far more likely to be aware of the likely side effects of all aspects of the school's activity. In that way, what might once have been part of a hidden curriculum comes to be hidden no longer. This does not mean that schools today have no hidden curriculum; it means that a school has to try consciously to uncover and become aware of side effects of what it does in its teaching and its organisation.

If these side effects are unwelcome - if, say, they work against the school achieving its intended aims - then the school may make deliberate attempts to counteract them. Often a school does this by paying attention to aspects of its teaching and organisation outside the formal curriculum. So where the learning of racist or sexist attitudes might once have been part of the *hidden curriculum* in some schools, it is more likely today that the *informal* curriculum includes anti-racist and anti-sexist policies. And it may also be that such policies alter what is done within the *formal* curriculum; for example, within personal, social and health education (PSHE) or citizenship.

Mention of the informal curriculum shows that the curriculum as a *whole* is not, for any teacher, a rigid framework within which there is no room for flexibility or planning. Even when the formal curriculum is determined largely in advance, as in the NC for England, there is still scope open to the school to design the details of the curriculum and the way that links between curriculum subjects are (or are not) made, and there is some space outside the NC, since it is not supposed to occupy the whole timetable.

You should, then, see it as part of your professional role as a teacher that you can take an overview of the curriculum, have a sense of 'where it comes from' and be able to engage in discussion on whether it could be improved and, if so, in what ways.

Curriculum as a selection from culture

A number of writers have referred to the curriculum as a selection from the culture of a society. 'Culture' here refers to 'everything that is created by human beings themselves: tools and technology, language and literature, music and art, science and mathematics - in effect, the whole way of life of a society' (Lawton 1989: 27). Any society passes on its culture to the next generation, and in modern societies schooling is one of the ways in which this is done. But obviously no school curriculum can accommodate the whole of human culture, so a selection has to be made.

A natural question to ask next is how do we make that selection? Different curriculum theories give different answers.

A first move is to recognise that since some aspects of culture are passed on or picked up independently of schools, it may make sense for schools in general to concentrate on matters that will not be learned if they are not included in the school curriculum, and secondary schools in particular have to try to build on, but not to duplicate, what pupils have learned by the end of primary school. Even these points give rise to many questions. For example, many young people of secondary age pick up much of what they know about computers, sport or popular music independently of school. Does this mean there is no point in including study of these areas in the curriculum?

After putting on one side things that pupils learn independently of school (if we can identify such things), there are principles by which we might try to make a selection from culture. In this unit, there is space to mention just three: to select what is *best*, or what is *distinctive* of a particular culture, or what is in some way *fundamental*.

The idea of selecting, and enabling people to appreciate, what is *best* goes back at least to Matthew Arnold (1822-1888). Arnold was not only a Victorian poet and a commentator on the culture of his day, but also a school inspector. Historically, this principle has been linked with the idea of whole areas of culture - 'high culture', centred on arts and literature, being thought of in this view to be of greater value than the rest of culture, and also perhaps being accessible only to a minority of society. The principle does not have to be interpreted in that way (see Gingell and Brandon 2000 for an updated interpretation). Whatever area of culture we are dealing with, including popular culture, we may well want people to be able to appreciate what is good rather than what is mediocre. It does not follow, though, that the school curriculum should always be focused on what is best in any area. If we suppose, for instance, that the greatest science is that of Einstein or Stephen Hawking, it does not mean we place this science at the centre of the school curriculum. In many areas, if people are ever to be able to appreciate the best, they need to start by understanding something more basic.

Another principle of selection that is sometimes favoured is to pick from the whole of human culture what is *distinctive* of a particular culture - the way of life of a particular nation, or ethnic group, or religion. This may apply more to the detailed content within areas of the curriculum than to the selection of the broad areas. We do not just learn language; we learn a particular language; and while it is possible to study historical method, any content of history is that of particular people in a particular part of the world. One question for curriculum planning, then, is how far to select from what we see as 'our' culture, and how to interpret what is 'our' culture. That question, in England, has to be resolved in a context of a multicultural society, within a world in which there is increasing interaction between different cultures.

Rather than looking to what is best, or what is distinctive, we may try to look to what is *fundamental*. This idea may apply both across the curriculum and within subject areas of the curriculum. Within the sciences and mathematics, for instance, the idea of what is culturally distinctive may have little application (which is not to say that these subjects as actually taught are culture-free), and the idea of teaching the best may be inappropriate. We need to think about what is fundamental in the educational sense of 'foundational': not what is fundamental in the whole structure of human knowledge, but what people need to learn if they are to have a foundation on which further knowledge or skills can be built.

Thinking about the curriculum in general, we can also try to ask what is fundamental in the whole human culture in which people are living. But this question depends, in turn, on some particular understanding of what is important in human life. Is it the development of the capacities for rational thought and judgement? Then we might argue, as the philosopher of education Paul Hirst (1974) once did, that there are certain basic forms of human understanding - science, mathematics, interpersonal understanding and so on - that are not interchangeable and each of which is necessary in its own way to the development of rational understanding.

