



THE CRISIS OF CURRICULUM CHANGE

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I hereby swear and affirm. Affirm. On my... honour? My belief in... in... the technological revolution, the pressing, growing, pressing, urgent need for more and more scientists. My own belief in change, change for its own sake (Osborne, 1965).

It is not always time for a change... often it is not time for a change even when change looks like the easy way out (Sheehy, 1981, p. 99).

The 'necessity' for change has been such a bludgeon in European history and has justified so much that was in fact unnecessary, stupid, or tragic that it ought by now to be a principle that its advocacy should always be countered with a very firm Why? This is not conservatism, even only with a small 'c', but common sense. We should remember how many times we have been here before (The Guardian, 1998, p. 24).

Introduction

Firstly, the article raises some questions about the inevitable desirability of change, which seems an endemic expectation, especially within western societies. These questions are raised about the assumption that movements for change normally include progressive and inclusive elements. Rather, the article argues that we need to closely interrogate the historical circumstances of change forces before we judge their progressive or regressive potential.

Whilst most curriculum change emerges in specific local milieus, it remains true that, at times, there are 'world movements' that drive change forces. John Meyer has detailed some of these in his seminal studies (Meyer, 1980; Meyer *et al.*, 1992). By understanding the historical circumstances in which change forces emerge, we can assess the likely balance of progressive or regressive elements. Looking at a number of instances, I posit a model of waves of change, where a more open, democratic inclusive period is often followed by a more reactionary counter movement.

Studies of cultures and structures of schooling have often worked with snapshot notions of time and context. Cross-site case studies of secondary school change (e.g. Louis & Miles, 1990;

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Lieberman, 1995) have not permitted the change efforts to be grounded in patterns of influence and causation in the past, or to be followed longitudinally into the future. By comparison, historical studies of school change have tended to focus on broad patterns of organisational persistence and development (Cuban, 1984); on the fate of particular reform policies (Tyack & Robin, 1994), or on reforms in particular areas such as curriculum (Goodson, 1993). Alongside these have been more intensive historical case studies of single schools and their experiences of curriculum change (e.g. Grant, 1988; Labaree, 1988; Goodson & Anstead, 1993; Fink, 2000). One important exception is Brouillette's (1996) doctoral study of the geology of school reform in a small school district, which shows how school change processes are embedded in the contradictory constraints and reform trajectories of the wider system and indeed, Jan Nespor's new work, published in *Tangled up in Schools* (1997).

One of the most detailed and complete case studies of school change in one institution over a significant period of time is Smith and his colleagues' study of Kensington School (Smith *et al.*, 1986, 1987, 1988). At the beginning of a study that would span a quarter century, Smith, Prunty, Dwyer and Kleine predicted with uncanny accuracy that this innovative, open plan school with team teaching, democratic decision-making and students organised by divisions rather than by grades, would ultimately fall back into line with the rest of the school district. This reversion, they said would come about because of community pressure, changes in central office administration along with other school-level staff changes. Historical and longitudinal case studies of this kind serve as a strong warning to those who might be inclined to become overly optimistic about contemporary school change efforts when snapshots are taken of their early stages (e.g. Lieberman, 1995; Wasley, 1994). What is now needed is a set of historical and longitudinal investigations of school change across multiple sites, where the change trajectories and the conditions in which they are grounded vary.

Our study of secondary school cultures and change over time will take a particular approach to the study of historical time. This is grounded in and adopted from the Annaliste methodology for understanding historical change (Ladurie, 1975; Goodson & Anstead, 1998). Historians and social scientists in the Annaliste school see change as operating at three layers or levels of time - long, medium and short - which interpenetrate in a complex manner. These theorists provide an oceanic allegory to capture the three categories or levels and their interdependent mode of operation.

