A COLLECTION OF PAPERS

for a

SYMPOSIUM

Crossing borders and exploring new frontiers in professional practice research

at the

Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education

Notre Dame University, Fremantle

2-6 December, 2001

Wednesday, 5 December

at 1:45-2:45 p.m., 3:00-4:15 p.m. and 4:45-5:45 p.m.

(Session K1- M2, Room 1/206)

Presented by

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CONTENTS

THE SYMPOSIUM ABSTRACT

This symposium begins with a paper which frames reflections upon a range of professional practice research activities in which the presenters have been engaged in recent times. A series of short papers follows, where the presenters highlight a number of insights they have gained that have relevance for crossing borders and exploring new frontiers in professional practice research.

- *INTRODUCTORY PAPER (MAC01008/S9)*

    Crossing borders and exploring new frontiers in professional practice research: introductory considerations about conceptual and methodological frameworks.

    (Ian Macpherson, Tania Aspland and Ross Brooker)

    The symposium begins with a brief paper which presents some ontological, epistemological, methodological and ethical perspectives about professional practice research; and a view of what it means to cross borders and explore new frontiers in this area of educational research. The paper is situated within such areas as Action Research, Practitioner Research and Teacher Research, all of which focus significantly on what it means to engage in research efforts in developing professional knowledge, in improving practice and in influencing policies that will support and sustain a research-based approach to professional work and practice.

A number of short papers follow this brief introductory paper (which is presented as a conversation among the three of us). The titles and presenters of these papers are as follows:

- *PAPER #1 (MAC01010)*

  Reporting a recently-established research partnership between a group of schools in a local school district and a university: crossing borders in identifying and engaging in research agendas

  (Ian Macpherson)

  This paper explores border crossings in the development of a research partnership between a university and a group of schools in a school district. While the university may have been proactive is seeking new research partnerships with schools, it has been the schools in this particular district which have driven the desire to be more research-based in their professional work and practice and the focus for a collaborative research agenda. Such a shift is defined as a significant border crossing. The paper elicits a number of emerging themes in making the crossing, not the least of which has to do with parity of esteem of the research partners and with the leading role of the "industry partner" in defining the "what" and the "how" of the collaborative research effort as an example of professional practice research.

- *PAPER #2 (BRO01011)*

  Extending the borders of an evaluation project beyond the purposes of formative feedback and accountability: considerations of teacher confidence and competence in a curriculum change effort

  (Ross Brooker and Ian Macpherson)

  Trialing new curricula in the Queensland secondary school context is a very formal process in which the curriculum making activity of teachers in the trial is monitored through a sponsored evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide feedback to the curriculum developers on the implementation of the new curriculum in the school context. The principal focus for the evaluation is the efficacy of the curriculum document in terms of its substance and the ability of teachers to translate it into teaching and learning programs for students. The effects of the trial process on teachers' personal resources for curriculum making are rarely studied. In a recent two-year study of the implementation of a trial senior secondary (years 11 & 12) school curriculum in Home Economics (Brooker & Macpherson, 2001), the borders of the formal evaluation process was extended to investigate the perceptions of teachers about their competence and confidence in curriculum-making. Drawing on the analysis of data collected from 35 teachers in 24 schools over a two year period, this paper reports on how teachers perceived their levels of competence and confidence during the trial and on the factors which influenced those levels. Implications are drawn for the curriculum-making process in schools. The study reported in this paper is, therefore, an example of professional practice research which sought to go beyond the primary purpose of syllabus evaluation.

- **PAPER #3 (ASP01012)**

  Developing community in constructing professional knowledge as a means of informing policy about social justice and equity in the curriculum (with reference to a new Aboriginal Studies curriculum)

  (Tania Aspland)

  It is timely in the Australian context to introduce the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies into the secondary school sector. In Queensland, a curriculum authority has just completed the development and evaluation of such a syllabus. This paper critiques the evaluation of the syllabus in times when indigenous issues are open for scrutiny and debate in Australia. Thus, it is argued that the traditional model adopted for the processes of syllabus development, implementation and evaluation must be challenged. This paper explores an alternative approach to curriculum evaluation that pushes the boundaries, and that is responsive to social justice and equity issues. It asks new questions for new times about professional practice research in this significant area of educational activity in Australia.

  > School subject borders and the maintenance of a hegemonic curriculum discourse in multidisciplinary curriculum making

  > (Ross Brooker)

  > The symbolic enshrinement of subjects in the secondary school curricula has been a very successful principle in the history of curriculum making (Goodson, 1992). Goodson argues that the subject "is a perfect device for conservation and stability and stands to effectively frustrate any more holistic initiatives... New initiatives in curriculum-making have to be scrutinised at this level of symbolic action." Drawing on the analysis of interview and observational data collected from a twelve-month case study of the implementation of a "more holistic" multidisciplinary curriculum at a school site, this paper analyses the ways in which subject borders influenced the curriculum making discourse. Insights about the borders and implications for crossing them become the focus for reporting professional practice research in this paper.

  Key points are drawn from each individual paper within a framing provided by the introductory paper. It is these key points, together with perspectives from research participants, which form the basis for conversation in the symposium. A synthesis of the conversation, along with plans for continuing the conversation concludes the symposium.

  ### THE SYMPOSIUM OUTLINE

  1:45 Overviewing the symposium with negotiation of final details for the afternoon and introducing the presenters (Ian)

  1:55 Presenting the introductory paper as a conversation (Ian, Tania and Ross)

2:10 Presenting Paper #1 (Ian)

2:20 Listening to what a critical friend/discussant has to say about the Introductory Paper and Paper #1 (TBA)

2:30 Engaging in general discussion and establishing a framework for considering the remaining papers (Tania)

2:45 BREAK

3:00 Presenting Paper #2 (Ross)

3:10 Presenting Paper #3 (Tania)

3:20 Presenting Paper #4 (Ross)

3:30 Presenting Paper #5 (Ian)

3:40 Sharing feedback from symposium participants regarding key points about professional practice research that they would add to those raised in the papers (Tania and discussant)

4:10 Negotiating whether or not to continue after the break.

4:15 BREAK

4:30/45 (If agreed) Working in small groups to refine and elaborate the key points about professional practice research raised in the papers and in the whole group discussion before the break (Ross)

5:15 Sharing by discussant of what s/he has heard discussed in the small groups

5:30 Collating small group reports and arranging details for continuing the conversation(s) (Ian)

5:45 CLOSE

SPACE FOR SYMPOSIUM NOTES

Some points to consider from the Introductory Paper, Paper #1 and the
critical friend/discussant comments

(Use these points as a framework for the remaining papers)

Points from the first two papers about Professional Practice Research that are significant for you	Points you are adding as you consider what the discussant said - This is your frame for listening to the remaining papers

Summarising the points about professional practice research that you would add to those raised in the remaining papers, and commented on by the discussant

Why are these points important for you?

A possible frame for the final small group activity (if it is agreed that it occur)

The summary of this activity within each small group will be recorded on an OHT

What is the small group's consensus about the most significant points about professional practice research emerging from ALL participants in this symposium	Explanations about why each of these points is considered significant

DETAILS FOR ONGOING CONVERSATIONS

If you would like to continue the conversation that we have begun in this symposium, please provide your contact details below and leave this sheet with us

Name: _____

Institution: _____

Contact Details:
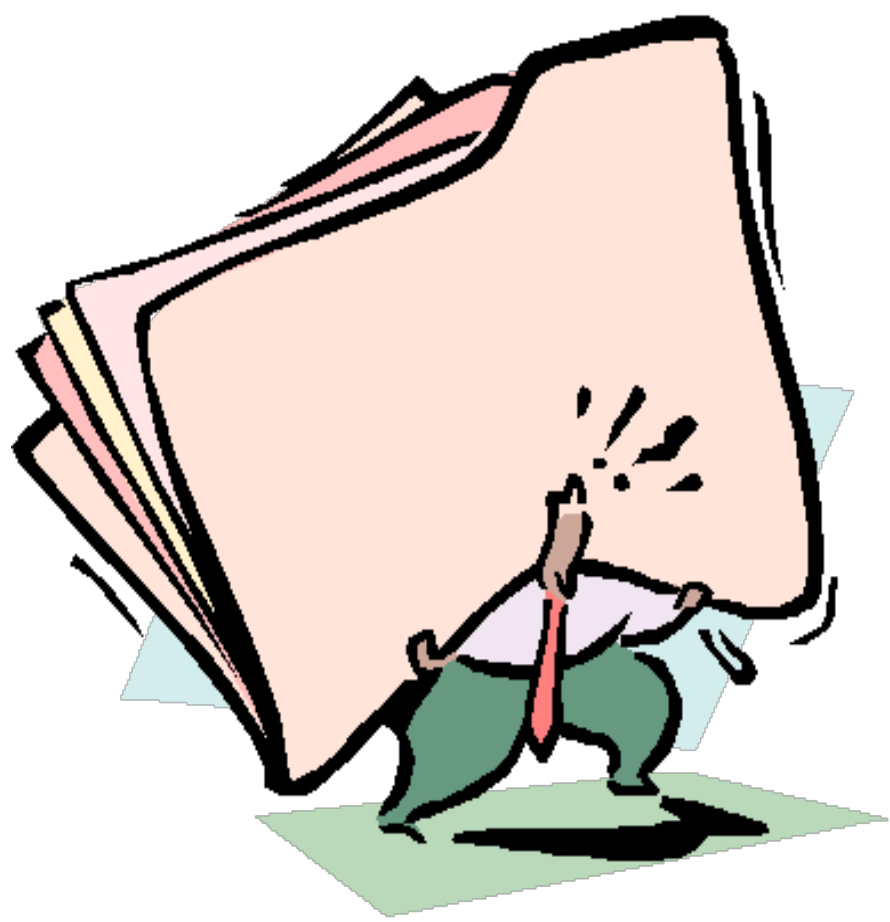
Postal address:

Phone:

Fax:

E Mail:

Thank you for being with us

THE SYMPOSIUM PAPERS

INTRODUCTORY PAPER

Crossing borders and exploring new frontiers in professional practice research: introductory considerations about conceptual and methodological frameworks.