Or is human life more fundamentally about providing the material necessities of life? Then we might stress what can be economically useful, and our curriculum might be primarily a vocational one. Or is the essential aspect of human life, so far as education is concerned, the fact that people live together in groups and have to organise their affairs together? Then preparing people to be citizens might turn out to be most fundamental.

So far, none of these approaches looks as if it takes us very far, by itself, in selecting which aspects of culture should make up a school curriculum. Besides, we do not *have to* transmit culture, or any aspect of culture, just as it stands (and in any case, it is constantly changing). So it looks as if making any selection from the available culture requires us to ask just the sorts of question that Unit 7.1 suggested we need to ask when deciding on aims of education: what is it that matters most in life, and how can teachers and schools best contribute to promoting that?

Relating curriculum to aims

The curriculum of a school is one of the major factors determining what actually goes on in the school. So the curriculum should be a major way through which we try to realise whatever we think the aims of education should be; we could say, in brief, that the curriculum is a tool for realising educational aims. So, rationally, the planning of a curriculum should depend on how the overall aims of education are conceived. Historically, this does not appear to have been always what has happened. A brief survey of some of the references to aims in the developing documentation of the National Curriculum for England will illustrate this point.

There have been several changes in the National Curriculum (NC) since it was first introduced for England (and at that time also Wales) in 1988; however, this does not necessarily mean that the curriculum designers have changed their conception of the aims of education during that time. It could be that the changes have come about through cumulative attempts to find a better way of realising the underlying aims. But, in fact, it is not easy to see how far the actual content of the NC has been determined, either originally or in later versions, by reference to underlying aims. The NC documentation *has* contained some reference to aims from the beginning. (Actually, the reference to aims usually refers to the aims *of the curriculum*; there is very little reference to the aims of education as such.) In the earliest version, in 1988, reference to aims was limited to stating merely that schools should promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepare them to take their place in society as responsible adults. As a statement of aims, this was not very controversial (with the possible exception of the idea of spiritual development). Its problem was that it was so broad and general that it gave very little guidance. And in fact, there was no indication in the rest of the original documentation of the NC for England and Wales that its content had been influenced at all by the statement of aims. That statement seemed to be an example of an error that it is easy for government agencies, and also schools, to slip into: setting out a statement of aims that looks good but that makes no apparent difference to what actually happens.

In the 1999 revision of the NC for England, there were again two overall aims: to provide opportunities for all to learn and achieve, and to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and emotional well-being. But there were also two more significant changes. First, it was explicitly said that the aims of the curriculum were rooted in certain values that were held to be widely shared in the society; an outline list of values was given, based on the findings of the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community (see Unit 4.5). Second, a listing of more specific aims was given under each of the two overall aims.

By the time of the 2008 NC revision, three aims were explicitly stated to be the starting point for curriculum design:

The curriculum should enable all young people to become:
■ successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve;
■ confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives;
■ responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

(DfE 2012a)

These broad aims were broken down into 29 specific aims on an accompanying document on the Department for Education website. The website also provided a list of values underlying the aims and the purposes of the National Curriculum. In many ways, the relationship between values, aims, purposes and curriculum design was left vague. There was no explicit explanation of how the stated aims might be derived from the values. The section on purposes gave reasons for having a statutory National Curriculum, and included a list of some particular aims to be realised through this statutory curriculum, but there was overlap between 'Aims' and 'Purposes' in the document that seem to echo the individual/societal distinction used in Unit 7.1. (Under 'Aims' were the qualities and capacities to be developed in the learners. Under 'Purposes' were what society as a whole hoped to achieve through the statutory curriculum.) The detailed account in the 2008 National Curriculum

of the relations between the curriculum aims, purposes and values does not appear in later versions, but is a useful reminder of their underlying relations and connections, even with its limitations in terms of precision.

It is important to think about how a particular curriculum might be derived from stated aims, and how a statement of aims might serve as a practical guide to what is done in schools. Here, we can usefully contrast the 1988 version and the 2008 version of the NC. The 1988 version was so broad and open-ended that it left almost all discussion about the actual content of the curriculum still to be carried out (in principle; in practice it seems likely that an almost ready-made list of subjects was taken over from what had already been normal practice in schools). In contrast, the 2008 version, in listing as many as 29 aims (divided between three broader aims), gave a series of reference points that *potentially* could be used almost as a checklist in seeing how far a school was actually doing something concrete towards realising the aims.

To illustrate, within the broad aim that pupils should become 'successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve', we could take the specific aim that schools should enable pupils to be 'creative, resourceful and able to identify and solve problems', and then ask what a specific school is doing in practice towards achieving this aim. Similarly, within the broad aim that pupils should become 'confident individuals who are able to live safe, happy and fulfilling lives', we can ask whether a school is paying enough attention to helping pupils to 'have a sense of self-worth and personal identity'. Within the broad aim that pupils should become 'responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society', we can ask what the school is doing to ensure that they become people who 'challenge injustice, are committed to human rights and strive to live peaceably with others'. And so on through the remaining 26 specific aims. In principle, such a list seems to offer a level of detail that could be used for detailed curriculum planning. The same would be true of any reasonably detailed list of aims, whether it is some future revised list of aims from government or a school's own list.