At the bottom, representing long-term time, are deep oceanic currents which, although apparently quite stable, are moving all the time. Such long-term time covers major structural factors: worldviews, forms of the state, etc. The movement from pre-modern to modern, or modern to postmodern forms, can be understood in terms of these broad epochal shifts (Mills, 1959; Bell, 1973; Lyotard, 1984; Denzin, 1991). The effects of the emerging social, economic and

political conditions of the postmodern era upon the organisation and practices of schooling might be understood in these terms (e.g. Hargreaves, 1994; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p. 62).

Above this level are the swells and tides of particular cycles representing medium time. Such medium-term time has been conceived in boom-bust like spans of 50 years or so - although with the compression of time and space in the postmodern age, these cycles may themselves undergo compression (Giddens, 1990). It is within these medium-term cycles that one might explain the establishment of the current 'grammar of schooling' for example as classroom-based, graded and subject-specialised schooling in the latter years of the 19th and early years of the 20th centuries. As Tyack and Tobin (1994) admonish 'unless reformers begin to talk the historical 'grammar of schooling', their attempts to initiate curriculum change will be forever thwarted.'

At the top of the ocean, representing the waves and froth, is short-term everyday time: the everyday events and human actions of ordinary daily life. Proponents of this view of history often celebrate its empirical specifics against the grander theoretical claims of epochal shifts between different historical periods (e.g. McCulloch, 1995). These theorisations of history should not be treated as competitive though. Fine-grained empirical detail and broad-based theoretical sensibility are complementary forces in history and complementary resources for interpreting such history.

The most interesting points for inquiry and investigation are when the different layers of historical time coincide; for it is at such points that inclination towards, and capacity for, change and reform are strongest. Such co-incidences or conjunctures can be seen in key moments of educational history and change. One such moment, arguably, is the global restructuring around the turn of the century that established the worldwide grammar of schooling (Tyack & Tobin, 1994; Meyer *et al.*, 1992). Another, at least within many parts of the West, is the period 1968-72, when Keynesian economics and belief in the power of the welfare state, and optimistic ideologies of growth, expansion, openness and equality were at a peak - in ways that impacted on the proliferation of curriculum innovation, the growth of open-plan schooling, and the expansion of flexible High Schools within education (Goodson & Anstead, 1993). In many ways, the current global restructuring of schooling around market principles of choice and self-management with greater standardisation and centralisation of curricula and testing, along with greater school-level experimentation in patterns of teaching and learning and forms of organisational structure, may some twenty or more years later represent a third such conjuncture in education (although this is not an assertion in our study, but a point for inquiry and investigation).

The article works with an historical methodology derived from the French Annaliste School where the Annalists work with three levels of time. As we have seen, they argue, following Kondratiev's (1984) study of economic cycles of change, that beyond the recognisable short cycles of change there are long waves of change which often cover fifty to sixty year cycles. At these

points, they argue 'conjunctures' emerge where macro-economic transformations coincide with major shifts in educational reform.

The past decade has been such a conjuncturalist moment, where free markets have triumphed and educational reforms have echoed the stratifying and differentiating efforts of globalised markets. This has been a time where the engines of global efficiency have existed alongside a growing pattern of social inequality. Schools have become less engines for equality and compassion, more engines for efficiency and differentiation. Making schools of this kind more effective has an oxymoronic connotation for those concerned with socially progressive policies concerned with issues of social justice and equity.

This having been said, the full force of free market deregulation has, I believe, run its course, and the social downside of this is now increasingly being confronted by new political, environmental, social and educational movements to take one instance from Britain. Here, free market initiatives driven by Margaret Thatcher's regime began soon after global deregulation in the early 1980's. There has been a range of initiatives pushing marketisation of education, tighter accountability structures, a clearly specified national curriculum and a general push for assessment, testing and inspection. The famous focus on 'Standards not Structures' - a political and linguistic delusion, if there ever was one.

