10 Knowledge, knowers and knowing

Curriculum reform in South Africa

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Introduction

With the transition to democracy in South Africa in 1994 came the imperative to reform what was a highly inequitable system of education provision. Changing the curriculum was regarded as a crucial lever for fostering the ideals of the new nation – for creating a new citizenry and for re-inserting South Africa into a global context. The new curriculum that was constructed departed radically from what had gone before. It was underpinned by strong social goals which aimed to address past inequalities and foster human rights and democracy in every sphere – including what was learnt and how. While the political project of the new curriculum was very clear, its pedagogical shortcomings soon became evident. Within a short time this new curriculum was revised. And once again, within a relatively short period of time after the implementation of the revised curriculum, the national curriculum was once again reviewed. This chapter considers these processes of curriculum reform, considering the nature of the changes and the underlying logic of the shifts that were made in the course of the reforms.

The chapter traces the curriculum changes in relation to the notions of knowledge, knowers and knowing. In this way I attempt to show how the ultimate goal of achieving social justice has over time shifted from a focus on knowers and knowing, or the learner and learning, to one that privileges knowledge, or what is to be learnt. The three central moments in curriculum reform since the transition to democracy in South Africa in 1994 were alluded to above. Curriculum documents and review reports at three reform moments are considered in this chapter in tracing the reform process. The first reform moment was the construction and implementation of a new curriculum in 1998 for a new post-apartheid nation – called Curriculum 2005. The second reform moment was a review of Curriculum 2005 two years later. The result of this review was the construction and implementation of a revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in 2002. Finally, the third reform moment considered in the analysis below was in 2009, when the NCS was reviewed and another substantial revision of the national curriculum was proposed in the report issuing from this review. By considering these three reform moments in relation to how knowledge, knowers and knowing is constituted by and constitutes the curriculum, focus is drawn to the crucial distinction between curriculum and pedagogy. The chapter concludes by drawing

out some of the implications of the distinctions for curriculum-making and the shaping of pedagogy in South Africa over the past 15 years. The chapter begins by briefly sketching out what apartheid curriculum and pedagogy entailed in order to provide a context for the discussion of the reform that followed its demise.

Apartheid curriculum and pedagogy

Under the highly racially segregated system of apartheid, different departments of education were set up to control education for different population groupings based on race classification. White departments produced a 'core' curriculum, which departments for other racial groupings adapted, often amounting to a watering down of the 'white' curriculum. The curriculum was content-driven with very stringent prescriptions for the sequencing and scope of contents. The selection of content reflected the tenets of the philosophy underpinning the system, known as Christian National Education, which was essentially an expression of Afrikaner nationalism. The curriculum was white- and male-oriented (NEPI 1992). Curricula for black students especially emphasized teaching based on drill and practice, and little elaboration of concepts and skills, but rather a strict focus on content to be memorized. Teachers were issued with syllabuses that often contained highly prescriptive teacher manuals with detailed work plans. In African schools, teachers were overseen by a highly autocratic and bureaucratic system of inspection that appeared to be used punitively and vindictively against teachers (Chisholm et al. 2005). Christian National Education had an attendant theory of pedagogy, or 'science' of education known as 'fundamental pedagogics'. This was an authoritarian pedagogical philosophy, where the child was regarded as ignorant and undisciplined, in need of guidance from the teacher, whose authority was derived from the God of the Dutch Reformed Church (Ensor 1999). It also promulgated a pedagogy devoid of analysis and critique (Enslin 1984), emphasizing rote memorization.

   During the 1980s and 1990s there were two curriculum reform efforts. The one formed part of the range of movements for alternative proposals against apartheid education collectively known as 'People's Education'. Drawing on Freirian notions of education for empowerment, this movement tried to shift the focus of teaching and learning from a strong transmitter model and a given body of knowledge to one that stressed the politically potent role of education and the importance of students' experience and local context. The impact of People's Education was extremely limited. What predominated in schools under a strong inspection regime, and with teachers who were very poorly trained, was a pedagogy consisting largely of drill and rote routines, with '… teachers adopting authoritarian roles and doing most of the talking, with few pupil initiations, and with most of the pupil responses taking the form of group chorusing' (Chick 1996: 21).

