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Whether by grand design or by happenstance, the educational world is dictated by theories and policies that are always changing. This can be both a positive and negative when it comes to education because that means that what is taught in schools is at the mercy of the zeitgeist of the times and the people in power to make these decisions about best practices for education. One of the major things that stands out after reading *Cultures of Curriculum* edited by Pamela Bolton Joseph is that there is no “uniformed” definition of curriculum, and because of that, education is interpreted to mean many different things to many different people. Without a standard definition of curriculum, the policies that are created to oversee education fluctuate and therefore pedagogy and practice are always trying to “catch up” to meet these changes.

Joseph explores the many different theories that have been developed over the years. These theories explore multiple curricula such as Elliot Eisner's 1985 *Conception of Three Curricula* and Larry Cuban's 1993 *Framework of Multiple Curricula for Curriculum Investigation* to William Pinar, William Reynolds, Patrick Slattery and Peter Taubman's 1995 *Notion of Curriculum as Text* and Joseph Schwab's 1973 *Curriculum Commonplaces*. Joseph also explores Beyer and Apple's 1988 *Notion of Curriculum as Complex Questions*, William Dolls 1993 *Curricular Paradigms*, William Schubert's 1986 *Paradigmatic Categories*, and James Henderson and Rosemary Gornik's 1997 *Contemporary Paradigms, the Concept of Curricular Orientations*, George Kneller's 1971 *Educational Philosophies*, John Goodlad's 1979/1994's *Explanation of Education*, and Eisner and Elizabeth Vallance's 1974 *Conflicting Cultures of Curriculum*. Joseph also explores Lorraine Zinn's 1990 *Five Orientations for Adult Education*, Elizabeth Tisdell and Edward Taylor's 2000 *Philosophies for Adult Education*, William Watkins 1993 *African American Curriculum Orientations*. With each new theory, comes a difference of opinion. Does a hidden curriculum exist? Is there an intended and unintended curriculum? Is progressive education necessary? Should education focus on academic subjects or the holistic development of the learner? What role does the teacher play in curriculum development?

There are currently 9 states that have banned the implementation of Critical Race Theory in school and another 19 states that are considering banning Critical Race Theory (Brookings). That is more than half of the states in the United States that feels that CRT poses a threat to students. The real question is why? People who make policy are the people in power and usually people in power make policies that continue to keep their power in play. Jamila Lyiscott in her Ted Talk, "Why English Class is Silencing Students of Color" she discusses a story of a man and a lion. The man and lion are talking about who is more powerful. The Man thinks he is stronger and the Lion says he is stronger. The man holds up a picture of a man who has killed a lion and the man says that the picture is proof that the man is stronger. The lion says, "Yes, but who drew that picture" (Lyiscott). Whoever has the right to author the policy is the person who has the power to decide what narrative is written. That is why people are afraid that Critical Race Theory is being examined, because certain people have a lot to lose. Delgado and Stefancic in their Introduction to Critical Race Theory talks a lot about The Civil Rights key legislation on Brown v. the Board of Education. In the book, it analyzes the decision made by the Supreme Court and how there was an interest convergence, where Black Rights co-aligned with White Rights at the time which is really why Brown vs. the Board of Education was passed. How do we know if we are making progress if progress is just made out of interest convergence?

In Cultures of Curriculum Joseph outlines the Peace Curriculum that is taught at Valley Elementary School. The curriculum "Envision Peace," was a conscious effort by everyone involved to create an environment that would focus on social justice and incorporating peace into all actions of the curriculum. Everyone made it their mission to create this curriculum and to establish it as the rule of law at Valley Elementary School (Joseph, 2000, p. 244-279). Though there are many frameworks, when you view curriculum as culture it creates an opportunity to "question explicit practice, underlying beliefs about teaching and learning, implications of curriculum work, and implicit social and political visions" (Joseph, 2000, p. 30). If we are mindful, there might just be a way to teach out racism in systemic processes that are always inequitable to minority groups.

Since there is no "standard" definition of curriculum and the cyclical nature of theory, policy and practice exists there are several tools that exist that can inform everyone's future practice when

dealing with education. The first, as Joseph notes, “For curriculum to be understood as a process for transforming educational aims and practices, it must be conceptualized as an undertaking that encompasses inquiry and introspection” (Joseph, 2000, p. 3). Joseph notes that it not only requires a continuous examination of “practices, interactions, values and vision” but that it is also an “inward journey” of personal reflection. Creating a culture of self-reflection when creating curriculum is vital in ensuring that a curriculum designer has checked their bias as well as their understanding of the subject matter and materials. This self-reflection must not just be on the individual processes, etc, but also an honest examination of the individual creating the system. As Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz notes, “in order to teach someone, in order to be open to someone, you have to know your own story” (2018, np).

Educators have a hard decision to make everyday about curriculum and pedagogy. While educators are examining their personal biases and creating a culture of “self-reflection” other tools can be implemented as well to ensure that we are consistently focusing on everyone that comes to the table. One tool that can be used is the equity literacy framework. As outlined in Paul Gorski and Seema Pothini’s book, *Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education*, the equity literacy framework is “the knowledge and skills that prepare us, not to fix the cultures or mindsets of this or that group of students, not merely to appreciate diversity, but to root bias and inequity out of our classrooms, schools and communities” (2018, p. 10). Using the seven steps of the Equity Literacy Framework, 1) Identify bias or inequities, 2) Take stock of various perspectives, 3) consider possible challenges and opportunities, 4) imagine equitable and just outcomes, 5) brainstorm immediate-term solutions, 6) brainstorm long-term solutions, 7) craft a plan of action, can all help in making decisions that are a little more fair and a little more equitable (Gorski and Ptohini, 2018, p. 13). Likewise, using the seven principles of Universal Design, 1) Equitable Use, 2) Flexibility in use, 3) Simple and Intuitive Use, 4) Perceptible Information, 5) Tolerance for Error, 6) Low Physical Effort, and 7) Size and Space for Approach and Use (National Disability Authority).

- Brookings. Why are States Banning Critical Race Theory.
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2021/07/02/why-are-states-banning-critical-race-theory/>
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