The evidential results of the push has been Janus-faced. More children are achieving better results at one end of the educational spectrum. But, increasingly, the other side of the push for standards is evident - namely a rising tide of dissatisfaction and failure as assessment structures are tightened. Those who do not succeed in a standards regime are more and more visibly stigmatised and marginalised. The figures of school withdrawal and truancy fill a clear story of the downside of a headlong pursuit of marketisation and highly regulated curriculum and assessment reform. The major force of government alarm is that the new underclass emerging in schools is providing an army of disaffected young people who are causing a rising crime wave in the country.

Revisiting Curriculum Change Theory

The great virtue of examining curriculum change theory and change initiatives at this point in time is that it allows us to scrutinise some of the paradoxes which progressive thinkers and agents face at the moment. A simple way of stating this paradox would be to say that, so inverted is the current pattern of positionality, our normal assumption that progressive forces should be in favour of change needs to be seriously scrutinised. As we shall see, such an assumption is at best naive, and at worse wilfully misguided. In troubled times, when global forces are pushing re-stratification and re-differentiation, change may have a very undesirable side to it. Hence, at the very least, change theorists and advocates of change need to examine the 'structures of opportunity', where their change will have its effect. For, if they do not undertake such an

examination, they could be promoting changes which have quite different effects from those they might intend. Change, far from being progressive, could have the opposite effect.

The reason for starting with such a broad polemical introduction is that the issues confronting schooling and education are clearly affected by the colossal changes currently underway in the global economy. As educational work is repositioned and re-stratified inside this new global work order so, inevitably, the role of change agents is itself repositioned. In such a situation, even where people go on working as they have worked before, it is possible that the effects of their work have been redirected; sometimes so as to substantially invert or shift the effect and relevance of that work.

These global changes are mediated at national and local levels and the specific results of these negotiations, of course, vary considerably. The range of contemporary changes in the global economy then works at two general levels. At levels of economic production, there is the much analysed crisis of modernisation and a consequent need to explore and interrogate the condition of postmodernity; but at the level of cultural production, it is to the above crisis of positionality that we should be turning. Let me state clearly what this means: a crisis of positionality arises at this point because high modern capital has successfully reconstituted and repositioned the social relations of production. The newly deregulated circulation of capital globally, substantially confines and repositions those social movements that have sought to tackle issues of inequality and redistribution. Hence, progressive movements, welfare states and national trade unions can be redefined and challenged by the press of a button which moves capital from one national and local site to another.

Global capital, then, has a twin triumph to celebrate; the emasculation of social democratic and egalitarian movements within the western world, and the culminating destruction of alternative systems of production and distribution in the communist world. These twin triumphs leave would be change agents in a precarious position; detached from past histories of action for social justice and divorced from hard won visions of alternative futures. In the crisis of positionality that they face, there is no firm ground to stand on, and to remain in the same place is to risk one's position, be it change, nonetheless.

Restructuring Schooling: How the Change Agents Role is Redefined

It is, of course, obvious that schooling, far from being a timeless and changeless institution, is in fact subject to recurrent waves of restructuring (whether this works its way down into the intricate details of classroom life is a matter for continuing discussion but, in a sense, this misses the point I want to make). In their seminal book, *School Knowledge for the Masses*, Meyer *et al.* (1992) have reviewed the spread of schooling as a world movement associated with modernisation. They show how, in a very short period at the end of the nineteenth century, national systems of education were established in many of the countries of the world. Whilst

many of the pioneering definitions of schooling developed local and idiosyncratic versions of curriculum, within a very short period, a world movement got underway which established a short list of basic subjects. Meyer *et al.* (1992) judged this to have been the period 1890 to 1910. What their work alerts us to is that new democratic moves to open schooling up to the masses were only the first stage in a process. Fairly rapidly, a second counter reactionary stage set in, whereby schools were redefined and re-stratified according to the subject-centred curriculum. Whilst this may seem a small structural issue of fine tuning, rather like the new school effectiveness movement, it was in fact a massive repositioning of the possibilities for progressive action within schooling. Let me explain why.