Ian Macpherson, Tania Aspland and Ross Brooker

ABSTRACT

The symposium begins with a brief paper which presents some ontological, epistemological, methodological and ethical perspectives about professional practice research; and a view of what it means to cross borders and explore new frontiers in this area of educational research. The paper is situated within such areas as Action Research, Practitioner Research and Teacher Research, all of which focus significantly on what it means to engage in research efforts in developing professional knowledge, in improving practice and in influencing policies that will support and sustain a research-based approach to professional work and practice.

Professional practice research derives from Stenhouse's (1975) view of the teacher as researcher and from the Action Research movement which his ideas spawned in the UK in the mid to late 1970's and in Australia in the late 1970's and into the 1980's (See Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988). In more recent years the Teacher Research and Practitioner Research initiatives have sharpened the focus on professional practitioners as they have interrogated and investigated their professional practice as a basis for critically-informed advocacy and activism as well as transformative/reconstructive action. Somekh's (1995) view of Action Research in social endeavours is worth reading in this regard. A much more recent example is Groundwater-Smith's (2000) characterisation of evidence-based practice with in knowledge-building/creating schools.

Professional practice research, then is an interrogation and investigation of professional practice by the professional practitioners themselves. It is research that is critically-informed, politically-activist, and action-oriented. It aims for a deeper understanding of professional practice, an enriched capacity to engage in professional practice and a commitment to an ongoing quest for quality improvement in professional practice.

This characterisation of professional practice research derives from a view of Action Research which is critical and collaborative (Aspland, Macpherson, Proudford & Whitmore, 1996); from an approach to collaborative activities (Macpherson, Aspland, Elliott, Proudford, Shaw & Thurlow, 1998); from a stance about professional learning (Macpherson, Brooker, Aspland & Elliott, 1998); from a view of curriculum leadership in which a range of stakeholders collaborate in leading learning (Macpherson, Aspland, Brooker & Elliott, 1999; Macpherson, Aspland & Brooker, 2001); and from a position about collaborative research (Macpherson, Aspland & Brooker, 2000).

Our ontological position is one of democratic participation and inclusion; our epistemological stance is associated with socially-critical constructions of

knowledge; and our methodological approach is a "working with" rather than a "working on" people. For us, people are research participants and not research subjects. Our overall view of research sits within the view that the purposes of educational research are to extend theory, illuminate practice and inform policy. Ethical matters are, of course, of utmost importance in a characterization of professional practice research within what is a heavily value-laden position. We grapple with these matters by seeking to maintain a balance between what we term passion and responsibility in research efforts (Macpherson, Brooker & Aspland, 2001).

So, what does it mean to cross borders and to explore new frontiers in professional practice research? Take the following statements, for example, and consider the implications embedded in the questions which follow each statement.

> Professional Practice research is conceptualised as critically-informed, politically-activist and action-oriented. It is a transformatively-reconstructive interrogation and investigation into our lives as professional practitioners in a range of educational settings, systemic priorities and policies, and global contexts.

> > *But,*

> > *How does this fit with a traditional view of research which is less personal and works on, rather than with, research participants?*

> Professional Practice research is contextualised within the issues and challenges which confront us as professional practitioners.

> *But,*

> > *How do we know that this specific focus is worthwhile within broader levels of the professional community?*

> Professional Practice research is praxis-oriented, collaborative and constructivist in its views of professional knowledge and practice.

> *But,*

> > *Where does the existing (and perhaps taken-for-granted canon of professional knowledge fit?*

> While the focus of Professional Practice research may be on the local and individual, it remains collective in the sense of its potential impact on theory, practice and policy at wider levels.

> *But,*

> *How does it have an impact on both local thinking and practice and wider policy formation, when it has been so localized in its emphasis?*

Professional Practice research informs professional practitioners about their ever-evolving professional knowledge to the point that is difficult to draw the boundary between theory and policy on the one hand and practice on the other.

But,

How valid is professional knowledge constructed in these ways?

Professional Practice research challenges hegemonic views about research agendas, how they are generated and who owns them (and their outcomes)

But,

How can we advocate convincingly for the validity of this sort of research?

Professional Practice research raises questions about ethical principles and practices associated with this type of research which in some ways is unpredictable and uncontrollable compared with the more traditional or positivist forms of research.

But,

On what bases do we argue for matters of rigour, for example?

Professional Practice research opens up new possibilities for crossing borders and exploring new frontiers regarding who drives professional practice research, who owns it and who benefits from it?

But.

> *Do our "answers" to these questions create a confidence on our part to cross borders and to explore new frontiers?*

Are the "borders" more imagined than real?

Are we in the territory of the "new frontiers'?

> *What is the place of practitioner research in these "new frontiers" and where do we find our space?*

These ideas and questions, then, are the conceptual framing that we are
providing for this symposium. This Introductory Paper is an invitation for us all
to explore the territory of professional practice research. Can we argue for its
recognition or place and what are the opportunities or space for us to engage
in it?

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<div align="center">PAPER #1</div>

Reporting a recently-established research partnership between a group of schools in a local school district and a university: crossing borders in identifying and engaging in research agendas

<div align="center">**Ian Macpherson**</div>

<div align="center">**ABSTRACT**</div>

This paper explores border crossings in the development of a research partnership between a university and a group of schools in a school district. While the university may have been proactive is seeking new research partnerships with schools, it has been the schools in this particular district which have driven the desire to be more research-based in their professional work and practice and the focus for a collaborative research agenda. Such a shift is defined as a significant border crossing. The paper elicits a number of emerging themes in making the crossing, not the least of which has to do with parity of esteem of the research partners and with the leading role of the "industry partner" in defining the "what" and the "how" of the collaborative research effort as an example of professional practice research.

Introducing the research partnership as an example of Professional Practice research

The significant feature of this research as an example of professional practice is that the school-based professional practitioners had already identified a focus for the research agenda. Having been involved in the challenging and complex process of interpreting a multiplicity of policy initiatives and priorities and adapting these into local programs and pedagogies, they wanted to take stock, reflect, and identify what they had been doing and how effective their efforts appeared to be.

A proactive stance by school-based personnel is certainly a border crossing when it comes to research partnerships between universities and schools!

The new frontiers are associated with both the establishment of the research partnership and its sustainability. Within the professional practice research partnership, the parity of esteem among the various researchers in terms of their unique and complementary contributions; the ownership of the research focus, approach and outcomes; and the significance, usefulness and applicability of the outcomes are all an ongoing challenge.

Introducing the focus of the research partnership

The title of the research project in this partnership is: "**Sustaining a research base for futures-oriented curriculum planning and implementation at the school level: A local school district (and a small number of schools within the district) working in partnership with a research team from the**

Faculty of Education to theorise school-level curriculum work within contemporary and future contexts".

The research project focuses on a futures-oriented perspective on curriculum planning & implementation. District personnel in schools identified the need to develop a research base for their school-level curriculum initiatives within the complex contexts which demand, for example, outcomes-based approaches to curriculum & assessment, the incorporation of key learning areas into the curriculum, and the consideration of new basics & productive pedagogies as a means of contributing to the "Smart State" (Mooloolaba School District, 2001a, 2001b Education Queensland, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2001; Queensland School Curriculum Council, 1998, Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training & Youth Affairs, 1999, Watt, 2000.). **How can schools at the local level respond to this multiplicity of demands in developing curriculum programs that meet the diverse needs of learners, & take them on pathways leading to worthwhile learning outcomes?** Case studies in four schools are exploring this question.

The aims of the research project are to:

1. investigate and **document** via a case study approach the ways in which school sites interpret national policies and system priorities as a basis for local curriculum planning and implementation

2. critique the ways in which these school sites operate using theoretical frameworks associated with change and accountability in futures-oriented curriculum planning and implementation at the local level

3. generate a range of emerging propositions about sustaining a research

4. validate these emerging propositions though dissemination to local and wider networks of schools and other relevant educational personnel

5. develop a theoretically-informed and practically-oriented basis upon which further research-based activity can be built

Research, with aims such as these, is of local, national & international significance as it helps to extend the theory about how local schools develop a research-based curriculum culture within contexts of a futures-orientation, change & accountability; it helps to illuminate policy about how best a system & District can support schools in developing such a culture; and it helps to improve practice in supporting & sustaining a theoretically/critically-informed research-based culture both for the system & the District as well as for local "sites". The research also is significant in that it provides a platform for wider-scale research-based inquiry and practice at system, District and school levels. Arguably, the research is most significant in that it involves teachers & other stakeholders at the local level in interrogations, investigations, implications & (re)inventions of their own practice relative to the research focus (See research title, question, aims & strategies) of this project (in partnership with District & University personnel).

