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AUTHOR van Manen, Max
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ABSTRACT

The notion of the practical as a language for curriculum and the concept of curriculum as the study of educational experience are investigated and elaborated for their methodological implications. It is shown philosophically and by means of concrete illustrations that different forms of curriculum enquiry produce different forms of discourse and different modes of cognition or awareness. Thus, the meaning of the practical changes depending on the use functions of the curriculum knowledge. Suggestions are made for methodological possibilities of curriculum work and for linking curriculum thought to action. (Author)

(draft)

NOTES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LANGUAGE OF THE PRACTICAL, THE MEANING OF EXPERIENCE AND THE METHODOLOGY OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Max van Manen

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
252 Bloor Street West; Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V6

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The Idea of the Practical

Curriculum concerns are practical matters not theoretic ones*. Joseph Schwab, Decker Walker, and others have argued this point persuasively. The person who attempts to decide what sort of curriculum should be presented in elementary or secondary schools, or how that curriculum should be determined, is trying to decide what course of action is best for a given range of circumstances, says Decker Walker (1975). This then is the appropriate language of curriculum, the language of practical discourse or deliberation. And Walker quotes Schwab when he characterizes the idea of curriculum as practical deliberation, it

> "treats both ends and means and must treat them as mutually determining one another. It must try to identify, with respect to both, what facts may be relevant. It must try to ascertain the relevant facts in the concrete case. It must try to identify the desiderata in the case. It must generate alternative solutions. It must make every effort to trace the branching pathways of consequences which may flow from each alternative and affect desiderata. It must then weigh alternatives and their costs and consequences against one another, and choose, not the right alternative, for there is no such thing, but the best one." (Schwab, 1970, p.36).

Schwab has developed his concept of the practical over and against a critique of the significance of principles of theoretical inquiry for curriculum practice. All theory of learning, of personality, etc. is necessarily incomplete, Schwab says, only examining a limited slice of educational reality from the limiting perspective of some inquiry principle. For the clarification of any

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*To argue that curriculum concerns are practical does not mean to say that curriculum study cannot be theoretic. It means that the object of all curriculum study consists of practical processes, practical procedures and practical devices which link educational theory with action, or which match knowledge with experience. The practical is a concept used to convey the programmatic concern of curriculum.

particular curriculum issue there frequently are many theories, partial theories, and many theoretical positions which might provide for alternative or complementary interpretations, understandings and solutions of a given problem. In order to guard against ill-guided practice and the doctrinaire application of any single incomplete theory or set of theories, Schwab proposes the introduction of a special discipline consisting of the practical, the quasi-practical, and the eclectic. The arts of the practical, says Schwab, is concerned with choice and action, leading to defensible decision. Schwab's theory of the idea of deliberation occupies a central place in the arts of the practical. Deliberation is the process dealing with problem choice which precedes action. The second prominant theoretical development for the practice of curriculum are the arts of the eclectic. Schwab describes the eclectiv as the procedures for dealing with diverse theories in a practical context. The eclectic arts aim at clarifying the limiting perspective provided by any one theory, and the sorts of interpretations which theory permits of subject matter. In other words, the eclectic suggests a way of linking theory and practice by means of "a systematic comparison of the principle premises, methods and selections" of theories in the treatment of "the whole subject matter of the whole plurality of enquiries" with respect to concrete and particular curriculum concerns.

While Schwab's theoretical writings on the practical have made a widely recognized contribution to the curriculum literature, there is the puzzling phenomenon that his theories have not yet been demonstrated to be very productive practically. Except for some related and promising contributions to the literature of the practical by Decker Walker, the concrete utility of the arts of the practical for real schools and real classrooms has been disappointing. In this paper I make an attempt to describe some problems associated with the concept of the practical. One problem, I believe, is that practical deliberation, as conceived by Schwab is seldom realized in concrete situations. Teachers freely engage in much talk about their everyday curriculum practices. But whether this talk is heard in the staffroom or around the curriculum committee table, it seldom displays the level of deliberative reflectivity that one would hope to hear. Practical deliberation, in the sense of Schwab is far more seldom a useful category for describing or conceptualizing actual curriculum talk than the Schwabian analysts seem to realize. Another difficulty, I believe, is

associated with Schwab's critique of the misguided confidence of educators in the promises of theoretic knowledge for curriculum practice. It seems that even though Schwab points out that the practical arts must "treat both ends and means", it is not at all clear how the idea of the practical is related to the various knowledge sources of the major theoretical traditions in the social and human sciences. Schwab's references to "theory" and "science" suggests that he aligns himself with the commonly accepted "scientific" North American usage of these terms. Although Schwab's free style and his suggestive prose make it difficult to commit him to any definitive position, it seems that his theory of the practical is motivated mainly by the frustrations of educators to gain more effective control by means of scientific knowledge over the practical activities of curriculum development. Schwab does not give evidence that he is aware of the articulation of different pragmatic functions of theoretic knowledge in its application to concrete situations. This is illustrated also in Schwab's narrowly conceived, Aristotelian epistemology. The difference between theoretic inquiry and practical discourse is, according to Schwab, that the theoretic deals with truth and the practical deals with action. I hope to demonstrate that this position is untenable from the broader perspective of the social and the human sciences. Finally, in this paper I will attempt to argue that the concept of the practical acquires distinctive meanings at various levels of deliberative rationality.

No doubt practical curriculum actions range all the way on a continuum from rather routine, taken-for-granted practices to the radically reflexive attitude of critical deliberation. But curriculum specialists often have not recognized that while typically professional curriculum development tends to turn into a reflective and critical activity, this is not true of local or classroom curriculum work. When teachers are involved in the process of daily planning, adapting materials, developing courses, arranging subject matter content, teaching, evaluating, and so forth, they do so largely uncritically and unreflectively. This is the attitude of everyday work. The practical in this sense is a concern of ordinary life, it expresses itself in our daily activities, in the routines or taken-for-granted gounds of everyday life. The language of the practical is the ordinary curriculum language inside and outside the classroom, i.e. the practical reasoning and acting in which teachers, students and other educators engage during the developing/planning and

the teaching/learning phases of the curriculum. Typically this language is fleeting and full of experiential and concrete detail which can be partially recorded by paper and pencil, coding instruments, tape recorder, or videotape. However, none of these recording techniques probably can fully catch the rich and subtle detail of meanings of all that transpires during the transactions and interactions among the teachers, learners and the curriculum materials.