   At the same time the apartheid government was also engaged in its own process of curriculum revision, the 'Education Renewal Strategy', in an effort to rationalize and modernize curricula, and make them more relevant (especially in terms of economic demands and that of the labour force). This last apartheid state reform effort responded to some of the curriculum developments in the USA and the

UK, most notably drawing on ideas around constructivism and progressivism developed there. But essentially, under the apartheid curriculum regime, strong control was exerted over knowing, knowledge and knowers, informed by an autocratic theory of pedagogy and clear content selection along white, Christian, nationalist lines.

Reform moment 1: Knowers and the conflation of curriculum and pedagogy

The shift from the apartheid regime to a democratic state in South Africa in 1994 entailed a negotiated settlement between old and new rulers. This negotiated settlement had particular implications for education and the construction of a post-apartheid curriculum. Fundamentally what it entailed was an eschewal of the definition of content to allow for a proliferation of sites for learning, and also the avoidance of explicit prioritizing of knowledge distribution to any particular group. The process of curriculum construction at this time was influenced by a number of foreign consultants, particularly those promoting outcomes-based education (OBE) as a curriculum alternative fostering generic skills for a new global economy. Policy-makers were also influenced by the increasing popularity of national qualification frameworks, which were identified as a way of integrating education and training and introducing equivalences into a system with a large number of disparate qualifications and unequal institutional capacity. South Africa termed its approach 'transformational OBE', and as educationally unsound as it proved to be, it presented a strong political argument for a curriculum for rapid social transformation. Transformational OBE was defined in official documentation thus:

> No thought is given to the existing curriculum. Instead schools (or local districts) are told they can choose any content and use a wide range of teaching methods as long as these develop citizens who display the agreed-upon critical outcomes.
>
> (South African Department of Education 2000b: 19)

These 'critical outcomes' were derived from the constitution and described the kind of citizen that the curriculum aimed to create, as well as broad, cross-curricular, generic skills underpinning the curriculum, for example, 'identify and solve problems by using creative and critical thinking' (South African Department of Education 1997: 16). The benefit of the approach of leaving out specific content, it was argued, was that 'This allows educators to relate teaching direct [sic] to their local contexts and also to change syllabus content rapidly' (South African Department of Education 1997: 16). The response here to the highly prescriptive curriculum of apartheid is obvious. But further, what the new curriculum signalled was a move to erode a number of boundaries – between education and training, between academic and everyday knowledge, and between different forms of knowledge, disciplines or subjects. This was to be achieved through a strong

programme of integration, involving the collapsing not only of knowledge, but of political and economic boundaries as well:

> An integrated approach implies a view of learning which rejects the rigid division between 'academic' and 'applied', 'theory' and 'practice', 'knowledge' and 'skills', 'head' and 'hand'. Such divisions have characterised the organisation of curricula and the distribution of educational opportunity in many countries of the world, including South Africa. They have grown out of, and helped to reproduce, very old occupational and social class distinctions. In South Africa such distinctions in curriculum and career choice have also been closely associated in the past with the ethnic structure of economic opportunity and power.
>
> (South African Department of Education 1995: 15)

Ensor (1997) points out that this erosion of boundaries was expected to result in the collapse of a fourth: the social boundaries between groups on the basis of race and class. The strong political project of creating a new nation and a new citizenry meant that pedagogical and epistemological questions were subordinated to strong ideological notions around the kinds of persons to be formed for the new democratic era.

In 1997, the new post-apartheid curriculum, Curriculum 2005, was launched. As described above, Curriculum 2005 was informed by a number of trajectories within education, both locally (People's Education; the integration of education and training) and globally (outcomes-based education, competency-based curriculum) (Cross et al. 2002; Kraak 1999). Curriculum 2005 was defined in relation to the past. It was referred to as a paradigm shift in curriculum, from the traditional apartheid curriculum to a new outcomes-based curriculum. Curriculum 2005 was also designed in relation to the new National Qualifications Framework (NQF) launched in 1996, which was an attempt to create equivalencies between education and workplace learning by placing all qualifications on the same grid, and breaking them down into unit standards which could interchangeably make up different qualifications. The strong influence of Labour, and an economic discourse is evident in the quote above, but was also seen in an emphasis on the recognition of prior learning, access and portability which were the key ideas underpinning the creation of qualifications. There is general agreement in the literature that the construction of Curriculum 2005 was largely a product of Labour's needs, and their demands for a skills-based curriculum linked to an NQF. At the heart of this was the *outcome*, a discrete, generic, demonstrable performance required of the learner.

