

## CURRICULUM SCHOLARS' REFLECTIONS ON THE CURRICULUM FIELD<sup>i</sup>

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Within the broad field of curriculum studies (CS), curriculum workers teach, write, research, and create within and outside of institutions of higher education. As described by AERA Division B, which focuses on curriculum studies, CS scholars are:

A diverse and eclectic group of scholars who raise questions, study issues and explore possibilities related to curriculum—the official and unofficial bodies of knowledge taught and learned, or not. We are historians, critical social and cultural theorists, pedagogues, researchers, philosophers, teachers, teacher educators, artists, advocates, activists, thinkers, believers, intellectuals, learners, but above all else we are curriculum workers—intergenerational, complex, and growing into inclusivity.

Given both the diversity and eclectic nature of curriculum studies scholars, there have always been and continue to be questions about how curriculum scholars define our ever-changing field. In this paper, we seek to shed light on the complex trajectories of present-day curriculum thought by determining which writers, texts, hopes, and concerns have been foremost in the minds of the contemporary curriculum field by tracing the connections to the thinkers and ideas that emerged as most significant to the community of curriculum scholars in past decades.

This work in this article is part of a broader inquiry about the ways in which curriculum studies scholarship influences curriculum workers in universities, schools, and community spaces. As we began to compile information about the ideas of influential curriculum

<sup>i</sup> The authors would like to thank Bill Schubert, who shared his 1982 AERA paper with us. We would also like to thank Schubert, Posner, and Lopez Schubert for their work on the original study. Our work was strengthened by the feedback from anonymous reviewers for AERA, where we presented our work in the spring of 2019. We also appreciate the feedback and insight from those who attended our workshop at Bergamo in the fall of 2018. Finally, we thank the scholars who took the time to complete our survey.

studies scholars, we re-read a chapter by Bill Schubert (1991) in Edmund Short's *Forms of Curriculum Inquiry*. In this chapter, Schubert referenced the results of the questionnaire of curriculum scholars that he and his co-authors shared in a paper entitled "Professional Preferences of Curriculum Scholars: A Genealogical Study" in New York City in 1982. In this study, completed through the AERA Special Interest Group on the Creation and Utilization of Curriculum Knowledge<sup>ii</sup> (Short, Willis, & Schubert, 1985), the authors collected 42 questionnaires from curriculum studies scholars. Upon our request, Bill Schubert graciously sent us a copy of the paper about this study, including questions and responses, delivered at AERA. Using a revised version of the original questionnaire, we distributed the survey widely. In this paper, we offer the updated results of an inquiry that began 36 years ago as part of a study on the writers, works, and ideas that have most influenced the curriculum field.

This article presents the results from our current study and compares those results to the findings of the 1982 study. Through this work, we hope to answer the following questions: Which thinkers are most influential to contemporary curriculum studies scholars? What literature is most influential to contemporary curriculum studies scholars and to the field of curriculum studies? What do contemporary curriculum studies scholars identify as the most pressing challenges to the field? What are contemporary curriculum studies scholars' desires and wishes for the field? How are the stated influences and desires of curriculum studies scholars similar to and different from those collected in the early 1980s?

### **Research Methods**

The research presented in this paper is based on both online questionnaires and an in-person focus group about the views of curriculum scholars on the field of curriculum. We also compared our findings to the data presented by Schubert, Posner, and Lopez Schubert's 1982 AERA paper.

**Online Questionnaire:** We distributed an invitation to complete a Qualtrics survey through emails sent over curriculum- and education-based listservs,<sup>iii</sup> emails to individual scholars, and discussion board posts on social media. Respondents were able to complete the questionnaire if they met eligibility criteria (self-identified as curriculum studies scholars who were at least 18 years of age) and consented to participate in our research study. Of the 127 individuals who began the online questionnaire, only 47 respondents completed it. Of the 47 individuals who completed the questionnaire, 57% had PhDs in an education field, 28% had EdDs in an education field, and 7% had a Master's degree. More than half (51%) identified Curriculum and Instruction as their primary field, whereas 11% were in Social and Philosophical Foundations, 4% were in Education Policy, and 34% were in other areas. While 60% of those currently employed worked in U.S. universities, 22% worked in non-U.S. education or research settings, and 11% worked in (pre)K-12<sup>th</sup>-grade settings. Interestingly, 83% of respondents currently are or have been (pre)K-12<sup>th</sup>-grade teachers.

