Chapter 1

Introduction

Jerome Bruner (1996, p. 62) makes the point that 'there is something special about "talking" to authors, now dead but alive in their ancient texts – so long as the objective of the encounter is not worship but discourse and "going meta" on thoughts about the past.' This book is an engagement with the past, though many of the curriculum theorists referred to here are still very much alive. It is an engagement with the past that takes seriously Bruner's suggestion that discourse, critique and even 'going meta' are worthwhile. The sense of critique which pervades this book is not intended as a negative rebuttal of the theories and ideas developed by the various curriculum theorists referred to in the chapters that follow, but a building on and reinvigorating of their work. Each of them focuses on an idea central to an understanding of the curriculum; so, for example, W. J. Popham (1972) advocates a behavioural objectives view of the curriculum, whereas Lawrence Stenhouse (1967; 1975) argues for a process form of curriculum. Other curriculum theorists, though their work is much wider than is suggested here, offer perspectives on foundationalism (Paul Hirst, 1974a; 1974b; 1993); power-knowledge (Michel Foucault, 1977; 1984); social structures (Michael Apple, 1979; 1982; 1988; 1996, 2000); pedagogy (Basil Bernstein, 1975; 1985; 1990; 1996); internalisation (Lev Vygotsky, 1978; 1991; 1999); psycho-cultural views of learning (Jerome Bruner, 1960; 1966; 1971; 1983; 1996); critical pedagogy (Henri Giroux, 1981; 1983; 1988; 1989; 1992; 1994); reflection (Donald Schon, 1983; 1987); and autonomy (John White, 1973; 1982; 1990; 1997).

First, a brief look at writing history. A history of the curriculum and of curriculum ideas rarely finds general agreement amongst practitioners as to what it should be. Whether we adopt a conventional view of history with its transhistorical subject or we seek to genealogise history by subverting the 'naturalness' of the categories and delineations used in commonsense discourses, we still have to confront our own position as historian or genealogist. That is, we still have to come to terms with the originary status of our own viewpoint about knowledge.

Any study of curriculum ideas therefore constitutes knowledge about knowledge, and this adds to its complexity. Further to this, knowledge is formed,

disseminated and reconstituted in specific historical circumstances, and frequently as a response to them. Usher (1997) suggests in relation to finding out about the world that knowledge has a con-text, pre-text, sub-text and inter-text; and this applies to historical knowledge as much as it does to learning in the curriculum. Historical research for him is a textual practice. The context comprises the situatedness of the historian in the act of writing history so that they are immersed in structures or significations of gender, sexuality, ethnicity or class. Furthermore, the historian is situated within various pre-texts or discourses about the way the world is structured so that their writing is always underpinned by pre-organised meanings. The pre-text in turn has attached to it a sub-text, in that the writing strategy and the knowledge which is subsumed within it are distinctive ways of knowing the world. Finally, any account makes reference to other knowledge constructs and other historical meaning formations – the inter-text. Con-texts, pre-texts, sub-texts and inter-texts are interlaced with notions of power and control, which are foregrounded in any history of the curriculum.

For Michel Foucault (see Chapter 5 below), power and domination have conventionally been understood in terms of something being done by someone to another, and in the process dominating, restricting, coercing this other. These forms of power have been criticised by Foucault for being excessively negative in orientation, and for ignoring the productive forms of power that allow us to go on in life. In other words, power is ever present and never more so than in the knowledge mechanisms, discourses and inscribed subjectivities that make up reality. The role of the genealogist is to uncover or decipher the rules that constitute particular formations of power, whether of a coercive or productive kind, and to do so without becoming embroiled in logo-centric discourses.

To do otherwise is to fall into the trap of what Foucault (1977) calls the illusion of formalisation, in which the historian attempts to explain types of knowledge in terms of a formal logic that transcends those knowledge constructions: a logo-centric viewpoint. Foucault also enjoins us to avoid the illusion of doxa where appearances in relation to power are treated as opportunities to unmask them and replace them with more truthful versions of events and activities.

This would suggest that we cannot step outside those subjectivities, forms of ascribed behaviours and discourses that constitute our lives and the life of our society, even as historians. This means that we abandon notions of illogicality, false thinking, deception, and operate through a pure form of discourse. All we have is the discourse or at least a number of discourses, each of which has its own form of logic, its own particular relation to practices and behaviours, its own form of relations between items, its own way of determining which items of knowledge are valid and which are not and its own way of ascribing evaluative content to those items and combinations of those items. Furthermore, analysis of these discursive regimes always originates from another

discursive regime. The theorist therefore operates outside other discursive regimes, looking in, as it were, from a position which never quite captures them in their entirety.

Though we do not have wholly to accept such a view of the historian-at-work, this does point to a number of problems that any historian of ideas has to confront. First, there is a danger of treating any body of ideas as separate from the historical, socio-political and geographical circumstances from which it emerged. Second, there is a tendency for this body of ideas to be judged by criteria developed in a later period of time or in terms of a universal or transcendental set of criteria – Foucault's (1977) illusion of formalisation. Third, there is a danger that any interpretation or retelling of ideas developed by someone else and in a different time period is taken to constitute a definitive reading of that work. As the curriculum is a selection from all the available knowledge which has been developed, so are readings from key writers about that curriculum. There is a further danger if the whole corpus of writings of a single individual is treated as coherent and consistent. Writers change their minds; they develop their ideas; they even in certain cases reject the essential elements of their previous work. Ludwig Wittgenstein, for example, in his second major work, the *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), developed a pragmatic and socio-cultural view of language which is essentially at odds with the correspondence view of reality that he argued for in his earlier work, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1961). For these reasons, the historian of ideas has to tread carefully, and even more so if his or her subject matter is the curriculum, since decisions about what should be included and what should be excluded from it are deeply embedded in socio-political processes.