The curriculum had several progressive features. It placed an emphasis on group work, relevance, local curriculum construction and local choice of content. There was also a shift away from strong disciplinary boundaries, to a horizontal integration of traditional curriculum subjects. Learning areas, which were clusters of subjects, were introduced to support integration. Phase organizers also introduced themes that directed programmes of learning across different learning

areas. Learning outcomes were generic, and most of the subject-specific content from the curriculum was removed.

Curriculum 2005 was driven by a strong pedagogical project. Learner-centredness was the cornerstone of this new project, and the teacher (now termed 'educator') was to *facilitate* acquisition through the selection of the appropriate knowledge, including that of the learners' own local cultures, to enable the learner to reach the 'competency' which was expressed as an outcome. The pedagogy was based on a reading of constructivist and progressive principles, strongly advocating a pedagogy that directly challenged that of fundamental pedgagogics. A well-known table at the time explained the desired shifts – see Table 10.1.

Another table in official documentation further spelt out the changes in terms of knowledge and pedagogy in the shift from 'a content-based to an outcomes-based approach' (South African Department of Education 1997: 5) – see Table 10.2.

The curriculum was thus built around a strong (though often theoretically muddled) project of knowing, and Tables 10.1 and 10.2 show the ardent concern with the stipulation of pedagogy in this project. But in responding to the repressive pedagogy of apartheid, Curriculum 2005 changed the curriculum. The assumption made in the constructivist vein was that learning disciplinary content knowledge (the what) could be replaced by learning the procedures and

Table 10.1   Shift from traditional to constructivist classroom

Traditional classroom	*Constructivist classroom*
Curriculum is presented part to whole, with emphasis on basic skills	Curriculum is presented whole to part with emphasis on big concepts
Strict adherence to fixed curriculum is highly valued	Pursuit of learner questions is highly valued
Curricular activities rely heavily on textbooks and workbooks	Curricular activities rely heavily on primary sources of data and manipulative materials
Students are viewed as 'blank slates' onto which information is etched by the teacher	Learners are viewed as thinkers with emerging theories about the world
Teachers generally behave in a didactic manner, disseminating information to students	Educators generally behave in an interactive manner, mediating the environment with learners
Teachers seek the correct answer to validate student learning	Educators seek the learner's points of view in order to understand learners' present conceptions for use in subsequent lessons
Assessment of student learning is viewed as separate from teaching and occurs almost entirely through testing	Assessment of learner learning is interwoven with teaching and occurs through educator observations of learners, learner observation of learners at work and through learner exhibitions and portfolios
Students primarily work alone	Learners primarily work in groups

Source: South African Department of Education (2000b: 12).

Table 10.2   From a content-based to an outcomes-based approach

Old	New
Passive learners	Active learners
Exam-driven	Learners are assessed on an ongoing basis
Rote-learning	Critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and action
Syllabus is content-based and broken down into subjects	An integration of knowledge, learning relevant and connected to real-life situations
Textbook/worksheet-bound and teacher centred	Learner-centred; teacher is facilitator; teacher constantly uses groupwork and teamwork to consolidate the new approach
Sees syllabus as rigid and non-negotiable	Learning programmes seen as guides that allow teachers to be innovative and creative in designing programmes
Teachers responsible for learning; motivation dependent on the personality of teacher	Learners take responsibility for their learning; pupils motivated by constant feedback and affirmation of their worth
Emphasis on what the teacher hopes to achieve	Emphasis on outcomes – what the learner becomes and understands
Content placed into rigid timeframes	Flexible timeframes allow learners to work at their own pace
Curriculum development process not open to public comment	Comment and input from the wider community is encouraged

Source: South African Department of Education (1997: 6–7).

methods of the discipline (the how). What was entailed in this was a displacement of the ontological with the epistemological, which in a sense captures the shift from traditional to constructivist pedagogies that Curriculum 2005 attempted to accomplish. Curriculum 2005 conflated curriculum and pedagogy, emphasizing the everyday knowledge of students, in other words *knowers,* and silencing knowledge with a strident theory of knowing.