First of all, we have to begin to see the school subject and the subject-centred curriculum as one block in a mosaic of public schooling which was painstakingly constructed over many hundreds of years. Only then can we begin to understand the role of the school subject within wider social purposes: purposes which often relate closely to the mysterious 'mechanisms of fixity and persistence in society'. The school subject is, therefore, one of a number of prisms through what we might glimpse the structural frame surrounding state schooling. It seems, however, a particular valuable terrain for inquiry, for the subject sits at the intersection of internal and external forces. Moreover, the actions of 'educational state' are often uncharacteristically visible at times of subject redefinition (e.g. in the current case of the British National Curriculum, or in the current debate over the Australian Curriculum).

The school subject stands, in a sense, as the archetype of the division and fragmentation of knowledge within our societies. Encapsulated within each subject microcosm, broader debates about the social purposes of schooling are pursued, but pursued in an insulated manner and segmented (and indeed sedimented) in the range of different internal and external levels, and public and private arenas of discourse. Harmonisation across levels and arenas is an elusive pursuit: stability and conversation, therefore, remain the most likely result of the structuring of schooling, of which subjects are such a critical ingredient.

Some scholars have recently argued that the system was, from its early days, built to ensure stability and to mystify and conceal the power relations that underpin all curriculum-making. For instance, speaking of Germany specifically, and Europe generally, Haft and Hopmann have argued that:

Societies like ours are class societies, organised to provide for an uneven distribution of the resources needed for self-determination of one's way of life, and thus one's chances of education. Since such resources cannot be increased at will, every decision about distribution means taking from one and giving to another. Consequently, social struggle is on the national as well as on the international agenda. Problems arise whenever the losers refuse to give in. Thus, from the viewpoint of the dominant forces

in the distribution fight, it is necessary to organise the distribution in a way that it can ensure consensus by a majority, or at least not effectively be challenged.

The same holds for state-run curriculum making: The distribution of knowledge is socially secure as long as it is accepted as a rule, or at least not effectively challenged, however unequal it may be (Haft & Hopmann, 1990, p. 159).

And further that:

Curriculum making is the mode of producing curricula which makes sure that the structure of the social process conceals the underlying power relations, or at least prevents their being effectively interfered with.

This concealment is not as easy as it sounds. Simply keeping quiet will not do, unless Orwell's nightmare comes true with complete control of the social distribution of knowledge. Moreover, to keep quiet all of those contributing to the existing structure of distribution would have to agree - something which is very unlikely in a society like ours. Hence, what is needed is an elaborate system able to provide *legitimation* of the desired distribution. At its best, such a system can itself produce or organise the legitimation it needs. Frictions that may occur during the process of legitimation must not affect the underlying balance of power, but have to be neutralised in other areas (making them appear as technical problems of, for instance, the structure of knowledge or the method of teaching) (Haft & Hopmann, 1990, p. 160).

In scrutinising the emergence of their own system in Germany from the first Prussian Normal plan of 1816, they note that the division of syllabi, according to school level and school type, further entailed divisions into timetables, examination and promotion regulations, instructions concerning textbooks etc. In its final version, these divisions are augmented by the overall syllabus which is reduced to a subject-based catalogue of goals and contents. Haft and Hopmann argue that:

For the administration, the practical returns of this differentiation of the curricular framework serve a double purpose. First, the separation of syllabus editing from decisions about structural as well as educational principles from pressure which would otherwise arise from the curricular discourse where basic structures of knowledge distribution are touched upon. Proposals to change that distribution by curriculum reform can thus almost always be rejected with reference to other levels of regulation (such as laws, examination rules, or timetables). The exclusion of fundamental school organisation and subject canon questions has become so self-evident for syllabus authors that today suggestions to treat such questions in the curriculum commissions are met with incomprehensibility. On the other hand, all attempts to eliminate once

initiated differentiation, e.g. to have structural and subject planning questions solved by one and the same commission, have failed and thus proved the necessity of compartmentalisation.

