

Toward a renaissance in curriculum theory and development in the USA

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The curriculum field in the USA has existed in a chronic state of disarray, even crisis, for many years. This study considers whether the field's 'reconceptualization' has alleviated the signs of crisis articulated some 30 years ago by Joseph Schwab. It concludes by suggesting that four issues should be examined in order to establish a vital sense of community among curriculum scholars and to create favourable conditions for a renaissance in the US scholarly field of curriculum theory and development.

The US curriculum field can be seen as existing in a state of perpetual crisis. Whether one reads the literature of the field, speaks with veteran professors about the formative years of their careers, attends contemporary conferences, or peruses the academic journals of the day, a palpable feeling of a sense of continuing crisis emerges. In this paper, we briefly summarize the persistence of this sense of crisis in the US curriculum field from the early 20th century to the present. Noting that the recent so-called 'reconceptualization' of the field has been justified partly as an antidote to the description of the field as 'moribund' that Schwab (1969) offered some 30 years ago, we evaluate the current state of the field against the six signs of 'crisis' Schwab then articulated. We conclude that these indicators of crisis persist, in some cases in aggravated form. Finally, we outline four issues we think the curriculum field should consider in order to establish the conditions conducive to a genuine renaissance in curriculum theory and development.

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The ‘stubborn disarray’ of the curriculum field

The US curriculum field has long existed in a state of ‘conceptual disarray’ (Cuban 1995). During its formative years in the early 20th century, conceptual disagreement fell along the lines of the preferred source of educational purposes, with camps rallying around varied subject-centred, child-centred, and activity-analysis approaches to curriculum development (Whipple 1926). During the Great Depression of the 1930s, sharp disputes erupted between progressive curricularists and educational philosophers, social reconstructionists, and academic ‘traditionalists’ (Hlebowitsh and Wraga 1995). During the decade following World War II, attacks on progressive education from the political and educational right aggravated divisions within progressive education at large and the curriculum field in particular (Cremin 1961, Foshay 1975). With the launch of Sputnik in 1957 and the dominance of the US National Science Foundation’s (NSF) discipline-centred curriculum projects of the 1960s, all of these traditions of curriculum theory, questions, and work were firmly ushered to the sidelines of educational work (Tanner and Tanner 1990).

Beginning in the 1970s, a new generation of curriculum scholars pronounced the historic curriculum field ‘dead’, and launched a self-styled ‘reconceptualization’ of curriculum studies (Pinar *et al.* 1995, Marshall *et al.* 2000). However, by the 1990s, even as ‘reconceptualized’ perspectives dominated the academic curriculum field, internal ideological feuding and external critique fractured even the reconceptualist camp. Presently, with the appearance of several new curriculum associations and conferences,¹ and with little evidence of interest in communication among the various factions often represented by these affiliations, Cuban’s (1995: vii) recognition of ‘the stubborn disarray that marks the academic field of curriculum’ in the US continues as an apt characterization of the field.

The ‘reconceptualization’ of the US curriculum field that began in the 1970s was premised partly on the assumption that this new project would extract the field from the crisis that Schwab, himself a newcomer to the field, had diagnosed (Pinar *et al.* 1995, Marshall *et al.* 2000). Let us examine the current circumstances of the curriculum field in the US with respect to the signs of the crisis of principle that Schwab (1969) identified, conditions that have been often cited as the grounds for the ‘reconceptualization’ of the field.

Schwab’s signs of crisis revisited

As early as 1988, Pinar (1988) confidently declared the reconceptualization complete; recent retrospectives (see Pinar *et al.* 1995, Marshall *et al.* 2000) depict the triumph of the reconceptualization as a self-evident fact. Wright (2000: 8) considers the consequences of the ‘reconceptualization’ so pervasive that use of the term when discussing curriculum scholarship is unnecessary. As we have noted, an assumption of the reconceptualization of that field was that it would arrest the continual decline of the field into the moribund state that Schwab had discerned.

However, has reconceptualized curriculum theorizing rescued the curriculum field from the troubles that distressed Schwab? Let us explore this question by testing Schwab's six signs of crisis against contemporary circumstances, particularly against curriculum work engendered by the 'reconceptualization'.

