

## Sublime heterogeneities in curriculum frameworks

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Submitted as a draft paper for consideration for the PESA National Conference to be held in Brisbane in November 2002.

**Abstract:** To what extent does the construction of any curriculum framework have to contain axiological assumptions? Is it possible, as Efland (1990) and Brown (2001) suggest, to combine competing traditional ideologies of education in a complex postmodern pastiche which can nonetheless provide standards of assessment and evaluation without presuming a grand narrative? This paper examines the challenge of maintaining principled standards and recognising postmodern relativities with particular reference to the arts curriculum.

An ideology is more loosely constructed than a theory, but, it depends upon networks of assumptions, principles, beliefs about what it means to be a good person, that we generally pick up from everyday experience without being aware that we are so doing, An ideology affects not only the way teachers interact with students, but what they consider important enough to include in the curriculum and how they evaluate it.

What we include as *content* in the curriculum will depend on how we think we know the world, The recommended *pedagogy* will depend on how we believe students learn, the *activities* we include in the curriculum equally depend on our theory of learning and our ethics, and our assessment or *evaluation* of success will depend on what we take to be worthwhile education and the power of the teacher. Eisner distinguished five basic orientations to the curriculum: academic rationalism, personal relevance, social adaptation, social reconstruction, and curriculum as technology, which were based on differing aims of education but did not distinguish between different paradigms of the student as learner and knower.

A mimetic aesthetic theory is compatible with a correspondence theory of truth. A teacher who sees language as representing or imitating the world on a one-to-one basis, where the statement "The cat sits on the mat" describes relationships that represent the relationships between objects in the world, namely that the cat is sitting on the mat, is likely to believe that learning is acquired by imitating the behaviour of others, by breaking learning into its smallest component parts and using drill and repetition to set up patterns of learning. The teaching of art will depend on "accurate" representation of reality, the depiction of still life objects or life studies. This ideology underpins most old programmed instruction, setting step-by-step small goals and behavioral outcomes. To learn in this tradition is to come under the control of various stimuli provided by the teaching situation. Imitation and copying is the preferred method of teaching and learning in traditional societies as they strive to sustain valued traditions. Ironically I would find this category most compatible with Eisner's cognitive development orientation, especially at the lower orders of Bloom's taxonomy, though Eisner places more importance on the training of mental muscles and faculties within a discipline than on the training of the body or eye.

The following table draws heavily on historical research by Arthur Efland,(1979, 1990) who was looking at the traces of modern theories of art education which remain in our current practices of teaching art, though I have added educators who may represent the categories. He began from the question of why people thought art was important enough to teach, and how art represented reality. Efland (1990,p.13) tried to draw out the implications between traditional theories of aesthetics, learning theories and their ideologies, distinguishing between *mimetic* theories of art, in which art imitates reality, *pragmatic* theories of art where art is instrumental, *expressive* theories of art, where art is self-expression, and *formalist* theories of art in which art is formal order. He matches these aesthetic theories to learning theories and ideologies as follows, showing similarities with and differences from Eisner's categorisations consistent with him viewing curriculum from a different point of view. He finally concludes (Efland, 1990 p.19) that a postmodern curriculum would not necessarily discard or replace modernist or pre-modernist theories like these, but would recycle them, and apply them in different social contexts, for different purposes.

Aesthetic Theory	Learning Theory	Implied ideology
<i>Mimetic:</i> Art is imitation	<i>Behaviorism:</i> Learning is by habit and imitation and knowledge is inferred from behaviour. Content is defined as behaviours such as skills, discriminations. Learning involves practice in imitation.	Traditional morality: social control. The value of education is described as value-neutral and objective, though it prioritises surface behaviour and <i>knowing how</i> . <b>Skinner, Ryle, Gronlund</b>
<i>Pragmatic:</i> Art is instrumental	<i>Pragmatism:</i> Knowledge is experience that has instrumental value. Teaching uses problem situations to enable students to transact with their environment. Learning is instrumental	Social reconstruction. The value of education emerges through transactions with the environment, and the criterion is instrumental value. Prioritises <i>working it out</i> .