At times in what follows, I will be arguing against the positions taken up by these curriculum theorists; in other words, I will be pointing to inconsistencies, irregularities, contradictions, muddles and aporias where I find them. At other points in the text, I will be attempting to present their ideas as models of curriculum which were influential in their particular *époque*. Elsewhere, I will be taking out of context a particular set of ideas they developed in order to work on it, re-contextualise it, and in the process present it anew. The result will be an unconventional history, but nevertheless a history which I hope pays due deference to the intellectual work of some influential curriculum theorists.

Two models of curriculum

How therefore can we characterise current formations of curriculum? Basil Bernstein (1996) identified two models of curriculum and called these *performance* and *competence*, with the former now the dominant model round the world. From his earliest work on language, classification and framing to his later work on specialised semiotic codes, Bernstein has had a profound effect on curriculum theory (see Chapter 7 below). Highly abstract in formulation,

he offers schemata that open up the possibility of understanding practices of cultural transmission and social reproduction. His two models give different emphases or weightings to the various curriculum dimensions, and are therefore 'distinguished by time, space and discourse (whether content was presented as subjects or themes), evaluation, control, pedagogic text (whether the learner's output or what the teacher sees it as signifying), autonomy and economy' (Fitz *et al.*, 2006, p. 6).

The performance model has its origins in the behavioural objectives movement, and though contested by curriculum theorists, retains its status as the dominant model. It is a model which clearly emphasises marked subject boundaries, traditional forms of knowledge, explicit realisation and recognition rules for pedagogic practice, and the designation and establishment of strong boundaries between different types of students. Fitz *et al.* (2006, p. 6) describe this model in the following way:

> Space and movement were likely to be strongly marked. With the focus upon acquirers' past and future accomplishments, with strong, apparent progression and pacing, evaluation focused on what was missing from the texts in terms of explicit and specific criteria of which they were made aware. Their texts were products of their performance, to be graded and repair systems made available to those who did not meet them. Order was strongly relayed through explicit positional control.

Such a model in the hands of policy-makers becomes both normative and teleological. Furthermore, in policy texts, it has been combined – in the sense that elements of it can act as proxies for liberal and progressive ideologies – with discourses that seem to reflect a politics that offers a break with the past. Thus, *repair* is a tokenistic word to indicate that what was once broken can be put right; *explicit criteria* offer a vision of the future which suggests that muddle can be circumvented.

Bernstein compares this with a competence model, and in relation to the latter, he suggests that acquirers have some control over the selection, pacing and sequencing of their curriculum. For Bernstein, performance modes were seen as the norm, whereas competence modes 'may be seen as interrupts or resistances to this normality or may be appropriated by official education for specific and local purposes', and 'were generally found regulating the early life of acquirers or in repair sections' (Bernstein, 1996, p. 65). However, performance modes are being increasingly applied to early years' education and children with special needs, since recent developments in the UK, for example, have shown that policy-makers are prepared to move from a competence to a performance mode here as well. It is of course clear that underpinning discourses only become dominant through specific sets of historical circumstances, including technological developments, and particular sets of policy enactments; and further to this, that within the policy cycle, there is space for resistance to particular modes of thought and imposed practices.

Governments round the world therefore at the end of the twentieth century and in the early part of the twenty-first century, with a few notable exceptions, have reached a settlement about the nature of the school curriculum. This has meant that key ideas and themes which surfaced at particular moments in the history of the curriculum have been put to one side, and a false consensus on curriculum, barely agreed and certainly not negotiated, has replaced what was once a vigorous debate about central educational questions and in particular questions that related to the curriculum. This consensus now operates at all levels of the education system, and can be expressed in terms of a number of propositions: traditional knowledge forms and strong insulations between them need to be preserved; each of these knowledge forms can be expressed in terms of lower- and higher-level domains and the latter have to be taught before the former and sequenced correctly; certain groups of children are better able to access the curriculum than other children, and thus a differentiated curriculum is necessary to meet the needs of all school learners; the teacher's role is to impart this body of knowledge in the most efficient and effective way, and thus their brief can concern itself not with the ends to which education is directed, but only with the means for its efficient delivery; and the school's role is to deliver a public service that meets the targets set for it by governments. As Bernstein (1990, p. 25) suggests, strong boundaries and clear insulations can be said to characterise this consensus:

> Punctuations are written by power relations that establish as the order of things distinct subjects through distinct voices. Indeed, insulation is the means whereby the cultural is transformed into the natural, the contingent into the necessary, the past into the present, the present into the future.

Webster's *Revised Unabridged Dictionary* (1913) gives two meanings to the word *etiolated*. The first is 'to become white or whiter; to be whitened or blanched by excluding the light of the sun, as plants'; and the second is 'to become pale through disease or absence of light'. We have perhaps now an etiolated curriculum debate, with Bernstein's performance mode in the ascendancy.