Besides the substantive focus of the project, the procedural aspects are very significant in terms of what can be learned about research partnerships between Universities & industry partners. In this project, partnership is being

defined & acted upon at a number of levels. The Principals' Group (chaired by the Principal of one of the participating schools & liaising with the District Director & the District Manager of Education Services) is providing the first level of partnership with the Chief Investigators from QUT. These district & QUT persons also form a Management Team to oversee the project. (It meets at least monthly). A second level of partnership is occurring between school-based personnel & the QUT personnel at the school-level at which the case studies of futures-oriented curriculum planning & implementation are taking place. A third level of partnership is occurring when QUT personnel interact with school-level personnel in critiquing the data emerging from the case studies, as a basis for an ongoing documentation & dissemination of the case studies (across the entire School District with the support of the Staff College within the District). At this level, QUT personnel are providing the broad (as well as the more specific) theoretical/critical frameworks for critiquing the sorts of curriculum cultures & frameworks which are emerging at each case study site. A fourth level of partnership involves a Reference Group (It meets at least quarterly) which comments on the overall progress of the project; provides feedback about ongoing directions for the project itself & for wider-scale dissemination of research findings; & links with other District and School initiatives involving a partnership with QUT (e.g. Technology Project). A fifth level of partnership for this project involves all personnel in developing action plans for wider-scale dissemination (led by District personnel) & in developing an ARC Linkages Grant Application in early 2002 - for 2003 to 2005 (led by QUT personnel).

Outlining the research approach for the project

The research approach is a case study approach where the purpose is to describe in as thick detail as possible what is happening relative to the research topic at the four local "sites". The research approach sits within Brown & Dowling's (1998) view of educational research as "the continuous application of a particularly coherent and systemic and reflexive way of questioning, a mode of interrogation (Page 1). The approach heeds Wolcott's (1994) assertion that it is better to err on the side of description than analysis; but it also takes Simons' (1996) point that case study is a way to "see things anew". Using a case study approach (See Yin, 1989, Stake, 1995 & 1998, Bassey, 1999, Macpherson, Brooker & Ainsworth, 2000), this project focuses on the authentic participation of school-based personnel in researching their own practice relative to futures-oriented curriculum planning and implementation at the local level. Such participation is set within the ethos of Action Research (See Aspland, Macpherson, Proudford & Whitmore, 1996, Atweh, Kemmis & Weeks, 1998, and of Practitioner Research (a form of Action Research where the emphasis is on practitioners researching their own practice and thereby developing a research-based culture as a milieu for their work - See Anderson & Herr, 1999, Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, Brooker & Macpherson, 1999, Groundwater-Smith, 2000). The research, therefore, will be guided by the application of principles that aim to maintain productive and sustainable relationships among the various partners (See Macpherson, Brooker & Ainsworth, 2000). A range of research strategies are being used be used to complete the case studies at the local sites. Primarily, these strategies will focus on:

- **surveying** existing documentation of curriculum activity at each site (in terms of the research focus and overarching research question) (See Aim 1);
- **interacting** with personnel at each site (through narratives, interviews and ongoing conversations) regarding their perspectives on curriculum activity (that has occurred, is occurring and is likely to/should occur) (See Aim 1);
- **intersecting** descriptive data relative to Aim 1 with relevant theoretical/critical frameworks (See, for example, Macpherson, Brooker, Aspland & Elliott, 1998, Macpherson, Aspland, Brooker & Elliott, 1999, Macpherson, 2000, Fullan, 1998, Jennings, 2000) (see Aims 2 & 3);
- **working collaboratively** (though ongoing conversations with personnel at each site, & using emerging frameworks from the above strategies) to interpret the descriptive & first-level analytical data and to develop a set of emerging propositions for each site about the research question (See Aim 3)
- **Validating** these propositions across sites & within the District through an ongoing collaboration in interpreting & identifying implications out of the case study data for further consideration at each site, across sites, & within the District. (See Aims 4 & 5) (See Denzin & Lincoln, (Editors), 1998, Brooker, Macpherson & Aspland, 2000, Peshkin, 2000);
- **Disseminating** research processes & outcomes throughout the project via a variety of communication forms within & across sites, across the District, & in the relevant professional communities (conference and journal papers) (See Aim 5); and
- **Developing** a theoretically- & critically-informed basis for further research activity at each site (& other sites) within & beyond the District: & for the preparation of an ARC Linkages Grant Application for 2003-5 (See Aim 5).

Raising some points for consideration

The emerging themes about professional practice research from this research partnership are as follows:

> Parity of esteem of the research partners recognizes the unique and complementary roles and contributions which a collective of professional practice researchers can assume and make.

> The leading role of the "industry partner" in defining the "what" and the "how" of a collaborative effort in professional practice research enhances the perceived usefulness and significance of research outcomes.

> Matters of commitment and ownership have ethical overtones which should be clarified in establishing and maintaining a professional practice research collective.

> Working collaboratively, critically and politically encourages a collective voice that has the capacity to advocate for sustaining

research outcomes in the ongoing quest for quality and
improvement.

Disseminating the outcomes of professional practice research
in ways that connect with both the theoretical and practical
worlds is a significant part of the research effort.

A consideration of these themes within the context of the statements and
questions at the end of the Introductory Paper would suggest that matters of
balance between theory and practice and between university and school
personnel; of the impact of this sort of research on systemic and national
policy; of ethics in relation to participation, commitment and ownership; and of
effective dissemination forms for both theory-oriented and practice-oriented
audiences are of importance for us as we go on charting the territory of
professional practice research.

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PAPER #2

Extending the borders of an evaluation project beyond the purposes of formative feedback and accountability: considerations of teacher confidence and competence in a curriculum change effort

Ross Brooker and Ian Macpherson

ABSTRACT

Trialing new curricula in the Queensland secondary school context is a very formal process in which the curriculum making activity of teachers in the trial is monitored through a sponsored evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide feedback to the curriculum developers on the implementation of the new curriculum in the school context. The principal focus for the evaluation is the efficacy of the curriculum document in terms of its substance and the ability of teachers to translate it into teaching and learning programs for students. The effects of the trial process on teachers' personal resources for curriculum making are rarely studied. In a recent two-year study of the implementation of a trial senior secondary (years 11 & 12) school curriculum in Home Economics (Brooker & Macpherson, 2001), the borders of the formal evaluation process was extended to investigate the perceptions of teachers about their competence and confidence in curriculum-making. Drawing on the analysis of data collected from 35 teachers in 24 schools over a two year period, this paper reports on how teachers perceived their levels of competence and confidence during the trial and on the factors which influenced those levels. Implications are drawn for the curriculum-making process in schools. The study reported in this paper is, therefore, an example of professional practice research which sought to go beyond the primary purpose of syllabus evaluation.

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Introduction

In 1992, the Queensland Senior Home Economics syllabus underwent a minor revision. In that revision, the main changes were to assessment criteria and some aspects of learning experiences. In 1996, the Home Economics Subject Advisory Committee submitted proposals for a **major revision** of the syllabus, to focus on course organisation, subject matter and assessment. Particular attention was paid to course structure, to allow a degree of specialisation within the areas of study, and to ensure that any course of study developed from the syllabus would address an adequate range of the features unique to Home Economics as an area of study.

The major aspects of the proposed revision were:

8.   the recognition that the unique focus of Home Economics as an area of study is the development of the knowledge, processes and skills to enhance the well-being of individuals and families;
9.   the development of an underpinning theme of the individual and the family, to provide a focus for all studies within the syllabus;
10.   three areas of study: food studies, living environments, and textile studies;
11.   a structure within each area of study which incorporates a core unit plus a range of elective units;
12.   the development of a socially-critical approach, to be incorporated both within learning experiences and within objectives and criteria; and
13.   the incorporation, where appropriate, of a strong practical focus.

In addition to the formal purposes for the evaluation, the researchers were interested in the changes to teachers' levels of competence and confidence throughout the implementation of the Home Economics syllabus. In this paper we have outlined the research process and provided a summary of the data.

Research Process

Data Collection Process - 1999

Data collection in 1999 was completed in five phases (see Table 1). In order to progressively monitor the Trial-Pilot implementation, school visits in 1999 were undertaken in two stages: school terms 2 and 3 (Phases 2 & 3 in Table 1).

Table 1 Overview of 1999 data collection process

Phase	Focus	Time	No. of Schools	Teachers		Students	
				No.	Data Collection Instrument(s)	No.	Data Collection Instrument(s)
1	Teachers' Conference	March 1999	24	25	Questionnaire	N/A	*N/A*
2	School Visits	Term 2 1999	13	15	Interviews	203 65	Questionnaires Focus Group Interviews
3	Work Programs	Term 3 1999	24	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	School Visits	Term 3 1999	11	13	Interviews	214 58	Questionnaires; Focus Group Interviews
5	Year 11 Monitoring	End 1999	24	N/A	N/A	N/A	Document analysis

In addition to the data collected from teachers and students, school curriculum coordinators (mostly a member of the administration team) were interviewed to gain some understanding of the curriculum context for Home Economics in schools.

Data Collection Process - 2000

Data collection in 2000 was completed in five phases (see Table 2). In order to progressively monitor the trial-pilot implementation, school visits in 2000 were undertaken in two stages: school terms 2 and 3 (Phases 2 and 3 in Table 2).

Table 2 Overview of 2000 data collection process

Phase	Focus	Time	No. of Schools	Teachers		Students	
				No.	Data Collection Instrument(s)	No.	Data Collection Instrument(s)
1	Teachers' Conference	March 2000	25	30	Questionnaire	N/A	*N/A*
2	School Visits	Term 2 2000	12	15	Interviews	N/A	
3	School Surveys	Term 2 2000	25	24	Questionnaire	177 (Yr 11) 151 (Yr 12)	Questionnaires
4	School Visits	Term 3 2000	13	15	Interviews	114 (Yr 11) 174 (Yr 12)	Questionnaires
5	School Surve	Octobe	25	29	Questionnaire	N/A	*N/A*

	ys (Teachers' Conference)	r 2000					
6	**Year 12 Verification	October 2000	25				

Findings

The following data report on the competence and confidence of teachers on their journey through the syllabus implementation process**.**

Competence

At both the October 1998 (first year of implementation) and 1999 (second year of implementation) Teacher Conferences, participants were asked to indicate their level of competence to implement the new syllabus (see Table 3) and to identify factors that affected that competence (see Table 4).