Reform moment 2: Towards a knowledge project

Curriculum 2005 was reviewed in 2000. Although muted at first, the criticism generated by the first post-apartheid curriculum was significant. Prominent critiques focused on training and implementation, system failures and curriculum design. Jansen (1999: 147) in his 'Why outcomes-based education will fail' offers as a principal reason the idea that curriculum was driven by policy imperatives with no conception of the realities of classroom life. Later Jansen (2001) went on to argue that policies developed in the first five years of democracy served the purpose of 'political symbolism', helping to mark the shift from apartheid to post-apartheid education and establish the ideological and political credentials of the

new government. In short, although the political project of Curriculum 2005 had been clear, the pedagogical one was far from graspable.

Further research related to Curriculum 2005 involved a series of empirical classroom-based studies. The report on the studies (Taylor and Vinjevold 1999) claimed convergence in findings from the research around a number of issues, most importantly around teachers' extremely poor conceptual knowledge. They also found that teachers lacked the knowledge base to interpret Curriculum 2005, and were unable to deal with integration and 'ensure that the everyday approach prescribed by the new curriculum will result in learners developing sound conceptual frameworks' (Taylor and Vinjevold 1999: 230). Researchers found that although teachers were implementing their understanding of forms of 'learner-centred' practice and co-operative learning, very little learning was taking place. Another key contribution to critique at this time was Harley and Parker's (1999) analysis of outcomes-based education, the National Qualifications Framework, and competency models. They point out the conflicts in the system generated from incompatible frameworks – such as competence-based and outcomes-based assessment.

In the light of the criticisms, a review team was set up to consider the curriculum and make recommendations regarding the 'strengthening and streamlining' of Curriculum 2005. It was in this *Curriculum 2005 Review Report* (South African Department of Education 2000a) that a key argument entered official discourse. It was based on a critique developed by Muller (2000) around the conceptual design of the curriculum, arguing that while the socio-political rationale for integration was clear, the pedagogical purposes were not. The fact that the curriculum had removed most of the content for subjects, and replaced it with outcomes expressed as generic skills, meant that teachers were expected to select the appropriate content and design 'learning programmes' themselves. Muller summed up the class implications of this kind of curriculum:

> A success can be made of such an under-stipulated curriculum, but only if the teacher has a well-articulated mental script of what should be covered, and if the pupils come from homes where they have been well prepared to respond to such putative freedom, in other words, only in schools by and for the middle class.

(Muller 2000: 14)

There was also a strong critique at the time of the radical constructivism which underpinned the curriculum, identifying that 'by ignoring the boundary between school and everyday knowledges, radical modes increase the difficulties that working-class children will have in trying to acquire formal discourses' (Taylor and Vinjevold 1999). These arguments derived from a number of seminal papers on the distinction between everyday knowledge and school knowledge (Dowling 1995; Ensor 1997; Davis 1996; Muller and Taylor 1995) which asserted the necessity for distinguishing between knowledge types. The work, grounded in Bernstein's (1990) theory of pedagogic discourse, emphasized the importance of recognizing the *boundary* between knowledge types. Through the review team

report, these academic arguments around the distinction between everyday knowledge and school knowledge, and the implications of integration entered the formal domain in a way that was understandable to a broader readership, including some in government. The arguments focused centrally on the unequal distribution of types of knowledge to different students, often on the basis of social class. Dowling's (1998) research in particular showed how the working class and lower ability student 'paradoxically, is left free to be a local individual but a failed mathematics learner' as Muller (2000: 68) put it.