<sup>ii</sup> In the 1990s, the Special Interest Group's name was changed to "Critical Issues in Curriculum and Cultural Studies" (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995).

<sup>iii</sup> We distributed calls for respondents through the AERA Division B newsletter, Bergamo/JCT listserv, and the AERA SIG on Critical Issues in Curriculum and Cultural Studies list. We also shared calls for participation on social media sites for curriculum studies groups.

We further refined our research findings by sharing study results with participants at the Bergamo Conference on Curriculum Theory and Classroom Practice in the fall of 2019. During our session, we first asked workshop participants to answer critical questions asked on our online questionnaire and to record their answers on large poster boards. Then, we shared preliminary results from our study and asked attendees to compare the results of our study to the results of the 1982 questionnaire as a way to further analyze the data in collaboration with others in the field of Curriculum Studies. Seven individuals participated in the focus group.

We analyzed both questionnaire data and information gathered during the focus group. We tabulated the results from the 47 online questionnaires and answers from the seven focus-group participants (recorded on poster boards) to identify the most influential scholars and literature. We must acknowledge that many respondents listed incomplete citations for influential texts. We attempted to find full citations; however, some texts had multiple publication dates, which may not be adequately represented in this paper. In analyzing the more open-ended questions focused on concerns and wishes, we analyzed both online and focus group answers and identified key themes and recurrent ideas.

After we analyzed our current questionnaire data, we compared them with the results of the Schubert, Posner, and Lopez Schubert study as presented in their AERA paper. To understand the results of the 1982 study, we looked at two sources. First, we considered the results included in the paper presented by Schubert, Posner, and Lopez Schubert (1982) at AERA. Second, we examined the chapter by Schubert (1991) in *Forms of Curriculum Inquiry* in which he summarized the results of the earlier study. In the 1982 AERA paper, the authors included both a chart tabulating mentions for articles and texts and a list of concerns and wishes by theme. We again tabulated mentions of particular scholars and literature, and we examined a list of wishes and concerns to analyze common themes.

**Limitations:** We draw attention to four limitations in this study. First, respondents self-identified as curriculum workers. This is in contrast to the Schubert, Posner, and Lopez Schubert (1982) study, which was sent by mail to “members of the following groups: The Professors of Curriculum, The Society for the Study of Curriculum History, The American Educational Research Association Special Interest Group on the Creation and Utilization of Curriculum Knowledge, and self-selected others who have contributed to the literature of the curriculum field” (p. 3). Our online survey format meant we could reach more self-identified curriculum scholars, as well as include more school-based practitioners and others not directly affiliated with professional organizations. While this may have broadened the range of perspectives beyond that of the earlier study, we do not have external validation that those who answered are part of formal curriculum studies organizations. Second, the number of respondents was limited. While we had slightly more online respondents than the number of respondents in the 1982 study (47 and 42 respectively), less than half of the respondents that began our questionnaire completed it. Third, the open-ended questions used in the study make quantifying results difficult. The survey asked individuals to recall texts and scholars, which could be a challenging task. A follow-up study that used the open-ended responses to create closed-ended survey questions would be useful if we wanted to

be able to quantify the results. Additionally, the open-format responses included many different scholars and texts. As such, some of the influential scholars and influential texts recorded in our study had relatively few mentions.