It is instructive to note that a teacher, while it is his daily business to work with curriculum knowledge, problem solving skills, children, etc., he does so largely in a manner of course and in an act of practicality which is characteristic of everyday life. How the teacher starts his class or how he teaches Johnny to sit still or how to do long division is part of the knowledge which he has, so to speak, at hand. Schutz (1971) who has made special study of the character of the ordinary life world, says about practical knowledge, i.e. the knowledge of the man who acts and thinks within the world of his daily life, that it is incoherent, only partially clear, and not at all free from contradictions. Although the teacher almost certainly has available relatively isolated bodies of fairly consistent knowledge, for the most parts "clear and distinct experiences are intermingled with vague conjectures; suppositions and prejudices cross well-proven evidences; motives, means and ends, as well as causes and effects are strung together without clear understanding of their real connections". However, the fact that our knowledge is not so well organized, not so clear, and not at all based upon hard evidence rather makes practical action possible. Our knowledge in daily life is governed by rules, habits, inclinations and principles on which we have learned to rely and the origin of which is almost beyond our control. Our knowledge in our daily work and living, Schutz points out, is not without hypotheses, inductions and predictions, but they all have the character of unreflectiveness, of likelihood, and of reasonable expectations based on the experience that it-worked-in-the-past and therefore we expect it will work again in this concrete situation. The consistency of this form of practical knowledge is not that of natural laws, but that of precedents and typical sequences. (Schutz, p. 23).

What is the nature of the practical reasoning and acting that are based on this knowledge? Teachers are said to be continuously confronted with situations wherein they must make practical curriculum decisions. Deliberating,

valuing, choosing, rational acting, all these have been described as common processes of the curriculum. However, most everyday deliberations, in so far as they are indeed "reflective" are seldom "rational" in a strict sense of the term. At the point where a teacher is confronted with the task of mastering a situation or making curriculum decisions, he tends to appeal to his emotions, his interests, his knowledge, and to his stock of recipes, ready-made rules, skills and know-hows arising out of his past practical experiences. Thus, the curriculum language of the practical is situated in the verbal and non-verbal concrete actions of teachers. That is, the practical can be studied in the kinds of things teachers do and don't do--in the ways they talk to real students in concrete teaching-learning instances, in the ways they organize and select materials and prepare themselves for instruction, and in the ways they cope with the burden of pressures from parents, administrators, students, fellow teachers, etc. This is the natural process of deliberation and much of it occurs in the privacy of one's own mind or behind closed doors. The attitude of everyday practical curriculum activities typically is mostly unreflective, largely based upon routine practices and taken-for-granted expectancies which form the stabilizing features of the curriculum as a practical and ongoing affair. To get a grasp on the practical would involve an effort to make the reflexive and taken-for-granted character of the routine and problematic of practical curriculum activities visible for inspection. This is important, since it would reveal, for example, under what conditions, in what form, and to what extent curriculum deliberation can be expected to take place, and how deliberate curriculum intervention might be seen to occur. Making visible the stable features of preactive, interactive, and postactive teaching would enable us to identify the ofen unexamined, expected ways in which curriculum is being done. These are the seen-but-unnoticed or the taken-for-granted attributes of curriculum processes. The question then becomes, how can one problematize concrete curriculum talk and curriculum activities, in order to reveal their hidden or taken-for-granted character?

Commonplaces become visible, for example, in the mere act of reflection upon the otherwise apparently fleeting, partly routine and partly deliberative processes of teacher curriculum development. Five teachers, all graduate students, were asked to keep a daily record of ongoing happenings, ideas, procedures, decisions, activities, and experiences during the day that they were

involved in developing a curriculum unit of instruction*. Although these students were excellent teachers and had developed units in the past, they found this exercise most frustrating and, in fact, interfering with their ordinary work. The simple task of writing a protocol of the work seemed to make the job more difficult than usual. Curriculum plans, aims and instructional strategies for some of these teachers seem to mature in ways which are hard to catch in writing. For example, ordinarily a teacher might see an article or a cartoon in the newspaper and promptly decide that this cartoon might be worth saving for his Social Studies unit on "Poverty". However, in writing down, retrospectively about this event he reflectively would attempt to legitimate his picking the cartoon in terms of some educational means or end. The point is that this teacher did not necessarily have an objective in mind when he reached for the scissors. The cartoon simply struck him as significant or interesting. What is the nature of private deliberation?

> "A first glance at the protocol materials upon their completion was an almost unpleasant surprise to me. The teachers had been asked to systematically keep a diary of the daily work that they had accomplished. What I received in my hands were four extensive notebooks containing a seemingly chaotic series of jottings, scribblings, sometimes full page accounts. And on many pages written thoughts were connected with other thoughts by arrow, line drawings, and so forth. I guess that I must have felt taken aback somewhat, since I had expected, perhaps some consistent storyline of the development of a teaching unit. Only one teacher's diary more or less did show such journalistic account. All the teachers already had indicated during our meetings that the keeping of a diary turned out to be highly frustrating. On more than one occasion did I have to urge them to continue this job and to be as truthful as possible in their daily accounting. One teacher, in fact, found it an impossible task and apologetically gave up the effort. Why should one wish to make a point out of this observation? Is the frustration not due simply to the fact that the job of keeping a record becomes tedious and a chore for these teachers? No doubt this is true. But such explanation does not go far enough. Something else happened during the diary keeping; it forced the teachers to adopt a reflective attitude which they do not assume ordinarily. The point that teachers by themselves ordinarily do not deliberate or reflect upon their practices is commonplace which does not strike one as very significant.

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*These protocols have been accumulated in the context of a small-scale study into (pretheoretical) teacher-based curriculum unit development in social studies education, funded by the Research and Development Office of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, Ontario.

But I believe that this observation becomes more interesting and comprehensible when it is interpreted in the context of an analytical view of the practical language of curriculum development.

The protocols revealed things that most teachers know but that they do not acknowledge necessarily. The practical activity of curriculum unit development in social education is a highly individual and often a seemingly unsystematic activity. Guidelines or steps for a systematic development (of rationale, objectives, selection of content, construction of materials, deciding what approaches to take, etc.) are used little. For example, teachers may feel the need to think about some rationale for the teaching unit, but this need may not arise until late in the process of materials development. Similarly, objectives for instruction might be formulated at any time during the development process. Often the aims and objectives do not serve the function to keep a clear vision of the instructional ends in view (in the sense of certain learning outcomes). Instead the objectives finally were formulated in a manner which suggests that they served the purpose of "justifying" whatever went before, or maybe they merely functioned in the way of "providing an account" of the job.

None of the teachers who participated in the study did take the same starting point in their unit development activity. One teacher started to organize a course by asking the librarian for reference readings on poverty and related topics. Another teacher began by sketching out some conceptual framework. A third teacher made a beginning by formulating some teaching objectives, and a fourth teacher was playing around with some plans of how a unit on "poverty" might fit into his larger social science course.