Drawing implicitly on Bernstein's theory of knowledge then, the authors of the *Curriculum 2005 Review Report* took a realist view of knowledge, and of school knowledge as having an objective conceptual structure (especially in terms of the selection and sequence of knowledge). The major design flaw of Curriculum 2005 was identified as its having no conceptual sequence and hence no learning progression path. 'It is true that different learners approach learning in different ways, and might even learn concepts in a non-prescribed sequence. But this non-prescribed sequence must be an alternative route up the same conceptual ladder. There is no such thing as an alternative ladder, of optional and replaceable concepts' (South African Department of Education 2000a: 44).

The *Curriculum 2005 Review Report* strongly recommended reduced integration and clearer specification of contents. Greater simplicity to the design of the curriculum and language was also recommended. Significantly, under pressure from the unions (Chisholm 2005), outcomes were retained in the design of the curriculum. As a result certain pedagogical and curriculum features *associated* with outcomes would also be retained. These were identified by the *Curriculum 2005 Review Report* itself. It states that outcomes-based education asserts the dominance of outputs over inputs, but it also contains features of curriculum reform the world over, which are:

- the active learner and ideas of uniqueness and difference
- the active teacher who, rather than following a prescriptive syllabus, makes decisions about what to teach and how to teach it
- the relative importance of activity and skills as a basis for knowing and knowledge
- the relative importance of induction over deduction

                                        (South African Department of Education 2000a: 47)

Thus although the knower mode went into retreat with the review of Curriculum 2005, and knowledge was foregrounded, knowing remained pronounced. It was clear that the hold over pedagogy was to be sustained, mitigating a slide back into 'traditional forms'. The four pedagogical aspects bulleted above are features of progressive and constructivist pedagogies and in the argument of the *Review Report* are associated with outcomes-based education. There is some contradiction in the retention of outcomes in relation to the treatment of knowledge. Although the *Curriculum 2005 Review Report* provided a clear and coherent critique around knowledge and the need for greater conceptual coherence and progression, knowledge stipulation and attention to disciplinary structure, the pedagogical

project of Curriculum 2005 was to a certain extent retained along with the retention of outcomes thus reasserting local choice of content, a skills-based approach and an emphasis on the everyday (by asserting inductive approaches).

Over time, outcomes, constructivism and progressivism became entwined, and because of their conceptual conflation it became difficult to disentangle them (Morrow 2000; Harley and Wedekind 2003). Similarly, the conflation of curriculum and pedagogy was not dealt with in the *Curriculum 2005 Review Report*. The how remained entangled in the what, and Davis' (2005) comment on this conflation is apposite: that it is curious that those who argue for an emphasis on relevance and real-world problem-solving demand that the curriculum should organize and package curriculum in an already-integrated way.

Fataar (2006) links the shifts signalled in the *Curriculum 2005 Review Report* towards knowledge differentiation and stipulation to changes in the economy: 'by the time of the second election in 1999 the state had authorized a fiscally conservative development path, and had put leftist elements such as the unions and civic movements on the ideological retreat' (2005: 650). What happened in the development of the new curriculum based on the review of Curriculum 2005 was that the curriculum was wrested back from Labour into the hands of a particular group of academic educationalists whose concern was with knowledge and the 'boundary' alluded to above. Notions of knowledge differentiation emerged strongly, undergirded by the key conceptual critique of Curriculum 2005 around disciplinary probity and conceptual coherence. Fataar's more subtle argument was that the decline of the influence of Labour in curriculum construction 'can be found in the ambiguous constructivism that informed the curriculum design. The epistemological shortcomings upon which its knowlegability was constructed contained the seeds for its displacement' (2006: 657). In other words, an emphasis on a kind of radical constructivism, which was theoretically unstable, was the ultimate undoing of Labour's influence.

When considering some of the compromises and contradictions in the *Curriculum 2005 Review Report* (see also South African Department of Education 2009), it is clear that what was likely to emerge was a compromise curriculum, which could be read in a number of ways, and which would be underpinned by conceptual unease. Also, despite arguments to the contrary, the strong ideological arguments about changing the knowledge of the school to grant access to previously marginalized groups (rather than facilitating greater access to specialized knowledge) still dominated, particularly in parts of the bureaucracy involved in the mediation of curriculum to teachers (Chisholm 2005). Integration was also retained in the organization of traditionally separate subjects in 'learning areas'.

Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement was begun in schools in 2002. The first final school-leaving certificate based on the new curriculum was written in 2008. The following year the process of revision started up again.

Reform moment 3: Subduing knowing

In 2009 the new Minister of Education called for a new review of the curriculum, again couched as a review of the 'implementation' of the curriculum, rather than of the curriculum itself. The call for the review came from two main sources: on-going criticism in the media of outcomes-based education, and the persistent poor performance of South African learners on national and international standardized tests. In particular, some of the international comparative standardized tests had shown South Africa out-performed not only by other developed countries, but also by developing countries with a lower GDP and lower spend on education (van der Berg 2008). Over time, since the introduction of OBE and the NQF, education and training had separated out institutionally, both in terms of provision, qualifications and curriculum. The formal schooling sector had managed to untether itself from some of the strictures of the National Qualifications Framework (Allais 2006). A new government took office in 2009. This new administration was committed in word at least to greater efficiency, more openness around mistakes made in the past and less insistence on approaches that were not working. The question of OBE had become not only an educational issue but also a political one and the focus of numerous attacks on the government's failure in the sphere of education. The new minister indicated no adherence or loyalty to approaches that had failed in the past, and was intent on a review which considered what could be done to enhance the curriculum and address some of criticisms of and inefficiencies in the schooling system (Motshekga 2009). As Fataar (2006) had pointed out earlier, the pressure on education from Labour had also all but dissipated in relation to formal schooling.

Again a review committee was constituted, this time with significant government representation, as well as union and to a lesser extent academic membership. The emphasis was on strengthening implementation once again, and on teachers' experiences. A series of provincial teacher hearings attended by hundreds of teachers across the country were held, forming the basis for the recommendations made in the report (South African Department of Education 2009).

As in the previous review, but more directly, the *NCS Review Report* makes a strong call for a knowledge-based curriculum. Once again, the theory of knowledge in the report rests on a Bernsteinian conception of knowledge structuring. In this vein, the *Report* invokes Michael Young's (2007) notion of 'powerful knowledge' in making its arguments around the social justice implications of an under-specified curriculum:

> What we have learnt is that, despite the good intentions of past efforts, an underspecified curriculum advantages those who are already advantaged – those who already have access to the knowledge needed to improve their life chances.
>
> (Young 2007: 61)

The *Report* also takes direct aim at the discourse of knowing, and the dominance of a constructivist approach specifically:

> Though all learners do engage in the construction of knowledge in terms of coming to understand certain concepts, skills and content, it has generally been accepted that these aspects inhere within the subject and not in the minds of learners in the first place.
>
> (South African Department of Education 2009: 24)

Further the *NCS Review Report* deals directly with the sustained emphasis on group work in classrooms and on an integrated approach to learning, often realized through theme-based learning. The *Report* explicitly recommends that some of these understandings from the past (including the subordination of textbooks and on-going emphasis on integration) associated with OBE be challenged. It argues that in many instances these approaches are not ones that are privileged in official thinking, but persist at levels of the system concerned with implementation, especially districts (South African Department of Education 2009: 45).

What the *NCS Review Report* deliberately attempts to do is define curriculum in terms of a specification of 'the what' of knowledge. It presents a comprehensive critique of outcomes-based education, recommending its discontinuation and alluding to the confusion between OBE and various tenets of progressivism mentioned above. In particular, the *Report* argues that outcomes inhibit a clear specification of what is to be learnt, suggesting that outcomes be replaced with 'clear content, concept and skill standards and clear and concise assessment requirements' (South African Department of Education 2009: 45). The critique in the report draws on the work of others (Muller 2000; Jansen 1999; Allais and Taylor 2007; Donnelly 2005; Young 2002) arguing that OBE, by focusing on attitudes, dispositions and competencies, fails to give adequate specification of essential learning. Further, by focusing on outcomes, inputs, content, or the means for achieving these outcomes are left open and unspecified. In particular, the South African version of outcomes focuses on *skills* statements, more appropriate to some subjects than others, and also insists on the same set of outcomes from Grade 1 to Grade 12. The latter necessitates that the outcomes are specified at a high level of generality, rendering them largely generic and insufficient as a guide for what is to be learnt. The result of the OBE-based curriculum, the *NCS Review Report* argues, is 'curriculum and assessment descriptors that are often vague, ambiguous, difficult to measure and low in academic content' (South African Department of Education 2009: 38).