Finally, we note that some scholars who have featured prominently in other studies did not appear on our list. For example, none of the texts identified in the top five “most influential textbooks in curriculum in order of rank selected by the professors of curriculum” appeared in our top rankings (see Behar, 1994). When we compared the texts identified as “most influential” from both the 2018 and the 1982 studies with the list of texts suggested by the AAACS Proposed Canon (Roberts, Asher, Malewski, & Miller, 2017), there was some overlap. Slightly less than half of texts in the 2018 study and slightly more than half of the texts in the 1982 study were included on the proposed Canon list. However, many of the 34 texts that appeared on the Canon Project were not represented in either the 1982 or 2018 studies. While this can be partially attributed to the selection criteria of the AAACS Canon Project, which only considered texts published before 1970, it also illustrates limitations. Given the small sample sizes and open-ended design of the questionnaire, we understand this work as descriptive, rather than prescriptive, and as a snapshot of the particular preferences of some scholars at one specific moment in time, rather than as representative of the field.

### **Questionnaire Results**

We present our results in three broad sections: influential scholars, influential texts, and critical issues/wishes for the field. Within each section, we present our findings and then compare those findings to the 1982 study.

To answer our first research question (*What literature is most influential to contemporary curriculum studies scholars?*), we asked the same two questions Schubert, Posner, and Lopez Schubert asked in 1982: 1. Who are the one to five (1-5) education writers, primarily associated with the curriculum field, who had a major impact on you? And 2. Who are the one to five (1-5) education writers who did not write primarily in curriculum (e.g., educational philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, historians, etc.) who had a major impact on you? We combined the results from questions 1 and 2 from our 54 respondents and identified the scholars with the most mentions. We included 11 scholars instead of 10 because four scholars had the same rating. Please note that nine of the 11 identified scholars (82%) had received Division B lifetime achievement awards between 1981 and 2019<sup>iv</sup>. In Schubert, Posner, and Lopez Schubert’s study, 42 questionnaires were completed. We again combined the results of questions 1 and 2 and identified the 10 scholars with the most mentions. Seven of the 10 (70%) identified scholars had received Division B lifetime achievement awards between 1981 and 2018. Award winners on both lists are marked with an asterisk.

<sup>iv</sup> Division B lifetime achievement award winners from 1981-2009 are listed in a chart compiled by Wayne J. Urban in an entry written by David J. Flinders (2010) in the *Encyclopedia of Curriculum Studies, Volume 1*. Winners after 2009 were identified through publicly available data.

### Most Influential Scholars

2018 Study (Vaughan & Nunez) – 54 respondents		1982 Study (Schubert, Posner, & Lopez Schubert) – 42 respondents	
Name of Scholar	Total Mentions	Name of Scholar	Total Mentions
John Dewey	24	John Dewey	32
William Pinar*	21	Ralph Tyler *	24
Paulo Freire*	20	Joseph Schwab*	13
Maxine Greene*	12	Elliot Eisner*	12
Nel Noddings *	11	George Counts	9
Michael Apple*	10	Hollis Caswell*	8
Patti Lather*	7	Lawrence Cremin	8
Elliot Eisner*	6	John Goodlad*	8
bell hooks	6	Benjamin Bloom*	7
Gloria Ladson-Billings*	6	Dwayne Huebner*	7
Thomas Popkewitz*	6		

\* = denotes winners of AERA Division B Lifetime Achievement Award

Of the 11 scholars mentioned most frequently in our study, only two authors (John Dewey and Elliot Eisner) were included among the top 10 scholars in 1982. However, upon further review, we recognized that there was more overlap in writers from both studies. For example, four additional scholars listed in the top 11 scholars in our current study were also referenced in the 1982 study: William Pinar, Maxine Greene, and Michael Apple have five or more mentions, while Paulo Freire has a single mention. In our current study, one or more respondents listed Joseph Schwab, Hollis Caswell, Benjamin Bloom, and Dwayne Huebner, all of whom were amongst the most mentioned scholars in the 1982 study. In both our study and the 1982 study, the majority of respondents listed had won an AERA Division B lifetime achievement award. (John Dewey, who appeared in both lists, did not receive this award.) As such, while the lists of scholars appear to be largely different, there is a significant overlap of scholars mentioned in both studies.

