

Plagiarism and the “Tyler Rationale”

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*One of the disturbing characteristics of the curriculum field
is its lack of historical perspective.
Herbert M. Kliebard (2000 [1970], 70)*

“Tyler lore,” Craig Kridel and Robert Bullough, Jr. (2007, 94) tell us, “describes a lunch occasion in the 1930s when ‘Mike’ Giles, Hilda Taba, and Tyler were discussing curriculum development and the 1949 Rationale’s legendary questions were conceived by Tyler and written on a napkin.” Tyler may have recorded those questions on a napkin during lunch with Hilda Taba and “Mike” Giles, but he did not “conceive” them. The “1949 Rationale” is one version¹ of an idea that was in circulation for decades, referenced, for instance, in *The Twenty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education* (Whipple 1926). I am not the first to notice that the “Tyler Rationale” is credited incorrectly.² Daniel Tanner and Laurel Tanner blame the error on readers. “Unfortunately,” they write, “it is sometimes erroneously portrayed as one man’s version” of curriculum development (1988, 54). Is the error readers’ responsibility only?

It is true that in his 1949 *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*, Ralph W. Tyler never claims authorship of the four questions he presents. “This small book attempts to explain,” he tells us in his introductory remarks, “a rationale for viewing, analyzing, and interpreting the curriculum and instructional program” (1949, 1).³ “A” rationale exists; Tyler will explain it. While its authorship is left unspecified, we could be forgiven for mistaking it for Tyler’s, as its genealogy goes unremarked. Tyler

Books Discussed

Tyler, R. W.
(1949/1969). *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago & London.

encourages readers “to examine other rationales,” but these are left unnamed, and he quickly moves on to “the rationale developed here,” those “four fundamental questions which must be answered in developing any curriculum and plan of instruction” (1949, 1). That verb – “must” – implies that examining other rationales would be a waste of time.

Recall that *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* is a course syllabus; it is a syllabus without readings or references.⁴ With no genealogy, the course content would seem to come from the teacher. Tyler may never claim authorship of the rationale he presents, but he never disclaims it. And as the sole author of a book without a bibliography, readers could be forgiven for assuming that the ideas presented are “conceived” by the author. Are readers alone to be blamed for such an impression?

Not a curriculum theory⁵, the book, Tyler also insists, is “not a manual for curriculum construction since it does not describe and outline in detail the steps to be taken” (1949, 1). While it is true there is no organizational⁶ detail, the book does, indeed, describe the steps to be taken to develop curriculum, and these are listed in numerical order.⁷ First one formulates objectives, then “selects” those “educational experiences” likely to lead to the achievement of those objectives. The third step is “organization,” Tyler’s term incorporating both curriculum design and implementation.⁸ Fourth is evaluation. A disarmingly simple question - have the objectives been realized? - substitutes for situation-specific professional judgment. In asserting these four questions as “fundamental” (1949, 1), Tyler is using an adjective meaning not only “basic” and “essential” but, in its first definition, “serving as an original or generating source” (*Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1975, 465). But Tyler is not the “original” or “generating source” of these four questions. Presenting ideas “without crediting the source” (*Webster’s* 1975, 877) is the definition of plagiarism. After reviewing earlier statements of these “basic⁹ principles of curriculum and instruction,” it occurred to me why it may not have occurred to Tyler he was committing what could be considered a crime.¹⁰ While one cannot rule out self-serving motives – namely, that Tyler wanted to claim credit for himself - it could have been the general agreement on the objectives-design-implementation-evaluation sequence - or “interaction”¹¹ in the Giles et al. (1942, 2) graph - as the ruling “paradigm”¹² of curriculum development that encouraged Tyler to present the questions as if they were self-evident truths. In this speculation, Tyler is claiming leadership not authorship of what everybody already knows to be the case. Here, the charge of plagiarism gets reduced to hubris.

The genealogy of the “Tyler Rationale” became a question for me while doing research on Hilda Taba for a conference celebrating her 110th birthday.¹³ At one point – in the preface to her 1962 *Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice* - Taba colludes with Tyler in his deception, although she too knows better.¹⁴ “The idea that there must be a system of thinking about curriculum planning,” Taba (1962, vi) tell us, “occurred to Dr. R. W. Tyler after a rather confusing meeting on curriculum planning in the 1930s in which conflicting proposals for curriculum designs were being debated.” What was confusing about the meeting is left unclear, unless “confusing” is here a synonym for “conflicting.” What is clear – in Taba’s 1962 preface at least - is that the four questions “solve” the problem of “conflicting proposals for curriculum designs,” as all designs must now serve as means to the ends that are the objectives. Sequence substitutes for content.