		<b>Dewey, Habermas</b>
<i>Expressive: Art is self-expression</i>	<i>Psychoanalysis: Knowledge is the experience of a unique self. Teaching is based on nurturance, and guides students to explore inner feelings Experience acquires meaning by integration into one's personal view. Learning is emotional growth, free experiment.</i>	Personal liberation. Education is based upon the adequacy and originality of one's personal world view. Prioritises <i>knowing and being</i> over knowledge
<i>Formalist: Art is formal order</i>	<i>Cognitivism: Knowledge is characterised by the structure of concepts which give it its disciplined character. Learning is the acquisition of cognitive structures and procedures for making rational connections. Teaching facilitates discovery by asking questions, pointing out discrepancies.</i>	<b>Lowenfeld, A.S. Neill</b> Technocratic control by experts, who "prepare" the mind. Education values the development of arguments, experimenting and hypothesising, for its own sake and is evaluated in terms of concepts attained and their application to new concepts. Prioritises <i>knowing that</i> . <b>Piaget, Bruner, Broudy,</b>

Figure 1. Efland's conceptions of art teaching

At the higher order levels of thinking, Eisner's cognitive development model fits more closely Efland's formalist ideology. Ironically, the combination of behaviorist and formalist ideologies can shape what Eisner refers to as the technological model of curriculum, familiar to those who are offered a curriculum in which economic rationalism drives the whole curriculum. As Eisner notes in his fifth orientation,, curriculum as technology offers a systematised and rather mechanical of implementing control and demonstrating the success of various means to a predetermined end, but even whether the end is financial benefit, or accountability, the model is the technical one underpinning the behaviorist and formalist model taken to its scientific extreme. I would prefer to call this an example of a mechanical model which combines the behaviorist and formalist ideologies in a closed logical system of law-like cause and effect. It therefore remains in an analytic tradition close to the scientific paradigm of discovering truth about the world by continually testing and refining hypothetico-deductive theories in the belief that we will ultimately discover a grand unified theory of everything.

A teacher holding a pragmatic ideology would be likely to view knowledge as experience having instrumental value which enables individuals and social groups to adapt to a social environment or change it so that it can function better. The learning task involves intellectual reconstruction as new knowledge challenges previous understandings of the world. Encountering new experience is transactional in nature which may result in the individual adapting to the existing rules in a flexible manner or may result in reconstruction of social reality. A pragmatic ideology does not in itself presume a need for social reconstruction. In its conservative sense, pragmatism approximates most closely Eisner's social adaptation. The ideology of social reconstructionism which Eisner makes a fifth category fits the philosophy of critical theorists such as Peter McLaren or Michael Apple, but it is here included in the pragmatic ideology which seeks to make society work *better*, requiring in its turn social reform or some revision to social structures. What Eisner does not consider is an evolutionary pragmatism which says that our desire to change curricula for social reconstructionism may not in fact be making things *better*, but merely changing things. That is there is the possibility that like natural ecologies, we may be constantly adapting without any implicit idea of progress towards a predetermined end

A teacher embracing the notion of creative self-expression is likely to believe that the child's innate desire is in danger of being thwarted by social pressures demanding conformity. The teaching task consists of ways to free the child from inhibitions that block this natural desire for expression, though this sounds more psychoanalytic than Eisner's personal relevance orientation which it most closely approximates. Victor Lowenfeld was the leader in this progressive pedagogy, claiming that the teacher could impede the child's natural self-expression and should not interfere with intuition.

In many ways, the teacher possessing a formalist view of education (Eisner's academic rationalism) is as likely to be as conservative as the behaviorist teacher, relying on a cognitive view of learning which often presumes pre-existing or innate mental structures (Piaget, Chomsky) or a hypothetico-deductive model of scientific inquiry which prizes physics as true because it is so logical and precise. Bloom's lower orders are closer to the behaviorist ideology of training through repetitive practice. Through learning, one forms cognitive structures using concepts, principles, criteria and vocabularies. Through acquisition of these, learners come to possess the structure of various disciplines as bodies of knowledge. In its deference to expertise, the model implies an elitist or technocratic view of society. Learning is about seeing things as meeting the criterion of relevance, particularly relevant to the discipline.