It is, however, important to recognize that the current study includes more racial and gender diversity in our list of scholars. While almost half of the top 11 scholars identified were

white men, two African American women, three white women, and one Brazilian man were also included. In the 1982 study, all 10 of the most cited authors were white men.

To answer our second research question (*What literature is most influential to contemporary curriculum studies scholars and to the field of curriculum studies?*), we asked two questions. The first was a three-part question: Please identify one to five (1-5) education books or articles that have impacted you: a. In your personal life; b. In your work in the classroom (or with young people in community settings); and c. In your scholarship. We combined the results from questions from a, b, and c and identified the top texts with the most mentions (and a minimum of at least four mentions from at least two different respondents). Please note that we have identified 14 texts instead of 10 because the last six texts had the same number of mentions. Of the top 14 influential texts, all were books and only two had more than 10 mentions. Two authors, Elizabeth Ellsworth and John Dewey, are the only authors to have two pieces listed. Only three of the texts had been published 50 or more years before this study was completed.

In the 1982 questionnaire of curriculum scholars, Schubert, Posner, and Lopez Schubert asked the following questions (3A-3C): “What are five (5) of the curriculum books that you have found most useful for Novices; What are five (5) of the curriculum books that you have found most useful for Administrators and Supervisors; What are five (5) of the curriculum books that you have found most useful for University Curriculum Professors (for scholarly use).” The same questions were asked regarding curriculum articles (9A-9C). Combining all six ratings, we identified the top 11 works most frequently cited. Please note that we identified the top 11 pieces of literature, rather than 10 because the last two works had the same number of references. Of the 11 works, 10 are books. None of the texts were published 50 years or more before that study was completed; in fact, four of the 11 texts were published within 10 years of the study.

**Most Influential Works:  
Most Influential Books or Articles for Our Respondents**

2018 (Vaughan & Nunez)		1982 (Schubert, Posner, & Lopez Schubert)	
Literature	Total	Literature	Total
Freire, P. (1970). <i>Pedagogy of the oppressed.</i>	36	Tyler, R. W. (1949). <i>Basic principles of curriculum and instruction.</i>	40
hooks, b. (1994). <i>Teaching to transgress.</i>	9	Taba, H. (1962). <i>Curriculum development: Theory and practice.</i>	18
Pinar, W. (2004). <i>What is curriculum theory?</i>	7	Zais, R. S. (1976). <i>Curriculum: Principles and foundations.</i>	18
Biesta, G. (2013). <i>The beautiful risk of education.</i>	6	Schwab, J. J. (1969). <i>The practical: A language for</i>	17

		<i>curriculum.</i>	
Ellsworth, E. (2005). <i>Places of learning: Media, architecture, pedagogy.</i>	5	Smith, B. O., Stanley, W. O., & Shores, H. H. (1950, 1967). <i>Fundamentals of curriculum development.</i>	16
Apple, M. (1979). <i>Ideology and curriculum.</i>	5	Pinar, W. F. (1975). <i>Curriculum theorizing: The reconceptualists.</i>	15
Dewey, J. (1897). <i>My pedagogic creed.</i>	5	Eisner, E. W. (1979). <i>The educational imagination: On the design and evaluation of school programs.</i>	12
Huebner, D. E., Pinar, W., & Hillis, V. (1999). <i>The lure of the transcendent: Collected essays by Dwayne E. Huebner.</i>	5	Tanner, D., & Tanner, L. (1975). <i>Curriculum development: Theory into practice.</i>	10
Anzaldúa, G. (2007). <i>Borderlands: The new mestiza.</i>	4	McNeil, J. D. (1977, 1981). <i>Curriculum: A comprehensive introduction.</i>	8
Cammarota, J., & Fine, M. (2008). <i>Revolutionizing education: Youth participatory action research in motion.</i>	4	Saylor, J. G., & Alexander, W. M. (1974). <i>Planning curriculum for schools.</i>	8
Dewey, J. (1938). <i>Experience and education.</i>	4	Schubert, W. H., & Lopez Schubert, A. L. (1980). <i>Curriculum books: The first eighty years.</i>	8
Ellsworth, E. (1997). <i>Teaching positions: Difference, pedagogy, and the power of the address.</i>	4		
Jackson, P. W. (1968). <i>Life in classrooms.</i>	4		
Kozol, J. (1991). <i>Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools.</i>	4		