Table 3 Teacher self ratings of their level of competence to implement the new syllabus

		Good/Positive	Okay/Average	Low/ Not very
October 1998	4 (12.5%)	17 (53%)	9 (28%)	2 (6.5%)
October 1999	3 (11.5%)	16 (61.5%)	6 (23%)	1 (4%)

* In October 1999, 15 teachers (58%) commented on the fact that they felt more competent than they had previously.

** Five teachers (19%) added that they were still improving/had some way to go.

Table 4 Factors influencing perceptions of competence

	October 1998	**October 1999**
Positive aspects	Previous teaching and curriculum experience (8) Personal capabilities for teaching and change (7) Support from other staff (5) No baggage from the old syllabus (3) External support from the curriculum authority (2)	Personal engagement with the curriculum process (6) Teacher conferences (3) Positive feedback about work program (1) Improved pedagogy (2)
Concerns	Lack of experience (3) Assessment (2) Ideas not accepted by existing staff (1) Workload (1)	Assessment (3) Time restraints (2) Lack of personal interest (1)

Confidence

At both the October 1998 (first year of implementation) and 1999 (second year of implementation) Teacher Conferences, participants were asked to indicate their level of confidence to implement the new syllabus (see Table 5) and to identify factors which affected that confidence (see Table 6).

Table 5 Teacher self ratings of their level of confidence to implement the new syllabus

		Good/Positive	**Okay/average**	**Low/Not very**
October 1998	7 (22%)	10 (31%)	13 (41%)	2 (6%)
October 1999	3 (12%)	13 (52%)	8 (32%)	1 (4%)

* In 1999, 8 teachers (32%) commented on the fact that they felt more confident than they had previously

Table 6 Factors influencing perceptions of confidence

	October 1998	October 1999
Positive aspects	Collegiality (4) Experience/knowledge (4) Support (3) Support available (2) Teacher enthusiasm (5) Student interest in change (2)	Teacher conferences (5) Support from school administration (5) Improved competence (3) Teacher enthusiasm (3) Student satisfaction (2) External support (2)
Concerns	Time (4) Assessment (3) Working alone (3) Timetable (1)	Time (5) Assessment (5) Lack of resources (2) Lack of competence (2)

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Competence and Confidence - Contributing Factors

At the October 2000 Teachers' Conference, teachers were asked to identify the factors that have contributed to the growth of their competence and confidence in relation to working with the Home Economics syllabus (see Table 7).

Table 7 Factors that have contributed to the growth of your competence and confidence in working with the syllabus

Factor	Agree	Disagree	No Comment
14. Conferences	28	0	1

Paper Presented at the AARE Annual
Conference, Fremantle, 2001
Australian Association
for Research in Education

· Experience in teaching and assessing	27	2	0
· Accreditation of Work Program	27	2	0
· Working with a colleague in the same school	18	7	4
· Consulting with peers	25	4	0
· Redesigning learning experiences and assessment tasks following feedback from their initial use	25	1	3
· Marking assessment items	25	4	0
· Positive feedback from students	25	4	0
· Consulting with the Review Officer	24	5	0
· Assisting students has developed a clearer image of what is required	24	3	2
· Challenge to do something different	23	6	0
· Being encouraged to try, and learn from, new ideas/approaches	23	6	0
· Teaching both years (11 & 12) of the course	21	6	2
· Having work used as an exemplar at a conference	20	8	1
· Experience with aspects of the previous syllabus	20	8	1
· Positive feedback from Monitoring	19	9	1
· Access to the programs and work from a range of schools	19	9	1
· Substantial blocks of time away from school (TRS) to work on the syllabus	6	16	7

Discussion/Conclusion

Prior to the commencement of the implementation of the syllabus October 1998), teachers' perception of their competence was self-centred. The locus of control for their competence was their previous teaching and curriculum experience, their teaching capability and the support that they received from other staff in their school. One year into the curriculum making process, teachers perceived their competence to be located in the curriculum process. Their engagement with the new curriculum and teacher conferences were

cited as important factors related to their competence with the new curriculum (see Table 4).

In terms of confidence, experience and support from colleagues were again referred to as factors having a positive influence on their confidence. In addition, enthusiasm was seen as an important factor. After a year of curriculum making, enthusiasm was positively related to the opportunity to interact with colleagues outside of the school and to support from the school administration (see Table 6).

In terms of both competence and confidence, assessment was identified early as a factor of concern and that level of concern had increased after a year of implementation (see Tables 5 and 6).

After two years of the curriculum-making project, teachers identified a range of factors that had contributed to the growth of their competence and confidence throughout the curriculum-making project (see Table 7). The factors can be grouped into three broad areas:

- Networking with colleagues (Items 1, 4, 5, 9)
- Experience gained from working with the syllabus (Items 2, 6, 7, 12, 13, 15)
- Positive feedback from curriculum authority's processes and from students (Items 3, 8, 14, 16)

The study has identified that issues of teacher competence and confidence are important contributors to the implementation of a new curriculum. It has also shown that the factors which influence teachers' competence and confidence, are grounded in the curriculum-making process. These findings have implications for curriculum making projects. In circumstances where new curricula are being introduced, it is not sufficient for only a limited number of teachers (as is the case in a curriculum trial) to have access to the full range of professional learning experiences that are necessary to implement successful curriculum change. Opportunities such as networking with colleagues, first hand engagement with the curriculum-making process and positive feedback must be inherent in the curriculum implementation process.

A project like this one, then, has implications for those who would engage in curriculum-making as an example of professional practice research. Notions of confidence and competence point to the need for empowering practitioners as researchers.

PAPER #3

Developing community in constructing professional knowledge as a means of informing policy about social justice and equity in the curriculum (with reference to a new Aboriginal Studies curriculum)

Tania Aspland

ABSTRACT

It is timely in the Australian context to introduce the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies into the secondary school sector. In Queensland, a curriculum authority has just completed the development and evaluation of such a syllabus. This paper critiques the evaluation of the syllabus in times when indigenous issues are open for scrutiny and debate in Australia. Thus, it is argued that the traditional model adopted for the processes of syllabus development, implementation and evaluation must be challenged. This paper explores an alternative approach to curriculum evaluation that pushes the boundaries, and that is responsive to social justice and equity issues. It asks new questions for new times about professional practice research in this significant area of educational activity in Australia.

The research partnership

It is timely in the Australian context to introduce the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies into the secondary school sector. In Queensland a curriculum authority has just completed the development and evaluation of the syllabus in times when Indigenous issues are open to scrutiny and debate. Thus, this paper argues that the traditional model adopted for the processes of syllabus development, implementation and evaluation must be critiqued and reconstructed to be more responsive to socio-cultural issues. An alternative model of curriculum evaluation is proposed here, one that pushes the boundaries and is responsive to social justice and equity issues. It asks new questions for new times about professional practice research in this significant area.

The Evaluation of the Pilot Senior Syllabus in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies was funded to assess the syllabus in respect to a range of criteria required of new syllabi by a curriculum authority in Queensland. Following the trial pilot of the syllabus and the adoption of recommendations made by the evaluation team, approval was given for general implementation of the syllabus in Queensland Secondary schools in 2003.

The roles of the evaluators was determined by the curriculum authority (Dudley 1992) and was framed by the purposes of piloting a subject, which are:

18. to discover what the needs of teachers are in their implementation of the syllabus
19. to continue the development and dissemination of the standards of assessment with the state review panel and district review panels.

Thus, it was determined by the authority that the evaluation should engage in the following tasks:

- an examination of the work programs from all pilot schools, with particular note of the teacher and material resources available and used in the schools;
- an examination of how schools go about developing work programs;
- an evaluation of the actual implementation of the syllabus via the work programs to determine needs for source material, support programs and in-service programs required to ensure effective teaching, learning and assessment;
- clarification of appropriate standards of assessment;
- any other information that can lead to the improvement of the syllabus.

The context of the professional practice research

The Evaluation Team (Aspland, Synott & BinDol, 2001) however, challenged the traditional model of curriculum evaluation at the tendering stage and pushed the boundaries of the project to be more responsive to contextual features and guidelines pertinent to conducting evaluations in this study area.

In particular this evaluation was guided by a range of principles identified by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy, to which the Queensland Government has subscribed. Just as the development of the syllabus was undertaken by a Subject Advisory Committee, with significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultation, this evaluation attempted to establish a more inclusive and culturally-responsive approach in its undertaking. Thus, in designing the research project key evaluation principles from the relevant literature in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, were juxtaposed with the traditional criteria set by the curriculum authority. These principles and criteria provided the framework for the evaluation of the syllabus.

Extrapolating core approaches from a range of literature prior to 1980, Catchpole (1981) presented the following evaluation questions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Courses:

Aims: Does this syllabus direct its aims at:

25. Attacking racial prejudice?
26. Developing tolerance and understanding of other cultures?
27. Promoting the development of pride in Indigenous identity?

People:

28. Were Indigenous people involved in the development and teaching of this syllabus?
29. Are Indigenous people involved in this evaluation?

30. What attitudes do the teachers of this course have towards Indigenous people?
31. Do teachers have the expertise, the knowledge, the sensitivity to teach an Indigenous Studies syllabus?