Curriculum episodes

A history of the curriculum can be treated as a series of episodes. Each of these episodes overlaps, persists, reconstitutes itself in a different guise and inserts itself into practice in a different way. It is possible to identify seven episodes: scientific curriculum-making; intrinsic worthwhile knowledge; innovative pedagogical experimentation; socio-cultural learning; critical pedagogy; instrumentalism; and school effectiveness/school improvement, though labelling

them as such may serve to construct artificial chronological and historical boundaries round them. The story begins with the construction of scientific curriculum-making, where the process of teaching and learning is subsumed into a narrative about the correct way of developing curricula. Alongside it and indeed preceding it is a foundationalist view of knowledge which emphasises its intrinsic worthwhileness. Opposed to this view, and setting itself up as an oppositional discourse to scientific curriculum-making, is the notion of teaching and learning as an innovative pedagogical experiment. Interwoven between them are various forms of instrumentalism. These four episodes are essentially focused on the construction of the curriculum; however, curriculum theorists sought to develop theories about how people learn, and thus foreground the notion of pedagogy and, in Jerome Bruner's case, socio-cultural learning. This position in time gave way to the advocacy of a form of critical pedagogy, and from there to the development of a post-modern curriculum. All this time, scientific curriculum theorists, now in the guise of school effectiveness/school improvement theorists, were working to reassert the primacy of curriculum as a scientific discipline.

Scientific curriculum-making

Kliebard (1975) reminds us of the genesis of the curriculum movement in the United States, and identifies two key figures in the early part of the last century who represent this surge of enthusiasm for the application of the scientific method to the study and implementation of the curriculum. Franklin Bobbitt and Werrett Charters in their different ways argued for precision, objectivity, prediction and the use of the scientific method to establish once and for all what should be taught in schools and indeed how educational knowledge should be structured. Bobbitt's two major works were, appropriately enough, *The Curriculum* (1918) and *How to Make a Curriculum* (1924), and in 1913 he published a long article entitled, 'Some General Principles of Management Applied to the Problems of City-school Systems'. Charters' two major works were *Methods of Teaching: Developed from a Functional Standpoint* (1909) and *Curriculum Construction* (1923), both of which reflected then currently fashionable ideas of structural-functionalism.

Bobbitt's work provides an early example of the arguments for behavioural objectives and he is credited with developing a notion of objective analysis whereby designated skills are broken down into their constituent elements. These skills were derived from the activities of experts in a variety of fields essential to the well-being of society, and he claimed that curricular aims could be derived from an objective examination of these activities. Furthermore, these skills and their component sub-skills could be expressed as specific teaching objectives which could be so arranged that the curriculum could be designed around them. His work was behaviourist in that he understood learning as the acquiring of these skills and the evaluation of sets of behaviours

so as to determine whether those skills had been successfully acquired by the learner. It is easy to see here the origin of the behavioural objectives movement which influenced curriculum-making in the 1970s and 1980s and which continues to shape national and local curricula round the world.

What is noteworthy is the underpinning belief in science as the model for the essential practical activity of determining what should be included in a curriculum and how it should be delivered. Thus atomism, pre-specification and control are foregrounded, with the curriculum conceptualised in terms of behavioural objectives and an input-output model of schooling. Ralph Tyler (1950; 1968), for example, advocated a means-end approach to the development of the curriculum. He believed that educational aims could only be articulated in terms of objectives and that these preceded learning experiences and the evaluation of what is learnt. Curriculum-making was understood as a linear process which starts with the development of clear objectives or goals, proceeds to the selection of content which is specified in behavioural terms – that is, its acquisition must be an observable or testable process – and finishes with the evaluation of that process to see if those objectives have been met. However, he did not believe that objectives could be specified in precise behavioural terms, and he believed that they should be kept at a fairly general level. His work has influenced current models of policy-making and curriculum, though his objectives approach has in turn been heavily criticised for its limited understanding of the enacted curriculum. Other theorists such as W. J. Popham (1972; see also Chapter 2 below) were less discriminating about the use of behavioural objectives and were enthusiastic advocates of a scientific view of curriculum-making. Such a position was underpinned by a view of knowledge which coloured their perception of the curriculum. In the USA and the UK a behavioural objectives model formed the centre-piece for recently introduced national curricula.

This behavioural objectives model has been criticised (cf. Elliott, 1998) for the following reasons: complex and important learning outcomes of any educational programme may be neglected at the expense of the more trivial and less important, because it is easier to describe the latter in behavioural objective terms. The pre-specification of behavioural goals may also encourage an inflexibility of approach within the classroom, and learning outcomes which may incidentally flow from classroom interactions will be deliberately under-exploited. There is a further danger of assuming that if something cannot be measured, then it cannot be assessed and therefore it should not be a part of the learning process. Finally, lists of intended behaviours do not adequately represent the way individuals learn, and this is because logical order cannot be conflated with pedagogic process.

In opposition to behavioural objectives, it has been suggested that curriculum theorists should designate appropriate processes which learners need to go through. This avoids the problems inherent in the designation of pre-specified behavioural objectives noted above and builds into the curriculum

a more active and influential role for the teacher. Lawrence Stenhouse (1967; 1975; see also Chapter 3) was a trenchant critic of the use of behavioural objectives. Though his published writings are sparse due to his premature death, his work on the curriculum is still influential. It focused on the teacher-as-researcher, the limitations of a behavioural objectives curriculum model and the centrality of the teacher to the enacted curriculum.