In a separate question, we asked: *What are the one to five (1-5) education books or articles that have had the greatest impact (positive or negative in your estimation) on curriculum thought and practice?* We identified up to the top 10 texts that had at least four mentions by at least two different people. In our study, there were only seven texts that met this criterion. In this list, all but one of the texts is a book, and John Dewey and Bill Pinar both have two texts listed. Only two texts, one by Pinar and one by Freire, are listed in both the list for personally influential works and for those influential to the field.

**Most Influential Books or Articles for Curriculum Thought and Practice**

Literature	Total	Literature	Total
Tyler, R. W. (1949). <i>Basic principles of curriculum and instruction.</i>	11	Tyler, R. W. (1949). <i>Basic principles of curriculum and instruction.</i>	54
Dewey, J. (1938). <i>Experience and education.</i>	8	Dewey, J. (1916). <i>Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education.</i>	32
Freire, P. (1970). <i>Pedagogy of the oppressed.</i>	7	Bruner, J. S. (1977). <i>The process of education.</i>	26
Pinar, W. (2004). <i>What is curriculum theory?</i>	7	Bloom, B. S. (1956) <i>Taxonomy of educational objectives: Handbook I.</i>	22
Dewey, J. (1916). <i>Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education</i>	6	Mager, R. (1962). <i>Preparing instructional objectives.</i>	18
Pinar, W. F. (1995). <i>Understanding curriculum: An introduction to the study of historical and contemporary curriculum discourses.</i>	6	Schwab, J. J. (1969). <i>The practical: A language for curriculum.</i>	18
Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). <i>Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy.</i>	4	Smith, B. O., Shores, J. H., & Stanley, W. O. (1950). <i>Fundamentals of curriculum development.</i>	17
		Taba, H. (1962). <i>Curriculum development: Theory and practice.</i>	15
		Bobbitt, F. (1918). <i>The Curriculum.</i>	13
		Counts, G. S. (1969). <i>Dare the school build a new social order?</i>	13

Schubert, Posner, and Lopez Schubert (1982) asked a series of questions to understand which works curricularists thought most impacted curriculum thought and practice: (4) What are the titles and authors of five (5) curriculum books that in your estimation have had greatest influence (whether positive or negative in your estimation) on public school curriculum?; (5) What are the titles and authors of five (5) non-curriculum books that have had the greatest influence (whether positive or negative in your estimation) on public school curriculum?; (6) What are the five (5) curriculum books that have had the greatest impact (whether positive or negative in your estimation) on curriculum thought?; (7) What are five (5) non-curriculum books that have had the greatest impact (whether positive or negative in your estimation) on curriculum thought?; (8) What are five (5) curriculum articles that have had the greatest influence (whether positive or negative in your estimation) on curriculum thought? We combined the results of all five questions and listed the top 10 pieces of literature that also had at least four mentions by at least two different people. Four of the texts (Tyler, 1949; Schwab, 1969; Smith, Stanley, & Shores, 1950; Taba, 1962) appear in both the list for personally influential and for those influential to the field.



In comparing results from the current study and the 1982 study, it is important to note that none of the most personally influential texts appeared in both studies. In terms of the texts that respondents found made the most significant impact on the field, only two of the top texts listed in the 1982 study, Dewey's *Democracy and Education* and Tyler's *Basic Principles*, appeared in both lists. Of note, the current study had slightly more respondents than the 1982 study; however, there were fewer texts mentioned at least four times by at least two scholars, and there was less overlap in the current study of texts that were identified as both personally influential and influential to the field. While the sample size is not large enough to draw conclusions, we do wonder if this represents a more diverse range of texts and foci within curriculum studies programs.