Schwab's (1969: 3) first sign of crisis in the curriculum field involved 'a translocation of its problems and the solving of them from the nominal practitioners of the field to other men [*sic*]'. Here Schwab, and later Pinar (1978), referred in particular to the discipline-centred NSF curriculum projects, led largely by university scholars in the arts and sciences. To what extent are contemporary curriculum reforms influenced by curriculum professors? The contemporary US field enjoys the limited influence over current curriculum-reform initiatives as our predecessors did over the NSF reforms. Current reforms in the US, notably the standards movement, have been driven largely by politicians and corporate leaders. Moreover, the reconceptualist priority of pursuing curriculum theory to the neglect of curriculum practice represents a clear and conscious flight from the practical curriculum development work of the historic field (Pinar 1992). That is, while the exclusion of curriculum professors from the post-Sputnik reforms was involuntary, the reconceptualist distancing of theory from practice has been intentional. Schwab's first sign of crisis in the curriculum field, that persons other than curricularists bear primary responsibility for solving curriculum problems, remains apparent.

Schwab's (1969: 3–4; emphasis in original) second sign involved a flight 'from *use* of principles and methods to *talk* about them'. The reconceptualist commitment to seeking new ways of understanding curriculum at the expense of developing curricula seems to be the most obvious manifestation of this crisis in the contemporary field. Varied forms of enquiry, including structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstructionism, and post-modernism (to name a few) have been introduced to the field, manifesting a greater commitment to talk about rather than to engage with curriculum endeavours. In particular, the debates over interpretations of the Tyler rationale that are long on critique and short on constructive alternatives exemplify a commitment to curriculum contemplation at the expense of curriculum action.² Efforts to refine curriculum understanding have trumped efforts to improve curriculum development.

Schwab's (1969: 4) third sign of crisis involved 'an attempt by practitioners to return to the subject matter in a state of innocence, shorn not only of current principles but of all principles'. Although Schwab characterized this sign as a 'missing symptom in the case of curriculum', in the contemporary field it may partly exist as a consequence of the reconceptualist repudiation of the historic field. By dismissing principles and practices that emerged from the historic US field, reconceptualists are able to return to curriculum matters innocent of earlier work. New theories displace established principles. The frequent result of this repudiation, however, is a reinvention of ideas and practices, but with no acknowledgement of preceding work. Indeed, reconceptualist theorists have been known to identify ideas and practices that the historic US field in fact invented as emerging from reconceptualist theorizing. Slattery (1995), for

example, identifies practices such as interdisciplinary curriculum, thematic units, authentic assessment, team teaching, non-graded schooling, laboratory work, and field trips with 'post-modern' curriculum theory rather than with the 'modern' curriculum field. Each one of these practices, of course, was advocated, if not invented, by the historic US curriculum field. In two further instances, Connelly and Clandinin (1988), embracing the reconceptualized definition of curriculum as the course of one's life experience (versus the course of study), advocate the idea and practice of teachers as curriculum planners, and Henderson and Hawthorne (2000) advance a vision of democratic curriculum leadership, both uninformed by similar work from the historic field (e.g. Bonser 1920, Hopkins 1941, Aikin 1942, Tyler 1953, Zapf 1959). In these examples, curriculum problems that enjoy a long history of analysis and resolution are approached innocent of previous work.

Schwab's (1969: 4) fourth sign of crisis in the US curriculum field involved retreat of the curriculum professor 'to the role of observer, commentator, historian, and critic of the contributions of others to the field'. This role has in fact been advocated as one that distinguishes curriculum 'theorizing' from other forms of curriculum scholarship (Slatery 1995). Pinar (1978: 6, 1992: 234; see also Pinar *et al.* 1995: 14), for example, claimed that 'an intellectual and cultural distance from' curriculum practitioners was necessary 'in order to develop a comprehensive critique and theoretical programme that will be of any meaningful assistance now or later', and that 'Theory must stay out of bed with current reform in order to remain free to theorize modes of knowing and knowledge linked with neither the factory nor corporate model'. Critical commentary on the current state of school curriculum, with little commitment to the generation of practical alternatives, is a mainstay of reconceptualized theorizing.