Intrinsically worthwhile knowledge

In the 1970s and 1980s curriculum theorists were concerned with knowledge, and in particular transcendental knowledge, which provided a rationale or justification for the school curriculum. Shorn of its metaphysical underpinnings, such an argument can be expressed in a number of ways. White (1982, p. 10) suggests one such interpretation:

> The argument is at its most plausible when used to justify the particular claim that the pursuit of *knowledge* is intrinsically worthwhile. It asserts that if anyone either doubts or denies the claim, he [*sic*] can be brought to see, assuming he is a rational person, that there is an ineradicable inconsistency in his position. For in asking 'why pursue knowledge?', the sceptic is in fact already committed to the pursuit of what he is attempting to justify: it is presupposed to his seriously asking the question that he thinks it worthwhile to try to arrive at a well-grounded true belief about the topic in question, i.e. to come to know something.

As White goes on to suggest, this argument is flawed in so far as asking the particular question about the pursuit of knowledge in a general sense does not commit one to the pursuit of all types of knowledge per se; and furthermore, it does not provide any justification for deciding that some types of knowledge are more worthwhile than other types of knowledge. Thus, even if the first part of the argument is accepted, there are no grounds within the argument presented here for determining what that knowledge should be.

A view of knowledge as intrinsically worthwhile has persisted for a long time; for example, Aristotle (1925) presents his readers with the following argument. The purpose of life is predetermined, as is the individual's nature, though it is not always clear to the individual themselves what this natural purpose is. However, a lack of clarity can be remedied through rational deliberation and reflection on the self; and it is the possession of reason which distinguishes human beings from other animals. If this is accepted, then the end-point of human life is to pursue this aim; and thus from this set of premises can be deduced the aim of education as the pursuit of rational activities that develop the mind. It is fairly easy to see how this syllogism rests on false or at least disputed premises, so that predetermination and a fixed nature are concepts that are not readily accepted in the modern era.

However, what has persisted is a foundationalist view of epistemology; Paul Hirst's work exemplifies this (see Chapter 4 below). His early work identified forms of knowledge through reason which structure the curriculum. His later work moved beyond this and attempted a reformulation of these ideas with the curriculum understood as initiation into social practices. This in turn is understood as knowledge, attitudes, feelings, virtues, skills, dispositions and relationships. However, recent developments in the field of epistemology now offer a serious critique of a foundationalist view of knowledge.

It has already been suggested that a curriculum is always a selection from a range of human activities. Foundationalist justifications for inclusion in a curriculum offer reasons for including some forms of activities and excluding others, and there are perhaps three types. These are: logical delineations between domains of knowledge, distinctive mental or cognitive operations, and cross-cultural social distinctions. An example of logical delineations is Hirst's (1974b) forms of knowledge and experience: logico-mathematical, empirical, interpersonal, moral, aesthetic, religious and philosophical. Each of these forms has distinctive kinds of concepts, and distinctive ways of determining truth from falsehood. Hirst claimed therefore that each has a separate logical form. An example of the second type of justification is Gardner's (1983) seven forms of intelligence: language or linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical analysis, spatial representation, musical analysis, bodily kinaesthetic thinking, interpersonal knowledge and intrapersonal knowledge. His justification for inclusion of these forms of intelligence is psychological: individual learners have cognitive or mental modules which are separate and act separately from other mental modules. Individuals have been shown to differ in their capacity to perform these different types of operations. A third set of justifications moves us out of the mind and focuses on the culture we inhabit. Lawton (1989) argues that all societies have cultural sub-systems: socio-political, economic, communicative, rational, technological, moral, belief-related, aesthetic and maturational. Because these are universal and cross-cultural, Lawton concludes that curriculum developers should seek to represent the forms of knowledge which underpin them.

Progression within a curriculum can also take a foundationalist form. Underpinning the notion of progression is a rationale for teaching some aspects of the knowledge domain before others and a belief that a subject can in fact be arranged in a reliable hierarchy. Adey (1997) argues that it is possible to do this and develops a three-dimensional model comprising conceptual complexity, breadth and extent. Using only the last of these two dimensions leads to a naive view of learning. For Adey, a measure of conceptual complexity is also needed to provide a fully developed model of curriculum progression. Examples of these frameworks are: Piaget's (1971) schema comprising progression from concrete operational to formal operational thinking, and Kohlberg's (1976) stages of moral thought, where the subject progresses from pre-moral and conventional rule conformity levels to the acceptance of general rights

and standards, and even to adopting individual principles of conduct. These hierarchies are based on empirical investigation. The other way of establishing knowledge hierarchies is through some form of logical ordering, where complexity comprises both a progressive development of more items of knowledge and the making of more complicated connections between these items of knowledge. Such foundationalist views are in conflict with instrumentalist views discussed elsewhere in this book.