Selection of Content:

32. Does the syllabus cover a selection of Indigenous cultures/lifestyles? i.e. does content include examination of (a) traditional cultures; (b) culture-contact period;

    (c) contemporary Indigenous peoples lifestyles?

33. Does content examine race relations and associated concepts in relation to 1 (b) and (c) above?
34. In relation to traditional society, are the concepts and information being taught correct in relation to understanding traditional society?
35. Does content include sacred/secret information? If it does, who has revealed this information? Has it been sanctioned by Indigenous people?

Methodology:

36. Are teaching strategies being used which involve the affective and behavioural aspects of attitudes as well as the cognitive?
37. Are such strategies as role-playing, socio-drama, puppet theatre, simulation games, small group discussions, debating, films, literature and excursions being used?

Resources

38. Are the textbooks and teaching materials used by teachers appropriate?
39. Are teachers aware of the dubious merits of many textbooks and teaching materials about Indigenous Australians?
40. Is the material available for use by students in the school library appropriate?

The Recipients

41. Have syllabus developers and teachers considered the school clientele and its community setting in the selection of content and methodology?
42. Is content and methodology appropriate for the school clientele and its community setting?

Similarly, the report of the Commonwealth Aboriginal Studies working group (Budby, 1982) emphasised the following essential features in the design of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies:

- Teachers should have adequate time, to allow for the appropriate treatment of materials
- A planned and sequential approach to content needs to be adopted.
- A recognition of the need to balance the study of traditional and contemporary Indigenous cultures as imperative
- A recognition of the need for teacher expertise in assessing resources as essential.
- The involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through community consultation.
- A consideration of the learning needs of Indigenous students.

Therefore, in considering the implementation of the syllabus and the designing of teacher work programs, the evaluation team adopted this framework through the data collection.

In a published book on the Effective Teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Groome (1994) advised that the basic criteria in evaluating the effectiveness of teaching Indigenous Studies should include the following:

Students should gain:

- understandings of the range of Indigenous lifestyles, past and present;
- understandings of the complexities and subtleties of the lives of Indigenous people over times and between groups;
- understandings of how racism has operated in Australia, especially how it has affected the relationships between Indigenous/Non-Indigenous Australians, and the life chances of Indigenous Australians.

Groome emphasised the following:

- The primacy of consultation /partnership with Aboriginal communities and individuals;
- The need to incorporate aims which relate to the unique needs and characteristics of school contexts and the particular groups of students being taught;
- Recognition of local community background, and the attitudes of the local school contexts;
- The adequacy of resources in respect to people, places, and media.

These principles informed the evaluation of the pilot syllabus and provided a useful framework for undertaking aspects of the study.

Finally, we were also responsive to relevant information from the Final Report of the National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Commonwealth of Australia 1995) that identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies as:

> 'the study of Indigenous culture and heritage for all Australian students. It aims to develop widespread cultural awareness and sensitivity to Indigenous Australians. This knowledge is necessary to develop the kind of recognition and respect which might provide the basis for a lasting reconciliation.'

(Commonwealth of Australia 1995, 96).

**According to the Report, the key requirement for the effective teaching
of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies is the professional
development of teachers on a wide scale (Commonwealth of Australia
1995, 97).**

Key principles and Recommendation 27 of the Final Report of the National
Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
(Commonwealth of Australia, 1995), contained the following clauses:

- Making maximum use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
  in all aspects of course development and implementation and having
  an explicit preference for employment of appropriately qualified
  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to teach the courses;
- Provision for the inclusion of local content at the school level in the
  development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum
  frameworks, on the advice of local communities;
- Ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies curricula
  encompass both traditional and contemporary cultures and lifestyles;
- Accreditation and assessment bodies should formally recognise the
  prior knowledge and understanding that Aboriginal and Torres Strait
  Islander students hold in relation to these courses.

(Commonwealth of Australia, 1995, 97-98).

This literature portrayed a consistent set of approaches and criteria in the
evaluation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies courses. It
acknowledges the special nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Studies courses in the Australian educational context and the need to
evaluate such courses within a framework that is informed by the
perspectives and procedures of a diverse community of Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander peoples. Thus our professional practice research need to move
beyond a traditional essentialist model of curriculum evaluation and take a
more inclusive positioning that valued and incorporated the values and
cultural knowledges of its stakeholders.

The focus of the professional practice research

As such, this evaluation sought to examine the situational influences on the
syllabus, the opinions of the key stakeholders involved as to the strengths
and weaknesses of the syllabus, and how student performances are most
affected. The evaluation was designed to discern and discuss significant
features of the syllabus and the critical processes involved in implementing it.
It was essential to also identify the desirable components of the syllabus from
the stakeholders point of view as well as the components or processes that
are perceived to be undesirable. The syllabus evaluation was composed of
four distinct components: observation, inquiry (1999) and explanation and
reporting (2000). The task of the evaluators, as we designed the project, was
to "tell it like it is" revealing the stakeholders reactions to the syllabus to the
Board. This was done through developing a 'portrayal' of the way in which the
syllabus was adopted and implemented in unique sites, the issues
surrounding this process, the reactions of the people involved in the process
(principals, teachers, students, parents and community members) and the

complexities and patterns of experiences that were documented across seventeen school sites.

Outlining the research approach for the project

This study adopted a multi-methods approach within the curriculum evaluation project in order to elicit a quantitative and a qualitative data base. The early part of 1999 focused on the first stage of the project that of observation and interview. This allowed the evaluators to develop a rapport with the significant stakeholders in each site as well as gain an initial understanding of how each teacher was using the syllabus in a particular context. This was essential in research of this type. The process was enriched by a series of focus interviews (Minichiello et al., 1995) and teacher journal writing that provided a more extensive qualitative data base to enrich and check the observations within the study. Teacher, student, parent and community member narratives, both written and spoken, were designed to be a key construct within this methodology. The qualitative data elicited in this manner:

Provided a basis for designing a survey later in the year;

Generated a process that triangulated the data in seeking a convergence of findings;

Invited a more comprehensive search of specific teacher, student, parent and community experiences;

Explored the degree of consensus or resistance to specific reported experiences; and

Enhanced a more complete understanding of teachers perceptions of the syllabus.

Later in 1999 the quantitative data was gathered through the administration of a survey to all teachers, students, parents and administrators engaging in the trial project.The questionnaire consisted of a number of sections that measured teachers' perceptions of

the internal consistency of the syllabus;

the congruence between syllabus intentions and teacher intentions;

the appropriateness and viability of the depth and breadth of the syllabus;

the value of the resources in specific contexts; and

the appropriateness of the assessment strategies.

This set of data was of great interest to the curriculum authority but the team argued that it was necessary to enrich these findings with a series of case studies.

In both 1999 and 2000 all of the significant stakeholders across the trial sites were invited to participate in two focus group interviews based on personal journal writing of their experiences with the syllabus. The framing of the dialogue within this research community was significantly shaped by the "narrative" literature, considered both a mode of inquiry as well as a research method. It has been argued that narrative (Clandinin and Connelly,1990) is the most appropriate form of research set in educational settings of this type where the research participants are given the opportunity to access their own thinking about their experiences with the syllabus in their unique context. Each community recounted their experiences through "stories" (or narratives) that brought to the fore "the images, rituals, habits, cycles, routines and rhythms" that constituted their experiences of the syllabus in a specific socio-cultural context. This form of inquiry is most suitable for a curriculum evaluation project that aims to access the experiences of teachers, students and members of the local communities that vary greatly in their history and their political and socio-cultural constructs. Further the use of conversation and storying enabled participants to express their experiences in ways that did not cause discomfort or alienation.

Preliminary Analysis

The research team transcribed the interviews and collated stories as the basis of the analysis. The initial analysis was reported back to the participants through the use of site-based narratives to capture the essence of teachers, parents students and community members experiences. The participants were invited to read the analysis with a view to altering, reconstructing, adding, deleting the data as a form of member checking and triangulation of the data.

Case studies

The secondary analysis generated a number of case studies for reporting. The key foci of the case studies was phenomenological in essence in order to:

- portray the experiences (dilemmas, struggles and successes) of stakeholders in trailing the syllabus in specific sites;
- highlight idiosyncratic contextual variables that impact on teachers' planning and implementation of the syllabus;
- identify the viability and appropriateness of the syllabus constructs and key concepts in specific contexts;
- capture student response to the implementation of the syllabus in specific contexts;
- highlights the appropriateness of syllabus resources in specific contexts;
- record the assessment strategies teachers adopted in specific contexts; and
- document teachers' personal/professional reactions to the syllabus in specific contexts.

The case studies were of significance to both the curriculum authorities and the participants.