### Hopes and Desires: Curriculum Wishes

In 1982, Schubert, Posner, and Lopez Schubert asked in their questionnaire, "What are three (3) wishes that you would like to grant to the curriculum field?" This study rephrased the question slightly to read, "What are three wishes/hopes you have for the curriculum field?" Respondents of today share some aspirations with the respondents of 37 years ago, but there are interesting shifts in emphasis among the desires held by curriculum workers for the field.

The most widely held wishes and hopes for curricularists past and present coalesce around the practical relevance of the field and the impact of curriculum scholarship on (pre)K-12 schooling and schools. Both sets of questionnaire responses included about 20 distinct expressions of aspirations related to the real-world influence of the curriculum field. An example from 1982 expresses the hope that the curriculum field "find[s] a productive link between research/scholarship/theory and practice/curriculum development/policy/theory." A similar sentiment, quoted below, was shared in the current study:

My hope is that the good work that curriculum scholars are doing will be considered by education leaders and policy makers and thus impact the daily lives of teachers and students in K-12. More attention needs to be paid to "translating" curriculum research into classroom practice.

Specific phraseology appearing in many responses, in both the earlier and contemporary studies, lamented the divide between theory and practice. Both sets of data included wishes for teachers and school leaders to make better use of curriculum scholarship *and* for curriculum theorists to consider more fully the on-the-ground realities of life in schools—usually in different individuals' responses.

Wishes for the curriculum field as shared by these distinct generations of thinkers differed as to the next most common categories of desire. For the respondents of 1982, the second-greatest hope for the field was the diversity of ideas, with about a dozen respondents writing about this issue. Some responses straightforwardly asked for more expansive thinking: "That it would recognize and support several alternative modes of inquiry." However, several acknowledged that such diversity of ideas was already present in the field: "That it remain as maddeningly diverse as it is; the alternative would be stifling." A sizable contingent hoped for better relationships among the adherents of these diverse

perspectives: "That it would encourage a continuing critical dialogue without attacks on individuals"; "Continuing opportunity for dialogue (without acrimony)". This theme did emerge in the current study, but in only three responses to the "wishes and hopes" question, where one example read, "Diversity in ideas and scholarship." An optimistic interpretation of this shift is that curriculum studies, as a field, has moved closer to a 1982 respondent's desire for "Genuine, informed, compassionate, and wisdom-seeking dialogue, ad infinitum." A less-hopeful view might question whether we have drifted into dogmatism and no longer wish to engage with opposing perspectives.

Among the contemporary curriculum thinkers who responded to the questionnaire, justice-oriented wishes were nearly as common as those related to having a practical impact on schools. These types of responses include broad calls to "To be driven by desires for justice and transformation" and more specific direction to "Push back on the accountability regime" in about equal measure. This latter form of justice orientation found parallels in a smaller set of wishes from 1982 for "Less reliance on 'scientific' measures of curriculum," for example. In the earlier study, however, such sentiments were balanced by eight opposing wishes for "more or better use of empiricism/logical positivism." One call to "Recognize curriculum as a field of applied science and renounce the sterile, futile, and intellectualist search for curriculum theory" is a particularly strongly worded illustration. This historical contrast may be yet another sign that the field of curriculum studies has grown less inclusive of diverse philosophical orientations.

Though they do not reflect the most common themes in the data sets, there are a few other strikingly similar responses in the two generations' wishes. Several respondents from the earlier generation hoped for "Great agreement on the definitions of terms used in this field," a feeling that was carried forward by just one respondent in the recent study, who asked for "A definitive set of definitions." Just one response to each questionnaire expressed the desire for connection to a related field of education, with the earlier respondent hoping that curriculum work "Would draw more fully on 'foundational' sources," and the more recent that it "Would rediscover its relationship to Foundations."