In trying to make sense of the protocol materials, I found myself continually making use of the interpretive devices given by my knowledge of the personalities of the individual teachers and their particular school environment. Thus, my familiarity with this teacher D's secondary school, the type of semestering being used, the attitudes and the privileged backgrounds of the students, and my understanding of the way D perceived himself to be relating to the students, all these descriptors made it perfectly understandable to me why D was concerned first and foremost with the problem of how he should write up this course in the school course bulletin. It was only after D had managed to formulate a fairly attractive course description that he started to think more seriously of the actual substance of the course.

When we later discussed the working activities of the curriculum unit development job, some of the teachers felt that they had been fairly systematic in their approach. They felt this even though the protocols did not seem to suggest that the work had been carried out in the successive stages of some prescriptive curriculum development design. It seemed that the systematic appearance of the work is a feature of the many rules of thumb, routing practices, and personal habits which permit a teacher to cherish and experience the subjectively felt confidence in his own practices as 'competent'." (Van Manen, 1974).

The point is that teachers usually proceed as if they do know what is and what is not an appropriate, worthwhile or adequate curriculum decision. However, upon deliberate reflection of their activities (such as by keeping a diary of the curriculum process) they frequently are confronted by the fact that their confidence in the proceed-as-usual is placed in doubt. And this is particularly true if they suspect that the proceed-as-usual may not meet the expectations of some outside observer. It is under the pressure of uncertainties such as doubts created by new expectations that teachers are forced out of the proceed-as-usual and into the deliberative process. For example, short-term workshops are known to be notoriously ineffective. It is not uncommon to hear teachers remark that they did not acquire many new insights from a curriculum workshop which intended to demonstrate the application of some new principle. However, what teachers often do acquire from workshops is a deep-seated feeling of sudden uncomfortableness with their own practice. Confidence in the proceed-as-usual has given way to the insecure feeling of doubtful practice. In other words, a commonplace has become visible which now stands in need, either for legitimation, justification, or for new (changed) practice. Both require deliberation for their solution.

It is doubt alone which makes reflective curriculum deliberation possible. And doubt arises in situations where the world-taken-for-granted is disrupted by the conflicting or incongruous nature of a new experience, or by a new set of expectations which cannot be met by the stock of practical knowledge at hand. Recent changes toward decentralization in curriculum development responsibilities have altered the traditional role and the concommitant performance expectations of teachers, consultants, etc. It is a commonplace of theory of institutions that social actors tend to identify themselves with the socially constructed descriptions of role performance. Institutional shifts from centralized to decentralized curriculum responsibilities have resulted in redefinitions of roles which describe the typifications of performances of all the parties involved. In a more centralized setting individual teachers may have involved themselves voluntarily in curriculum development activities, now they must see themselves as teachers, planners and developers. The teachers, as well as those who support, consult and advise them, presently are confronted with a set of institutionalized expectations which demand a form of practical reasoning and practical acting beyond the available stock of recipes, ready-made rules, interests and knowledge which they have available.

Deliberation and Rational Choice-Making

Literally "de-liberation" refers to the process of removing the mind from a state of indecision or liberty. It implies a committing of thought to potential action, a choice from an array of possible alternatives toward the realization of a given means or end. Although the idea of deliberation is important for understanding scientific rationality it is equally important to realize that practical deliberation usually is not equivalent to scientific reasoning. Dewey has effectively exposed the rational theory of deliberation as contrary to empirical fact. According to Dewey, joy and suffering, pain and pleasure, the agreeable and disagreeable, all play their considerable role in deliberation. Deliberation is oriented toward the future. Therefore Schutz described deliberation very appropriately as thinking in the future perfect tense:

> "We cannot find out which of the alternatives will lead to the desired and without imagining this act as already accomplished..... Only by considering the act as accomplished can we judge whether the contemplated means for bringing it about are appropriate or not, or whether the end to be realized accommodates itself to the general plan of our life." (Schutz. 1971. p.77).

Many things can go wrong in practical reasoning and practical acting. Austin has pointed out that one problem of the practical resides in the failure of properly appreciating a situation. We may have deliberated with much information and intelligence an appropriate course of action and yet hit upon a strategy or a decision of priorities which lead to disastrous results. In practical life it happens often that "we may know the facts and yet look at them mistakenly or perversely, or not fully realize or appreciate something, or even be under a total misconception." (Austin, p.39). Therefore, lack of success in curriculum activities may more often be a matter of failure to appreciate the situation rather than inappropriate deliberation given by lack of information, lack of consideration, sensitivity or by lack of intelligence. Moreover, the possibility of deliberation can be illusory (Taylor, 1966). For example, a teacher may believe that he is deliberating about alternative courses of action, where actually these alternatives do not exist. Similarly, a teacher or curriculum worker may think that he is deliberating when, in fact, he is only driven to rationalize for a course of action which he cannot help but take. This happens in cases where a definite personal bias, strong attitudes or an immutable perspective interferes with the deliberative process.

All deliberation is a search for a way to act, and thus, there is reasonable and unreasonable choice leading to practical action. By unreasonable choice is meant that sometimes decisions are made which cannot be reasonably expected to lead to the desired results. Frequently, actions are the outcomes of a mental process which Taylor has described as a vacillation between competing impulses, desires or motives. Actions which are initiated by impulses or inclinations are, therefore, not deliberated practical actions. Although this does not imply that such actions are necessarily unreasonable. Instead such actions often can be understood in terms of the personal characteristics of the actor. Dewey (1957), Schutz (1971), Garfinkel (1967), and Taylor (1966) all have pointed out that deliberation is usually motivated by emotions, desires, impulses, tendencies, etc. Practical deliberation is seldom characterized by reason alone. Often one finds himself deliberating about the best route of action and then, in spite of the preceding deliberations, yet act upon a final impulse or inclination. Taylor (1966, p.17) observed that:

> "More commonly one finds himself partly trying to decide what to do, partly trying to predict what he is going to do, partly deliberating about what to do if the predictions turn out right and, perhaps in addition, deliberating about whether to hold a decision that has been at least tentatively made, and so on."

Although practical curriculum deliberation is not identical to scientific reasoning it is always characterized by rational elements. Schutz (1971) did a now almost classical series of studies on the problem of rationality in everyday practical life*. And Garfinkel (1967), through his ethnomethodological investigations into the methodical character of everyday practical reasoning and acting, has further developed and refined Schutz's account. He has identified at least ten elements of rational thought, some of which may occur in practical life, and at least four rationalities which are seldom or never found in practical deliberation. Among the latter rationalities Garfinkel counts the requirement that the deliberated steps, "contain only scientifically verifiable assumptions that have to be in full compatibility with the

*Alfred Schutz. Collected Papers, Vol.1: "Common Sense and Scientific Interpretation of Human Action", (pp. 3-47); "Choosing Among Projects of Action", (pp. 67-96); "On Multiple Realities", (pp. 207-286). Collected Papers, Vol. II: "The Problem of Rationality in the Social World", (pp. 64-90); "The Stranger", (pp. 91-105).

whole of scientific knowledge;" and "that they remain in full compatibility with the rules that define scientifically correct decisions of grammar and procedure" (1967, pp.271-272).