Innovative pedagogical experiment

A third episode in the history of curriculum ideas designates the curriculum as an innovative pedagogical experiment. Elliott (1998) sets out the key themes and ideas that constitute this form of curriculum-making. He describes social change as continuous, and difficult to predict scientifically and control socially. Furthermore, it is dynamic and complex, rather than episodic, stable, static and involving simple entities. Furthermore, modern societies are risk societies with fluid boundaries and shifting identities. Responsibility for shaping lives cannot therefore be left to governments alone, but should be devolved to individuals themselves. Here, Elliott is suggesting a form of grassroots democracy, in which schools and education services have an important part to play. The traditional curriculum is ill served to meet the demands placed on people in different and changing circumstances, and for Elliott, the task is to appropriate cultural resources to enable individuals to take responsibility for their lives. Furthermore, the traditional, strongly classified and strongly framed curriculum configures those cultural resources in a way that is accessible to only a few and not to the many. A curriculum which is responsive to the needs of all pupils has to take a particular form:

> More consistent with such an aim is a curriculum which organises cultural resources in usable forms for the purposes of enabling pupils to deepen and extend their understanding of the problems and dilemmas of everyday life in society, and to make informed and intelligent judgements about how they might be resolved. Such a curriculum will be responsive to pupils' own thinking and their emerging understandings and insights into human situations. It will therefore be continuously tested, reconstructed and developed by teachers as part of the pedagogical process itself, rather than in advance of it. Hence, the idea of 'pedagogically driven' curriculum change as an innovative experiment.
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> (Elliott, 1998, p. xiii)

Elliott distinguishes between curriculum and pedagogy, but suggests that there should be a focus on both, and on teachers as curriculum experimenters and action researchers. Furthermore, the action researcher element should be treated not as another strategy for the better delivery of educational ends

developed elsewhere but as an essential part of the development of the curriculum per se. Educational change, for Elliott, involves reflection by teachers on the 'problematics of their curriculum and pedagogic practices' (1998, p. xiii). The implications of understanding the curriculum as an innovative pedagogical experiment and teachers as innovators presupposes a view of society as a community of educated people which is in opposition to technicist and market-orientated approaches. Planning by objectives 'distorts the nature of knowledge and leaves little room for individuals to use our culture as a medium for the development of their own thinking in relation to the things that matter in life' (Elliott, 1998, p. xiv).

Socio-cultural models of learning

A further episode in the history of the curriculum focuses on pedagogy and the development of socio-cultural models of learning. For example, Jerome Bruner's (1960; 1966; see also Chapter 9 below) early work represents an exploration of intrapsychic processes of knowing and learning, and the development of ideas such as the spiral curriculum and the three modes of understanding: enactive, iconic and symbolic. His later work represents a reformulation of psychology from its behaviourist form, and a development of cultural psychology, so that meaning, narrative and intrapersonal communication become increasingly important concerns. Bruner's work on curriculum echoes and pays due deference to the earlier work of Lev Vygotsky (1978; see also Chapter 8 below), and Vygotsky's influence on the field of curriculum and more generally on the field of education has been profound. He described his theory as cultural-historical, and he meant by this that mind, cognition and memory can only be understood as functions that are carried out with other people and in society. He developed two important notions: *the zone of proximal development* and *inner speech*, both of which have contributed since the mid-1970s to a revolution in pedagogy. However, as will become apparent, policy developments round the world, and in particular in the USA and the UK, have combined to restrict the impact of these new pedagogic forms. Bruner's much quoted and controversial maxim, for example, that 'any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development' (1960, p. 33) reflects a view of pedagogy and curriculum which is at variance with the development of strong boundaries between forms of knowledge and between types of children encapsulated in Bernstein's performance model of curriculum.

Bruner and Vygotsky, though with different emphases, foreground society and culture as key dimensions of learning, and this is in contrast to imitative and didactic forms of pedagogy. A number of different models of pedagogy, then, have been developed. The first of these is imitation. Learners seek to copy the actions of the teacher and in the process incorporate these observed characteristics into their behaviours. Much learning of an informal nature,

especially in early childhood, takes this form. Didacticism, on the other hand, involves instruction where the teacher inculcates a knowledge, skill or affective domain into learners by informing them about what they should do and how they should behave. This view of pedagogy has been disputed by constructivists and situationists who understand learning as contextualised, and thus as incapable of being understood without reference to the environment in which it takes place. Constructivists and situationists have developed a notion of inter-subjective interchange in which learners construct knowledge in the light of the experiences they have in and outwith the classroom, and in the process create meanings for themselves and others. The fourth pedagogic approach is apprenticeship in which the learner is supported in their attempts to gain access to the culture of the society in which they are being educated.

The two most important learning theories, symbol-processing and situated cognitive approaches, allocate distinctive roles to learning styles, assessment and meta-cognition. Symbol-processing approaches understand the learner and the environment as separate; learning takes place within the human mind as the individual processes information they receive through their senses, assimilates that information and creates new ways of understanding. This theory positions the individual as a passive recipient of environmental influences. It separates out mind from body, language from reality and the individual from society. Situated cognition understands the relationship between the individual and the environment in a different way. Situated learning approaches view the person and the environment as mutually constructed and mutually constructing. Bredo (1999) suggests that this relationship should be viewed actively and as involving dynamic modification rather than static matching. The learner acts with and on the environment, shaping or modifying themselves and at the same time shaping or modifying the environment. Situated cognitive approaches stress active, transformative and relational dimensions to learning; indeed, situated cognitionists understand learning as contextualised.

