

SEGMENT 6

Teaching and Curriculum

copyright - do not use

Segment 6:

Teaching and Curriculum

Readings

- READING 11** McKernan, J. (1996). The teacher as researcher and professional. In *Curriculum action research* (2nd ed., pp. 35–55). Guildford, UK: Castlefield Press.
- READING 12** Eisner, E. W. (1999). The art and craft of teaching. In A. C. Ornstein & L. S. Behar-Horenstein (Eds.), *Contemporary issues in curriculum* (2nd ed., pp. 81–89). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- READING 13** Marsh, C. J., & Willis, G. (1999). Curriculum planning: Levels and participants. In *Curriculum: Alternative approaches, ongoing issues* (2nd ed., pp. 189–197). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- READING 14** Brady, L., & Kennedy, K. (1999). Curriculum translation in classrooms: Teachers as decision makers. In *Curriculum construction* (pp. 126–137). Sydney: Prentice Hall.

Without adequate mechanisms for educating teachers in their roles as choice-makers, it is irresponsible to delegate curriculum authority to teachers. (Connelly)

The way that curriculum is conceived will depend on how one conceives the role of the teacher. This unit is itself based on an explicit conception of both. Read the following extract (Michael Golby et al., 1976, p. 23):

Arguing that any program of teacher education implicitly contains and derives from a 'model of the teacher', David Gorbutt identifies four large-scale approaches to the concept of the teacher. These are:

1. The teacher as an educated amateur.
To produce such a good teacher entails providing him with a good liberal education. It is the underlying concept in the now obsolescent situation whereby graduates were qualified to teach although not trained to do so. Rejecting this view, Gorbutt wonders whether its adherents would be satisfied to apply the same criteria to the training of their doctor or dentist. (But see c below.)
2. The teacher as a craftsman.
This is part of an apprenticeship model of training, summed up in the expression 'sitting next to Nellie'. Unfortunately there are not enough 'Nellies' or master teachers to go around. More importantly, such a system may well make the individual competent to operate only one situation or sort of situation. Again, such a system would seem to be inherently conservative,

serving to perpetuate both the best and the worst of the current situation. This is a disadvantage it shares with task analysis and performance-orientated training programs. More fundamentally, the nature of the 'craft' is itself unclear.

3. The teacher as the competent practitioner of educational science.
But, is there an educational science as coherent as, for instance, medical science? It seems to me that there is little agreed knowledge which can be directly applied to educational practice.
4. The teacher is seen as a self-critical problem-solver.
This is the model that the North East London Polytechnic has adopted as the base line for curriculum design. 'The basic elements of the model of the teacher as a self-critical problem solver are as follows. The teacher is an autonomous professional who can (1) analyse an educational situation (2) devise a program of action (3) operationalise the program (4) monitor and evaluate the program.'

Here the emphasis is on the individual teacher's ability to carry through his own analysis of the educational task before him and act both upon general educational principles and in a locally effective way. Curriculum development is therefore seen as essentially a school- and teacher-based enterprise. It is to be hoped that a consequence of adopting this fourth model of the teacher will be that the motivations, skills and resourcefulness, upon which effective school-based curriculum development depends, will begin to be developed within the training program.

We will proceed broadly on the basis of the assumptions outlined in the last section of this extract, allowing for some modifications along the way: the teacher is a self-critical problem-solver and curriculum development and evaluation is essentially a school- and teacher-based enterprise.

One of our necessary modifications would of course be that self-criticism must occur within the context of the normative framework of Scripture. Individual rationality, intuitions—and yes, even beliefs—will not be the ultimate determinant of what is or is not acceptable, for we will be called to test all things against the authoritative Word of God. Our approach will therefore be religio-critical which will be discussed later.

A second modification, at least in respect to what is explicit in the passage we are discussing, is that the curriculum is a communal and not merely an individual responsibility. I take it that this is a necessary implication of the Biblical teaching on the Body of Christ: we do not each have all the resources for a given task within ourselves, but must rely on the contribution of all involved according to their office and their gifts. In this way, the Holy Spirit enlightens us as to the application of the Word in a specific context.



This means that we will also need to think about whether the curriculum is exclusively the professional responsibility of the teacher. Should curriculum development and evaluation involve parents and students as well? Are there other parties who should contribute? How should the Christian character of a school affect this involvement?

Your reflections can be typed into the Journal for this segment. Consider also posting your thoughts on the forum (aim for a minimum of 5 posts for unit).

Reading 11 is a more extended exploration of the role of the teacher as critical problem-solver, or “researcher”.



Read: McKernan (1996) – Reading 11

Although we have endorsed the teacher as problem-solver, there is also a much more attractive model of the teacher as craftsman than that described in the preceding quotation. Van Brummelen (1998) talks of teaching as a religious craft, Tom (1984) of moral craft, and Blomberg (1995) has written of teachers as articulate artisans. Eisner is one who has done much to bring aesthetic sensibilities to bear on educational matters, and the following reading is perhaps better read not as an alternative to the “problem-solving” model, but as a complement to it. Once again, the faith in science, and in “scientific technology, the good works that faith made possible” (Eisner, 1999, p. 82) is being called into question. But does Eisner evidence a faith of his own?



Read: Eisner (1999) – Reading 12

The Teacher’s Role

Colin Marsh has been a prolific author and an influential agent in the curriculum field in Australia for many years. He has been a strong advocate of teachers’ involvement in curriculum development and is confident that the classroom teacher can acquire the necessary skills, resources and time for this role. He argues that ownership of curriculum is an important contributor to effective teaching (Marsh and Stafford, 1988, pp. 102-3).

In the following reading, Marsh joins with an American co-author, but he repeats much that he has written in an Australian context. You will note that in the first section, Marsh and Wills, like Eisner, also express a preference for viewing teaching as an art.



Read: Marsh and Wills (1999) – Reading 13



Describe the processes that you believe you go through in developing curriculum. Compare this with the description on pp. 190-2.

Your reflections can be typed into the Journal for this segment. Consider also posting your thoughts on the forum (aim for a minimum of 5 posts for unit).

Christian schools often pride themselves on being communities. Marsh and Wills are quite sceptical about the kind of impact that teachers have on one another, painting a picture of most schools as places where teachers learn to play it safe, lest they incur the wrath of their colleagues or the administration. What concrete steps has your school taken to encourage teachers to work together in curriculum planning and teaching? What additional steps do you envisage might be taken? What insights can you glean from the discussion of Site-based management and School-based curriculum development?

Reading 14 is a very practical discussion of what teachers do in translating comprehensive curriculum documents into concrete classroom programs, providing examples of different formats and concluding with a program development checklist.



Read: Brady and Kennedy (1999) – Reading 14



Assignment 2

You should begin Assignment 2 now.

copyright - do not use

Segment References

Golby, M., Greenwald, J., & West, R. (Eds.) (1976). *Curriculum design*. London: Croom Helm.

Marsh, C., & Stafford, K. (1988). *Curriculum: Practices and issues*. (2nd ed.) McGraw-Hill.

Tom, A. (1984). *Teaching as a moral craft*. New York: Longman.

Van Brummelen, H. W. (1988). *Walking with God in the classroom: Christian approaches to learning and teaching*. Medina, WA: Alta Vista College Press.