As I said Efland considers that postmodernism allows the teacher to borrow bits and pieces from each of these ways of looking at curriculum design, making a sort of pastiche of different ideologies and not worrying too much about lack of consistency. However, you might ask whether we can avoid working within some framework which makes these categories seem logical or natural. As Marx said, we can only leap out of one myth into another. even postmodernists and poststructuralists are usually operating with some set of guiding principles, even where these are held provisionally. Another arts educator, Brown (2001), has more recently drawn up another table to show the limitations of the analytic tradition which still presumed a grand narrative. Brown is trying to look at which curriculum paradigms or frames of awareness are compatible with the idea of a student producing authentic art works, so he is looking through a paradigm which recognises intentionality, or autonomy of the student. He also offers a greater awareness of Continental and postmodern writers outside the classical analytic tradition prominent in the United States.

	EPISTEMOLOGICAL SITES			
PEDAGOGICAL SITES	Subjective	Socio-economic	Structuralist	Post-Structuralist
<i>Experience/belief</i>	Learning based on the structural relation believed to exist between types of subject content and their construction as representations in the student's mind  <b>Piaget 1.1</b>	Understanding expressed as the historical constraints upon intentionality, where consciousness or <i>dasein</i> is confined to a historical moment within an existing universal hermeneutic, in which the tools of thought presuppose knowledge  <b>Heidegger 1.2</b>	Learning is a representational function of language, understood as a functional state of mind, in which meaning impresses itself onto intentionality through the traditional structures of narrative  <b>Bruner 1.3</b>	A mythical story based on the fiction of the 'mind'; a manifestation of knowledge power and conceptual mutations rendered through the authority of the text.  <b>Foucault 1.4</b>
<i>Socio-pragmatic</i>	Understanding is expressed as the ability to use knowledge instrumentally to inquire into problems emergent in social contexts. Ethical practice uses knowledge for autonomous and authentic inquiry <b>Dewey 2.1</b>	Knowing as class-based explanations of differentials in student achievement.  <b>Freire 2.2</b>	Knowing as 'social semiotics'. The differences in meaning between two subject domains is marked by their semiotic purposes and their purpose is marked by cultural convention  <b>Halliday 2.3</b>	Knowing and differences in degrees of 'who knows what' are expressed as a function of the <i>habitus</i> and the transmission of symbolic capital  <b>Bourdieu 2.4</b>
<i>Genre/semiotics</i>	Achievement as a stage-like process of conceptual development shaped, coached and scaffolded by social agencies, through language, towards different performative levels and ends  <b>Vygotsky 3.1</b>	Knowing as competency in the four roles of language in communicative action: the cognitive/objective, the interactive/conformative, the expressive disclosure, and the intelligible syntactic  <b>Habermas 3.2</b>	Knowing as versatile readership. The possession of fluency in a variety of symbolic modalities. Continuing in the pragmatic tradition of C.S. Peirce, wherein knowledge is used in the 'intelligent' solution of representational problems  <b>Gardner 3.3</b>	Inversion of the pragmatic project. Aporias – necessitated by the citational 'independence' of the signifier and, consequently, by the structural absence of the student speaker from their own meanings, in which to know entails the recovery, not the use, of what is said.  <b>Derrida 3.4</b>
<i>Critical/ironic</i>	Knowing as the existential dilemmas of authentic choice directed towards an entity directed towards an entity within consciousness  <b>Sartre 4.1</b>	Knowing as the contemplation of a commodified spectacle of the world in whose reproduction they are complicit but upon whose objects they are nevertheless systematically dependent for survival <b>Debord 4.2</b>	The semiotic role of the unconscious in knowing and its introduction of motility into the relation between sign and significandum  <b>Lacan 4.3</b>	Simulacra, the radical dis-engagement of the image from the representation of (1) reality, (2) a mental signified and its re-engagement with a reversible procession of itself <b>Baudrillard 4.4</b>