This is not to say, however (as acknowledged above), that the theorists around the reconceptualization completely ignore practical curriculum matters. Schwab's (1969: 4) fifth sign of crisis in the curriculum field involved 'a repetition of old and familiar knowledge in new languages which add little or nothing to the old meanings as embodied in the older and familiar language'. This sign is an effect of the presence of Schwab's fourth sign, and as such may be apparent in the examples cited above. However, there are many other examples. Taubman (2000: 28, 31), for example, inaccurately represents work consistent with the priorities of the historic curriculum field as embracing scientific educational research, national standards, high-stakes testing, reductionist skill-driven curriculum, and the hegemony of disciplinary knowledge, and presents as reconceptualized alternatives practices such as attending to the particular situation and to particular students, living in the moment, and embracing 'endless' meaning-seeking and question-asking that considers solutions as temporary, but problem resolution as ongoing. Yet, the fruits of the reconceptualization Taubman cites are not far from the practices that emerged from the historic curriculum field. Cautions against the misuse of standardized tests, insistence that curriculum and instruction should be developed for particular students and particular locales, and the imperative of ongoing problem resolution are features of the literature of that field (e.g. Whipple 1926, Harap 1937, Taba 1945, Tyler 1949). Thus,

as the reconceptualists approach curriculum problems in a state of historical innocence, perseveration of historic curriculum commitments in the contemporary scholarship results.

Finally, Schwab's (1969: 4) sixth sign of crisis in the curriculum field involved 'a marked increase in eristic, contentious, and *ad hominem* debate'. Milburn's (2000) characterization of the 1999 exchange between Pinar (1999) and Wraga (1999a, b) as 'heated' probably provides sufficient evidence to suggest that this sign remains apparent. In addition, the inclination to label academic analyses of reconceptualized curriculum theory as 'harsh', 'uncivil', 'passé', or 'naïve' without substantiating such claims, while characterizing reconceptualized work as self-evidently 'diverse', 'emancipatory', and 'eloquent', can foster a contentious, divisive climate that is not conducive to intellectual exchange (Kesson and Henderson 1999, Taubman 2000, Wright 2000). Moreover, decrees such as the reconceptualist epitaph for the field, 'Curriculum Development: Born: 1918. Died: 1969' (Pinar *et al.* 1995: 6), and depiction of the historic curriculum field as 'our genocidal European American predecessors' (Pinar 1998: xxxiii), reveal that a debate is unnecessary for the deployment of hyperbolic and even offensive language.

In summary, then, sufficient evidence exists to support the claim that the US curriculum field remains in a state of crisis much like the one Schwab described over three decades ago. We would contend that the reconceptualization has not only failed to extract the field from the crisis that Schwab identified, but it may even have aggravated the crisis that Schwab sought to mitigate.

In addition, a comparison of the current conceptual disarray in the curriculum field to previous manifestations of disarray reveals other problems. During the 1950s, for example, the sources of the crisis in the US curriculum field were largely external: first the conservative assaults on progressivism in education, then the political surrender of curriculum reform to arts and sciences professors by federal legislators. The current 'crisis' in the field has both external and internal sources, the former stemming from the sheer irrelevance of the curriculum field in educational reform, and the latter from conceptual and theoretical disputes within the field. During the first half of the 20th century, 'conceptual disarray' in the US curriculum field resulted largely from internal disputes among differing theoretical perspectives. During the 1920s, however, and to a lesser extent during the following decade, not only did disagreement not suppress dialogue, but a concerted commitment to conversation produced some consensus that was inclusive of a diversity of perspectives. Taking a cue from our predecessors, we think that continual debate and dialogue is the only way to establish a universe of curriculum discourse that is animated by both consensus and diversity.

A way out of curriculum confusion

What, then, should curriculum professors discuss? We think that, for the US curriculum field to extract itself from its state of chronic crisis, curriculum scholars would do well to confront frankly at least four fundamental issues.

Curriculum boundaries

The US curriculum field in general, and reconceptualist theory in particular, need to mark the boundaries of the field. The demarcation of the field defines the field. The curriculum field needs to identify those phenomena considered in the domain of curriculum inquiry. We think that these phenomena should be limited largely to matters pertaining to the life and programme of the school. Cultural studies, writ large, and personal psycho-social therapy, writ small, for example, are worthy pursuits, but lie beyond the bounds of curriculum enquiry. We need to heed Reid's (1992: 166) caution that 'research that is about everything is about nothing'. His suggestion that, 'At some point, a certain humility is in order—a willingness to render unto curriculum the things that belong to it, rather than strive to expand it to the whole of life' (p. 168), warrants serious, candid deliberation. Or, using Kuhn's (1970) language, curriculum scholars should fix their gaze on the 'constellation of objects' that are curricular, rather than casting their gaze toward the whole vast heavens. Distinguishing curriculum phenomena from non-curriculum phenomena will impinge little on 'diversity' in the field, because the range of perspectives to bear on those phenomena will remain appropriately wide.