Cross-matching and cross-planning at such detail as above is not without its difficulties and drawbacks, and this may have informed current practice to slim down such guidance. Indeed, the introduction to the current NC has a short section of two sentences entitled 'Aims' (DfE 2014o: S3), and more detailed elaboration of the aims to be achieved in specific NC curriculum subject areas. Also, official statements about the curriculum are not necessarily intended to apply to the *whole* curriculum of a school. In the case at least of England, while government agencies are setting out the aims to be pursued through a statutory curriculum, they are also reducing the extent to which the whole curriculum of a school has to be determined by the *statutory* National Curriculum: 'The national curriculum is just one element in the education of every child. There is time and space in the school day and in each week, term and year to range beyond the national curriculum specifications' (DfE 2014o: S3).

Schools may increasingly need to do their own thinking about the topic of Unit 7.1 above, namely the aims of *education*, rather than following official guidance about the aims of the National Curriculum. Now complete Task 7.2.2.

When you have tried this task both individually and in discussion, move on to the next section of this unit.

✏️ Task 7.2.2   Realising aims through the curriculum

(This is a task for individual reflection and group discussion.)

Taking as your reference point the most recent detailed list of NC aims to which you have access (or, if you prefer, any other detailed list of aims to which you and your fellow student teachers have access), consider how far these aims could be realised through aspects of the *formal* curriculum. For reasons of time, you will probably be able to concentrate on only a limited number of the aims listed. For each aim you consider, ask which (if any) subject on the formal curriculum would be relevant to the realisation of this aim.

For each subject you consider to be relevant, ask which particular aspects of that subject would help to realise the aim in question. Is there something in the subject content that would need to be emphasised, or something that would need to be specially added, if the subject is to help towards the realisation of this aim? Or would some part of the content have to be approached in a particular way?

If it is hard to see how the aim in question could be pursued through subjects in the formal curriculum, what about the informal curriculum?

Store your findings in your PDP.

Relating curriculum subjects to wider aims

In the task you have just carried out, you may well have identified some aims to which the teaching of traditional curriculum subjects clearly is relevant: promoting pupils' intellectual development, for instance, and promoting their learning and achievement (at any rate, achievement within those subjects, although there are other kinds of achievement as well). But we saw above, some other sorts of aims. Here are a few more: that pupils should 'relate well to others and form good relationships', be 'willing to try new things and make the most of opportunities' or 'appreciate the benefits of diversity'. We may think of these as broader aims of an emotional, moral and social kind. Such aims have always been recognised in NC documents since 1988 and have gained greater prominence in later versions. It seems likely that a school that gave its attention *only* to the teaching of traditional subjects as discrete entities might fail to be addressing such aims at all.

The first version of the NC in England and Wales, brought in by the Education Reform Act 1988, attempted to address such aims within the curriculum by incorporating a number of cross-curricular themes: health education, citizenship education, careers education and guidance, environmental education, and education for economic and industrial understanding. These themes did not have the statutory force of the core and foundation subjects, and it was left largely to individual schools (with limited published guidance) to decide how to teach them. In fact, in many schools, the cross-curricular themes were not systematically taken up at all. Of the original cross-curricular themes, only citizenship has gained the status of a statutory subject, and the other areas are no longer there as distinct themes. Health was taken up within the broader area of personal, social and health education (PSHE), which became a recognised part of the NC for England in 2008.

It remains true that the content of the National Curriculum very much revolves around a list of subjects, and that these subjects, to a large extent, were ones that had been in the curricula of

schools for a long time. How far can the inclusion of these subjects be justified, not just because they have traditionally been in the curriculum, but because they can actually be shown to contribute to the stated aims of the curriculum? Questions can be raised about the contribution of individual subjects to the overall aims of the curriculum. How such questions are answered not only bears on the justification of particular subjects being in a compulsory curriculum at all, but can also make a difference to the aims of a teacher of a particular subject. In science and mathematics, what is the balance between equipping pupils with skills that they can put to practical use (thus furthering training and employment opportunities) and trying to show pupils something of the sheer fascination that science and mathematics can hold quite apart from their applications? In English, what is the balance to studying a canon of classical literature and exploring the writings and culture of a variety of writers using English as a world language? Similar questions can be raised about other subjects. The book *Rethinking the School Curriculum: Values, Aims and Purposes* (White 2004) devotes a chapter to each subject of the National Curriculum, with the exception of PSHE, citizenship, and information and communications technology (ICT), and also to religious education. The discussions and further references in that book help you in thinking about the role of your own subject within the whole curriculum (see also Task 7.2.3).

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✎ Task 7.2.3 Justifying your subject in the school curriculum

This can be a two-part task, with an individual stage followed by a group stage.

The task is to contribute to a school prospectus (it might be for the same imaginary school that you used in Task 7.1.2.). Suppose now that the school is trying to follow the statement of aims from a specific national curriculum. At the same time, remember that the national curriculum you are referring to does not necessarily attempt to prescribe the *whole* curriculum for the school (see the section above on relating curriculum to aims).