Figure 2 (Brown, 2001, p.311)

Brown (2001,310) assumes that all assessors of student work, including student art, give credit under principled terms of some kind. He outlines the relation between four such principled terms or epistemologies (columns) and four pedagogies (rows) The shaded cells represent a sympathetic relation between column and row, and the

unshaded cells represent marginal relations. A sympathetic relation is represented as a site where a particular point of view about teaching and learning is matched by accordant assumptions about truth and value. Marginal relations are represented as sites at which the four pedagogies are challenged by unsympathetic assumptions. Each epistemological assumption in Figure 2 appears to become increasingly antagonistic to a particular pedagogy the more remotely the relation is situated from its most accordant (a shaded position). For example the epistemology of 'poststructuralism' marginalises the pedagogy of 'subjective understanding' (Efland's personal liberation, Eisner's personal relevance) to the extent that it casts doubts upon its very reality. "The angst of existential dilemma in Sartre contrasts with the relative indifference in Baudrillard to the authenticity of human experience. The middle rows express similar dichotomies" (Brown, 2001, 310).

The names of the individual theorists identifying show that an influential point of view can be found to characterise the divisions in the diagram although Brown acknowledges that the fit is bound to be imperfect, and their characteristic position implies no constraint on the broader relevance of theorists to other cells. Krausz (1993) maintains that different pedagogies can continue to make relevant, albeit quite different, representations while fused across a range of epistemological assumptions. "In cell 2.1 for example, knowing involves inquiry into artistic problems which are socially meaningful to the knower, while in cell 2.4 knowing entails an inquiry into the problems of socially produced meaning in art. The former is relative to the subject, the latter relative to the cultural economics of society." (Brown, 2001, p.312 ). The table represents a multi-dimensional space in which different epistemologies concatenate in ways that are not altogether incommensurable with one another, as Efland had indicated with his table. Rather than providing a pluralist revision of each other, cells tend to focus the character of teaching and learning from different points of view, thereby suggesting that the indeterminate properties and processes of the things being learnt about within each cell or frame, are selected and assembled in significantly different ways.

The drift away from an autonomous intentionality in the cells from left to right is accompanied by an overall reduction in the ethical autonomy of the knower. Cell 1.1 stands for an ethical romanticism like that proposed by Lowenfeld in what Eisner called personal relevance and Efland the expressive band where there is an I or self which intuitively the Good. At the opposite extreme, cell 4.4 expresses ethical indifference. There are simply constructed layers of meaning or text, with no reality at the core. The polarisation of these two extremes is accentuated in the division between modernism and postmodernism. In the top left hand cell, the romantic assumption of a reflexive consciousness supports the ideal of a belief in free will. The precept of free will assumes the existence of a conscience, a concept of rational accountability, an acceptance of spiritual authority and so on. Under the romantic ideal the responsibility for human actions can be attributed more easily to the actor since a functional belief is held accountable for their motivation.

However other external agencies emerge to compete with idealised consciousness further to the right of the diagram, for example, the social agency of the school, the semiotic obligations of cultural convention, the concealed agency of the unconscious, the politics of education – being just a few. Dewey's utopian ethic of "practical autonomy" in cell 1.1. is replaced by the embedded dispositions of Bourdieu's *habitus* "... that part of practices which remain obscured in the eyes of the producers" (Bourdieu, 1984, p.79) in cell 2.4. The movement from left to right represents a general reduction in the proportion of responsibility which can be attributed to intentionality in human actions.