Reporting

The team reported to the Board appointed committee as to the progress of the project on a regular basis. The confluence of the quantitative data with the qualitative data and the ongoing analysis of the data formed the basis of two interim and a final report to the Board that presented the findings of the evaluation of the syllabus in terms of :

- **how effectively the syllabus objectives are communicated to teachers and their communities;**
- **how effectively the syllabus documents facilitate effective planning, teaching and learning that was responsive to differing contexts;**
- **how appropriate the content, resources and key concepts of the syllabus were across diverse contexts;**
- **how effective the syllabus constructs and documents were in promoting authentic and reliable assessment practices in specific contexts;**
- ***how viable the syllabus constructs and documents were in ensuring inclusive and quality learning experiences for all students; and***
- **how effective the guidelines were in generating active community participation in student learning.**
-

The research process adopted within this study can be characterized as critical and collaborative. This implies that the research team did not engage in research on teachers, students and parents in the schools as they trialled the syllabus. Rather, we engaged in research conversations with teachers, administrators, students, parents Indigenous community members in ways that reflected a parity of esteem. In adopting such an approach, the voices of these participants remain at the fore of the project and were not silenced by researcher motives or traditional evaluation constructs that are reductionist in nature. As partners in research it was anticipated that the personnel in schools, parents in the communities, and students together with the members of the research team :

60. **worked together in generating and analysing the research data;**
61. **demanded the direct experience of people in the field 'living' the experiences of trailing a new syllabus;**
62. **generated high levels of trust;**
63. **invited people to determine the ways in which they spoke about the syllabus**
64. **produced reliable and valid data that authentically represented the various stakeholders; and**
65. **comprehensively investigated the complex issues implicit in site-based curriculum evaluation.**

Raising some points for consideration

On reflection, while the evaluation was well accepted by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the curriculum authority

and the education communities, a number of key questions arise for consideration here:

Can traditional research practices implicit in the discourse of curriculum evaluation successfully capture the diverse experiences of the stakeholders within a culturally-responsive syllabus project?

Was the project worthwhile in communicating significant findings to all stakeholders?

Were the findings truly representative of the diverse range of stakeholders?

Were the localised knowledges valued by the curriculum authorities?

Who owns the research findings? How can such knowledge be progressed in the interests of the stakeholders?

Did the rigour of the research methodology compromise the authenticity of the data?

How can researchers continue to push the boundaries of curriculum authorities to generate more authentic and representative data bases for curriculum design?

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PAPER #4

School subject borders and the maintenance of a hegemonic curriculum discourse in multidisciplinary curriculum making

Ross Brooker

ABSTRACT

The symbolic enshrinement of subjects in the secondary school curricula has been a very successful principle in the history of curriculum making (Goodson, 1992). Goodson argues that the subject "is a perfect device for conservation and stability and stands to effectively frustrate any more holistic initiatives... New initiatives in curriculum-making have to be scrutinised at this level of symbolic action." Drawing on the analysis of interview and observational data collected from a twelve-month case study of the implementation of a "more holistic" multidisciplinary curriculum at a school site, this paper analyses the ways in which subject borders influenced the curriculum making discourse. Insights about the borders and implications for crossing them become the focus for reporting professional practice research in this paper.

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Introduction

In contemporary school education in many western countries, the process of implementing centrally formulated curriculum policy into pedagogic practice in schools is a frequent occurrence. In the context of pursuing economic rationalist objectives for schooling, the curriculum offerings for schools are constantly under review and change, to a point where curriculum making is a regular part of schools', and in particular teachers' routines. For example, in Australia and the United Kingdom in recent years, a significant focus has been on the implementation of national curriculum initiatives. Such initiatives, in many instances, have organised school knowledge in different ways (eg. 'key learning areas' which have brought together knowledge from a number of traditional subject areas) and they have been presented to teachers and schools in unfamiliar packages (eg. outcomes-based syllabuses).

While the thinking that has occurred in the context of the production of these contemporary discourses for school knowledge (eg. school systems) may be considered 'innovative', the readiness of the field of reproduction (schools) to develop pedagogical practices which respond to such innovative thinking is problematic. The implementation of curriculum frameworks based on an integration of knowledge from a range of pre-existing subjects, is one such example. Typically, the implementation processes follow the traditional and dominant 'top-down' model where a small number of teachers are 'in-serviced' by the curriculum developers. It is then the responsibility of the 'enlightened few' to make sense of the new text to other relevant staff in schools, who together translate the text into pedagogical practices. The problematic nature of this approach to curriculum making (Common and Egan, 1988; Goodson, 1994; Klein, 1991; Sparkes, 1990) is likely to be accentuated in circumstances where teachers are asked to develop a new pedagogical discourse for the implementation of a curriculum initiative in which the organisation of knowledge is unfamiliar.

The paper reports from a year long empirical study which investigated the ways in which an existing subject based curriculum structure framed the curriculum making practices that emerged from the implementation of a health and physical education key learning area (HPE KLA) curriculum framework (syllabus) into a high school context.

Brief Summary of Related literature

School subjects and subject departments are historically located and well-established symbols of curriculum stability. Subjects represent a particular way of organising discipline-oriented knowledge for the school system. Subject departments in schools are the structures for organising and delivering subject knowledge. Subject departments are

historical artefacts of the school system and are characterised by certain teacher discourses and practices. The data presented in the following section provides insights into the way in which a multi-subject curriculum encountered the hegemony of a subject based curriculum structure in a curriculum making process.

Discussion

It has been argued that discourse is at the core of the change process. It is through patterns of discourse that relational bonds are formed with one another; structures are created, transformed and sustained; beliefs are reinforced and challenged (Barrett et al., 1995). Data from the study have confirmed the central role of discourse in change but in the case presented, the patterns of discourse have served to limit the possibilities for change. The subject-based hegemony evidenced in the discourse community of curriculum makers at the school, exercised a powerful influence on the attempt to implement a KLA curriculum at the school site and served to define the limits of the curriculum making discourse. Three interpretations of that influence are provided and discussed in the following section.

The language of subjects and the denial of legitimacy to a key learning area curriculum

The vocabulary of subjects proved to be a powerful tool in defining the reality for the KLA syllabus in the school context and played a significant role in limiting the ability of teachers to frame the curriculum making process for the KLA in multidisciplinary terms. Historically teachers in the school have thought about, and enacted, the high school curriculum as subjects with well-defined knowledge boundaries (Goodson, 1992). However, subject based narratives were inadequate for the development of a curriculum designed to transcend traditional subject boundaries.

From its point of introduction into the school, the KLA was dissected, discussed, and differentiated in subject terms. Rendering the KLA syllabus subject to the strictures of a single subject paradigm ensured that the curriculum making process was dominated by subject-based discourse. The persistence of the subject-based discourse throughout the curriculum making process denied a curriculum of possibility. Subject-based thinking closed down an opportunity for the creation of a curricular space for the multidisciplinary philosophy to be nurtured and developed in the school. The language of subjects embedded in the curricular thought and practice in the school, resulted in the integrity of the syllabus being compromised, and the legitimacy of the multidisciplinary nature of the KLA being denied.

The language of subjects was significant in another way. Defining the KLA syllabus in "HPE' terms proved to be rhetorical and enabled a strategy of curricular influence and control to emerge. Although beyond the control of the school, the 'HPE' nomenclature for the KLA destined the curriculum making process for the syllabus to be framed by a subject-based paradigm, and particularly by a HPE subject paradigm. The denotative nature of the 'HPE' nomenclature ensured that the KLA

syllabus was not subjected to close scrutiny prior to its introduction and ensured that its passage into a subject department (HPE) remained largely uncontested. It also assigned the development of the KLA over to the control of the HPE department in the school and restricted the access of the Home Economics department to the curriculum making process. As a consequence the HPE department participated with authority in the curriculum making discourse for the KLA while the HEc department were consigned to 'listen' (Cherryholmes, 1987). The discourse of HPE became the dominant discourse for the KLA and the means of expression for the HEc narrative in the syllabus was limited.

The immutability of subjects as a barrier to multidisciplinary curriculum making

The curriculum making process for the KLA was a discursive activity which supported the institutionalised nature of school subjects (Goodson, 1992). School subjects strongly influenced the curriculum making process and in doing so had their influence reinforced. Because subjects were so much a permanent aspect of the structure and process in the school, teachers were strongly tied to their discipline 'category' and its 'organisational base' with the effect that communication across subject boundaries was weak or limited (Bernstein, 1996). The strong classification of subjects ensured that teachers were unable to conceptualise a multidisciplinary pathway for the KLA syllabus. So strong was teachers' subjectivity, that they did not have a language nor were they able to develop one for the curriculum making process. Teachers were isolated by their subject-based expertise and by their departmental allegiance (Akin, 1993). The success of the syllabus required teachers to develop a discourse based on a more integrated code for the KLA which they were unable to do. The articulation of such a discourse required teachers to engage in a more public discussion with colleagues from another department. Teachers, however, showed little enthusiasm for and openness to a dialogue across subject boundaries (Bernstein, 1996), a reluctance which might be explained by an implied shift of identity (Beane, 1992). Communications between the HEc and HPE departments were bound by subject categories and remained unfocused on the integration of difference (Bernstein, 1996).

School subjects give permanence and a sense of tangibility (Clair, 1993) to the belief that school curricular knowledge should be organised around categories of knowledge. In this sense subjects are reified structures in the high school organisation. Subjects are strongly classified which gives the knowledge represented by the subject a "special quality of otherness" (Bernstein, 1996, p. 24). Subjects clearly provided a challenge to the implementation of a KLA curriculum model which emphasised the integration of knowledge from a variety of disciplines or subjects. Teachers and administrators were unable to develop a curriculum structure with permeable boundaries that allowed for a "reordering of specialized differentiation" (Bernstein, 1996) to realise the integration of the HPE and HEc knowledge contained in the syllabus. Staff relations in such a model cohere around knowledge and not organizational categories.

The immutable and privileged nature of school subjects was implicated in the curriculum making process for the KLA in a number of ways. Firstly, it was assumed by both the school administration and the HPE HoD that the KLA syllabus was subject-based and that its development was best undertaken in a single subject department. Despite the HEc HoD's contestation of that assumption, the 'natural' order of subjects prevailed. Secondly, discussions about the nature of the curriculum knowledge in the KLA were focused on how the knowledge could be apportioned to subject areas and how it articulated with existing subject frameworks and how it would be developed within and filtered through those frameworks. Even on occasions when teachers acknowledged the contestable nature of ownership of some of the KLA knowledge, debate revolved around how that knowledge could better be taught in on or other subject area rather than as a shared venture. Thirdly, it was argued that subjects were seen as an essential source of support for teachers during the curriculum making process. Throughout the whole year of the curriculum making process for the KLA, there was a passive acceptance of subjects and subject departments as the dominant interest which effectively silenced the development of a multidisciplinary curriculum making model (Goodson, 1992).