This has led in turn, principally through Donald Schon's (1983) critique of technical rationality, to an emphasis on reflection and meta-reflection within the context of learning communities, with society once again foregrounded, in contrast to theories of learning which understand the learner as a passive imbiber of information from their environment. Schon's (see Chapter 11 below) best work can be found in his two seminal books, *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983) and *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* (1987). In particular, his attack on various forms of technical rationality has been a major influence on post-compulsory education discourses. Reflection and reflective practices have become central ideas for the construction of professional development courses in a range of disciplines. Schon's (1987) well-known distinction between reflection-in-action and reflection on reflection-in-action is the central theme of new developments in learning and pedagogy in this field.

Much of the work on professional development since the mid-1980s has focused on teaching and learning, with a subsequent neglect of both assessment practices and the impact assessment has on both formal learning settings and the workplace. Teaching and learning strategies on professional development courses have utilised a range of methods. The first of these is instruction, whether hierarchical or progressive (Adey, 1997), spiral (Bruner, 1996), sequenced (Gagne, 1985), or modular. The second is coaching in situ, understood as the learner being offered feedback and critique as they perform the skills required in the workplace. Collins *et al.* (1989) have developed a coaching model for professional development that includes: modelling by the expert; coaching while the learner practises; scaffolding where the learner is supported during the initial stages with that support gradually being withdrawn as the learner becomes more proficient; articulation during the learning process; reflection on those processes and comparison with the expert's reasons for action; and exploration where the learner undertakes various workplace activities without support. Third, there is observation where the learner either mimics the expert performing in the desired role or identifies with and emulates that person (Bandura, 1986). Associated with this is the notion of role modelling, where the learner identifies with the role model: partially, charismatically, performatively, optionally or negatively (Bucher and Stelling, 1977). Fourth, there is the process of mentoring, whether built into professional development courses or developed informally. Fifth, there are processes of simulation and transfer. Simulation provides a proxy experience for the learner outside the workplace, and the intention is that those skills can then be transferred to real-life situations. Generic theories of transfer suggest that the professional can develop certain general skills and attributes which then enable improvements to their performance in non-related areas. Identical elements theory suggests that transfer only occurs when enough of the elements are shared between the learning site and the workplace setting.

Within this framework of situated learning, a new model of apprenticeship has been developed. The traditional model is characterised as a conservative and static transmission framework: only the apprentice learns; the body of knowledge being transmitted is fixed and unproblematic; the expert teaches and does not learn from the experience; and the knowledge that is acquired is context-bound and not transferable. Guile and Young (1999) contrast this with a form of apprenticeship that understands learning as an active, social and collective process that takes place in a community of practice. Contexts within which that learning takes place are always changing; and more importantly, new knowledge emerges for both the expert and the apprentice.

Practitioner learning in the light of these new developments is therefore understood as contextualised and situation-specific. Universities, however, are offering courses on professional development to in-service educational practitioners which are taught away from the practice site, frequently operate within technicist frameworks of understanding, and adopt disciplinary forms

of knowledge. That is, knowledge developed outside the practice setting is made available to students who are then required to apply it to their own practice. This knowledge may take the form of models of good practice or ideal simulations of what the practitioner should be doing in the practice setting. The knowledge being developed is generalisable, and moves beyond the repertoire of actions with which the practitioner is familiar. This can be contrasted with informal, work-specific and transitory forms of knowledge. For Schon, knowledge underpinned by a technical rationality model fails to take account of the context-specific nature of knowledge acquisition. Schon himself has been criticised, in turn, for not developing a critical approach to knowledge.

Critical pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is underpinned by a belief that schooling and the curriculum 'always represent[s] an introduction to, preparation for, and legitimation of particular forms of life' (McLaren, 1989, p. 160). It thus seeks, through pedagogic means, to surface and in the process disrupt conventional forms of understanding which serve to reproduce undemocratic, racist, sexist and unequal social relations. As Lankshear *et al.* (1996, p. 150) make clear,

> [t]he task of critical pedagogy . . . is to unmask hegemonies and critique ideologies with the political and ethical intent of helping to empower students and more generally, the social groups to which they belong: by fostering awareness of conditions that limit possibilities for human becoming and legitimate the unequal distribution of social goods.

Unlike some post-modern viewpoints, critical pedagogy is predicated on a clear ethical position with regard to society and to the way society reproduces itself, though some versions of critical pedagogy emphasise the need to disrupt conventional school knowledge structures and the reproductive processes that accompany them without specifying alternative frames of reference for students. The end-point becomes the disruptive process rather than the re-forming of schooling and society in a particular way.

Lankshear *et al.* (1996) suggest that critical pedagogy had to wrestle with a number of serious problems. Though implicit within it is a notion of student-centredness and student empowerment, all too frequently teachers found it difficult to forgo their role as orchestrators of proceedings, thus in effect critical pedagogy became a means by which one ideological viewpoint replaced another. Structural constraints on the implementation of critical pedagogic processes proved to be difficult to negotiate around, and, indeed, the state sought to reinforce the power of those structural constraints so that alternative pedagogies proved difficult to enact (an example in the United Kingdom is the

way the state imposed a national curriculum and appropriate methods for teaching it by strengthening inspection, evaluation and assessment arrangements). Students also found it difficult to give voice to their own localised and immediately available experiential knowledge within the constraints of a formal curriculum and a formal process of schooling. The concentration on class, gender and race led to an essentialised, reductionist and, as a consequence, over-simplified view of identity formation; and the political ideals that underpinned critical pedagogy were frequently abstracted and decontextualised so that the movement itself lost impetus. Finally, critical pedagogy never developed beyond a system of ideas so that the relationship between culture and practice was never adequately operationalised.