History is with all of us

The US curriculum field in general, and reconceptualist theory in particular, need to come to terms with curriculum history. Pronouncements of the death of curriculum development and the consequent repudiation of the historic field appear more as rhetorical tactics than as considered scholarship. The rejection of the historic field contradicts the reconceptualist commitments to understanding curriculum as historic text (Pinar *et al.* 1995) and to affirming and validating diverse perspectives. In addition, the reconceptualist interpretation of the historic field suffers from an inherent historical presentism that enlists history largely for the purpose of rationalizing the reconceptualist movement (Lincoln 1992, Wraga 1998, Milburn 2000). The reconceptualist interpretation of the historic field is also based on claims that are contradicted by the historic record (Hlebowitsh 1992, 1993, Wraga 1998). Moreover, the fact that practices ostensibly engendered by reconceptualized curriculum theorizing often bear a striking resemblance to practices invented by the repudiated historic US field not only points to internal inconsistencies in reconceptualized scholarship, but also raises questions about the extent to which reconceptualized curriculum theorizing has reinvented the curriculum wheel (Wraga 1996). (Perhaps Faulkner's (1966: 92) epigrammatic admonition from *Requiem for a Nun* applies here: 'The past is never dead. It's not even past'.)

The conscious building upon past accomplishments makes creative advances possible. In virtually all fields of human endeavour—except, perhaps, education—established conventions form the foundation for subsequent invention. The great creative achievements of the Italian Renaissance, for example, were enabled in part by a rediscovery of

knowledge and methods of Roman architecture and sculpture that had been forgotten for centuries during Europe's so-called Dark Ages (Csikszentmihalyi 1996). Similarly, in a more recent US example, John Coltrane's extraordinary inventiveness in the jazz arena was the outgrowth of his near obsessive mastery of a range of historic musical material (Porter 1998). Such examples are legion (Csikszentmihalyi 1996). The reality is that creative contributions are almost invariably predicated upon mastery of the particular domain of human endeavour. Reconceptualized curriculum theorizing, however, has been based upon a repudiation of the very domain it claims to recreate.

As Hargreaves and Moore (2000) demonstrated, some of the benefits new curricularists seek for children and youth are obtainable through curriculum forms developed and advocated by the historic US field. Apple and Beane (1995), too, have endorsed the democratic forms of curriculum developed by that field. In short, reconceptualist curriculum theory must be situated in the context of the entire US curriculum field, historically and contemporaneously; we also need to move beyond presumptuous claims that reconceptualized work embodies the whole of the field. To propel the field progressively and inventively into the future, we must build upon past accomplishments and develop a constructive synthesis of historic principles and practices and new ideas.

From ideology to ideas

We think that the lack of sustained deliberation and dialogue about these and other issues perhaps is attributable in part to an exaltation of ideology over ideas in reconceptualized curriculum theorizing. Positions such as the repudiation of the historic field, the separation of theory from practice, and the redefinition of curriculum from the course of study to the course of one's life experience, originated as planks in the platform of 'reconceptualized' thought. Over time, however, as these positions were operationalized in reconceptualized curriculum scholarship, they became reified into doctrine. These positions now seem to function more as articles of faith than as ideas to be tested. The lack of substantive response to criticism of these positions perhaps can be explained by recognizing that, typically, ideological tenets prove intellectually indefensible.

Moreover, not only is the rationale for the reconceptualization based on academic ideologies, but as well reconceptualized scholarship is often driven by and devoted to advancing particular political ideologies. From our perspective, advancing any political ideology or doctrine is incompatible with sound scholarship. Academics working from a post-positivist or post-modern perspective likely will balk at such a suggestion. We think, however, that a fallacy of equivocation undermines the justification of ideologically-driven scholarship. The argument goes something like this: All individuals carry subjective biases. These biases, or personal ideologies, are virtually inescapable and influence all thinking and acting. This subjectivity is compounded by the 'theory-ladenness' of all scholarship; that is, the theory that guides the choice of hypotheses and data sets makes all investigations

inherently selective and subjective.³ Thus, because all scholarship is indubitably tainted by personal ideologies and circumscribed by theory, researchers may as well acknowledge and accept those facts and admit honestly that all scholarship is ideological. Consequently, because the promotion of ideology through scholarship is unavoidable, the use of scholarship to promote ideology is acceptable. This synopsis oversimplifies, yet still captures, the crux of the argument.