The second advantage of continuing differentiation lies in its creation of a clear framework of reasoning for the planning of distinct sections of subject matter. Thus, there is no discussion at all about the purpose of schooling as a whole, but narrowly defined issues, such as whether optics should be taught in the seventh or in the ninth grade, or which type of literature should dominate in tenth grade lessons. Such detailed questions are obviously questions for experts, and not for the general public. Tying syllabus work to subjects opens up ways of justification, which are hardly possible at a more comprehensive level. As for the rest, the subject constraints in syllabus work are reflected in paralleled differentiations in school administration, teacher training, and employment, and thus create a consistent network of cross-reference elements in which all curricula quarrels can be taken care of (Haft & Hopmann, 1990, p. 162).

The structuring of schooling into subjects represents at once a fragmentation and an internalisation of the struggles over state schooling. Fragmentation, because conflicts take place through a range of compartmentalised subjects; internalisation, because now conflicts take place not only within the school but also within subject boundaries. Giving primacy to the 'school subject' in the resourcing of schooling is, therefore, to finance and to promote a particular narrowing of the possible discourse about schooling.

The symbolic enshrinement of subjects as the basis of the secondary school curricula is perhaps the most successful principle in the history of curriculum-making. However, as we have seen, it is not a neutral, bureaucratic or rational/educational device; it is a perfect device for conservation and stability, and stands to effectively frustrate any more holistic reform initiatives. Comprehensive innovations, such as those suggested by Dewey, stand little chance of long-term implementation.

New initiatives in curriculum-making have to be scrutinised at this level of symbolic action. A segmented subject-centred model of schooling acts to effectively silence or marginalise alternative models. Yet, often the symbolic significance of subject-centredness is itself unrecognised in much of the debate over new initiatives. In the debate over the British National Curriculum there has been a deafening silence on this aspect of the proposals.

Just to reiterate then, a democratic extension of public education to educate all children in the late nineteenth century was quickly followed by a new dispensation, a new wave, which established the subject-based curriculum. The effect of this was to internalise and fragment all arguments about the social and political purposes of schooling. From now on, these arguments could be contained within the 'power cushion' which school subjects represent. Any challenges to the nature and purposes of schooling had to be played out within each subject area. Hence,

more general arguments and more general changes that would have transformed the nature of schooling were rendered impossible. And furthermore, the capacities for progressive action were transformed and the role of change itself revolutionised. For a teacher moving through this period, the capacity to teach a general curriculum, according to one's judgement of the relevance and needs of the pupils, was transformed into a situation where a written curriculum, defined by the state and defined in terms of a particular school subject, was the only arena in which one could operate. In such a situation, the teachers' work and the change agents' work had been dramatically repositioned.

Let me now move on to a more recent world movement and then, I think, you will begin to see why I have been providing this historical introduction. A New World movement in the school curriculum began in the 1960s and 1970s. This was powered by, in the United States, a desire for the 'great society' and, in many Western countries, by a desire to create more inclusive curriculum to bring in the many groups and classes that had been excluded by previous settlements of public schooling. Hence, new curricula were defined in the 1960s and new interdisciplinary patterns of work generated. Normally, the attempt was associated with a more comprehensive system of schooling, which broke down the selective boundaries which had been erected over past centuries. Comprehensive schools and more comprehensive curricula went hand-in-hand. As in the previous world movement at the end of the 19th Century, the attempt was to democratise schooling and provide genuine education for a mass clientele.

But, as also with the previous world movement, a counter reaction to restratify and redirect schooling began in the 1980s under the title of 'Back to Basics'. Once again, the attempt was to internalise the discussion about the social and political purposes of schooling and to restratify clienteles. This time a dual approach was adopted. Firstly, the reassertion of the traditional school subjects which, as we have seen, had done their work so successfully in the period following 1910 and, secondly, a move to confine the discussion of schooling within the site of each school. The discussion then could be confined both within subjects and within each individual school site. Thereby, once again, any general discussion about restructuring the purposes of schooling could be confined. It is here that one begins to confront the crisis of change in the postmodern period. For if change is confined within these sites, then the change itself is confined in ways that cannot challenge the basic structures of schooling. Hence, change activity works in fact to conserve the status quo. This is the paradox of progressivism that we currently confront.