Your individual task is to write a paragraph of not more than 100 words setting out for prospective parents the ways in which your teaching subject fits into the whole curriculum, and thus contributes to realising the overall aims of the curriculum. (Remember that some parents – and pupils – may wonder what the point of studying certain subjects is at all.)

The group task for you and your fellow student teachers, representing different subjects, is to make sure that the individual subject statements fit together into a coherent description of a curriculum, complementing and not competing with each other. In addition to your individual subjects, you may add any elements you consider necessary to complete the whole curriculum of the school. Then, cooperatively, draft in not more than 200 words a statement for the prospectus outlining and promoting the whole curriculum of the school.

Reflect on this task and check your development against the standards for your ITE programme. File your statement in your PDP.

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

■ The curriculum is perhaps the most important means through which educational aims can be pursued.

■ Any curriculum is a selection from the culture of a society. The attempt to select what is best or distinctive or fundamental may not be adequate without a view of the overall aims of education.

■ The curriculum includes both the *formal curriculum*, which sets out in detail the subjects to be taught; the *informal curriculum*, which covers the variety of ways in which a school can attempt to achieve the kinds of aims that cannot be captured in the content of timetabled subjects; and the *hidden curriculum*, which is the way the school relates to pupils and parents, sometimes referred to as the ethos of a school.

■ You should get the opportunity to contribute to discussion and planning about the curriculum, and should be able to take and argue a view, both on the whole curriculum and on the place of your own subject within it.

■ 'Curriculum studies' is a subject area in its own right within educational research and theory and has a large literature. Some of this is in the further reading below.

■ Finally, a reminder that Unit 7.1 should be read in conjunction with this unit.

Check which requirements for your ITE programme you have addressed through this unit.

📖 **Further reading**

Reiss, M. and White, J. (2013) *An Aims Based Curriculum*, London: IoE Press.
This book sets out an alternative to a subjects-based curriculum having as its starting point not subjects, but a question about what schools should be for, which Reiss and White state as to equip each learner to lead a personally fulfilling life and help others do so too. From these, they derive more specific aims covering the personal qualities, skills and understanding needed for a life of personal, civic and vocational well-being, and from this a discussion about how curricula could be designed in different ways, in different schools, starting with aims and not subjects.

Aldrich, R. and White, J. (1998) *The National Curriculum beyond 2000: The QCA and the Aims of Education*, London: Institute of Education, University of London.
With contributions from a historian and a philosopher, this argues for basing the curriculum on an explicit consideration of aims, and for deriving these aims from democratic values.

Lawton, D. (1996) *Beyond the National Curriculum: Teacher Professionalism and Empowerment*, Sevenoaks: Hodder & Stoughton.
From one of the major British contributors to curriculum studies, this, as the title implies, considers not just the National Curriculum, but how the curriculum impinges on teachers and how teachers can be involved in curriculum planning.

💻 **Other resources and websites**

Note: With changing government policies on education, URLs for the relevant documentation on the National Curriculum have also changed from time to time. It should not be difficult for you to find the most recent official documentation from the relevant government department or agency. Your tutor will be able to guide you.

National Curriculum in England: www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4/the-national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4

Scottish National Curriculum: www.ltscotland.org.uk/5to14/guidelines/

Welsh National Curriculum: http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculuminwales/arevisedcurriculumforwales/?lang=en

National Curriculum in Northern Ireland: www.nicurriculum.org.uk/

Appendix 2 on pages 591–595 provides examples of further websites you may find useful.

Capel, S., Leask, M. and Turner, T. (eds) (2010) *Readings for Learning to Teach in the Secondary School: A Companion to M Level Study*, London: Routledge.
This book brings together essential readings to support you in your critical engagement with key issues raised in this textbook.

The subject-specific books in the Routledge *Learning to Teach* series are also very useful.

Any additional resources and an editable version of any relevant tasks/tables in this unit are available on the companion website: www.routledge.com/cw/capel

1.1 What are schools for?

Michael Young

Introduction

Every parent and teacher needs to ask the question 'what are schools for?' They are not, of course, the only institutions with purposes that we should question, but they are a special case. Like families they have a unique role in reproducing human societies and in providing the conditions which enable them to innovate and change. Without schools each generation would have to begin from scratch or – like societies which existed before there were schools – remain largely unchanged for centuries. There are, however, more specific reasons why it is important to ask the question 'what are schools for?' today. Since the 1970s, radical educators and many critical sociologists have questioned the role of schools and have seen them in largely negative terms. I shall argue that despite having an element of truth which we should do well not to forget, these critiques are fundamentally misconceived. More recently, John White, the philosopher of education, has offered a critical but explicitly positive answer to the question (White 2007). However, like the negative critiques, by failing to specify what is distinctive about the role of schools, he does not take us very far. I begin this chapter therefore by reviewing these two kinds of answer. I then go on to explore the implications of an alternative approach that locates schools as institutions with the very specific purpose of promoting the acquisition of knowledge.

For rather different reasons, the question of knowledge and the role of schools in its acquisition has been neglected by both policy makers and by educational researchers, especially sociologists of education. For the former, a focus on the acquisition of knowledge is at odds with the more instrumental purposes that are increasingly supported by governments. For many educational researchers a focus on knowledge masks the extent to which those with power define what counts as knowledge. However, there is no contradiction, I shall argue, between ideas of democracy and social justice and the idea that schools should promote the acquisition of knowledge.