It was “following” this 1930s meeting, Taba continues, that “Dr. Tyler *and* the writer began to elaborate a scheme for a sequence of questions to be asked and an order of steps to be taken in planning curriculum” (1962, vi, emphasis added). The first conjunction communicates the collaborative character of this undertaking, registering that she *and* Tyler are co-authors of the questions.¹⁵ Did Tyler ever contradict Taba’s claim? Given that it was the association of his name with the “rationale” that ensured his reputation, surely he must have, although I have yet to discover any references to such events. Perhaps Tyler ignored Taba’s claim. In his interviews at least, he consigns her to a minor role in his career.¹⁶

Taba played no minor role, if any part of the 1962 recollection is accurate. In that preface Taba registers the passage of time – not a moment of “conception” noted on a napkin - as the two of them “began” to “elaborate” the “scheme”¹⁷ that led to the questions, a “sequence” of questions, an “order of steps to be taken in planning curriculum.” Despite Tyler’s aside that curriculum developers can “attack” (1949, 128) the challenge of curriculum development starting with any one of the four questions, his collaborator Taba claims otherwise. For the Taba of 1962 these questions are necessary “steps” to be followed in “order.” What we have is a procedure; the use of “principles” in Tyler’s 1949 book is terminologically inflationary.

After initially attributing authorship to Tyler, Taba upgrades her status to that of co-author, then claims credit for the “fieldwork.” She “tried these out in the next workshop held by the Eight Year Study” (1962, vi). “These” refer to the “questions” that “Dr. Tyler and the writer began¹⁸ to formulate” (1962, vi). The field-testing of the four questions hardly ends at that “next workshop” held by the Eight-Year Study. “Over a period of years,” Taba (1962, vi) tells us, and “working as a curriculum consultant in several school systems” – as well as “teaching courses in curriculum development” – she “continued testing and refining the scheme and building a theoretical rationale for it.”¹⁹ That gerund – “building” – seems exactly right, as Taba’s 1962 book constructs an elaborate, even systematic, conceptual edifice from the simple four-question scheme she claims Tyler and she *began* to elaborate in the 1930s.

In 1949 Tyler covers his tracks by including no bibliography²⁰; readers are left with the impression he is the sole author of these “*basic principles of curriculum and instruction.*” In 1962 Taba calls his bluff by asserting co-authorship and extensive field-testing, the latter absent in Tyler’s pity pronouncement.²¹ Taba’s tracks are not so easily covered, however. How collaborative their relationship remains for me an open question, but the dating is dubious, as in her 1932 *The Dynamics of Education*, Taba (1932, 246) references the *Twenty-Sixth Yearbook* (Part II) when listing the four points of procedure Tyler, seventeen years later, converts to interrogatives:

[T]hat part of the curriculum [that] should be planned in advance . . . includes, (1) a statement of objectives, (2) a sequence of experiences shown by analysis to be reasonably uniform in value in achieving the objectives, (3) subject matter found to be reasonably uniform as the best means of engaging in the experiences, (4) statements of the immediate outcomes of achievements to be derived from the experiences.”²²

Except for step three, these are almost identical to the four questions listed in Tyler's syllabus. And the third is close enough: rather than asking how "learning experiences" can be "organized" for "effective instruction," in this 1926 version "subject matter" is made "uniform" so as to provide "the best means" of "engaging in the [selected] experiences." This is not a difference that makes a difference.

Earlier in *The Dynamics of Education*, while discussing the concept of "purposive learning," Taba (1932, 172) quotes Kilpatrick's²³ *Foundations of Method* in which appears the same, if differently worded, sequential scheme. "Purposive learning," Taba tells us, "usually comprises learning which occurs in connection with the pursuit of definite 'ends-in-view,' the acts of learning which follow the scheme of 'Purposing, planning, executing and judging'."²⁴ Tyler's 1949 questions restate these "ends-in-views" but do not revise their intentions.