To these problems and issues should be added the inability of critical pedagogy to confront the post-modern attack on foundationalism, both epistemological and, more importantly, ethical. In turn, critical pedagogy lost ground to technicist frameworks of understanding, which allowed governments round the world to set in place organisational and pedagogic structures antithetical to critical pedagogy.

Michael Apple's work (1979; 1982; see also Chapter 6 below) may be located within the field of critical pedagogy, and his focus has ranged from teacher education to school curriculum and national testing, to textbook production, educational financing and governance. In particular, he has been concerned to understand social reproduction, student socialisation, the hidden curriculum, inequality in all its various guises and curriculum knowledge. Like Apple, Henry Giroux's (1981; 1989; see also Chapter 10 below) work may be located within the field of critical pedagogy, and in particular the development of emancipatory citizenship. His later work embraces a post-modernist conception of knowledge, though he would still want to retain a version of ethical universalism.

Though Foucault's (1977; see also Chapter 5 below) work hardly touches on education and the curriculum, his general social theory has influenced and continues to influence discussions of the curriculum. His Nietzschian perspective is perhaps best expressed in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) in which he sets out to explain how technologies of power operate through new knowledge-power discourses and modes of objectification that individuals are subjected to and to which they subject themselves. His work on biopower and governmentality has direct implications for the study of the curriculum. All three of these key figures in the history of the curriculum have distanced their work from foundationalism and from economism, that is, in the first instance, adopting a universalist and trans-social view of knowledge, and in the second instance, understanding the aims and purposes of formal education as directly to produce trained workers for an efficient and effective economy, whether market-based or state-controlled. However, instrumentalism, as a curriculum form, has a number of different guises, and even critical pedagogy, underpinned as it is by a normative model of society, can be labelled

as instrumentalist. Thus, in a broader context, instrumentalism has also come to be associated with any normative view of life as the end-point and purpose of formal schooling.

Instrumentalism

A different type of justification for the inclusion of items in a curriculum eschews foundationalism and epistemic conventionalism, and argues that it is possible to provide a justification for the contents of a curriculum in terms of certain virtues or experiences that children should have in order to lead a fulfilled life. The project is therefore clearly normative and redefines the notion of instrumentalism away from economism. It is a distinctive approach in that the curriculum is constructed in terms of whether the experiences undergone by students contribute to the development of dispositions that allow them to lead the good life. There are two principal problems with this approach: there is a difficulty with establishing what the 'good life' is; and there is an equal difficulty with identifying experiences for children in school which will lead to the development of dispositions so as to allow the individual to lead the good life when they leave school (cf. Callan, 1988; Clayton, 1993).

This further episode in the history of the curriculum therefore incorporates an idea of the good life as the end-point and indeed determinant of what should or should not be included in the curriculum. John White's abiding theme (1973; 1982; 1990; see also Chapter 12 below) has been that of autonomous well-being; he insists that the only way to resolve arguments about the curriculum is to define the good life and subsequently identify what the curriculum should be to give children the best chance of achieving it. His work has ranged from discourses about justice, altruism, work, lifelong learning and community to discussion of the philosophical rationale for a national curriculum. It is then his insistence on basing the curriculum round the notion of autonomy that marks out this particular curriculum episode, though in response to critiques of his early work he has refined and deepened this idea.

White (1982) argues for a notion of autonomy or the capacity to reflect on and make choices which allow the possibility of leading the good life and he suggests that if children do not develop such a capacity they cannot distinguish between projects which contribute towards the good life and projects which do not. Further, if they do not develop such a capacity, they are liable to be in thrall to arbitrary authority. Thus, the autonomous individual is treated as an ethical absolute, though again there are problems with identifying such an individual, because it is difficult to distinguish between actions which have been motivated by conformity to an arbitrary authority and actions that have genuinely resulted from the exercise of individual autonomy.

This dilemma for White reflects the tension between leading an autonomous life and a fulfilled one, and the two are not necessarily the same. Indeed,

a person who indulges their appetites may not be considered to be autonomous, though clearly there is a sense in which they have chosen to indulge their appetites and have thus exercised their autonomy. It is here that the problem is at its starkest because autonomy as a concept cannot carry the weight attached to it, and there are implicit and normative meanings attached to it. So, autonomy means more than making choices or even having the capacity to make choices. There is a sense in which it is used to indicate the making of good or right choices and this is reflected in White's distinction between self-regarding reasons for choosing one form of life over another and other-regarding reasons in which a person also contributes to the welfare of others. Instrumentalist views of curriculum-making are future-orientated, and can therefore only be justified with reference to particular political and social arrangements. These arrangements, in turn, need to be argued for, and are likely to be contested.

School effectiveness/school improvement

Though it is important to separate out the two, academic theorists have sought to combine them, so that knowledge developed by school effectiveness researchers influences and indeed determines particular and prescriptive school improvement practices. This assumes a particular relationship between school effectiveness and school improvement, a technicist model which is at odds with critical, innovative and reflexive views of the curriculum. Indeed, what marks out this curriculum perspective is a neglect of the curriculum as such and an embeddedness in scientific models of curriculum-making. A typical prescriptive model that embraces both school effectiveness and school improvement discourses is provided by Pam Sammons and her colleagues.