The 1970s and 1980s critics of schools

In the 1970s negative views of views of schooling came largely from the left and were given considerable support by researchers in my own field – the sociology of education. The idea that the primary role of schools in capitalist societies was to teach the working class their place was widely accepted within the sociology of education (Althusser 1971; Bowles and Gintis 1976; and Willis 1977). The few working-class students that did progress to university were seen as legitimating the fundamental inequalities of the education system as a whole. In the 1980s and 1990s this analysis was extended to refer to the subordination of women

and ethnic and other minorities. However, these analyses rarely went beyond critiques and presented little idea of what schools might be like in socialist, non-patriarchal, non-racist societies. Radical critics such as such as Ivan Illich (1971) went even further and claimed that real learning would only be possible if schools were abolished altogether.

The post-structuralist turn in the social sciences

In the late 1980s and the 90s, under the influence of post-modernist and post-structuralist ideas and the collapse of the communist system in Eastern Europe, Marxism and other grand narratives foretelling the end of capitalism (and even of schooling) lost their credibility. As a consequence, the critiques of schooling changed, but more in style than substance. They drew much on the work of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, who grouped schools with hospitals, prisons and asylums as institutions of surveillance and control; they disciplined pupils and normalised knowledge as subjects. The difference between thinkers such as Foucault and the left-wing ideas of earlier decades was that the 'post-Marxist' theorists dispensed with the idea of progress and any idea of a specific agency of change such as the working class. For Foucault there was no alternative to schooling as surveillance – all social scientists and educational researchers could do was to offer critiques. He expressed this point in the following terms:

> I absolutely will not play the part of one who prescribes solutions. I hold that the role of the intellectual today … is not to prophesy or propose solutions since by doing so one can only contribute to the determinate situation of power that must be critiqued.
>
> (Foucault 1991, quoted in Muller 2000)

It is not surprising, therefore, that these critiques were not listened to by policy makers – they really had little to say about schools, except to other social scientists.

Governments' responses

At the same time as the emergence of post-structuralist ideas, another set of ideas – neo-liberalism – came to dominate economics and government and, indirectly, education. Neo-liberals argued that the economy should be left to the market and governments should give up trying to have economic or industrial policies. The logic of this position was followed through with enthusiasm by governments of both main parties in the UK, with profound implications for schools. While ceding to the free market any role in the economy (with the exception of the control of interest rates), governments devoted their efforts to reforming the school system or improving 'human capital'. New Labour went even further than the Tories; they argued that the market offered the best solution for improving the public as well as the private sector – and education in particular. This had two consequences that are relevant to the question 'what are schools for?' One has been the attempt to gear the outcomes of schools to what are seen to be the 'needs of the economy' – a kind of mass vocationalism. The control of much post-compulsory education and even some schools and local education authorities has been put in the hands of sometimes willing but often reluctant private employers. The other consequence has been to turn education itself into a market (or at least a quasi-market), in which schools are forced to compete for students and funds. I call this the *de-differentiation of schooling*. Schools are treated as a type of delivery agency, required to concentrate on outcomes and pay little attention to the process or content of delivery. As a

result, the purposes of schooling are defined in increasingly instrumental terms – as a means to other ends. With schools driven by targets, assignments and league tables, it is no wonder that pupils become bored and teachers experience 'burn out'.

New goals for old?

In seeking to reassert the distinctive purposes of schools, I want to consider two alternative answers to my starting question. The first can be found in John White's recent paper for the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain. It is called *What Are Schools for and Why?* (White 2007). No one could take issue with his claim that schools should promote human happiness and well-being. The problem is that such goals apply equally to all institutions (except perhaps prisons) and they say nothing specific about what schools are for and what distinguishes their role from that of other institutions. In his paper White is dismissive of the idea that subjects or disciplines might define the purposes of schools. He makes the curious argument that the subject-based curriculum was a middle-class device designed in the eighteenth century to promote the interests of the rising bourgeoisie of the time. It is inconceivable, he argues, that a curriculum with such origins could be the basis for schools for all in the twenty-first century. In my view his argument is deeply flawed for two reasons. First, as Baker and LeTendre (2005) have shown, the contemporary curriculum in the UK is remarkably similar to that found in most developed countries, despite their very different histories. Furthermore, the historical fact that this curriculum was developed by a particular fraction of the middle class in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century is no grounds for describing it as a middle-class curriculum. It would be equally flawed to describe Boyle's law as a middle-class law on the grounds that Boyle was an eighteenth-century upper-middle-class gentleman! The particular historical origins of scientific discoveries are interesting, as are the historical origins of scientific laws; however, these origins have nothing to say about the truth of a scientific law or about the merits of a particular curriculum.

   My second reason for rejecting White's argument is that it does not address the question why parents, sometimes at great sacrifice, especially in developing countries, have historically tried to keep their children at school for longer and longer periods. Nor does it tell us what parents expect as a result of these sacrifices. Despite asking the question 'what are schools for?' White also ends up, like the government and the post-structuralists, in de-differentiating the goals of schools. As a result we have surveillance for Foucault, employability for New Labour and happiness and well-being for John White. I certainly prefer the last but it is hardly a guide for those responsible for the curriculum.