These quoted passages confirm that the "Tyler Rationale" is a misnomer. Recall that Daniel Tanner and Laurel Tanner (1988) acknowledge "the error," but their point is not plagiarism but "paradigm" (Tanner and Tanner 1988, 57), namely that the four questions constitute one.²⁵ The point they fail to make is that by refusing to reference the 1926 *Yearbook*, the 1932 and 1945²⁶ publications of his colleague Hilda Taba, and that of their collaborators in the Eight-Year Study - most prominently the 1942 report *Exploring the Curriculum: The Work of the Thirty Schools from the Viewpoint of Curriculum Consultants* - Tyler engineers the illusion that he himself is the author of "the Bible of curriculum making" (Jackson 1992, 24).

In its authority and sole authorship,²⁷ *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* has indeed appeared to be the "Bible" of the U.S. field. On occasion, Tyler has even been treated like a god.²⁸ Is this status an illusion the absence of bibliography creates? Chronology requires us to acknowledge that Taba listed the four steps in 1932, quoting from the *Twenty-Sixth Yearbook*. Given the collaborative character of progressive curriculum development, the genesis of the four questions may not be determinable. What is indisputable, however, is that Tyler (1949) presented ideas "without crediting the source" (Webster's 1975, 877). They were not "conceived" on a napkin in the 1930s. Nor did Taba and Tyler compose them together. "Everybody" knew these questions by the mid-1920s. They were the "paradigm" of curriculum development. Never again should any student or scholar reference the "Tyler Rationale" without qualifying the phrase in quote marks (as Daniel Tanner and Laurel Tanner do: see 1988, 54) or without the modifier "so-called." The "Tyler Rationale" is indeed "one man's version" of a decades-old widely shared scheme.²⁹

How could Tyler – and Taba later – imagine these ideas as their own? My speculation – I invite yours – is that in their "paradigmatic" status these questions seemed to belong to everyone. Consensus conferred anonymity upon them. Only fifteen years after Tyler associates them with his own name does Taba (in that preface to her 1962 book) attempt to establish a genealogy. Hers is a metaphorically confused history, with Tyler "conceiving" the questions but the two of them bringing the "scheme" to term, after which Taba takes their "child" into the world where it becomes extended and operationalized. But the two of them had not worked alone. Many progressives had accepted proceduralism as paradigmatic in curriculum development, as the *Twenty-Sixth Yearbook*

demonstrates (see Whipple 1926) and as Daniel Tanner and Laurel Tanner remind (1988).

Not only the consensus concerning the questions may have rendered the problem of plagiarism remote. It may have also been their nature: that they are steps in a procedure. By definition, procedure – “an established way of doing things” (*Webster’s* 1975, 917) – obscures individual agency and creativity as it forefronts “a series of steps followed in a regular definite order” (1975, 917). The noun, then, obscures the verb from which it is derived. To “proceed” is defined as “to come forth from a source” and “to begin and carry on an action, process, or movement, and “to move along a course,” as in “advance” (1975, 917). No doubt Ralph Tyler – and evidently many others – judged he had achieved an “advance” in his 1949 *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*. In claiming co-authorship, Hilda Taba would “advance” the paradigm to its systematized conclusion in her 1962 *Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice*.³⁰ In her theory of curriculum development, Taba acknowledges the past. So must we.

Acknowledgement: My thanks to Professor José María García Garduño for his informative review and critique of the manuscript. While he acknowledges that Tyler fails to reference the intellectual history of “his” rationale, Professor Garduño does not share my view that Tyler could be considered guilty of plagiarism. Thanks as well to Professor Alan Block for his fine editorial eye; he too thinks “plagiarism” is too severe a charge.

Endnotes

¹In his conclusion of his critique of the rationale, Herbert M. Kliebard (2000 [1970], 81, emphasis added) also uses this word: “But the field of curriculum, in its turn, must recognize the Tyler rationale for what it is: Ralph Tyler’s *version* of how a curriculum should be developed – not *the* universal model of curriculum development.” Curiously, Kliebard fails to note the implication of this fact, namely that there are antecedent versions that require acknowledgement. Also in that conclusion, Kliebard, after dismantling the rationale, strangely confers upon it a mantle of “rationality” (2000 [1970], 81).

²As do Daniel Tanner and Laurel Tanner (1988) and Alan A. Block (2008), José María García Garduño (1995) also lists Dewey among Tyler’s predecessors that also include Thorndike, Bobbitt, and Charters. Kliebard (2000 [1970], 76) terms Bobbitt Tyler’s “spiritual ancestor,” but he makes clear the disconnect between Tyler and Dewey. He quotes *Human Nature and Conduct*: “Ends arise and function within action. They are not, as current theories too often imply, things lying outside activity at which the latter is directed. They are not ends or termini of action at all. They are terminals of deliberation, and so turning points in activity” (1922, 223; quoted in Kliebard 2000 (1970), 79. “Dewey’s position,” Kliebard (2000 [1970], 79) comments, “has important consequences not just for Tyler’s process of evaluation but for the rationale as a

whole.” Namely, the “starting point for a model of curriculum and instruction is not the statement of objectives but the activity (learning experience)” (2000 [1970], 79). In my terms, the starting point is the question: what knowledge is of most worth?

