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Epiphany of Learning

I liked how Marsh & Willis (2007) made the statement that school is where students learn what they can't on their own by the Internet or their parents. Students experience two types of curriculum in school: the planned curriculum and the hidden curriculum (Marsh & Willis 2007). I had never thought about officially identifying the hidden curriculum that I teach. Jackson (2009) said it best when he stated that schools and prisons are alike in that good behavior pays off. Schools punish behaviors; never wrong answers, which is so true! Basically we are saying that as long as students try and model good behavior, they succeed. However, what about students who don't pass the basic, planned curriculum? Do we just hope they get it later on in life and know we have helped them learn proper behavior in society? Jackson made me think on this subject and I really enjoyed his chapter.

Eisner (2002) points out that teachers cannot satisfy the needs and wants of every child in their class. Children must learn to deal with this while participating in a large classroom. I always felt guilty I couldn't tend to every student's needs and wants and give them my full attention all day, but it's impossible. Maybe that is another hidden lesson in school, children need to learn to have independence and know when they need help by an adult. As Eisner (2002) says, "we teach what we teach out of habit and traditions." This makes me think about why I want to get my master's degree in digital teaching. I think our world is changing at an incredible pace and I feel the days of direct instruction to 30 students sitting in desks in a classroom are going to be obsolete in a matter of time.

It was very insightful to me to read about curriculum development over time. I had previously asked last discussion, "Our society is always changing, so shouldn't our curriculum always be changing?" After reading Marsh & Willis (2007), I learned all we have really done is gone around and around, bouncing back and forth between curriculum focused on subject matter, society, or the individual, I don't feel like I ever did read about a curriculum that truly combined all three! Marsh & Willis (2007) helped me distinguish between society's culture (changes and evolves slowly) and society's trends (fads that come and go quickly). I think I had been focusing on trends and not enough on the big picture over time.

Ornstein provided me with a lot of valuable insight to the influences philosophies have on education. Just like snowflakes, no two teachers are exactly a like in their philosophies. While some may agree on certain things, Ornstein (2011) points out that philosophy is a descriptive, explanation, and evaluation of the world as seen from personal perspective or "social lenses." Therefore, as educators it's so important we are willing to be flexible with our individual philosophies and let them change and grow over time. I will remember to keep an open mind about my own philosophy of education.While reading Marsh & Willis (2007), I was thinking about the three different approaches and how educators are trying to develop the "right" curriculum. I wondered if maybe there is no "right" curriculum. Due to our different individual philosophies, I don't believe there will ever be one curriculum that every teacher will agree with. The important idea is to take what you can from each and make it work for you and your students.

It was quite enlightening to me to read about how Tyler (1949) claims a student will apply his knowledge gained in school. He states, "The student [is] much more likely to apply his learning when he recognize[s] the similarity between the situations encountered in life and

the situations in which the learning took place" (Tyler, 1949, p. 73). Meaning, a teacher needs to be sure he/she makes the connections between real life and the subject matter studied in order to ensure comprehension and application into other settings. I would like to incorporate this into my personal philosophy of education. It goes back to when we were discusses the purpose of school, to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in life. I also appreciated his overall objectives and reasoning for teaching English, Science, and Art. The Paideia Proposal by Adler (1982) was an interesting idea, but like Noddings, I don't feel like making everyone learn the same thing is what equality means to education.

Dewey (1902) was clearly beyond his time when he wrote *The School and Society*. I found most of what he said directly related to our school and societal issues today, and this is over 100 years later! I completely agree with his "learning by doing" method and I would like to incorporate his ideas into my own philosophy of teaching. Dewey advocates for the child and his needs in order to gain a fulfilling, lasting education. I especially liked how he brought up how difficult it is for a child to connect what he is learning in school with his life outside the school. In order for education to be worthwhile, teachers have to bring the outside world into the school for closer examination, understanding, questioning, and application. Also, the only way to internalize motivation to learn is to directly correlate the subject matter with the students' interests (Dewey,1902).

To follow up on Dewey, I now want to examine other claims by Eisner that I felt very strongly about. Eisner writes, "The function of schooling is not to enable students to do better in school. The function of schooling is to enable students to do better in life" (Eisner, p. 329). Too many educators have been forced to focus on the test scores, and like many of the authors stated, all that has come to matter in education are the students' test scores. No one seems to

care if the child can apply what he learns in school to life outside of school. The more I read about this, the more passionate I feel about this sad fact of our current "educational institution."

There are so many components involved in developing a curriculum, no wonder it is a process that requires a lot of time, analyzing, problem solving, and critical thinking skills. Marsh & Willis (2007) describe how Purves (1975) uses a metaphor of playing a game to illustrate the curriculum development process. I thought it was a fantastic analogy and it really brought everything into perspective for me. There are many pieces in the game (student interests, time, objectives, attitudes, needs, abilities, ect.). Purves (1975) states the following rules: 1) Players can start with any piece, but all pieces must be picked up. 2) All pieces must be considered in terms of their relationship with other pieces. 3) Players win the game if all pieces can be placed in some relation to each other. (Marsh & Willis, 2007, p. 208) This made me think of our last discussion and Doll's R of "Richness" when he describes richness as a curriculum's depth, to its layers of meaning, to its multiple possibilities or interpretations (Flinders & Thornton, p. 268). Even the development of a curriculum itself is open to interpretation! There are many different answers out there, thus, there is not one "right" curriculum.

Au's report, "High Stakes Testing and Curriculum Control" really hit home with me. New to the profession, I hear teachers constantly complain that things are not like they used to be and that I did not come into teaching at a very good time. A large part of this has to do with the standardized testing movement. These tests have affected content as well as teaching methods and pedagogies. However, maybe we can have accountability and achieve AYP without being forced to rely on direct instruction and teacher-centered approaches. I think the answer lies in integration of subject matter as well as student-centered approaches.

One of the most interesting pieces of information to me at the end of Marsh & Willis (2007) was the fact that "NCLB does not require all standardized testing to be identical. Rather, it permits individual states to formulate their own standards and design their own testing programs" (Marsh & Willis, 2007, p. 319). After taking Curriculum Development, this has a whole new meaning for me. How can our government judge all of the public schools equally when there is no equal base set in place? To me, this sounds like there has to be a national curriculum in place before schools can attempt to meet national standards. While I agree with states having the freedom to develop their own standards and testing programs, I feel it is irrelevant to compare state against state, school against school. I also appreciated Marsh & Willis (2007) comparison of medical doctors and teachers in regards to their responsibilities. They state, "It is both fair and reasonable to hold medical doctors responsible only for what they should be able to do: provide reasonable treatment within the flexible boundaries of what the profession accepts as good practice" (p. 322). It is unreasonable that the "right" curriculum and the "right" kind of teacher will transform every child they come in contact with into a straight A, overachieving, critical thinking student. Going back to Dewey (1902), the child itself is the curriculum. The goal is to help a child reach their individual potential, not a national standard of potential for all students. Students are not all alike, nor are they ever going to be. Why do we keep pushing them in this direction?

Overall, Curriculum Development opened my eyes to the foundations, perspectives, and approaches to curriculum development. I have learned from theorists who I agree with and from those I do not, which helps me formulate a more solid philosophy of teaching supported by research. I feel I am leaving this class with knowledge I will be able to implement into my own classroom and within my school regarding curriculum issues and implementation.

References

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