Subjects as a trivialising influence on key learning area curriculum making

The immutability and dominance of the subject based philosophy and practices in the school served to trivialise the KLA curriculum making process, and by implication, the KLA syllabus. While the trivialization of the KLA was not intentional from the point of view of setting out to invalidate the KLA curriculum, the passive submission to a subject paradigm that was "well entrenched" (Ball & Bowe, 1992, p. 112), limited the curriculum possibilities for the KLA in the school (Goodson, 1992). The passivity of the trivialization was evidenced more through silences in the curriculum making process rather than through deliberate actions. A context for trivialization was established by the school administration. Despite being uninformed about the nature and content KLA syllabus, a decision was made to assign the KLA to a single subject department in a curriculum structure with strong subject classification. To grant an authoritative position within the curriculum making discourse (Yeatman, 1991) was unhelpful for the development of a multidisciplinary discourse necessary for the implementation of KLA.

An important factor in negating the importance of the KLA in the school was realised in the motive of the administration and HPE HoD for introducing the KLA into the school. While it might be expected that a new curriculum would be explored for its potential benefits to student learning, an important reason for trialing the syllabus was related to preparing the way for a future curriculum development in a senior school physical education subject. The KLA was not being valued for its intrinsic worth. Rather, it served a subject based agenda.

The "low permeability" (Hargreaves, 1994) between subjects, ensured that a lack of regular and structured communication occurred between staff across subject boundaries which was a significant factor in undermining the curriculum making process for the KLA. On the very

few occasions in which staff from the two departments did meet over a twelve month period, not all of the teachers connected with KLA were present and the agenda was focused on ensuring that between the two departments the stated outcomes in the syllabus would be achieved. The focus of communication divided rather than united the syllabus. In a syllabus in which the "reordering of specialized differentiation" (Bernstein, 1996) was implicit, the need for collaboration across subject boundaries was paramount. The strong classification of subjects ensured that the already entrenched departmental discourses acted as anti-collaborative devices that had a counter productive effect to curriculum making for the KLA (Macdonald & Glover, 1997). The assignment of responsibility for the curriculum making process to a subject department ensured that departmental interests, and particularly the interests of one department, became more important than ideas and debate. As a consequence, "rules of discourse" became subservient to the "tools of power" (Goodlad, 1991, in Klein).

Conclusion

The curriclum making process for the HPE KLA was framed by a subject-based discourse. Subjects and the subject-based thinking of teachers and administrators acted as a "kind of metanarrative" (Stahl, 1989, p.49) that influenced the interpretation of the syllabus into the school but was not part of the "content" of the syllabus. The discursive and rhetorical nature of the subject-based practices served as "framing devices" (Clair, 1993, p.118) which defined and assigned interpretation to the syllabus. A significance of the subject-based framing discourse is that it served to sustain the existing power relations in the departmental curriculum organisation of the school (Mumby, 1988).

Despite the potential of the KLA syllabus to challenge schools to adopt more innovative curriculum practices, the "hegemony of subject specialism" (Hargreaves, 1994) marginalised the multidisciplinary intent of the KLA syllabus. The "balkanized" subject departments limited the possibilities for curriculum change (Hargreaves, 1994). Teachers in the study demonstrated a strong commitment to the "well entrenched" curriculum paradigms (Ball & Bowe, 1992) in their respective subject areas and a reluctance to engage in meaningful dialogue about curriculum practices based on a more integrated code (Bernstein, 1996). School administrators similarly opted for a position of "stability and conservation" (Goodson, 1992, p. 53) and displayed a reluctance to think about curriculum organisation in the school beyond the existing subject department structure.

The immutability of the subject-based discourse that dominated the school curriculum served to trivialise the curriculum making process for the KLA. Subject hegemony in the school effectively closed down the opportunity for the creation of a discourse space in which a multidisciplinary dialogue could develop. Most of the dialogue surrounding the curriculum making process served subject based interests. The strong subject classification denied legitimacy to the KLA syllabus and ensured that it found no place to effect a crossing of subject borders. Subject discourses acted as anti-collaborative devices which prevented the exploration of curriculum possibilities for the KLA

in the school. The subject hegemony in the school restricted teachers' access to a KLA curriculum language in doing so defined the boundaries for the development of a discourse for the curriculum making process for the KLA.

New ways of organising curriculum in school sites requires new allegiances to be formed to challenge the "dominant and valued" subject categories (Cherryholmes, 1987, p. 312) that currently exist in school curriculum organisation. There is a need for the development of new lines of communication to be established so that curriculum ideas can be properly discussed, and contested. The study clearly showed that the curriculum making context in the school was characterised by weak relations between staff with respect to a multidisciplinary curriculum discourse (Bernstein, 1996). The strong commitment by staff to their subject areas and the absence of any history of curriculum conversation across subject boundaries proved to be an important constraint on the implementation of the HPE KLA. The challenge for schooling authorities (both in and out of the school) is to develop curriculum cultures, structures and practices which can support the development of curriculum discourse that is necessary for authentic curriculum reform to occur.

(Note: If notions of confidence and competence as highlighted in Paper #2 are significant in empowering practitioners as researchers, then so are the considerations of the discourses relevant in the ever-changing contexts within which (curriculum) practitioners reflect upon and reconstruct their practice)

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PAPER #5

Developing a draft policy statement for a national professional association (the case of the Teacher Education Network of ACSA and a policy statement for "Curriculum Studies in Teacher Education Programs"): How authentic can consultation, negotiation and collaboration be at this level of scale?

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ABSTRACT

Since 1995, the ACSA Teacher Education Network has facilitated six-hours workshops at each Biennial Conference. The workshops have focused on the intensification of teachers' curriculum work, the framing of teachers' curriculum work as curriculum leadership, and the implications for supporting and sustaining teachers' efforts in curriculum decision-making conceived as curriculum leadership. The workshop at the 2001 Biennial Conference drew from these earlier foci and from a national mapping exercise across Australian Universities to develop a draft policy statement for ACSA for "Curriculum Studies in Teacher Education programs. In reflecting on the process leading to this draft policy statement, we cross borders by asking ourselves how authentic consultations, negotiations and collaboration were in this research-based process about professional practice.

Introducing the process of developing a draft policy statement as an example of Professional Practice research

The Australian Curriculum Studies Association is well-known for its teacher- and learner-oriented approach to curriculum; and it has always encouraged its members and its wider spheres of influence to think of teachers as curriculum makers. The notion of the teacher as curriculum maker who engages in curriculum leadership is one that sits very comfortably with professional practice research. A view of the teacher engaging in curriculum leadership is aligned with Stenhouse's ideas of the teacher as researcher. The teacher as a curriculum worker or practitioner engages in a process of theorizing about curriculum thinking and practice.

As indicated in the abstract above, the process of developing a draft policy statement for teaching curriculum studies in teacher education programs has taken a number of years. It has been a process which has sought to be contextually-aware, critically-reflective, inclusively-collaborative and widely-consultative and communicative. It is now at a stage of having a draft which has been forwarded to the Executive of the Association for its consideration.

In 1995, the workshop emphasis was on the context of teachers' curriculum work is becoming increasingly intensified; in 1997, the workshop focus was on a conceptualisation of teachers' curriculum work as curriculum leadership; in the 1999 workshop, the contextualisation of 1995 and the conceptualisation of 1997 were brought together in the development of a conceptual frame for teaching curriculum studies in teacher education programs. In late 2000/early 2001, a survey of Australian Universities (focusing on how curriculum studies is defined and taught) has been completed. A brief summary of this survey is as follows (keeping in mind that the response rate was approximately 50%):

The pattern of curriculum studies offerings in teacher education programs

Most responding institutions indicated that they offer curriculum studies at preservice, inservice and graduate programs, although one institution claimed that it did not use the term "curriculum studies" at all! While one institution cautioned that it was presumptuous to assume that curriculum studies is defined in the same way across all programs and levels, there was a pattern of emphases in defining curriculum studies at the preservice, inservice and graduate levels.

- *The emphasis, understandably, at preservice level was on an understanding of curriculum contexts (key syllabus documents, etc) and on an ability to plan, implement and evaluate curriculum programs at the school and classroom levels. Much of curriculum studies at this level is closely related to content, subjects and key learning areas.*
- *At the inservice level, there was a tendency for extending the preservice emphasis with a greater linking of theory with practice through such processes as praxis and critical reflection.*
- *At the graduate level, theorising about curriculum and the development and application of research approaches and skills tended to recur across the institutional responses from all states.*

As curriculum studies spanned from preservice to graduate levels, there was increasing mention of such terms as "curriculum leadership", "in-depth theoretical examination of curriculum issues", and the "politics of curriculum reform", for example.

Defining curriculum studies in teacher education programs

In defining curriculum studies generally, most responding institutions focussed very much on contemporary contexts with the accompanying implications for curriculum thinking and practice (planning, pedagogy, assessment/evaluation and review/reconstruction). Some institutions related curriculum studies very closely to the notion of curriculum decision-making,

while others saw it very much within the teacher's role of creating and sustaining productive learning environments. At least three institutions spoke about the "socially-constructed nature of knowledge and teaching/learning"; and they saw that curriculum studies was very much a contested matter requiring ongoing debate and conversation.