At the time of writing this chapter the curriculum was undergoing revision in the light of the recommendations made in the *Report*. In parliament the Minister declared that she had 'signed OBE's death certificate' (Motshekga 2009). In the revised version of the curriculum no specification of particular pedagogic approaches was to be made, and no indication of a particular theory of knowing is included in the templates for writers. All references to learning outcomes are to be removed. The clear intention is to draw the process away from residue emphasis on knowers and knowing to one that addresses the concern of curriculum primarily as a 'structuring and organisation of knowledge' (Moore 2004). The process is current and the outcome thus indeterminate. Although the intention of the reform move is clear, the argument that the discourse of knowers and knowing has been

subdued in this reform is speculative and based primarily on the intentions of the *Report* and not on the curriculum that will finally emerge.

Discussion

What is clear from the discussion of the three curriculum reform moments in South Africa is an increasing emphasis on the prioritization of knowledge in the curriculum – a concern specifically with academic disciplines, their structuring and curriculum entailments. Although it is not possible to claim whether the prioritization is commonly agreed upon or understood, in formal argument (i.e. in official review reports) the social justice implications of access to disciplinary and specialized forms of knowledge has been foregrounded. The consideration of the three reform moments also shows a change in the relationship between the what and the how of teaching and learning. In other words there has been some shift in thinking about the distinction between curriculum and pedagogy. In concluding this chapter and thinking about the current curriculum debates in South Africa there are two points that I want to make in relation to this latter distinction between curriculum and pedagogy.

The first point concerns the issue of control over pedagogy. The approach taken in Curriculum 2005 and in the NCS was to attempt to control pedagogy *through* curriculum. Pedagogy, as it has been constituted in curriculum reform in South Africa, has been treated as an outcome of curriculum, in other words, pedagogy is 'legislated' through curriculum. Teachers are *instructed* through curriculum prescription (again Tables 10.1 and 10.2 provide good examples, as do the Learning Programme Guidelines of the National Curriculum Statement) to deploy particular pedagogic forms in their classrooms. This is understandable when one considers it as a response to the tyranny of 'fundamental pedagogics' in schools under apartheid. Alexander provides a broader explanation, relevant to current times as well, which is more generally about control over the vagaries of the classroom:

> Pedagogy was the ultimate prize for any government wishing to secure a level of control of the educational process as close to absolute as – given the stubbornness of the human spirit and the wayward chemistry of classrooms – is feasible.

> (Alexander 2001: 142)

However, what Curriculum 2005 produced with its eschewal of the 'traditional' in favour of a 'constructivist' pedagogy was an alienation of teachers from their own practice (Jansen and Christie 1999; Taylor and Vinjevold 1999). The NCS did little to address this distancing of teachers from an understanding of the ideal practice proffered in policy.

If we conceive of pedagogy as an independent social form, which has a history, consisting of sedimented practices over time (as in the German tradition of Didaktik), then simply changing pedagogic practice by fiat through curriculum stipulation is misguided.[1] One cannot eclipse pedagogy through curriculum

stipulations, even though the reasons why one might want to do this are compelling, as Alexander (2001) points out. Neither on the other hand should a curriculum be obscured by pedagogy – either a real or imagined pedagogy – as occurred in the case of Curriculum 2005. As Hamilton (1999: 145) puts it, our analysis and conceptions of pedagogy should be built on 'the lived experience of practitioners, an awareness of the historicity of practice, and an anticipation of the life-worlds of future practitioners (cf. "what should they become")'. A consideration of how particular constructions of *curriculum* can shift pedagogy also needs to be considered.