   Let us go back to Foucault for a moment. When he puts schools in the same category as prisons, asylums and hospitals, he misses both the history of the political struggle over mass schooling and what is distinctive about schools. I want to focus briefly on the first of these points and develop an argument about the implications of the distinctive purposes of schools.

Struggles over the purposes of schools

The historical struggle over the purposes of schooling can be seen in terms of two tensions. The first is between the goals of *emancipation* and *domination*. Since the Chartists in this country in the nineteenth century and more recently in the case of Bantu education in South Africa, dominant and subordinate classes have attempted to use schools to realise their widely different purposes. One only has to remember that Nelson Mandela was a product of

the schools for Africans that predated Bantu education to be reminded that even the most oppressive school systems can be used by some as instruments of emancipation. The second tension is between the question 'who gets schooling?' and the question 'what do they get?' The struggle over schools in this country has, with a few exceptions, taken the second question as given and focused on the first. The terms in which each of these questions has been debated have of course changed. The 'access' question began with the campaign for free elementary schooling in the nineteenth century, led to struggles over the 11-plus and selection and now is expressed in terms of the goals of promoting social inclusion and widening participation. Interestingly the idea of a struggle over access has been replaced by a largely top-down approach associated with government policies for 'widening participa-tion'. Debates over the question 'what do they get?' also go back to the Chartists in the nineteenth century and their famous slogan 'really useful knowledge'. This was an attack on the domination of the curriculum by Scripture. The Chartists' idea was revived on the left in the 1970s but such questions are far less widely debated today.

   The legacy of earlier debates can be seen in two contrasting concepts of education that underlie present-day government policies. One might be called 'education as outcomes'. In this approach to education policy, teaching and learning become dominated by the setting, assessing and attaining of targets and the preparing of students for tests and examinations. Less visible is a very different idea of education that still finds expression in the idea of subject syllabuses. It is the idea that the primary purpose of education is for students to gain access to different specialist fields of knowledge. The idea of education as the trans-mission of knowledge has, with some justification, been heavily criticised by educational researchers. However, my argument is that these criticisms miss a crucial point. They focus on the mechanical one-way and passive model of learning implied by the 'transmission' metaphor and its association with a very conservative view of education and the purposes of schools. At the same time, they forget that the idea of schooling as the 'transmission of knowledge' gives transmission a quite different meaning and explicitly presupposes the active involvement of the learner in the process of acquiring knowledge. The idea that the school is primarily an agency of cultural or knowledge transmission raises the question 'what knowledge?' and in particular what is the knowledge that it is the schools' responsibility to transmit? If it is accepted that schools have this role, then it implies that types of knowledge are differentiated. In other words, for educational purposes, some types of knowledge are more worthwhile than others, and their differences form the basis for the difference between school or curriculum knowledge and non-school knowledge. What is it about school knowl-edge or the curriculum that makes the acquisition of some types of knowledge possible? My answer to the question 'what are schools for?' is, therefore, that schools enable or can enable young people to acquire the knowledge that for most of them cannot be acquired at home or in the community, or, for adults, in workplaces. The rest of this chapter is concerned with exploring the implications of this assertion.

What knowledge?

In using the very general word 'knowledge' I find it useful to distinguish between two ideas – '*knowledge of the powerful*' and '*powerful knowledge*'. 'Knowledge of the powerful' refers to who defines 'what counts as knowledge' and has access to it. Historically and even today when we look at the distribution of access to university, it is those with more power in society who have access to certain kinds of knowledge. It is this that I refer to as 'knowledge of the powerful'. It is understandable that many sociological critiques of school knowledge have

equated school knowledge and the curriculum with 'knowledge of the powerful'. It was, after all the upper classes in the early nineteenth century who gave up their private tutors and sent their children to the Public Schools to acquire powerful knowledge (as well, of course, to acquire powerful friends). However, the fact that some knowledge is 'knowledge of the powerful', or high-status knowledge as I once expressed it (Young 1971, 1998), tells us nothing about the knowledge itself. We therefore need another concept in conceptualising the curriculum that I want to refer to as 'powerful knowledge'. This refers not to whose has most access to the knowledge or who gives it legitimacy, although both are important issues; it refers to what the knowledge can do – for example, whether it provides reliable explanations or new ways of thinking about the world. This was what the Chartists were calling for with their slogan 'really useful knowledge'. It is also, if not always consciously, what parents hope for in making sacrifices to keep their children at school; that they will acquire powerful knowledge that is not available to them at home.

Powerful knowledge in modern societies in the sense that I have used the term is, increasingly, specialist knowledge. It follows therefore that schools need teachers with that specialist knowledge. Furthermore, if the goal for schools is to 'transmit powerful knowledge', it follows that teacher–pupil relations will have certain distinctive features that arise from that goal. For example:

- they will be different from relations between peers and will inevitably be hierarchical;
- they will not be based, as some recent government policies imply, on learner choice, because in most cases, learners will lack the prior knowledge to make such choices

This does not mean that schools should not take the knowledge that pupils bring to school seriously or that pedagogic authority does not need to be challenged. It does mean that some form of authority relations are intrinsic to pedagogy and to schools. The questions of pedagogic authority and responsibility raise important issues, especially for teacher educators, which are beyond the scope of this chapter. The next section turns to the issue of knowledge differentiation.