### **Curriculum Issues**

The questionnaire distributed in 1982 asked respondents, "What do you consider five (5) of the most pressing curricular issues?" Respondents in the current study were asked the very similar question of "What do you consider the one to five (1-5) most pressing curricular issues today?" In both sets of data, we found quite a bit of overlap in the answers to this prompt and those to the previously discussed open-ended question concerning wishes for the field. Since this question asked for five issues and the prior question asked for three wishes, both the number of distinct ideas and the frequency of themed responses regarding "pressing issues" are higher.

Once again, curriculum thinkers from both generations broadly agreed on the most pressing concern facing the field, though each set of responses had distinct tones and qualities reflecting the different periods during which they were collected. For this question, justice-oriented themes outnumbered issues of school-based practicality, with over 30 answers so categorized on each of the surveys. In the 1982 study, however, concerns about social justice

were framed in terms of the democratic ideal (18 responses) or in support of a human-centered approach to education and curriculum (14 responses). An example of the former type of justice-oriented response lamented “Lack of participation in decisions, especially by learners,” while the latter type is illustrated by answers that critique “Reification, i.e., finding the course of study and objectives more animated and important than students and teachers.” Both of these types of justice concerns appeared in the current inquiry, albeit in smaller numbers. One present-day respondent articulated both:

- Need to focus curriculum programs on democratic education and values in a time of anti-democratic movements and practices in both education and government.
- Need to confront the dominant worldview that affects current curriculum, education, and public policy—maximizing economic gains and use of accounting methods at the expense of human values, goals, and freedom to learn and act for the common good.

Though less consistent foci of concern in the recent survey, democratic and learner-centered education has remained a central issue for justice-oriented curriculum workers.

Social-justice issues from the more recent survey are concerned with destructive education policies (15 responses), resistance to oppression (11 responses), and diversity of identities (10 responses). Worries about education policy are exemplified by “K-12 education reform and deform especially in urban settings,” and are sometimes stated as succinctly as “bad education policy.” Perhaps the most powerful proclamation of oppression is the following: “There is no education—schools are purely profit centers and the new plantations of child slave labor. The world is coming to an end and school can't do anything about it.” This response is, however, unusual in its hopelessness. Most answers in this subtheme are closer in tone to one decrying “Reproduction-reiteration of social inequalities (gender, race, SES, global).” Related are the responses addressing diversity. One person’s answer captured the concerns noted in many of these:

- Ethnic Studies (reflective, responsive, sustaining, and generative culturally and linguistically and sustaining learning for self-determination and [re]generation)
- Struggle against and operating outside of the team-up of neoliberalism and racism/Indigenous erasure
- Community control (education for self-determination)
- Critical hope and healing (against/despite toxic societal and environmental factors that shape contexts for schools and teaching/learning)
- Sustaining languages, literacy practices, cultural practices, and knowledge systems
- Dismantling whiteness (internalized dominance, curriculum, pedagogical practices, policies)

A couple of answers to the previous study foreshadowed the tone of the generation to come, sharing worries about the “Relationship between knowledge taught and economic and cultural power and inequality” and “The role of the curriculum as an instrument of social control.”

After justice issues, the next most common concerns were regarding (pre)K-12 schools. An interesting distinction between the prior and recent sets is in the number of responses that articulate a specific vision for the curriculum of (pre)K-12 schools. These are much more prevalent in the 1982 study, and are exemplified by the expressed “Need to consider vertical organization, the entire curriculum, i.e., curriculum as a whole, rather than its parts.” Some respondents to the later questionnaire also voiced concerns with the particulars of the school curriculum, but most focused their attention on the people within these institutions, including teachers and their “Autonomy in curriculum development and design,” and students ill-served by “A curriculum that seems to exist outside of the learner’s life and experience (lack of relevance).” An area of convergence is testing and assessment. A sample answer from the 1980s naming “Evaluation: Who, how, when, for what purpose?” as a concern finds fellowship with many current responses, including one pushing for “Scholarship that troubles easy assumptions regarding the use of standardized testing, teaching toward the test, implications of test scores on schools and teachers, etc.”