Brown continues to talk about the implications of these ideologies on the validity of assessment, particularly on assumptions of student autonomy. "It may seem unquestioningly inauthentic to give a student 100% for a drawing if most of it was done by their teacher, happened by chance, was coerced by cultural influence, or denied by poverty. But while ever this assumption is kept intact, construct validity is safely confined to notions of authenticity and authorship which fails to read the message implicit in (the above figure) ... it is far from clear how the principles of construct validity function within pedagogies which operate outside the assumptions of an intentional frame of belief. It is sensible to assume that radical changes in the theories of truth and value, and their accompanying pedagogies, will provoke changes in the policy of apportioning grades to art students and what passes as authentic practice towards this end." (Brown, 2001, p.312-3). He shows how the assessment of students is dependent upon historical variations in the principles which underlie the imputation of authenticity within their works. These variations ensure that value and achievement, imputed to students as authentic under one assumption, at one time may be inauthentic under the terms of another. It confirms that while the imputation of authorship of a work or set of performances to a student may be a matter of legal formality, the imputation of accountability, its authenticity, is a question of axiological principle.

The frameworks of both Efland and Brown raise the deeper question as to whether curricula CAN provide a holistic pastiche of different assumptions about student authenticity or autonomy. Many curriculum frameworks appear to point in diverse directions, leaving the teacher confused as to the "intentions" of its framers. Is it possible or desirable to do as Efland required and use whichever analytic theory we need for certain purposes in the school and enter what Lyotard calls "sublime heterogeneity" (Lyotard, in Appignanesi, 1989 p.19-2,3, 26)?

Longinus invented the term sublimity in the 5<sup>th</sup> century in the context of rhetoric, where he described the effect of elevated language upon an audience as one not of persuasion but of transport. "At every time and in every way imposing speech, with the spell it throws over us, prevails over that which aims at persuasion and gratification. Our persuasions we can usually control but the influences of the sublime bring power and irresistible might"

The notion of the sublime became widely known through the work of Thomas Burnett in 1681 *The Sacred Theory of the Earth* where the spectator of natural sublimity always experiences a situation of being overpowered by the size or energy of the sublime phenomena. Kant, in his *Critique of Judgement*, seemed to be using the sublime as an aesthetic value in which the primary factor is the presence or suggestion of transcendent vastness or greatness, as of power, heroism, extent in space or time but particularly appropriate for aesthetic and ethical feeling. Sublimity differs from greatness or grandeur in that these are capable of being completely grasped or measured. By contrast the sublime, while in one aspect comprehended and grasped as a whole, is felt as transcending our normal standards of measurement or achievement. Lyotard is using it in this Kantian sense. According to Lyotard, in contemporary society, the question of how knowledge is legitimated is formulated in fundamentally different terms from the scientific and empiricist quest for a grand theory of everything. All metanarratives have lost their credibility, regardless of what mode of unification it uses (Lyotard, PMC, 37) and the way to look at a curriculum framework then is not to look for any unifying principle of organisation but to see how it functions in human interaction, how it is used. There is no need to consider a metalanguage that embraces and grounds all of the different types of statements and phrases.

Schools required to report on student progress will have difficulty in fairly ranking all students in a linear progression without omitting aspects of their complex development as people. As one holds to a fundamentalist view of a grand unified theory of education which will be consistent and true, a complex holistic curriculum which includes all of the above perspectives will be seen as either contradictory or relativist. If however one sees a curriculum as forming a dynamic community of different perspectives, like an ecological environment, where students have a choice to adapt to multiple possibilities of values and realities, then the inclusive curriculum framework can be seen as liberating and open-ended, provisional in its evolution. Choices are always shaped by history, and the complex relations of constraint and exclusion circumscribe the assessment of student progress. Weeks (1993, p.195), talking about cultural differences, speaks of recognising our complex history as making a commitment to a form of radical humanism, shaped by many histories and cultures. He recommends embracing paradox and difference as an affirmation of human solidarity. "The paradox is real because the assertion of different ways of being apparently fragments any unitary project, opening the way to a cacophony of different claims and aspirations. But if we look at the claims of the different epistemological categories perhaps we can begin to dissolve the paradox, though not eliminate the difficulties. For the claim that there are different ways of being human can become a constituent element of a humanistic project, defining the human as precisely concerning respect for difference".(Weeks, 1993, p. 196) Human solidarity becomes a project not of realising what is already there but of constructing bonds across the chasms of difference. The task of radical humanism then becomes the making of a human community across the chasm of difference. Difference is relativised as part of the making of universal principle. At the same time, the universal is itself relativised, becoming not an unproblematic given, but an articulation of a variety of social discourses and logics around an evolving project. Ironically this seems to be what Kant was speaking of when he speaks of the sublime in his *Critique of Judgement*, that it transcends rational principle and is apprehended in action. "To learn names," Lyotard writes (Diff p.44), "is to situate them in relation to other names by means of phrases." A specific referent first achieves its meaning or *Sinn* in and through its linkage with other phrases. A referent can be located within many different networks of names, and the linkages between phrases are not "right" or "wrong," but rather suitable or unsuitable, useful or superfluous, meaningful or senseless. The question then remains as to whether we can apply Week's solution as a compromise between conserving terms of evaluation, distinction and merit in the curriculum and seeking to move beyond confining canons of taste and conservative categories. As a human enterprise, in a curriculum, we redefine and are constantly redefining curriculum categories and goals in a dynamic and complex equilibrium.