Knowledge differentiation and school knowledge

The key issues about knowledge, for both teachers and educational researchers, are not primarily the philosophical questions such as 'what is knowledge?' or 'how do we know at all?' The educational issues about knowledge concern how school knowledge is and should be different from non-school knowledge and the basis on which this differentiation is made. Although the philosophical issues are involved, school/non-school knowledge differences raise primarily sociological and pedagogic questions.

Schooling is about providing access to the specialised knowledge that is embodied in different domains. The key curriculum questions will be concerned with:

(a) the differences between different forms of specialist knowledge and the relations between them;
(b) how this specialist knowledge differs from the knowledge people acquire in everyday life;
(c) how specialist and everyday knowledge relate to each other; and
(d) how specialist knowledge is pedagogised.

In other words, how it is paced , selected and sequenced for different groups of learners.

Differentiation, therefore, in the sense I am using it here, refers to:

- the differences between school and everyday knowledge;
- the differences between and relations between knowledge domains;
- the differences between specialist knowledge (e.g. physics or history) and pedagogised knowledge (school physics or school history for different groups of learners).

Underlying these differences is a more basic difference between two types of knowledge. One is the *context-dependent* knowledge that is developed in the course of solving specific problems in everyday life. It can be *practical* – like knowing how to repair a mechanical or electrical fault or how to find a route on a map. It can also be *procedural*, like a handbook or set of regulations for health and safety. Context-dependent knowledge tells the individual how to do specific things. It does not explain or generalise; it deals with particulars. The second type of knowledge is *context-independent* or *theoretical knowledge*. This is knowledge that is developed to provide generalisations and makes claims to universality; it provides a basis for making judgements and is usually, but not solely, associated with the sciences. It is context-independent knowledge that is at least potentially acquired in school, and is what I referred to earlier as *powerful knowledge*.

Inevitably schools are not always successful in enabling pupils to acquire powerful knowledge. It is also true that schools are more successful with some pupils than others. The success of pupils is highly dependent on the culture that they bring to school. Elite cultures that are less constrained by the material exigencies of life, are, not surprisingly, far more congruent with acquiring context-independent knowledge than disadvantaged and subordinate cultures. This means that if schools are to play a major role in promoting social equality, they have to take the knowledge base of the curriculum very seriously – even when this appears to go against the immediate demands of pupils (and sometimes their parents). They have to ask the question 'is this curriculum a means by which pupils can acquire powerful knowledge?' For children from disadvantaged homes, active participation in school may be the only opportunity that they have to acquire powerful knowledge and be able to move, intellectually at least, beyond their local and the particular circumstances. It does them no service to construct a curriculum around their experience on the grounds that it needs to be validated, and as a result leave them there.

Conceptualising school knowledge

The most sustained and original attempt to conceptualise school knowledge is that developed by the English sociologist Basil Bernstein (Bernstein 1971, 2000). His distinctive insight was to emphasise the key role of knowledge boundaries, both as a condition for the acquisition of knowledge and as embodying the power relations that are necessarily involved in pedagogy. Bernstein begins by conceptualising boundaries in terms of two dimensions. First he distinguished between the *classification* of knowledge – or the degree of insulation between knowledge domains – and the *framing* of knowledge – the degree of insulation between school knowledge or the curriculum and the everyday knowledge that pupils bring to school. Second, he proposed that classification of knowledge can be *strong* – when domains are highly insulated from each other (as in the case of physics and history) – or *weak* – when the there are low levels of insulation between domains (as in humanities or science curricula). Likewise, framing can be *strong* – when school and non-school knowledge are insulated from each other, or *weak*, when the boundaries between school and non-school knowledge are blurred

(as in the case of many programmes in adult education and some curricula designed for less able pupils). In his later work Bernstein (2000) moves from a focus on *relations between* domains to the *structure of the domains* themselves by introducing a distinction between vertical and horizontal knowledge structures. This distinction refers to the way that different domains of knowledge embody different ideas of how knowledge progresses. Whereas in vertical knowledge structures(typically the natural sciences) knowledge progresses towards higher levels of abstraction (for example, from Newton's laws of gravity to Einstein's theory of relativity), in horizontal(or as Bernstein expresses it, segmental) knowledge structures like the social sciences and humanities, knowledge progresses by developing new languages which pose new problems. Examples are innovations in literary theory or approaches to the relationship between mind and brain. Bernstein's primary interest was in developing a language for thinking about different curriculum possibilities and their implications. His second crucial argument was to make the link that between knowledge structures, boundaries and learner identities. His hypothesis was that strong boundaries between knowledge domains and between school and non-school knowledge play a critical role in supporting learner identities and therefore are a condition for learners to progress. There are, however, a number of distinctive aspects to how Bernstein uses the idea of boundary, all of which can be traced back to Durkheim (Moore 2004). First, boundaries refer to *relations between contents* not the *knowledge contents themselves*. Second, although strong boundaries have traditionally been expressed in disciplines and subjects, from Bernstein's perspective, this is a historical fact, and the disciplines and subjects that we know are not the only form that strong boundaries can take. Third, strong boundaries between contents will have distributional consequences; in other words they will be associated with certain inequalities of outcomes. Fourth, whether it is associated with creating new knowledge (in the university) or extending the acquisition of powerful knowledge to new groups of learners, innovation will involve crossing boundaries and calling identities into question. In other words school improvement from this perspective will involve both stability and change, or, in the terms set out in this chapter, the inter-relation between boundary maintenance and boundary crossing.