I believe that the above considerations throw sufficient doubt on the unclarified usefulness of Schwab's characterization of curriculum as practical deliberation. Those who have participated in teacher based curriculum committees know that to speak of curriculum as a deliberative process, by means of which best choices are made after careful analysis of implications, assumptions and consequences of alternative possibilities, is phenomenologically wrong. Even at the level of university based curriculum projects the deliberative procedures that are used to construct experimental program types are seldom reflective in a fundamental sense. The idea of curriculum as practical deliberation, in the sense of Schwab, does not describe things as they are. Rather it provides for a recommendation to strive for an increasingly reflective attitude in the pursuit of a truly critical understanding of the concept of the practical. A concept of the practical, in order to be of interest to curriculum specialists has to be reflective to some degree. In this paper I wish to argue that deliberation as practical curriculum action may occur at several levels of reflectivity. Each level of reflectivity presumes an active awareness of the epistemological assumptions upon which the corresponding concept of the practical is based.

A practical attitude is reflected in the question what difference knowledge makes in the everyday enterprise of education. The paradigm of a practical situation is a situation in which there are conflicts or in which there are things to be done or acted upon. The task is to decide what is to be done and how it is to be done. But a practical judgment very much is a function of the degree of reflectiveness of the critical-practical attitude of the actor. This critical-practical attitude determines the way in which an individual in fact perceives a practical situation: the nature of the conflicts or the kinds of things that are to be done. From the perspective of critical theory or critical epistemology it is possible not only to distinguish levels of deliberative rationality by means of which knowledge is mobilized for a practical situation. It is also possible from the frame of critical theory of knowledge to make distinctions among different interpretations of the idea of the practical. Critical theory or critical epistemology is a special elaboration of the more or less conventional distinctions among the major traditions of social inquiry. These distinctions are not new but they have been articulated in a most scholarly manner by Gerard Radnitzky (1973), and by men such as Paul Ricoeur (1973), Joseph Kockelmans (1967),

Theodore Kisiel (1971), Trent Schroyer (1973), and others. Roughly a division can be made among three main streams of social research and theorizing (see van Manen, 1975). Radnitzky calls these distinctions "Contemporary Schools of Meta-science". Each of the schools provides the philosophical framework for a group of related social theories of man and society. While every social science has its own legitimating meta-theory one needs to adopt an even more fundamentally reflective frame in order to create an inventory of the ways in which philosophers look at science. For example, the philosophy of logical empiricism, which speaks for the research tradition of empirical-analytic science, is mainly preoccupied with methodological problems and theory development. But, says Radnitzky, those oriented to a research tradition cannot critically assess the value of its contribution, any more than you can see the contact lens on your eye, which, nonetheless, influences your seeing. For this reason Radnitzky sets out to develop a (praxiological) theory of research which constitutes a platform for a critical perspective, i.e., a style of thinking, which enables a placing of the contemporary stream of science in a wider context. There are the hermeneutic and the dialectical sciences such as phenomenological anthropology, ethnomethodology, analytical sociology, and critical theory, and there are the behavioral or the strict sciences such as structural-functionalism, cybernetics, and other behavioral theories. Radnitzky refers to the hermeneutic and the critical sciences as the Continental schools and to empirical-analytic science as the Anglo-Saxon stream of research and theorizing. The point is that in North America too social science is broadening its conventional epistemological infra-structure. This broadening of the field of theoretical-practical possibilities in social science is accompanied by a changing view of the relationship between man and knowledge, and by a new concept of the meaning of objectivity and of the practical possibilities of knowledge in everyday life. For the curriculum question, however, most promising in my view is a recent development of critical social theory which emerged from the neo-Marxist tradition of the Frankfurter school. In his book Theory and Practice Habermas explicates the systematic relationship that exists between the logical structure of a science and the pragmatic structure of the possible applications of the knowledge generated within its framework.

Habermas is capable of linking in a unique way, theory with practice, knowledge with action, and subject with object. At a "quasi-transcendental" level Habermas bases his theory of knowledge and practical knowledge and practical action on the concept of "human interests" which are seen to underlie every human orientation. The practical significance of knowledge is that owning knowledge, like owning

wealth, inadvertently invests the proprietor with the practical interests inherent in the functions of that knowledge. The concept of "cognitive interest" is used to refer the existential roots and the practical function of all theoretic knowledge to their anthropological origin. Habermas distinguishes among cognitive interests in the practical activities of (a) production and technical control, (b) communciation and interpretive understanding, and (c) emancipation and liberation (see fig. 1). Furthermore, each form of practical action is guided by the cognitive interests of the science that promotes it.

THREE CONCEPTS OF THE PRACTICAL
(a) Practical ability--the practical as technique: knowing how to predict possible consequences of alternative actions; knowing how to act instrumentally and in a manner technically appropriate to achieve a given end. KNOWLEDGE GUIDES ACTION INSTRUMENTALLY TO PRACTISE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF CURRICULUM.
(b) Practical understanding--the practical as interpretation: knowing how to perceive social meanings, values, feelings, motives, actions, experiences, and knowing how to analyze curriculum views, conceptions, preconceptions, educational assumptions, prejudgments, frameworks. KNOWLEDGE GUIDES ACTION COMMUNICATIVELY TO PRACTISE POSSIBLE CONCENSUS AND COMMON UNDERSTANDINGS.
(c) Practical criticism--the practical as emancipation: knowing how to problematize distorted social relationships, knowing how to perceive oppressive interests lying behind knowledge and rationalizations, knowing how to locate the existential grounds of ideological arguments. KNOWLEDGE GUIDES ACTION NORMATIVELY TO PRACTISE AUTONOMY AND A CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY AS JUSTICE, EQUALITY, THE GOOD LIFE, ETC.

figure 1

If "science" is looked at as a system which aims at the development of knowledge then Habermas' notion of cognitive interests focuses on the practical use-function of the knowledge produced by science. For example, empirical-analytic science develops theoretic knowledge such as behavioral theory of learning which is, for purposes of practical action, technically exploitable. In other words, if theory can explain and predict learning to take place under controlled and controllable conditions then this theory can be put to practical use "to make students learn". Usually this concept of the practical is associated with the idea of "techniques" and with notions of "effectiveness" and "efficiency".