In the key learning area of the Arts, the overarching outcomes that the WA Curriculum Framework urges teachers to work towards are that

- Students generate arts works that communicate ideas
- Students use the skills, techniques, processes, conventions and technologies of the arts
- Students use their aesthetic understanding to respond to, reflect on and evaluate the arts
- Students understand the role of the arts in society.

These reflect competing ideologies developed over the last century that separately focus on studio practice, the mimetic skills, art history, the traditional canon of formalism, the pragmatic, and to a much lesser extent expressivism that Efland speaks of. Arts teachers have said that the curriculum offers them no direction and that they cannot make sense of the levels of understanding by which they are required to constantly monitor student achievement. But if Lyotard is right then the sublime heterogeneity of the curriculum is not to blame, but the attempt to define abstracted standards to which a grand narrative would make claim. For what is required here is the ongoing

judgement of the teacher to select whatever “frame” of values” is appropriate to a particular task in the arts classroom. Many confident teachers manage to do this, though there is some uncertainty as to whether they are simply acting according to their accumulated social experiences through upbringing, educational training or mentoring, without paying any attention to the diverse requirements of the outcomes-based framework.

Valerie Johnson has recently successfully completed a Masters’ thesis which looks at the phenomenology of experienced Drama teachers in WA, the way they describe their teaching processes in the classroom. She says “ the “definition provided by the Outcome Statements that Drama is an Arts subject which deals with creative communication, technical skill, evaluative reflection and social and historical contextualization – is clearly acknowledged by these teachers” (Johnson, 2002, p.67). But the teachers themselves show that they have a broader understanding of communication than that stated in the curriculum scaffolding. Bruce for instance often refers to holism, body movement and the nonverbals that students learn through (John on, 2002, p.41). Fran considers it important to teach boys that touching one another is not taboo (Johnson, 2002, p.49) indicating that in practice she holds a functionalist view of drama teaching as therapy. Many of the teachers mention enjoyment, pleasure, good fun, and although that does not feature in the curriculum, it is contained in many 19<sup>th</sup> century treatises on the arts as celebration. Teachers in this thesis show more concern with giving student access to meaning than making the school wealthier by promoting theatrical school productions in the school, a healthy resistance to the dominant economic rationalism imposed on schools. Their emphasis is on teaching drama to the children for a multitude of reasons, but mostly for the childrens’ benefit.

The Curriculum guidelines, especially in the Arts, encourage integration across arts domains and then again across KLAs but there is no indication that these drama teachers feel their professional expertise in drama threatened or enriched by such attempts at integration. Johnson (2002, p.74) concludes “The kind of classroom autonomy that Errington envisages is not a real option - It is role-constrained in that these teachers see themselves as drama teachers, and Drama teachers ... However the teachers see themselves first and foremost as teachers – that is, in a much more holistic way than is suggested by the arts curriculum”.