The second issue relating to the conflation of curriculum and pedagogy refers to the more general point about boundaries raised earlier. In pedagogy, the everyday is always a 'portal to the esoteric' (Dowling 1998). In curriculum, however, the necessity of the incorporation and stipulation of everyday knowledge varies with subjects and their relation to everyday/workplace practices. In the more specialized subjects, such as mathematics and science for example, the dominance of everyday knowledge has the potential to obscure, confuse or dilute conceptual specification. In the case of Curriculum 2005, and to a lesser extent the NCS, everyday knowledge infused the curriculum. Everyday knowledge as a portal to the specialized knowledge of the school became confused with the specialized knowledge itself. What was produced was a dilution of what was to be learnt by how to learn it. This is a case of a particular theory of learning (constructivism), being transformed into a set of 'pedagogic techniques', which bled into the structuring of the curriculum so that knowledge, knowers and knowing all became blended into one (as we see in Tables 10.1 and 10.2).

The Bernsteinian framework, which underpinned the second and third reform moments, draws attention to knowledge boundaries. In his enduring interest in social justice and knowledge, Bernstein outlines the rights that must be institutionalized to meet the conditions of an effective democracy (2000: xx). He describes one of the rights as 'enhancement', which concerns boundaries and the right to experience boundaries. These boundaries are tension points which open up the possibility for condensing the past and opening up possible futures. In other words, it is not possible for students to think things as they aren't, to imagine alternatives, unless they have access to the non-local, non-everyday, context-independent knowledge that allows this. So for Bernstein, 'Enhancement entails a discipline'. The latter has two meanings – access to disciplinary knowledge; and the 'labour of acquisition' (Davis 2005). The intrusion of the Bernsteinian framework in the reform efforts and the attention it drew to issues of the organization of knowledge in the curriculum and its social consequences reconfigured the knowledge–knower relationship, reasserting the boundary between knowledges and between knowledge and the knower. In a Durkheimian sense, it is not the knower or knowing that makes the knowledge, but primarily knowledge that shapes the knower.

Yates provides a definition of pedagogy as that which 'can include attention to the person and subjectivity, and the world and culture, and even policy and institutions, but seems to put the emphasis particularly on the interpersonal instructional (or facilitative) act' (2009: 20). Bernstein (1999) extends this definition by establishing

the authority of the transmitter in the pedagogic relation. The relation is intrinsically asymmetrical and teacher and acquirer are always unequal as it is the transmitter who holds the criteria for what is to be learnt and who controls the rules for evaluating whether those criteria have been acquired. He also ties the definition to curriculum in asserting the 'what' that is to be transmitted: '… there is a purposeful intention to initiate, modify, develop or change knowledge, conduct or practice by someone or something which already possesses, or has access to, the necessary resources and the means of evaluating the acquisition' (Bernstein 1999: 267). But he is clear: 'Curriculum defines what counts as valid knowledge, pedagogy defines what counts as valid transmission of knowledge' (Bernstein 1975: 85). What this chapter has tried to show is that confusion between curriculum and pedagogy, or conflation of the two, has led to problems in the implementing of that curriculum. The various reform efforts have thus far largely missed this distinction in thinking about curriculum, pedagogy and the failure to improve the possibilities education offers students in the majority of schools in South Africa.

If any act of curriculum construction is to decide what knowledge is of most worth to its citizens, then a consideration of knowledge *and* knower is crucial. And the structuring of a curriculum in relation to what students can and should do at what point (selection and sequence) entails a theory of knowing. Different curricula deal with these categories differently – making all three explicit and coherent, emphasizing one to the exclusion of others, or holding the three in tension. Separating out curriculum and pedagogy allows for the possibility of making principled decisions around what belongs where and how we might achieve our educational aspirations. It may also enhance clarity around the possibilities for stipulation in terms of knowledge, knowers and knowing, and how we might meaningfully achieve educational change in a society with an enduring fractured social milieu, with a very particular history and a fragile knowledge project.

Note

1   For example, in the case of Curriculum 2005 where there was an attempt to insert a 'constructivist' notion of pedagogy, where student discovery was prioritized and where knowledge was treated as open and negotiable, in a system where the authority of the teacher and her knowledge had for years been paramount in the social relations in the classroom, premised on class, ethnic and historical bases (see Chick 1996), as well as relating to the extent to which teachers had been given an opportunity to 'internalise the grammar of the subject' in question (Muller 1989), i.e. the nature of their training and qualification.

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