³Recall that in response to Kliebard’s critique Tyler insisted that the Rationale was not a curriculum theory (see Pinar 2011, 83), but surely providing “a rationale for viewing, analyzing, and interpreting the curriculum” qualifies as curriculum theory. It is a theory of procedure not content, as the canonical curriculum question – what knowledge is of most worth? – has been replaced by the organizational question of how shall the curriculum be developed. The curriculum has been demoted to the status of “means” to other “ends,” in Tyler’s (1949, 1) phrase “a functioning instrument of education.”

⁴In a 1990 interview with Graciela Cordero Arroyo, Tyler repeats that “my little book” ... “was developed not as a book, it was developed as a guide for a class that I taught at the University of Chicago.” Cordero and García Garduño (see 2004, 3) accept the syllabus story as justification for the absence of references. Then Tyler tells them: “And I discovered that the University of Chicago Press had picked it up as a book when I didn’t even know it was made into a book. I started it out as a mimeograph and it became published” (quoted passages in Cordero and García Garduño 2004, 11). If not legal issues, would not professional courtesy obligate the University of Chicago Press to consult Professor Tyler before publication?

⁵“In a little-known 1970 interview after the release of ‘The Tyler Rationale: A Reappraisal’ by Herbert Kliebard,” Kridel and Bullough (2007, 94) report, “Tyler maintained that he never sought to develop a curriculum theory or ‘theoretical formulation of what a curriculum should be’ but merely wished to pose an outline of kinds of questions that should be asked’.” While it’s true the questions constitute a procedure and not curricular content, it structures the latter instrumentally, converting educational experience with (as Dewey emphasized: see note 2 above) destinations not necessarily known in the advance into a predictable sequence in which success is defined by the achievement of objectives. That’s a de facto theory, however simplistic.

⁶While curriculum organization by school subjects is, Taba (1962, 384) points out, “the oldest and still prevailing form of organizing a curriculum, especially in the high school,” it is hardly the only one. The “broad fields curriculum” (Taba 1962, 393) as well as curriculum based on “social processes and functions” (1962, 396; see 1962 398 for an illustration and for other patterns of curriculum organization; see also Giles et. al. 1942, 23). The “broad fields” organization is also discussed in Giles, McCutchen, and Zechiel (1942, 23). The four questions represent a methodology of curriculum organization, one that relegates academic knowledge to “means” to an “end.”

⁷Listed as chapters in the table of contents, Tyler’s questions are: 1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain? 2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes? 3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized? 4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?” (Tyler 1949, 1). In the

book's final sentence Tyler backs off his sequencing by allowing that "the program may be improved by attacks beginning at any point, providing the resulting modifications are followed through the related elements until eventually all aspects of the curriculum have been studied and revised" (1949, 128). Numbering the questions establishes a sequence, however "flexible" Tyler insists (in the final sentence!) the sequence is.

⁸"Teaching" disappears into "implementation."

⁹It should go without saying these are *not* "basic principles of curriculum and instruction" but instead entirely arbitrary even irrational questions, however consensually shared they once were. That they were widely shared could account for them seeming self-evident, perhaps explaining in part Tyler's failure to attribute them to his predecessors and colleagues. But Taba – who states the questions in her 1945 essay and, as noted, in her 1932 book – manages to reference antecedent formulations, so the question of Tyler's culpability cannot be discarded.

¹⁰It is not that Tyler didn't know how to cite the work of others. On page 42, for instance, he references Thorndike, Judd and Freeman, although without dates or page numbers. On page 28 there is a probable reference to Louise Rosenblatt, although he fails to mention her name. Whom he does not reference is Taba or Giles and McCutcheon or the various contributors to the Twenty-Sixth NSSE Yearbook, all of whom present what Tyler's lists in 1949 as "his" four questions.