Sammons *et al.* (1995) make the following claims:

- Although socio-economic factors and innate dispositions of students are major influences on achievement, schools 'in similar circumstances can achieve very different levels of educational progress' (1995, p. 83).
- There are some studies which suggest that both academic and social/affective outcomes such as attendance, attitudes and behaviour are determined by the school. In other words, children attended more, truanted less, had better attitudes towards schooling and behaved better whilst at school in the more effective schools compared with the less effective.
- Primary schools can have significant long-term effects on achievement at 16 years of age.
- It is possible to measure the difference which schools make. Creemers (1994, p. 13), for example, suggests that 'about 12 to 18 per cent of the variance in student outcomes can be explained by school and classroom factors when we take account of the background of students.'

- Prior achievement is a much more significant factor than gender, socio-economic, ethnicity and language characteristics, and even school effects are more important than these effects, but not that of prior attainment.
- There is some evidence that school effects vary for different kinds of outcomes, i.e. mathematical as compared with language achievements.
- The amount of variance in achievement attributable to schools and classes may vary from culture to culture.

These empirical findings are then translated into lists of interdependent factors that mark out an effective school from an ineffective one. Thus Sammons *et al.* (1995) produced a directory of effective school descriptors:

- professional leadership (firm and purposeful; a participative approach; the leading professional);
- shared vision and goals (unity of purpose; consistency of practice; collegiality and collaboration);
- a learning environment (an orderly atmosphere; an attractive working environment);
- concentration on teaching and learning (maximisation of learning time; academic emphasis; focus on achievement);
- purposeful teaching (efficient organisation; clarity of purpose; structured lessons; adaptive practice);
- high expectations (high expectations all round; communicating expectations; providing intellectual challenge);
- positive reinforcement (clear and firm discipline; feedback);
- monitoring progress (monitoring pupil performance; evaluating school performance);
- pupil rights and responsibilities (raising pupil self-esteem; positions of responsibility; control of work);
- home–school partnership (parental involvement in children's learning);
- a learning organisation (school-based staff development).

Here we have the scientific model of curriculum writ large, underpinned by technicist and managerial models of schooling; reductionist, tautological and in some cases trivial accounts of process; and more fundamentally, a distaste for many of the curriculum debates referred to above. However, these criticisms of this approach should not be used to underestimate the important effects this mode of curriculum-making has had in education systems round the world.

Curriculum models

These episodes or moments in the history of the curriculum, it should be reiterated, are not sequential, but overlap, reconstitute themselves in different

guises and take on different forms in practice. The substantive argument of this book, as the last chapter will make clear, is to argue for a new model of curriculum, one which supports a conception of education as the public good. It therefore seeks to revisit some of the major curriculum issues that have surfaced since the mid-1970s with the intention of providing alternatives to the way that curriculum is now officially understood. It will do this by concentrating on some major themes as they have been expressed in the writings of key curriculum theorists. It will not therefore be a comprehensive exegesis of the work of each of these curriculum theorists. It will, however, seek to surface for the attention of the reader themes and issues that have both past currency and relevance to modern debates about education.

The structure of the book is as follows. This chapter has sought to provide the backdrop to the history of curriculum ideas by briefly examining some of the recent debates in relation to different models of curriculum-making. Chapter 2 examines a version of behavioural objectives advocated by W. J. Popham. Chapter 3 offers an opposing viewpoint and focuses on the work of Lawrence Stenhouse. In Chapter 4, reference is made to those important and influential curriculum models which are underpinned by foundationalist epistemologies, focusing in particular on the work of Paul Hirst. In Chapter 5 issues of relativism and power are addressed in relation to the writings of Michel Foucault. Chapter 6 concentrates on structural issues and, in particular, Michael Apple's distinctive view of educational systems, structures and curricular forms. Chapter 7 examines the influence of Basil Bernstein on pedagogy and in particular the relations between the different elements that make up the curriculum. Chapter 8 focuses on the learning process and Lev Vygotsky's internalisation thesis. The next three chapters address issues of reflection, critical pedagogy and psycho-cultural learning, taking as their critical lodestone three influential authors, Jerome Bruner, Henri Giroux and Donald Schon. The final author who is highlighted is John White, with his reflections on, and advocacy for, a notion of autonomy to underpin the curriculum. Finally, a different and post-modernist perspective on the curriculum is examined in the last chapter.

What then is a curriculum? A curriculum may refer to a system, as in a national curriculum; an institution, as in the school curriculum; or even to an individual school, as in the school geography curriculum. Its four dimensions are: aims or objectives, content or subject matter, methods or procedures, and evaluation or assessment. The first dimension refers to the reasons for including specific items in the curriculum and excluding others. The second dimension is content or subject matter and this refers to the knowledge, skills or dispositions which are implicit in the choice of items, and the way that they are arranged. Objectives may be understood as broad general justifications for including particular items and particular pedagogical processes in the curriculum; or as clearly defined and closely delineated outcomes or behaviours; or as a set of appropriate procedures or experiences. The third

dimension is methods or procedures and this refers to pedagogy and is determined by choices made about the first two dimensions. The fourth dimension is assessment or evaluation and this refers to the means for determining whether the curriculum has been successfully implemented. This book offers a critical perspective on these various dimensions as they are addressed by the curriculum theorists identified above.