TERMS OF LOGICAL AND PRAGMATIC STRUCTURE OF KNOWLEDGE

logical structure of theoretic knowledge	theoretic orientations	guiding cognitive interest	concept of the practical	practical criteria for deliberation	possible aspec of dominant curriculum mode
(a) empirical-analytic positivistic hypothetico-deductive experimental nomothetic correlational	behavioral learning theory structural function-alism S.O.R. theories behavior modification systems theory	technical control	making means-ends recom-mendations using technical rules acting instrumentally ability to predict	efficiency effectiveness economy	input-output expert based top-down administrative skill oriented systems approach
(b) hermeneutic phenomenological interpretive historical analytic	phenomenology hermeneutics ethnomethodology symbolic interac-tionism analytic sociology language analysis	communi-cative under-standing	orienting actions thru "Verstehende" under-standing facilitating communi-cation establishing "reson-ance" by making "visible" motives, authentic experi-ences, purposes of actions, frameworks, life-worlds, etc.	defensibility of position among al-ternatives true communication of educational ex-perience co-orientational un-derstanding	interactional choice-making participatory laissez-faire decentralized humanistic approac
(c) includes (a) & (b) dialectic critical self-reflective	critical theory neo-Marxism psycho-analysis ethnomethodology	emancipa-tion or praxis	liberating from domi-nation arranging social con-ditions prerequsite for true consensus uncovering repressive interests	critical-practical norms of justice, equality, etc. critical self-under-standing worthwhile lifeforms in a radical sense	problem-solving dialogical self-determination free school alternative cur-riculum "subversive" approa

figure 2

In a broader sense science is a complex knowledge system composed of subsystems, each characterized by its own internal logic-in-use. This logic-in-use is described in terms of methodological procedures for doing research and a complex set of standards or norms which distinguishes valid from invalid knowledge and which specifies criteria for truth determination and theory construction. Also, and this is especially interesting to the issue of the practical in curriculum, each subsystem for doing science is associated with an internally consistent concept of the practical. Furthermore, each form of cognitive interest commands a distinct and logically identifiable orientation of social science: the empirical-analytic, the hermeneutic/phenomenological, and the critical theory/psycho-analytical orientation. Thus, empirical-analytic or behavioral science addresses empirical problems. The knowledge generated by their cognitive activity becomes practically useful in its application to technical-instrumental problems. In turn, phenomenological and hermeneutic science deals with interpretive problems and the knowledge constructed by this cognitive approach is practically significant in its possibility to provide for communication and practical orientation to action. Finally, critical theory and psycho-analytic approaches in the social sciences typically treat normative problems. And this cognitive activity is directed to involve praxis, i.e., critical knowledge aims at emancipatory practical action, self-determination and liberation (see fig.2).

On the basis of this quick sketch of the orientations of social science and their cognitive interests it is possible to outline the levels of reflectivity of deliberative rationality associated with the various interpretations of the practical. On the first level of deliberative rationality the practical is concerned mainly with means rather than ends. The methodological state of empirical theories makes available to curriculum a set of principles, theories and technical-practical recommendations which seem appropriate for the practical task of achieving certain objectives of curriculum development. On this level the practical refers to the technical application of educational knowledge and of basic curriculum principles for the purpose of attaining a given end. However, it is true that few such principles exist. Educational research has had great difficulty demonstrating that some curriculum approaches are more effective in the achievement of determinate learning outcomes than others. When there exist alternative, conflicting or competing principles, and, therefore, when there are a multitude of technical recommendations available, a second level of deliberative rationality is necessary.

In the face of an abundance of theories, principles and views, curriculum deliberation permits a translation of a manifold of alternative technical recommendations and their consequences in practice. But the deliberative rationality of empirical-analytic theory does not offer norms for choice-making among alternative practical possibilities, except for those norms which are inherent in the instrumental attitude of a technological rationality. Thus, the rationality of the "best choice" is defined in accordance with the principles of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. A higher level of deliberative rationality is needed when it is recognized that the instrumental rationality of empirical-analytic theory unwittingly obligates educators to an attitude which serves the self-legitimating process of technological progress, including the obsession with accountability criteria of efficiency, effectiveness and economy.

On this higher level of deliberative rationality it is assumed that every choice is based on a value commitment to some interpretive framework of those involved in the deliberative process: teachers, students, curriculum specialists, parents, administrators, etc. Deliberation refers here to the process of analysing and clarifying individual and cultural experiences, meanings, perceptions, assumptions, prejudments, and presuppositions for the purpose of orienting practical actions. Curriculum and teaching-learning are seen as processes of establishing communication and common understandings. At this level of deliberative rationality the focus has shifted toward an interpretive understanding of the nature and quality of educational experience and to a relativistic ethic of making practical choices. But in order to deliberate issues of worthwhileness of educational goals and of educational experience a yet higher level of deliberative rationality is needed.

It is on the highest level of deliberative rationality that the practical assumes its classical politico-ethical meaning of social wisdom. On this level practical deliberation addresses itself (self-)reflectively to the question of the worthwhileness of knowledge and the nature of the social conditions necessary for the raising of the question of worthwhileness in the first place. Therefore, the practical involves a constant critique of domination, of institutions and of repressive forms of authority. The norm is a distortion free model of a communication situation which specifies social roles and social structures of a living together in unforced communication; that is, no repressive dominance,

no asymetry or inequality exists among the participants of the educational processes. Universal consensus free from delusions or distortions is the ideal of a deliberative rationality that pursues worthwhile educational ends in self-determination, community, and on the basis of justice and equality.

The Practical as the Technical, Communication and Emancipation

One of Habermas' main concerns has been to expose the ideological character of the empirical-analytic sciences in favor of a reconstructed logic of the "practical". In doing this he sets forth the work already begun by other proponents of the Frankfurter school such as Adorno, Horkheimer and Wellmer. According to Habermas scientific inquiry has become a one-dimensional world which produces knowledge of a certain kind. And because of its position of dominance over the field of research and theory development all knowledge tends to be reduced to scientific knowledge in the sense of strict nomothetic theory development or "soft" variations thereof. This is the danger of an extreme positivist ideology:

> "the danger of an exclusively technical civilization, which is devoid of the interconnection between theory and praxis, can be clearly grasped; it is threatened by the splitting of its consciousness, and by the splitting of human beings into two classes--the social engineers and the inmates of closed institutions." (1971, p.282).

In a culture where the knowledge industry is dominated strongly by a positivist tradition of science it is not surprising that the predominant concern of educational practice has become an instrumental preoccupation with "techniques", "control", and with means-ends criteria of efficiency and effectiveness. This concern is visible in the attempt of school systems to improve education by perfecting the administration, and in the heavy emphasis of educational institutes on programs modelled on movements such as competency-based teacher education (CBTE), performance-based teacher education (PBTE), etc. The shortcomings of these models are clear.