The argument that all scholarship is inherently ideological and, therefore, the propagation of ideology through scholarship is both inevitable and acceptable, hinges on equivocation of the meaning of the term ideology: 'ideology' as signifying a set of ideas gives way to 'ideology' as signifying political doctrine. If personal biases are largely inescapable, however, political ideologies are largely a matter of choice. Is not the argument for promoting ideology through scholarship tantamount to imploring that, because prejudice and stereotyping will likely always exist, researchers not only should cease working to mitigate prejudice and stereotyping, but that they even should embrace and foster them? Clearly, both of these positions are unacceptable. Social scientists (e.g. Myrdal 1944) have long recognized the fact that personal bias does, and that political ideology can, influence research. They also called for methods to mitigate the effects of both personal bias and political doctrine because of the obvious distortions in the record of evidence and fallacious conclusions that usually result. Dewey (1985: 201), for example, acknowledged that all everyday thinking

is liable to be influenced by almost any number of unseen and unconsidered causes—past experience, received dogmas, the stirring of self-interest, the arousing of passion, sheer mental laziness, a social environment steeped in biased traditions or animated by false expectations, and so on.

However, he implored that we 'control' such thinking by proof. Dewey's (1986) requirements for controlling everyday thinking apply even more imperatively to academic work.

Every person, including curriculum scholars, is obviously entitled to his or her personal beliefs, political or otherwise. However, ideology as political doctrine, by definition, ignores mitigating evidence and rejects contradictory arguments. Ideology as doctrine privileges personal preference over proof and results, ironically, in positivistic positions. Ideology as doctrine compromises accuracy and constrains perspectives. And ideology as doctrine militates against free and open communication; dogma displaces debate. Will students of curriculum suffer the fate of Blair and her classmates in Russo's (1997: 200) *Straight Man*, who 'have learned from their professors that persuasion—reasoned argument—no longer holds a favoured position in university life'? Russo (1997: 200–201) continued:

If their professors—feminists, Marxists, historicists, assorted other theorists—belong to suspicious, gated intellectual communities that are less interested in talking to each other than in staking out territory and furthering agendas, then why learn to debate?

Our concerns about ideology may be interpreted by some readers as a manifestation of a positivist epistemology; we think our position is better

characterized as pragmatic. Constructive conversation and communication are virtually impossible if academic or political doctrine governs the representation of evidence and the evocation of arguments.

Finally, the resurgence of interest on the part of US academics in ideological social-reconstructionist curriculum theory is both problematic and symptomatic of some of the issues just mentioned. For all of its commitment to 'critical' analysis of social structures and cultural values, this renewed interest in social reconstructionism has been remarkably ahistorical and un-self-critical. Cautions against the anti-democratic nature of curricula imbued with ideology and committed to indoctrination were something of a fixture of the historic US curriculum field, at least among progressives. The Committee on Curriculum-Making (Whipple 1926: 15–16), for example, contended that when school curricula include investigation of social problems, as they should:

the curriculum maker must take care that the material presented and the treatment given shall be fair to all sides. The chief aim will not be to reach final solutions for such problems—still less to establish any prior chosen position—but to build in the children methods of attacking controversial issues and increasingly to develop attitudes of open-mindedness and sympathetic tolerance.

When Counts and others ignored this principle and advocated open indoctrination through the instrument of the school curriculum, criticism of their position was incisive. Dewey (1987: 415), for example, objected to curriculum designed 'to impress upon the minds of pupils a particular set of political and economic views to the exclusion of every other'. Bode (1935: 22) accepted indoctrination in education only in the sense of 'indoctrination in the belief or attitude that the individual has the right to a choice of beliefs'. Bode continued, 'Stated negatively and in terms of paradox, it is indoctrination in the belief that the indoctrination of beliefs is wrong'. For Bode, the failure to allow students to think reflectively and independently amounted to an admission 'that our belief in democracy was a mistake'. The progressive critique of social reconstructionism largely has been lost on contemporary educators who advocate a critical pedagogy that accommodates, and even encourages, indoctrination (Hlebowitsh and Wraga 1995). Our position is that such approaches to curriculum theory and practice will likely thwart democratic forms of living and learning.