Outcomes from the curriculum studies components of teacher education programs

When asked about outcomes of curriculum studies components of their teacher education programs, institutions tended to stress the need for a sound awareness and critical understanding of curriculum contexts; the ability to use the relevant documents creatively and imaginatively in local settings; and the capacity to actively engage in planning, implementing AND evaluating (and reviewing/reconstructing) curriculum programs as responsible curriculum decision-makers.

Ways of working towards these outcomes

At all levels, the blending of theory with practice was a significant theme across the institutional responses - "theory-driven practical application" was one phrase used, for example. "Active participation", "hands-on approaches", "a range of independent and cooperative activities", "collaborative/joint projects" and "critical review and reflection" were other terms that conveyed the sense of thoughtful participation and active engagement by students in curriculum studies.

Outlining the outcome of the process

In 2001, the workshop built on the previous three workshops and the survey, to develop a draft policy statement for teaching curriculum studies in teacher education programs. Extracts of this statement are as follows:

A UNDERLYING COMMITMENTS IN TEACHING CURRICULUM STUDIES

The teaching of curriculum studies in teacher education programs reflects a commitment to the ongoing professional development and learning of teachers (educators) as curriculum workers who are:

- **Contextually-aware, ethically-sensitive, culturally-inclusive and socially-just**
- **Critically-informed, praxis-oriented and research/inquiry-based**
- **Learner- and learning-centred**
- **Critically-reflective and pedagogically-competent**
- **Educationally-defensible and deliberatively-passionate about their beliefs and values**

- *Professionally-responsible, politically-astute and collaboratively-participatory*
- *Transformatively-reconstructive*

These attributes, along with some key ideas, words and phrases, appear in the table which follows.

Teachers (Educators) who are:	Key ideas, words and phrases *
- Contextually-aware, ethically-sensitive culturally-inclusive and socially-just - Critically-informed, praxis-oriented and research/inquiry-based - Learner- and learning-centred - Critically-reflective and pedagogically-competent - Educationally-defensible and deliberatively-passionate about their beliefs and values - Professionally-responsible, politically-astute and collaboratively-participatory	Past/present/futures orientations and connections (personal and collective) Diversity Complexity Equity Multiple knowledges Contestation/problematisation Eclecticism Synthesis Curriculum theorising Value position Ongoing constructions of knowledge Responsiveness Flexibility and negotiation Enabling conceptual frames and scaffolds Critique Critical pedagogy Articulation and communication Advocacy Commitment and passion Professional learning

▪ *Transformatively-reconstructive*	*Empowerment*
	Decision-making
	Collaboration
	Professionalism
	Quality
	Accountability
	Influence
	Impact
	Curriculum leadership

**These ideas, words and phrases are suggestive of the
contextual, conceptual and methodological languages
associated with the discourse of teaching curriculum
studies in teacher education programs. A separate
attempt is not made to define them; rather their meanings
may be elicited in the context of the various sections of
this statement.*

B *A DISCOURSE FOR TEACHING CURRIUCLUM STUDIES*

*The content or knowledge associated with teaching curriculum studies
in teacher education programs is more appropriately thought of as a
discourse. The attributes of teachers as curriculum workers, along with
related ideas, words and phrases (See Section A) form the basis of this
discourse.*

A brief representation of this discourse is as follows:

*Curriculum workers who are contextually-aware, ethically-sensitive,
culturally-inclusive and socially-just are familiar with the connections
that the present has with both the past and the future; they recognise
the rich diversity of living within a multicultural Australia and a
globalised world; and they appreciate the enormous complexity
associated with being sensitive to the ethics of being responsive in
ways that are socially-just and equity-driven in their curriculum thinking
and practice. Within the Australian context, curriculum workers work
towards reconciliation through an authentic inclusion of Indigenous
content and perspectives in the curriculum.*

*There are multiple knowledges upon which curriculum workers draw in
ongoing constructions of their professional knowledge or learnings.
These learnings reflect both an eclecticism and a synthesis as
curriculum workers develop and express their own values and beliefs
about learners and learning. The professional knowledge of curriculum*

workers is characterised by contestation and problematisation within this diversity of values and beliefs; and, as such, is more a process than an end product. Professional knowledge conceived in these terms relates to curriculum workers who are critically-informed, praxis-oriented and research/inquiry-based.

Curriculum workers value the fact that their thinking and practice focuses on learners and learning. Given the diversities and complexities referred to above, curriculum workers are prepared to be responsive and flexible to learners' backgrounds, needs and aspirations through processes of negotiating learning experiences (including assessment) and outcomes.

In being responsive, curriculum workers frame their decision-making within their curriculum theorising. Emerging understandings associated with their professional knowledge provide the conceptual frames and scaffolds for critiquing existing curriculum thinking and practice as a basis for transformative reconstructions. These reconstructions will include the capacities (and competence) for continuing to engage in curriculum theorising and in curriculum decision-making as it relates especially to critical pedagogical and assessment practices.

Curriculum workers are educationally-defensible and deliberatively-passionate about their beliefs and values. They demonstrate these attributes as they articulate and communicate their curriculum thinking with confidence; and as they advocate their views to appropriate audiences with convincing, informed and passionate commitment.

Professional learning is an imperative for curriculum workers. It contributes to a sense of empowerment from within. It engenders a commitment to critically-informed decision-making; to a willingness to work collaboratively with a range of stakeholders; and to a sense of accountability and quality in all areas of curriculum activity. Overall, professional learning as an imperative for curriculum workers makes a significant contribution to professionalism.

Curriculum workers are curriculum leaders. They lead learning. As characterised in Section A, and as elaborated in this brief discourse, the work of curriculum leaders has the potential to influence the shape of curriculum policies and to have an impact on curriculum practice in ways that transformatively reconstruct learning experiences, assessment practices and learning outcomes for ALL learners.

C APPROACHES TO TEACHING CURRICULUM STUDIES

Approaches to teaching curriculum studies in teacher education programs are intimately connected to the underlying commitments (See Section A) and to the elements of the discourse (See Section B). Approaches are geared towards understandings associated with the discourse; and towards capacities for engaging in the discourse as a dynamically-reflexive conversation about curriculum thinking and practice.

Features of these approaches are:

- *Modelling of processes associated with contesting, problematising and theorising curriculum matters*
- *Raising difficult questions rather than providing easy answers about curriculum issues*
- *Encouraging curriculum theorising as an evolving professional responsibility to engage in career-long professional development (learning)*
- *Offering relevant contextual, conceptual and methodological frameworks for curriculum theorising*
- *Being democratic and inclusive in negotiating pathways for developing professional learnings (understandings and capacities) about curriculum matters*
- *Providing opportunities for nurturing an empowerment to articulate and advocate for positions and practices which are transformative for learners and their learning*
- *Working towards the attributes of curriculum workers (See Section A), and using the discourse in Section B in ways that recognise the uniqueness of each teacher education program*

D ORGANISATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT TEACHING CURRICULUM STUDIES

Teaching curriculum studies is central in teacher education programs. Curriculum Studies has the potential to provide an integrative framework for scaffolding thinking and practice about how we imagine the diversities of learners and learning; how we create appropriate learning experiences and environments; and how we envision the worthwhileness of learning outcomes.

While it is simple to order professional learnings in curriculum studies from the preservice to the inservice and graduate levels, it is more realistic to see professional learning as a recursive process characterised by increasing levels of curriculum theorising. The focus of curriculum theorising at the preservice level may emphasise familiarity with contemporary curriculum policies and frameworks and their relevance for planning, pedagogy and assessment at the classroom level; while at the inservice and graduate levels, more in-depth considerations of issues and their relevance for curriculum reconstructions in classroom, school and wider contexts may be the focus. At all levels, there is opportunity for both individual and collective thinking and action, although a greater emphasis on the individual is conceded at the preservice level.

The process and its outcome, then, have focused on a theorising of teachers' curriculum work and as such, is an example of professional practice research. It helps to elaborate the ontological and epistemological underpinnings as alluded to in the Introductory Paper.

Reflecting on the process and the outcome - How authentic can consultation, negotiation and collaboration be at this level of scale?

As stated earlier, the process has sought to be contextually-aware, critically-reflective, inclusively-collaborative and widely-consultative and communicative. However, the question remains - How authentic has consultation, negotiation and collaboration been? The process has been an interrogation, investigation and construction of the curriculum work of teachers. There is no doubt that it has been contextually-aware in relation to the multiplicity of pressures which teachers face as they live and work in the twenty-first century. It certainly reflects the international literature about the contemporary and future state of curriculum and curriculum studies. At each of the four workshops in 1995, 1997, 1997 and 2001, there has been a cross-section of stakeholder interest and involvement, and print as well as electronic forms of communication have kept the consultations and conversations moving.

But this process has operated at a level of scale which might not be usually associated with professional practice research. Questions arise, therefore, about the authenticity of the levels of consultation, negotiation and collaboration that have been achieved.

These questions raise issues about the usefulness of professional practice research as a viable approach in the wider arenas within which our more localised professional practice is situated. In what sense, for example, might there be a perception of this sort of research being imposed or shaped from above or without rather from the grass-roots and within? In addressing this question, we must revisit the balance between being practice-driven or theory-driven and think about research-based approaches that are praxis-oriented. In this way, we may blur the boundary between policies being imposed on practice and policies emerging out of practice.

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Reports of workshops in 1995, 1997 and 1999 appear in the Newsletter Edition (second issue for the respective year) of Curriculum Perspectives. A report of the workshop in 2001 will hopefully appear in the November/December Newsletter Edition in 2001.

See References for the Introductory Paper and for Paper #1