¹¹In the graph on p. 2 "objectives" and "subject matter" and "methods and organization" and "evaluation" are portrayed as equally significant and interactive with each other. While I dispute these categories - like Kliebard I question the value of "objectives," regard "evaluation" as inflated, and endorse "complicated conversation" not implementation - their equality and interactivity creates a very different (the 1932 Taba might say "dynamic") comprehension of curriculum construction. True, it remains organizational rather than intellectual. Despite the authors' enthusiastic embrace of functionalism (see 1942, 5), its proceduralism is defused. Clearly, this 1942 statement is an improvement on 1949 Tyler's numerical sequencing.

¹²See Tanner and Tanner 1988, 55, 57. The Tanners acknowledge that the questions appeared in Giles, McCutchen, and Zechiel (1942) and Taba (1945); indeed, they even trace them back to Dewey (1902), surely a stretch – see note 2 above - but one Garduño (2013) also endorses. Null (2008, 480) tells us that "Tyler's (1949) *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* put curriculum development on the map," an entirely ahistorical assertion that ignores that it was the topic of the *Twenty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education* (Whipple 1926). Regarding "paradigm" see note 25.

¹³I prepared "The Achievement of Hilda Taba" as a keynote presentation to the Conference on Hilda Taba in commemoration of her one hundred tenth birthday on December 7, 2012. The conference opened that afternoon in Tallinn, Estonia. It was directed by the well-known curriculum scholar and developer Urve Läänemets and held at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, where she teaches.

¹⁴Taba references the four questions in her 1932 book, as I will document momentarily.

¹⁵As the phrase “order of the steps to be taken” makes unmistakable, the Taba-Tyler “scheme” is a procedure, not an interchangeable listing of options to be exercised in any order, as Daniel Tanner and Laurel Tanner (1988, 53) point out that it is in Giles, McCutchen and Zechiel (1942, 2): “As with Dewey, Giles et al. stressed that the process is not linear, and they modeled the questions diagrammatically as four interactive determinants encompassing objectives, subject matter, methods and organization, and evaluation.” While Tyler (1949, 128) tries to wiggle out of the lock-step sequence he has presented, the deed was done.

¹⁶See Ridings 1982, 256. In his longest interview, Tyler tells Malca Chall: “In February of 1936 I found Hilda teaching German in the Dalton School, which is one of the schools in the study. She was an Estonian, who had come on a student visa to Bryn Mawr to get a master’s in philosophy. Bryn Mawr was involved with international exchanges. When she finished that, she wanted to go on for a Ph.D. and she got a Ph.D. under William Heard Kilpatrick at Columbia. Without changing her student visa she continued to stay and, finally, the immigration authorities caught up with her. They were about to deport her; she did not want to go back to Estonia which had been taken over by the Russians. Since I found her an extremely intelligent person *knew nothing about testing or curriculum* but she could learn I signed up with the immigration authorities to take her. I began in February of 1936 to teach her, and she became quite an authority. She was at San Francisco State College when she died of an unexpected tetanus which she got in the hospital in the summer of 1967, here in this area” (Regents 1987, 77, emphasis added). Taba concluded her 1932 *The Dynamics of Education* with a chapter on “Curriculum Thinking.” That book was published in a distinguished book series which included volumes by G. E. Moore, Ludwig Wittgenstein, C. G. Jung, I.A. Richards and Otto Rank, among others. Evidently it is Tyler who knew “nothing” about curriculum.

¹⁷In both Taba and Tyler this “scheme” seems to hinge on an expansive concept of behavior that the purpose of education is to change. “Education,” Tyler (1949, 5-6) tells us, “is a process of changing the behavior patterns of people. This is using “behavior” in the broad sense to include thinking and feeling as well as overt action.” As a concept, “behavior” dominates both Tyler’s 1949 and Taba’s 1962 book. In her 1932 *The Dynamics of Education*, behavior becomes totalizing. At one point Taba (1932, 13) writes: “All the major problems of human behavior – those of organism and environmental relations, relations of mind and body, intelligence, consciousness, stimulus and reaction, and the role of meaning – can be adequately studied only from such a dynamic standpoint. They must be regarded first and foremost as parts of a dynamic, ongoing process of life, which we call experience, and of which the behavior act is a unit.” Despite demarcating her view from Thorndike and S-R psychology, in this sentence everything slides into the “unit” which is “the behavior act.” Behavior becomes the bottom line, not meaning or experience. See Block 2008, 5-6.

¹⁸This choice of verbs suggests Taba too is rewriting history. Can she have forgotten that she has

already quoted the four questions from the *Twenty-Sixth Yearbook* in her 1932 book (see pp. 172, 246)?