The thesis concludes (2002, p.76): “As readers reflect on the understandings presented here they will naturally compare such understandings with their own and determine where they differ. Such reflection can only serve to broaden and deepen understanding of what to some is a rather esoteric area of endeavour and to others an unattractively constraining one, and if this is the case the study will have served an important purpose. Most important of all however is the affirmation what the work is valued and respected in its own right – something which is not always forthcoming in our society. It has not been possible to fully exploit the data”.

#### **Curriculum’s invisible hand**

The consequences of presenting such a sublimely eclectic curriculum to teachers and letting them sort it out in practice, as Lyotard presents, would seem to be liberating. However as Ball (1994, p.3) argues in a Foucauldian sense, power always faces in two directions. Curriculum, like any form of discourse, transmits and directs power; it reinforces it, even while it is undermining and exposing it<sup>1</sup>, (Foucault, 1981, pl.101) David Hume (1758) had expressed surprise at “the ease with which the many will be governed by the few and to observe the implicit submission with which men revoke their own sentiments and passions in favour of their leaders” .Despite the overall apparent liberation of the curriculum into this sublime smorgasbord of ideologies, the curriculum had a real and constraining existence for these teachers, almost as much through what it did *not* say as what it did allow.

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<sup>1</sup> Ironically the Curriculum Council seems to have bracketed out creative practices from its own scholastic attitude to the Arts. It is what Bourdieu, Giroux and McLaren have talked about, the invisible power that produces subjects. The irony of using “enterprise” as a defining term for the new key learning area of Technology and Enterprise should not escape those aware of the conservative nature of the State government when the Framework was written. More ironically there was an eighth Key learning area produced called values which was drawn up by an ecumenical council of Christians and Jews, and did not invite contributions from any Buddhist, Confucian or the growing population of Moslems. Heterogenous, indeed, but we don’t add just anything.

In reality principals demanded continuous assessment, and encouraged those teachers who put on skilful dramatic performances for potential parents. The Monitoring Standards in Education subcommittee continued to require reporting on student progress, even if the scope of what was to count as progress had widened. The conception of creativity which was explicitly stated as one of the outcomes of the arts was couched still in terms of reflective ideas, rather than direct expression of emotion. As Ball (1994 pp48-164 ) noted, teachers are inevitably enmeshed in a matrix of power relations and without them becoming critically aware of those power relations they will be forced to resolve the tensions between conflicting constraints by submitting to the power of the prevailing hegemonies. Simply working through the conflicting ideologies in practice as Lyotard encouraged us to do does not remove the constraints of ideology and can lead to as conservative a position as the apparent modernist logic of Habermas.

Teachers do show remarkable resilience by operating within a sublime heterogeneity but it is not a practice free of stress. Even while curriculum appears to be liberated, resilience must be practiced by a teacher acting under other forms of control such as market and management to which schools seem increasingly driven. The dramatic revisions to the Australian curriculum which removed power from the formalist traditions of the universities were spearheaded in the late 1980s by Laurie Carmichael, head of the Trade Unions, with an explicit agenda of improving national productivity. Stephen Ball (1994) is one of the strongest defenders of the notion that curricula are one of the major sites of communication of power networks, discourses and technologies of education. What Ball called the 1988 Mk1C, the result of the 1988 Educational Reform Act in the United Kingdom, "was certainly intended to influence the curriculum, assessment and pedagogy towards the changing needs of post-Fordist industrial production and thus enhance national economic performance". Aronowitz and Giroux (1991) noted similar changes linking educational reform to the needs of big business in the United States. Does this show that there is indeed a unifying principle, that of economic rationalism, latently driving the Australian curriculum? I would argue that while practices, especially those such as compulsory standardised testing in literacy and numeracy, and the requirement to grade students against pre-specified levels of achievement to preserve accountability, are often driven by an economic agenda, the curriculum framework itself contains sufficient rhetoric of student autonomy, diversity of cultural values, the freedom of the teacher to provide "appropriate" syllabus material and to use methods which best suit the teacher's contextualised purposes, is sufficient to militate against a rationally consistent theory of curriculum of the modernist kind, and that it indeed offers a sublime heterogeneity of the sort advocated by Efland and Brown.

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