Conclusions

This chapter has argued that whatever their specific theoretical priorities, their policy concerns or their practical educational problems, educational researchers, policy makers and teachers must address the question 'what are schools for?' This means asking how and why school have emerged historically, at different times and in very different societies, as distinctive institutions with the specific purpose of enabling pupils to acquire knowledge not available to them at home or in their everyday life[1]. It follows, I have argued, that the key concept for the sociology of education (and for educators more generally) is *knowledge differentiation*.[2]

   The concept of knowledge differentiation implies that much knowledge that it is important for pupils to acquire will be non-local and counter to their experience. Hence pedagogy will always involve an element of what the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu refers to, over-evocatively and I think misleadingly, as *symbolic violence*. The curriculum has to take account of the everyday local knowledge that pupils bring to school, but such knowledge can never be a basis for the curriculum. The structure of local knowledge is designed to relate to the particular; it cannot provide the basis for any generalisable principles. To provide access to such principles is a major reason why all countries have schools.

   The concept of *knowledge differentiation* sets a threefold agenda for schools and teachers, for educational policy makers and for educational researchers. First, each group (separately

and together) must explore the relationship between the purpose of schools[3] to create the conditions for learners to acquire powerful knowledge and both their *internal structures* – such as subject divisions – and their *external structures* – such as the boundaries between schools and professional and academic 'knowledge producing communities' and between schools and the everyday knowledge of local communities.

Second, if schools are to help learners to acquire powerful knowledge, local, national and international groups of specialist teachers will need to be involved with university-based and other specialists in the ongoing selection, sequencing and inter-relating of knowledge in different domains. Schools therefore will need the autonomy to develop this professional knowledge; it is the basis of their authority as teachers and the trust that society places in them as professionals. This trust may at times be abused; however, any form of account-ability must support that trust rather than try to be a substitute for it.

Third, educational researchers will need to address the tension in the essentially *conserva-tive* role of schools as institutions with responsibility for knowledge transmission in society – especially as this aspect of their role is highlighted in a world increasingly driven by the insta-bilities of the market. However, 'conservative' has two very different meanings in relation to schools. It can mean preserving the stable conditions for acquiring 'powerful knowledge' and resisting the political or economic pressures for flexibility. A good example is how curricular continuity and coherence can be undermined by modularisation and the breaking up of the curriculum into so-called 'bite-sized chunks'. The 'conservatism' of educational institutions can also mean giving priority to the preservation of particular privileges and interests, such as those of students of a particular social class or of teachers as a professional group. Radicals and some sociologists of education have in the past tended to focus on this form of conserva-tism in schools and assume that if schools are to improve they have to become more like the non-school world –or more specifically the market. This takes us back to the tension between differentiation and de-differentiation of institutions that I referred to earlier in this chapter.

This chapter has made three related arguments. The first is that although answers to the question 'what are schools for?' will inevitably express tensions and conflicts of interests within the wider society, nevertheless educational policy makers, practising teachers and educational researchers need to address the distinctive purposes of schools. My second argument has been that there is a link between the emancipatory hopes associated with the expansion of schooling and the opportunity that schools provide for learners to acquire 'powerful knowledge' that they rarely have access to at home. Third, I introduce the concept of *knowledge differentiation* as a principled way of distinguishing between school and non-school knowledge. Contemporary forms of accountability are tending to weaken the boundaries between school and non-school knowledge on the grounds that they inhibit a more accessible and more economically relevant curriculum. I have drawn on Basil Bernstein's analysis to suggest that to follow this path may be to deny the conditions for acquiring powerful knowledge to the very pupils who are already disadvantaged by their social circumstances. Resolving this tension between political demands and educational realities is, I would argue, one of the major educational questions of our time.

Notes

1   If set in a broader theoretical context this chapter can be seen as locating the role of schools in the links between modernisation and social justice.
2   In beginning with a *theory of knowledge differences* and not just the fact of differences, the concept of *knowledge differentiation* is quite distinct from (and a critique of) the superficially similar idea that there are different types of knowledge.
3   Here, 'schools' is shorthand for *all* formal educational institutions.

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Reflective questions

1   How far do you think that the primary purpose of schools is to provide the conditions for pupils to acquire knowledge that takes them beyond their experience?
2   The purpose of schools has always been a 'contested idea'. Discuss.
3   The distinction between theoretical and everyday knowledge is the starting point of any curriculum. Discuss.

Further reading

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