¹⁹After the decades of consulting and the teaching, Taba (1962, vi) judges her directorship of the project on Intergroup Education as providing “a real chance at a large-scale application of the idea.” One article appears in 1945; a book in 1949, antedating for coinciding with the publication of Tyler’s *Principles* (1949).

²⁰How does a university press continue to publish a scholarly book without a bibliography?

²¹Elaborating the “basic principles” of curriculum and instruction takes only 128 pages.

²²See Whipple (1926, 19-20). In various but always recognizable forms, the four steps are referenced throughout both volumes. Contradicting Tyler and herself (in her 1962 formulation), Taba (1932, 247, emphasis added) insists that objectives “should be translated into forms of concrete experience that are *ever unique* and therefore different ... [as] concrete experience tends to evolve objectives *not foreseen* in the predetermined outline.” She also contests step three: “Still more danger of an arbitrary limitation through the curriculum is involved in the proposal of the committee to outline those experiences and subject matter which are of a ‘reasonably’ uniform in achieving objectives. As no two experiences are exactly alike, so no two educational situations, when not artificially controlled, are exactly alike; nor do they hold uniform educative possibilities for everyone participating. Consequently, any attempt to chart the educational situation and its experiences in advance will inevitably become inhibitive to the full educational utilization of the factors and possibilities evolving during the process of learning” (1932, 248). Given Taba’s appreciation of the unique and unpredictable character of education experience, why did she retain any concept of “objective”?

²³William Heard Kilpatrick served as Taba’s Ph.D. supervisor; he composed the foreword to Taba’s 1932 book. There her ambivalence over the “project method” is noticeable (see pp. 170-1, 183-4, 187, 253).

²⁴After citing Kilpatrick’s *Foundations of Method*, pp. 200ff., a volume not listed in her bibliography, Taba (1932, 172 n. 1) points out: “Dr. Kilpatrick has since modified his position on purposive learning considerably, but the scheme of purposive learning as analyzed in *Foundations of Method* still influences educational circles and schools profoundly. The present discussion refers to these prevalent ideas as influenced by Dr. Kilpatrick’s *Foundations of Method* rather than to the position that authority holds at present.” Her interest here is to affirm the significance of learning that is not purposive but “indirect” (1932, 172), but discussion of this theoretical issue I will defer to my study of Taba, now underway.

²⁵There have been three paradigmatic moments in the history of curriculum studies in the United States: 1) curriculum development, 2) understanding curriculum, and - just underway - 3) internationalization and the engagement with alterity (Pinar 2008, 2013, in press).

²⁶Recall that the four questions Tyler lists in 1949 were already elaborated in 1945 by Hilda Taba, no surprise given her 1932 references discussed earlier.

²⁷Recall that the Bible is also comprised of material composed by multiple authors, if retrospectively fused into one presumably omniscient Author.

²⁸See, for instance, Kridel and Bullough 2007, 75. Even Kliebard (2000 [1970], 81) suggests that Tyler deserves to be “enshrined” in the curriculum “hall of fame”! Block’s (2008, 1) characterization of Tyler – as a “thickening cloud” that has “hovered over the field” is more appropriate.

²⁹“In essence,” Daniel Tanner and Laurel Tanner (1988, 54) emphasize, “Tyler’s syllabus proved to be an orchestration and systematic elaboration of the key elements, sources, determinants, processes, and principles that had been advanced for curriculum development and evaluation by leading experimentalists during the first half of the 20th century.” *Orchestration* seems the right word: “the arrangement of a musical composition for performance by an orchestra” (*Webster’s* 1975, 807). While there is nothing melodious about the four questions, the point is that they existed long before Tyler arranged his version of them in 1949. Rather than “author” he is an “arranger” of an extant composition crafted by numerous individuals and groups over several decades. By failing to provide an intellectual history of these “basic principles” Tyler in effect claims them as his own creation.

³⁰Taba’s 1962 exposition represents the final gasp of the U.S. field’s founding paradigmatic moment, as the Kennedy Administration’s national curriculum reform meant institutional curriculum development – as Tyler and Taba and their colleagues and predecessors conceived it – could no longer occur. Fifty years on, the four questions fade as accountability collapses the four into one: what’s your test score? As a concept and practice, curriculum development has not, however, disappeared; it has been reconceptualized (Pinar 2006; Grimmett and Halvorson 2010).

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