To this question, as well, there were intriguingly parallel responses across the two questionnaires that were not categorized with the most common themes. For example, one worry in the 1982 questionnaire, about the need for “Such action as necessary to prevent the destruction of the world and the pupils in it,” is echoed in five later responses naming “ecological devastation” as an issue. One respondent advocates for “foregrounding environmental/ecological/earth issues as a compelling theme and also as an organizing frame for constructing just, equitable, healing, and flourishing human and other than human communities.”

There are interesting areas of divergence. Some concerns of the earlier generation, none among the most prevalent, appear to have stopped troubling us. The impact of religious fundamentalism on curriculum received a few mentions among the earlier results, including “Creationism in public schools.” Despite continued relevance in the content areas of evolution and sex education, this did not come up in the later data. Some issues seem clearly of their respective times, such as the questioning by the prior generation whether “Should or should not the schools be involved with vocational curricula?” A present-day concern that would have been difficult to predict in 1982 is “Questions about ‘truth’ and ‘facts’ in the current political contexts of ‘alternative facts’ and ‘fake news.’ ” Overall, however, the similarities outweigh the differences in responses to both open-ended questions.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Curriculum studies scholars have long posited that a central organizing question for our field is what knowledge is of most worth. Of course, critical curriculum scholars have challenged our field to consider not only what knowledge is of most worth, but also: Who decides? And who benefits? Within this context, our study and the study in 1982 engage the conversation of what knowledge is of most worth to self-identified curriculum studies scholars.

We recognize that this conversation is situated within larger discussions about what constitutes our field. At the time the 1982 study was completed, many within the field of curriculum studies were engaging critiques of traditional curriculum development and

embracing work within a reconceptualized field. Malewski (2010) describes the reconceptualization as a “rejection (reconfiguration?) of traditional curriculum development in favor of the pursuit of politically inspired scholarship with the capacity to meet the promise of a democracy yet to come, one that engenders imagination, deliberation, and creativity” (p. 3). Within the context of Schubert, Posner, and Lopez Schubert’s (1982) study, this trend can be observed. While some of the scholars and texts represent more traditional approaches to curriculum development, many of the texts and scholars represent a shift toward more theoretical texts.

In the time since Schubert, Posner, and Lopez Schubert’s study was published, the field of curriculum studies has continued to change and develop into what some call a post-reconceptualized field (see Malewski, 2010). In the current study, there is both a greater diversity of texts and authors represented and fewer texts that had mentions by multiple scholars. This may reflect what Malewski (2010) describes as a post-reconceptualized “interdisciplinary field less continuous and coherent than discontinuous and fractured” (p. xix).

Within our changing field, there have been competing calls for increased disciplinarity and the establishment of a canon (see the discussion of the AAACS Canon Project in Schubert, 2009 and Roberts, 2017), but also calls for the “decolonization and de-canonization” of curriculum studies (Jupp, 2017) and the recognition of more expansive ways of knowing and being. These divergent views can be found in the current study. While some call for a more unified understanding of the field and/or more reference to existing work and traditions, others call for change. One respondent called for “a new origin story that doesn't rely on white men as the *founders*” of the field. Thus, while there is a desire expressed by many in the study for curriculum studies to have more engagement within schools and policy decisions, there are also calls for changes within the field.

In comparing the results of our study to the 1982 study, we find that while we are reading somewhat different literature and recognizing many new scholars, many of our concerns and desires remain the same. We recognize the importance of understanding our history, of thinking about changing or evolving areas of focus, and of responding to both the concerns and hopes of curriculum studies scholars. In this project, we do not try to re-engage the canon project. Instead, we understand our small study as a way to think about how individuals, texts, hopes, and concerns have changed over time. Perhaps the findings can help to guide development of curriculum studies course syllabi, or to inform descriptions of the field. Further research might dig deeper into either genealogies of influence or shifting concerns among curricularists. Our own further inquiry will explore how curriculum theory is manifest outside of academia. Despite its limitations, we believe that our project contributes to the ongoing conversations about the purposes and foci of our field.

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