The interplay of theory and practice

The US curriculum field in general, and reconceptualist theory in particular, need to confront frankly the relationship between theory and practice. As an academic field with a professional-practitioner constituency, curriculum theory and development cannot neglect practice and reasonably expect to thrive. The curriculum field must serve as an 'agent', not merely as a 'spectator' (Rorty 1998). A provocative parallel to the current state of the curriculum field is perhaps found again in the US jazz scene. During the late 1940s, with the infamous ban on recording in effect and the

unprecedentedly vibrant New York club scene in decline, opportunities for jazz players to work out new ideas became scarce. In this climate, a small cadre of musicians turned to theory. Their meetings at arranger Gil Evans's unheated one-room basement apartment in Manhattan to deliberate about new directions for their music are the stuff of legend. One of Miles Davis's biographers (Nisenson 1996: 60) reported that, 'While Miles enjoyed this musical theorizing, he found himself becoming impatient: "Don't talk about it, do it"'. Dissatisfied with the limits of sheer theorizing, Davis acted to translate theory into practice by forming a nonet featuring unconventional instrumentation and by administering the logistics of scheduling rehearsals and negotiating a recording contract. Davis's endeavours to apply new ideas resulted in the landmark recordings credited with giving birth to the 'cool jazz' movement (Stearns 1956, Gioia 1997).

The express commitment to distancing, even divorcing, theory from practice as a variable in the calculus of reconceptualized curriculum studies has surprised and troubled even some reconceptualists. Perhaps this reaction indicates that favourable conditions already exist for refocusing curriculum studies on practical matters (Milburn 2000). The potential for fostering a vital interplay between curriculum theory and curriculum practice is a key to advancing the field.

A renaissance in curriculum theory and development

Celebratory histories of the 'reconceptualization' in the US curriculum field characterize that movement as representing a 'renaissance' in curriculum studies (e.g. Marshall *et al.* 2000, Sears and Marshall 2000). This characterization, however, is problematic on at least two grounds: first, and as documented above, the reconceptualization has not mitigated, and may indeed have aggravated, the moribund state of the field that Schwab (1969) identified. Secondly, in these applications the term *renaissance* has been employed in an historically inaccurate fashion. The term obviously is strongly associated with the Italian Renaissance of the 15th century. As noted earlier, in that historic connection, however, the 'new birth' alluded to in the term *renaissance* refers to 'the revival of antiquity' (Burckhardt 1958: 175). That is, an historically accurate use of the term *renaissance* must apply to circumstances in which historic forms are rediscovered and serve to inform new creative achievements. Thus, the reconceptualization, which involved a conscious and calculated repudiation of historic forms of curriculum development, cannot in any historically accurate sense of the word be considered a 'renaissance'. (Note that Hauser (1951: 267) characterized the Italian Renaissance as involving a move away from 'metaphysical symbolism' and toward an increased interest in 'representation of the empirical world', a trend inconsistent with the reconceptualization shift from curriculum development to understanding.)

We submit, then, that a genuine renaissance in the US curriculum field will be predicated upon a continuing conversation which will enable the curriculum field to avoid the perils of academic balkanization—of the proliferation, as Russo (1997) put it, of isolated 'gated intellectual

communities’—and emerge from the last 30 years of intellectual ferment as a robust community of scholars committed to the improvement of education for all children and youth. When US curriculum scholars shed ideological blinders, clearly delineate the boundaries of the field, consciously build upon the field’s constructive legacies, and foster a robust interplay between curriculum theory and curriculum practice, then a renaissance in curriculum theory and development will be at hand.

Notes

1. For example, during the last 8 years: the American Association for Teaching and Curriculum, the International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies and its affiliate, the American Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies, and the recent offshoot of the Bergamo conference, the Curriculum and Pedagogy Conference.
2. In an analysis of the 1999 programme of Division B (Curriculum Studies) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Wright (2000) reveals a predominant commitment to theorizing at the expense of practical matters of curriculum practice. Indeed, inquiry into practical curriculum reform efforts is more likely to appear on the programmes of AERA’s Divisions A (Administration), H (School Evaluation and Programme Development), and L (Educational Policy and Politics).
3. For useful discussions of theory-ladenness, see Garrison (1986) and Howe (1985).

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