Let me look at these two strategies in turn. Firstly, the reassertion of traditional school subjects. This movement has taken different forms in different countries. In the United States, it has taken the form of a broadly based 'back to basics' movement, sponsored by the New Right which attained power with Reagan's election in 1980. In other countries, it has taken a more nationalistic flavour with the enshrinement of 'national curriculum' guidelines. This has been the

case in countries as geographically far apart as the United Kingdom and New Zealand. In the former case, the similarity between the original world movement, establishing school subjects in the late nineteenth century and the more recent national curriculum guidelines, can be clearly seen in the following chart:

<u>1904</u>	<u>1988</u>
English	English
Mathematics	Mathematics
Science	Science
History	History
Geography	Geography
Physical Exercise	Physical Education
Drawing	Art
Foreign Language	Modern Foreign Language
Manual Work	
Domestic Subjects	Technology
(Music added soon afterwards)	Music

The similarity between 1904 and 1988 questions the rhetoric of ‘a major new initiative’ employed by the government and points to some historical continuity in social and political purpose and priorities. The 1904 Regulations embodied that curriculum, historically offered to the grammar school clientele, as opposed to the curriculum being developed in the board schools, and aimed primarily at the working classes: one segment or vision of the nation was being favoured at the expense of another. In the intervening period, more egalitarian impulses brought about the creation of comprehensive schools where children of all classes came together under one roof. This in turn led to a range of curriculum reforms which sought to redefine and challenge the hegemony of the grammar school curriculum.

Seeking in turn to challenge and redirect these reforms and intentions, the political right has argued for the rehabilitation of the ‘traditional’ (i.e. grammar school) subjects. The National Curriculum can be seen as a political statement of the victory of the forces and intentions representing these political groups. A particular vision, a preferred segment of the nation has, therefore, been reinstated and prioritised and legislated as ‘national’.

The historical continuities evident in the National Curriculum have been commented on in a number of places. For instance, *The Times Educational Supplement* stated that: ‘the first thing to say about this whole exercise is that it unwinds eight years of English (and Welsh) educational

history. It is a case of go back to Go' (DES, 1989). In writing of the National Curriculum project, Moon and Mortimore (1989) commented:

The legislation, and the much-criticised consultative document that preceded it, presents the curriculum in needlessly rather restricted terms. Thus the primary curriculum was put forward as if it were no more than a pre-secondary preparation (like the worst sort of 'prep school'). All the positive aspects of British primary schooling so valued by HMI and the Select Committee of the House of Commons and so praised by many foreign commentators were ignored.

The secondary curriculum, in turn, appears to be based on the curriculum of a typical 1960s grammar school. We would not take issue with the subjects included, but we believe that such a curriculum misses out a great deal. Information technology, electronics, statistics, personal, social and careers education have all been omitted. Yet, surely, these are just the areas that are likely to be of importance for the future lives of many pupils? (p. 9)

Alongside the definition of a more regressive national curriculum - namely, one returning to links with past social hierarchies, rather than forward to more progressive coalitions - other initiatives have sought to reverse change in similar ways. The changing pattern of power, which is associated with the definition of national curriculum guidelines, has gone hand in hand with the move to restructure the teachers' work. It should be noted that in England, traditionally a very decentralised system, more central power is evident, but likewise in more centralised systems, decentralised initiatives are underway. It could be that systems are tending to converge. In the new coalition, the teacher is seen as a technical deliverer of curriculum defined by other people, in this case the national state. This marks a substantial reversal from the role of the teacher in the 1960s and 1970s when schooling was being democratised. At that time, the teacher was seen as the moral interpreter and partial definer of the curriculum (see Goodson, 1998).