> "The preoccupation of an instrumental curriculum with questions of objectives, achievement, and measurement of learning outcomes tends to be at the expense of the clouding of two more consequential issues: the question of determining what curriculum is, in fact, most worth the students' while, both, with respect to the purposes and the experiences which the school curriculum provides for." (Jencks and Banes).

Empirical-analytic science cannot deal with the issue of worthwhileness or the quality of educational experience. Instead, curriculum is understood as a nexus of behavioral modes which must be monitored, objectified, rationalized and made accountable. Habermas' theory of cognitive interests makes comprehensible, from a critical point of view, that much contemporary curriculum thinking and educational theorizing is motivated by a guiding interest which is "practical" in a technical or managerial sense (van Manen 1975). That is to say, the use function of empirical-analytic knowledge which specifies cause-and-effect relationships and functional relations of teaching-learning behaviors and curriculum variables is situated in its rational-technical manipulability. This technical-instrumental attitude is reflected in teacher education programs where the need for "practical relevancy" is defined in terms of how best to increase "teacher competency" and curriculum effectiveness. For the teacher this requires the ability to apply a variety of techniques to the curriculum and to the teaching-learning process so, that a predetermined set of objectives can be "produced" most efficiently and most effectively. The relationship between knowledge and practical action is constructed by means of a stock of practical insights in the form of principled techniques, know-hows, etc. that are derived from research and propositional theory construction. It is very difficult for educators not to invest knowledge and theory with technical significance. The dominant position of empirical-analytic science in education and curriculum assures that the "practical" question is converted almost automatically into an instrumental one: How can knowledge make the curriculum more effective, more efficient and more productive? The point is not that these are bad questions but that there are other questions to be asked.

Of course, critique of the role of science in contemporary society has been provided by authors from a variety of orientations. For example, Roszak (1971) has likened science, its objectifying and dehumanizing attitude to the great myth we accept without question. The cultural preoccupation with "objectivity" functions as a state-of-being, he says, which fills the very air we breathe in a scientific culture. According to Roszak it grips us subliminally in all we say, feel and do. Like most social scientists in North America, educators too had almost total reverence for the promises science seemed to hold for practical human affairs since the nineteenth century. As science victoriously entered the twentieth century curriculum was born as an independent field of endeavor. An excellent account of the optimism of the early movement for

scientific curriculum making can be found in the review by Decker Walker (1975) of the Twenty-sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. In Decker Walker's words,

> "The authors of the Yearbook placed their professional faith in an authoritative science of education. They relied implicitly and explicitly on science as validation for practices and policies, and therefore they turned to science to justify their own stance--that curriculum making was properly the responsibility of professional curriculists. The science of education was hope rather than accomplishment then and has remained so to this day, leaving at best a shaky foundation for claims of professional expertise concerning curriculum.
>
> ...in asserting the importance of scientific study in curriculum-making they did not indicate any reservations or limitations about scientific study, nor did they acknowledge any competing positions." (Decker Walker, pp. 265-273).

A curious change in the concept of curriculum is visible in the way science was practically applied to the task of curriculum making. Until the late 1920's and especially in Bobbitt's How to Make a Curriculum, Charters' Curriculum Construction, and in the work of their contemporaries, science was used for the determination of the "what" of curriculum. Science was used as a practical devise for answering the question what shall be taught. Harold Rugg, in his 1926 article*, has described how, from 1910 onward the quantitative method began to be applied to the solution of education problems. Scientific methods were employed in the determination of socially worthwhile knowledge. This approach appeared most popular during the twenties in, for example, the construction of spelling lists and vocabulary inventories taken from the writings of bankers and other social groups. The Bagley investigation of the "Content of American History in the Seventh and Eighth Grades" presented the results of an accurate account of the contents of twenty-three American history publications between 1865 and 1911. The technique used for determining the curriculum was quantitative tabulation. That is, through empirical analysis of existing curricula and of social life the curriculum was constructed. Thus, there were studies of basic skills and facts of proved social worth; studies of basic concepts, generalizations, institutions, and problems which are needed for an understanding of contemporary life; and there were studies of job analysis in the vocations and professions. This methodology of quantitative analysis of curriculum

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became a tabulation of useful skills and social behaviors on the basis of principles of "frequency", "universality", and "cruciality" in everyday social use. The cost-accounting or efficiency motivation behind this objectifying attitude is visible also in the titles of the curriculum committees. For example, in the "Third Report of the Committee on Economy of Time in Education" in the year 1918, Mitchell published an outline of his analysis of cook books, factory payrolls, marked-down sales advertisements, and trade catalogues, which empirically delineated an inventory of specifiable behaviors required for effective citizenship. Others, like Camerer, tabulated what bankers thought citizens should know about banking. And in the investigations of Bassett of the content of state and national political platforms, between 1860 and 1916, he listed what should be included in a civics course. Increasingly textbooks and curricula were being developed which could recommend themselves to be scientifically tested and to represent the practical everyday behaviors of young and adult citizens. Thus, the practical usefulness of science for curriculum development consisted in the making of inventories, by means of quantitative method, of a limited number of useful human activities. Job analysis became the universal technique whereby the knowledge most worth having was identified, listed and specified in trainable units. "Activity analysis is the beginning of all curriculum making", said Bobbitt. "Find the activities which men perform or those which they should perform, and train for those." Bobbitt used scientific techniques for determining what the curriculum must teach. But since Bobbitt and many of his contemporaries basically operated on the assumptions of a no-change, status-quo model of society the question "what is most worthwhile knowing?" was never really answered. Such developments led Bode, an early critic of the doctrine of scientific curriculum making to remark: "Just how Bobbitt expects a scientific analysis to reveal desirable abilities and needs I am quite unable to discover. No scientific analysis known to man can determine the desirability or the need of anything."

It was in the late twenties, and most clearly with the work of Charters, that the emphasis in curriculum gradually shifted from a concern with the "what" to a concern with the "how". While Charters like Bobbitt applied the practical method of activity analysis for curriculum development to many diverse fields, he also began to apply the techniques of activity analysis to the task of teacher education. Kliebard (1975) has shown how Charters' teacher education program, such as The Commonwealth Teacher-Training Study of 1929, is a direct precursor of the presentday competency-based and performance-based teacher education program. Before 1920 science was used especially to determine most effectively the nature

of the curriculum content. Effective curriculum was a curriculum that could specify the type of behaviors which most readily would prepare the young people for their place in society. But as scientific method became applied to teacher education the idea of curriculum-as-effective-content changed into the idea of curriculum-as-effective-treatment. Probably partly as a result of the expanding knowledge field which placed a heavy burden on the amount of subject matter to be taught, the significant curriculum concern became how to teach more knowledge more effectively. Thus science was mobilized for the technological determination of the most effective curriculum organizations and approaches for teaching more content. In a sense curriculum concerns (what is valid knowledge?) were subverted by scientific method into teaching concerns (what are valid ways of teaching the knowledge?). While the scientific approach to curriculum making found its early critics in the 1920's with men such as Bode, a very similar critique of the behavioral doctrines of empirical-analytic science currently are represented by Jencks, Huebner, MacDonald, Pinar, Apple, Willis and other curriculum critics. Huebner is one of the most articulate curriculum critics.

