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Ornstein, Allan C.; Pajak, Edward F. & Ornstein, Stacey B. (Eds.) (2007). *Contemporary Issues in Curriculum* (4th Edition). Boston: Pearson Education.

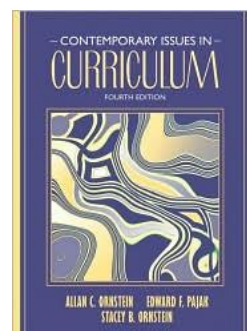
Pp. ix + 470 \$113 ISBN 0-205-48925-7

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April 28, 2008

The updated version of *Contemporary Issues in Curriculum* is a useful text for students of education, exposing them to different aspects of curriculum and a variety of current issues. The book was first published in 1995. This new edition is said to contain 35% new content. The book is divided into six sections dealing with curriculum and philosophy, teaching, learning, instruction, supervision, and policy, and contains a nice mix of work by leading scholars and educators. Each section features a personal profile of an education professional, a chart of pros and cons on a current issue, and a case study. Readers are helped to focus on key thoughts by questions provided at the beginning and end of each chapter.

The opening section leads the reader to examine the role of philosophy in education. Allan Ornstein looks at philosophy as the basis for all decisions in curriculum. It provides the belief system which drives what will be taught, how students learn, and what teaching should look like. Ronald Brandt and Ralph Tyler discuss the value of goals and objectives in describing what should be taught, in planning learning activities, and in evaluating learning. Peter McLaren expounds on the philosophy of Paulo Freire, and emphasizes its significance for education practice today. Maxine Greene, from an existentialist viewpoint, describes the importance of the arts in education as a means of helping students to develop creativity. Jane Roland Martin promotes the cooperation of families and communities, and recognition of students' cultural heritage to increase the effectiveness of children's school experience. Lastly, John Goodlad urges readers to examine what schools are for as they consider issues such as school testing and reform.



The second part deals with curriculum and teaching. Nel Noddings opens the section with a discussion of teaching themes of caring, and how this can help students to feel secure, and to make connections between school and community. Parker Palmer continues the discussion by focusing on the teacher, and how important it is for teachers to maintain their purpose and enthusiasm and love for students and teaching. Alan Ornstein addresses critical issues in the field as he compares

the art and science of teaching, examines the role of caring and compassion in inspiring student confidence and learning, and stresses the importance of educating students for social and personal responsibility. Herbert Walberg presents psychological research on the effectiveness of various means of instruction in education. Lee Shulman examines which aspects contribute to teacher competence and should be integral to the practice of teacher education. Edward Pajak, Elaine Stotko, and Frand Masci discuss the importance of supporting new teachers by matching them with appropriate mentors who can capitalize on their strengths and assist them to expand their thinking and teaching abilities to become effective teachers. Linda Hammond wraps up the section with a chapter on teacher attrition, and what can be done to prevent it.

Section three addresses curriculum and learning from a variety of perspectives, and several of them focus on moral education. Theodore and Nancy Sizer promote student grappling as a way to particularly deal with issues of morals and character, while Matthew Lipman encourages active development of critical thinking early in the educational process to help students become thinking, responsible members of society. Lawrence Kohlberg presents the cognitive development approach for moral education, encouraging the use of peer discussion to help advance students into the proceeding stages of moral reasoning. Alfie Kohn critically examines the different approaches used in character education and suggests an alternative approach that is committed to improving the culture of the schools themselves. Robert Sternberg and Todd Lubart emphasize the connection between intelligence and creativity, and advocate giving students opportunity to be creative in selecting problems to solve in school as well as in solving them. Jeannie Oakes challenges the practice of tracking students by their abilities as one which unfairly limits students' chances for future academic success. Frederick Hess concludes the section with a thoughtful discussion of what a public school should be and what purpose it should fulfill.

Part four is on the topic of curriculum and instruction, and opens with a chapter by Benjamin Bloom reporting on current research showing the effectiveness of conventional learning, mastery learning, and learning with a tutor. William Glasser emphasizes the importance of supportive relationships between teachers and students, suggesting that instruction would be more effective if teachers operated under the choice theory rather than the stimulus-response theory. Evans Clinchy candidly discusses the problems with desegregation and inequalities in schools, addressing student tracking and standardized testing, and proposing a "new educational civil rights movement." Andrew Gitlin and Stacey Ornstein promote a political humanist approach to curriculum and instruction; while Geneva Gay focuses on and encourages an integrated approach to multicultural education in the classroom as a way of improving instruction especially for an ethnically diverse student population. David Perkins looks at four aspects of teaching knowledge: creating, communicating, organizing, and acting on knowledge; and discusses the importance of all four to promote student understanding. Don Tapscott completes this section with a chapter on using the Net for instruction, arguing that for students in this generation, getting information off of the Net comes naturally and makes learning more interesting.

Section five concentrates on curriculum and supervision. Thomas Sergiovanni, in the Politics of Virtue, promotes virtue in school leadership, played out as principals work with communities for shared decision making about what happens in the schools. The commitment and accountability of all involved parties are tied up in caring about students, their families, the school, and the community as a whole. Four chapters are devoted to the topic of professional development. Dennis Sparks and Susan Loucks-Horsley review five models of staff development for teachers, looking at their underlying assumptions, theoretical and research underpinnings, phases of activity, and outcomes. Harry Wong, Ted Britton, and Tom Ganser use examples of practice from other countries to promote the induction of U.S. teachers into a mindset of continued professional development; and Thomas Guskey details six guidelines for improving the success of professional development programs. Later, Frank Levy and Richard Murnane discuss the role of technology in professional development, paralleling IBM's practices with their managers with schools and teachers. Edward Pajak discusses clinical supervision from the perspective of differing

psychological functions among clinical supervisors, promoting an understanding of one's own tendencies and how they might impact relationships with teachers.

The final section of the book looks at curriculum and policy. Harold Hodgkinson describes the varying demographics of the U.S., and how they impact teachers and classrooms, including such things as aging of communities, culture, and worldviews. Robert Slavin discusses the impact that research and evidence-based policies could have on the practice of education, claiming that education might finally make significant progress toward improvement. James Sears approaches the topic of families and their importance for students' success in the classroom. He addresses the special challenges that may arise for students from families led by lesbian, gay or bisexual parents, and advocates teacher sensitivity and inclusive, non-judgmental language. Allan Odden presents issues of equity and adequacy in school finances, particularly as they relate to school quality. In light of vastly different views of what is essential in education, influenced partly by the varying religious foundations of constituents, Carl Glickman challenges the public school system to seek educational quality in several forms, recognizing that many definitions exist of what constitutes an educated person. Richard Rothstein takes a close look at the achievement gap between Blacks and Whites in the U.S. and suggests ways to address it. Allan Ornstein wraps up the section and the book by writing frankly about class, equality, and equity, presenting some sobering statistics on the economic status of Americans, on education, and employment. He calls for the leadership, in positions of government and business particularly, to work for true democracy and aim for the common good of all U.S. citizens.

The format and contents of this book contribute significantly to an understanding of modern curriculum. The variety of viewpoints kept the narrative fresh and engaging. Focus questions enhance the pedagogical value of the text, and the case studies of current issues can serve as a springboard for class discussion. Finally, the profiles of the various authors brought life to the wide ranging perspectives that make up *Contemporary Issues in Curriculum*.

About the Reviewer

Lynn M. Merklin is a contract teacher in the area of health and wellness, and a doctoral student in Curriculum and Instruction at Andrews University in southwest Michigan. Her interests are in health education and program evaluation. She is currently researching the impact of a general education health course on the health practices of college students.

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