A whole new genre of methodologies has been generated to define the teacher as a practical deliverer of other peoples' intentions. For example, the movement to define teachers' knowledge as 'personal practical knowledge' marks a substantial move in the emasculation of the previous democratic incarnation of the teacher's role.

At the moment, there is a sense of change, crisis and anxiety in many workplaces, which is associated with economic restructuring or what Harvey (1989) calls the move to 'flexible accumulation' (p.1). Given this sense of job crisis, one of the battles which is under way is over what kinds of 'knowledge' workers are encouraged to acquire in their on-the-job situation.

Kari Dehli (1991) has argued that, increasingly, local and provincial groups are making claims about knowledge, skills and policies which are explicitly addressed to global capital - as a way of drawing capital into the region in question. In Canada, for instance, the Ontario Premier's

Council stated in its first report in 1988: 'We are now firmly ensconced in a new global economy in which our ability to compete will be increasingly called into question'. In 1990, the Council continued in the same vein, although the sense of urgency and crisis was heightened:

When the Premier's Council issued its first report in 1988, Ontario had been enjoying a period of sustained economic prosperity. Now, two years after the release of *Competing in the New Global Economy*, there are signs that growth is faltering... the inexorable movement towards global trading markets have accelerated (Dehli, 1991, pp. 9-10).

Their perception of competitive pressures of global markets lead these writers to urge a shift from resource-based economic activity towards 'high value-added' manufacturing and services. Likewise, they argue that investment in low-wage sectors will be wasted because an international division of labour will intensify the tendency to locate 'low-wage production' in 'the less developed world', and 'complex production (will be) anchored in high-wage countries'. This is how they put together their case:

We cannot cling to low-wage, low value-added activities where we have no competitive advantages, but must move into the high value-added, high-wage goods and services wherein lies our best hopes for prosperity over the long-term. This shift will require continuing improvements in the productivity of both capital and labour (*ibid*, pp. 9-10).

From here, the connections are made to what they call 'the human resources issues'. They write:

A critical determinant of whether we can make the transition to a higher value-added economy will be the education, skills, ingenuity and adaptability of our workers. They must be prepared for work which will demand the sophisticated knowledge and talents that are the trademarks of a truly developed nation. Our raw materials, our infrastructure and our capital will not be utilised to their fullest without the enhancements that a competent, innovative and adaptable work force can bring to such advantages (*ibid*, pp. 9-10).

Recent commentaries have been fairly explicit about the nature of the desired shift in forms of knowledge:

While many shareholders and management experts have been training their critical spotlight on executive compensation in recent months, a number of companies are engaged in a quiet but momentous revolution that is redrawing paychecks - and careers

- much lower on the organizational chart. At the heart of the new pay scheme is the notion that people should be paid not for how many people they supervise or how much power they have, but for how much knowledge they bring to their work. The concept is variously known as 'pay for skills', 'skill-based pay' or 'knowledge based compensation' (Gabor, 1992, p. 5).

Whilst 'sophisticated knowledge' and 'knowledge-based compensation' sound encouraging, the reality is that, more and more, the workplace is focusing on narrow, often low-grade technical skills. So that in fact the 'knowledge-based' and 'skills-based' rhetoric is being used alongside a move towards more practical, decontextualised workplace knowledge.

These new global patterns have to be linked to the question of how the battle over 'knowledges', specifically in this case, 'what counts as teacher knowledge, is linked to the power of external 'constituencies'' (Meyer, 1980). The contest over teachers' knowledge takes place on terrain which is already occupied by a strong ideology of redefinition as related to forms of knowledge. Traditionally, it has been argued that teachers are 'professionals' with degrees of professional autonomy, and that the 'constituencies' which influence discourse, debate and policy are both 'internal' professional constituencies and more external constituencies, such as business and commerce. The balance is now tilting further and further towards external constituency power and, in particular, the demands of business and commerce are developing analogies between industrial workplace skills and teachers technical and practical skills. In this move towards new forms of knowledge, there is a developing global tendency for more teacher education to become field-based. This is normally presented as part of a much-needed process of 'getting closer to practice' in our teacher training and in-service education.