> "Current curricular ideology reflects, almost completely, a technical value system. It has a means-end rationality that approaches an economic model. End states, end products, or objectives are specified as carefully and as accurately as possible, hopefully in behavioral terms. Activities are then designed which become the means to these ends or objectives." (Huebner).

Furthermore, there is increasing suspicion that the idea of curriculum as "applied techniques" and as "effective intervention" is an inadequate concept empirically (Coleman, Jencks). It is inadequate because there is very little evidence that any systematic curriculum treatment large enough to be statistically interesting has been significant in its outcome. Even in cases of system-wide applications of school curricula it has been most difficult to demonstrate differential effects of the curriculum in cognitive achievements (Len Berk,1975). Not the school curriculum but home background and the milieu of the community have shown to be the most effective determinants of differential achievements of school students. Large scale curriculum practices especially designed to teach school subject matter knowledge in a more effective manner do not seem to make an appreciable difference which would override the differences contributable to social class or ethnic background. Teachers know that students enter the school with basic differences which may reflect an intricate interaction of

physiological, biographical and situational factors. But for practical purposes student achievement cannot be reduced unequivocally to immutable indexes of learning abilities, attitude, intelligence, etc. Interpretations and reinterpretations of educational research on these matters have thrown sufficient doubt on results of research to adopt as yet the only moral stance possible, and that is, to take nothing for granted. Almost anything can happen. And many teachers know this.

In formulating learning objectives educators and methods texts frequently make use of the term "skills" to refer to a large array of cognitive processes that are to be taught by the curriculum. However, the word "skills" is an equivocal concept. It may refer to trainable "techniques", "procedures", or "ways-of-accomplishing things". This is an instrumental interpretation of "skills". But "skills" also may refer to some cognitive process that is inappropriately conceived of as "trainable" in a technical-instrumental sense. For example, it may refer to the practical-critical competency to "see", "perceive", or "notice" things which other people fail to be receptive to. Daniels uses the term "orientation" to refer to such "skills" of receptivity. The difference between "technical" skill-verbs and "orienting" skill-verbs is, that in response to the question: "What did you do all morning?" we can say: "I spent this morning memorizing a poem". But we cannot say: "I spent this morning noticing the problem of racism". From an empirical-analytic perspective the curriculum can deal with technical skills-verbs in a means-end manner. For example, the skills of reciting a piece of poetry can be broken down into a number of subsuming skills, such as memorizing the phrases, appropriate pronunciation and articulation of the words, etc. These skills probably can be trained in some straightforward manner. A poem can be taught by breaking it down into more easily memorizable parts. The more difficult "chunks" are recited more often until mastery is achieved, then the poem is committed to memory as a whole, etc. Thus, certain teaching-learning principles can be used to teach children the skill of reciting a certain piece of poetry. But from an empirical-analytic framework the notion of skills-as-orientation poses problems which usually are glossed over in "methods" textbooks. The pedagogical problem with respect to "orientations" is what we should do to prepare people to have receptions, says Daniels. How can we organize the curriculum so, that such and such an orientation skill can be achieved with a certain group of students? The question might have been:

How can the curriculum produce such and such orientations in pupils? The point is, that from an instrumental, measurable objectives frame of reference no "exacting" answer can be given.

The relevant point is that "orientations", in the way the term is being used here, often refers to the more consequential aspects of the school curriculum. For example, in social studies education students may develop a "critical orientation" to social problems. The concept of orientation can be understood as the existential referent in such phrases as "having an orientation", e.g. a scientist has a special orientation toward the world. Similarly teachers and students may have different orientations with respect to certain issues or subject matter. Thus, the term "orientation" is meant to refer to the specific ways in which an individual looks at the world. Concepts with roughly equivalent meanings are "worldview" (Weltansschauung), Von Uexkull's ethological concepts of the Umwelt and Wirkwelt referring to orientations which are typical of specific species. The concept of orientation refers to the way in which individual actors define their "action-world" (Parsons); and it refers to the "general schemes" in terms of which the individual "defines his situation" (W. I. Thomas); in ordinary language terms it includes the notions of "point of view", "perspective", a person's "way of looking at things", "outlook", "standpoint", and so on. Underlying every orientation is a definite epistemology, axiology and ontology, i.e., a person's orientation is composed of what be believes to be true, to be valuable, and to be real. That means that change with respect to a specific orientation may involve a rather drastic change in any of these three dimensions. An orientation has the uncanny quality of encapsulating the person who has learned to adopt it. As soon as a student enters a certain realm of thought, be it scientism or Zen, he has to make the rules of this realm his own; and consequently the evidences flowing from them will appear compelling to him. In the school curriculum the concept orientation may function as a device for making visible how each subject matter or knowledge area constitutes a way of making sense of the world.

> "As a student, I remember how upon entering an art class my orientation radically shifted from the one I had adopted during a biology lesson. During biology the teacher discussed the structure and function of the human hand. We observed the revolutionary characteristics in the hand bones of a Primate, an Australopithecus, and in modern man. And we noted how there was the straightening of the fingers in this series, and a broadening and lengthening of the last•

phalanx of the thumb. The advances in the opposability of the thumb and the related hand musculature perfected this remarkable organ of manipulation. However, then I walked into an art appreciation class. Some students chuckled as if caught by surprise; there, on the teacher's desk was a marvelous replica of Rodin's sculpture of the Praying Hands. The sensitive fingers, extending upwards in a devoted plea, transcending their instrumental function. How miraculously they expressed their earth-bound spirituality! I experienced the shift in orientation that came over me. I was in a different world with its own reality, its own values, feelings and beliefs. How inappropriate it would be to think of the saddle joint, the abductor pollicis or the evolution of the last phalanx of the pollex. How could something so familiar as a hand be a member of such different realities? Taking my place in the classroom I put my books down and involuntarily regarded my own hands. What strange objects if you thought about it! My own reflections took me back to the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke. This author recalls how he once, in reaching under the table for something he had dropped, "saw" his own hand groping. And for a moment it was as if this "thing" was leading a life of its own. It became a foreign object, or being of a different world, acting on its own mysterious impulse. I pondered about this curious phenomenon of being so alienated from something so typically human as a hand. How sensitive the man Rilke must have been to describe this experience in such poetic language that it left an indelible impression upon my mind. I tried to recall the exact words the poet used but the art teacher had started to speak. A quick glance at my neighbour told me that he had opened his book at a chapter on sculpture. The teacher was holding up Rodin's carving and again I was aware of a shift of orientation occurring from the reality of my private imagination to the reality of the classroom." (van Manen, 1973).