In fact, this process is closely allied to the more general movement to focus workplace knowledge solely on technical skills. If teacher knowledge can be promoted which is practical and individual (one school of thought argues for 'personal practical knowledge'), it sharply reduces the access which teachers will have to the wider understandings of school systems and school organisations. These understandings are the central ingredient of courses for those who will manage or, should I say, 'lead' the schools.

Interestingly, it is often progressive thinkers who have been attracted to the idea of 'practical knowledge', seeing it as a reaction against the ivory tower of foundational theory. But once the pattern is viewed holistically, what appears to be a progressive position can be seen to be closely in line with a conservative coalition of interest. This is a classic example of the crisis of positionality and the paradox of progressivism that I am referring to.

The second major initiative, besides the reassertion of traditional subject-centred curriculum, is the attempt to confine change initiatives within each school side. Here, the major carrier of this message is the so-called school effectiveness or school improvement movement.

You will note that school, here, always appears in the singular, for each site is scrutinised for its improvement or effectiveness potential in isolation from other sites. The mythology of this form of change theory is that each school can be scrutinised for its improvement potential, and a new improvement profile can be drawn up and each school can then be improved. The fallacy, of course, is that each school stands in relation to other schools, and each school student population stands in relation to other school student populations. And, as can be clearly seen, one school may improve following change theory, but at the expense of all the surrounding schools. Once again, in the counter-reaction to the democratic period, the debate about schooling is confined within each site so that matters of general distribution with regard to equality of opportunity are effectively masked. In the same way, then, the progressive scholars who involve themselves in change theory can be in an ambivalent relationship to progressive movements and find themselves much closer to a broader conservative matrix of purpose.

The danger with singular-site school improvement and school change methods, and individual self-managing schools, is that they do not confront the problem of distribution of resources for schools generally. It is always possible to improve single schools by concentrating resources on them. The other side of that kind of a school change is school deterioration in the other schools that are starved by the improving school. What is needed is a holistic model of school change which aims at improving **all** schools. This, however, is not envisaged by the counter reaction against inclusive schooling. Just as school subjects were invented to internalise and limit the debate about school purposes, so singular-site school improvement strategies have been invented in ways that limit a general democratic debate about improving schooling. The general point I am making is that the timing of curriculum change has to be closely scrutinised. This is a primary lesson of the histories of education. At the moment, the timing for change initiatives is extremely problematic given the global forces that we have reviewed. It could well be that, in recent times, progressive forces should have been on the side of educational conservation time, rather than on the side of change. However, the pendulum is now swinging towards an increasing concern with the social downsides of market deregulation. This all leads to a new 'third way' emphasis on ameliorating social exclusiveness. We are, I believe, at a turning point, where progressive concerns with social inclusion are now back on the political agenda. The prospects for change may then be about to change in more hopeful directions (McCulloch, Goodson & González-Delgado, 2019).

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A CRISE DA MUDANÇA CURRICULAR

Juro e afirmo. Afirmar. Em minha... honra? A minha crença na... na... revolução tecnológica, na necessidade premente, crescente, premente e urgente de mais e mais cientistas. A minha própria crença na mudança, na mudança por si mesma (Osborne, 1965).

Nem sempre é hora de mudar... muitas vezes não é hora de mudar, mesmo quando a mudança parece o caminho mais fácil (Sheehy, 1981, p. 99).

A "necessidade" de mudança tem sido um grande estrago na história da Europa e justificou tantas coisas que eram de facto desnecessárias, estúpidas ou trágicas, que agora deveria ser um princípio que, em sua defesa, sempre deve ser combatida com um muito firme Porquê? Isto não é conservadorismo, mesmo com um pequeno 'c', mas sim bom senso. Devemo-nos lembrar quantas vezes estivemos aqui antes (The Guardian, 1998, p. 24).