Moving from one orientation to another is experienced usually as a transition between two worlds, as a shift from one reality to another. Alfred Schutz speaks of "experiences of shock", when we move from one reality or orientation (he uses the term "province of meaning") to another. There are as many shock experiences as there are different realities in which a person partakes. Some examples Schutz provides are:

"... the shock of falling asleep as the leap into the world of dreams; the inner transformation we endure if the curtain in the theatre rises as the transition into the world of the stage-play; the radical change in our attitude if, before a painting, we permit our visual field to be limited by what is within the frame as the passage into the pictorial world; our quandary, relaxing into laughter, if, in listening to a joke, we are for a short time ready to accept the fictitious world of the jest as a reality in relation to which the world of our daily life takes on the character of foolishness; the child's turning toward his toy as the transition into the play-world; and so on.

> But also the religious experiences in all their varieties--for instance, Kierkegaard's experience of the "instant" as the leap into the religious sphere--is such a shock as well as the decision of the scientist to replace all passionate participation in the affairs of "this world" by a disinterested contemplative attitude." (Alfred Schutz, 1970).

I use the term "co-orientational grasping" to refer to the situation in which one person partakes in an orientation of another person. Co-orientational grasping occurs when a parent is playing with a child and momentarily suspends his beliefs in ordinary reality in exchange for the beliefs and feelings of the world of the child. And, of course, co-orientational grasping occurs in the classroom when, for example, the social studies teacher lets the student "live" through some historical event, or when the teacher perceptively pulls the student into the world of the "Black experiences", etc. Thus, co-orientational grasping is built into the teacher-learner relationship. The point is, however, that the teacher can make practical use of this relationship if he manages to arrive at a reflective knowledge of the structure and function of the notion of orientation. It simply is not enough to make use of an orientation, one also must understand the nature of having an orientation or, of having this specific orientation, and how it is being used. Questions the teacher must ask himself are with reference to the nature of the orientation of the world of the student. What kind of reality do young people live in? What is the nature of their beliefs? And what is considered valuable and important within their orientation toward their social world? Close examination of an individual's projects and actions makes possible phenomenological study of the relationship of the experiencing individual to his experienced physical and social world.

The practical as the achievement of communicative understanding of educational expressions, educational actions and educational experiences finds its theoretical roots in the interpretation theory of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, Ricoeur and Gadamer. The contemporary knowledge sources for interpretive practices are phenomenology, hermeneutics, analytical philosophy, ethnomethodology, aesthetics and the humanities. Hermeneutics is defined as the science of interpretation or the phenomenology of social understanding. Within the context of a hermeneutic framework curriculum is seen as the study of educational experience and as the communicative analysis of curriculum perspectives, orientations,

frameworks, etc. That is, curriculum knowledge is tied to practical educational experience through a concept of curriculum as analysis, interpretation and communication. This practical attitude is reflected in the work and courses of curriculists whose approach to curriculum is focussed on interpersonal communication, on group processes, on practical deliberation and on critical analysis of meanings, claims and implications of curriculum programs and positions. From the perspective of the hermeneutic frame there are no such things as stimuli, responses and measurable behaviors, instead, there are "encounters", "life-worlds", and "meanings", which invite investigation. The focus is on "actions" not on "behaviors". That is, the hermeneutic-phenomenological approach is not interested in the development of hypotheses and nomothetic propositions regarding the effectiveness of teacher behavior and the curriculum. Rather, it is concerned with making visible, and understandable in an existential sense, the educational experiences, actions, and the changing perceptions and preconceptions of teachers, learners and other participants of the curriculum process. The interpretive approach to curriculum seeks to analyze and clarify meanings, perceptions, assumptions, prejudgments, presuppositions and make experientially meaningful the curriculum as a subjective and interpersonal process. "Understanding" says Peter Winch (p.115), "is grasping the point of what is being done or said. This is a notion far removed from the world of statistics and causal laws: it is closer to the realm of discourse and to the internal relations that link the parts of a realm of discourse." Rather than criticizing the hermeneutic idea of knowledge or understanding by applying to it the exacting standards of the strict sciences, one must realize that the concept of knowledge in the hermeneutic phenomenological sense has little to do and is not in competition with the categories of knowledge and explanatory understanding of empirical-analytic science. The hermeneutic method, according to Gadamer, has as its task a discovery of knowledge in the sense of Verstehen (understanding) that cannot be attained by the strict or empirical-analytic sciences.

William Dilthey already had provided for an articulation of the logic of the "human" or "cultural" sciences. Dilthey, of course, made the epistemological distinction between the cognitive activities of the cultural and the behavioral sciences. The cognitive task of the behavioral sciences is to "explain" by means of causal principles and hypothesized relations among variables. In contrast, the cultural sciences seek to provide for an "understanding" of the ways

in which man subjectively and culturally experiences (perceives, interprets, plans, acts, feels, values, construes) the social world. "We explain nature, man we must understand," said Dilthey. Understanding involves empathy, the capacity to grasp the inner realities of the human world. In ordinary English we speak of an "understanding look" which suggests more than mere objective knowledge. In Dilthey's terms, we understand ourselves and others only in re-experiencing, reenactment and by inserting our own experienced life into every form of expression of our own and others' lives. "Understanding" is reserved to designate the operation in which the mind grasps the "mind" (Geist) of the other person. It is not a purely cognitive operation of the mind at all but that special moment when life understands life: "We explain by means of purely intellectual processes, but we understand by means of the combined activity of all the mental powers in apprehending." Practical understanding in the sense of Dilthey, is situated in the study of three types of human expressions: linguistic expressions, non-verbal expressions such as gesticulations, and actions. While Dilthey attempted to provide a framework for the epistemological claims made by Verstehende social science, Heidegger (1962) moved beyond Dilthey in providing insights into the ontological character of understanding. His concept of understanding reaches a deeper dimension of meaning. For Heidegger, understanding is the power to grasp one's own possibilities for being within the context of the lifeworld in which one exists (Palmer, 1969).

Heidegger puts forward a distinction between two senses of knowing which is a critique of the more traditional distinctions between thinking and feeling or between cognitive and affective domains of thought. Among social scientists and especially among educators there is a rather sharp conceptual distinction made between knowledge and feelings. Conventionally it is "theoretical" or technical-practical knowledge that counts when we wish to understand human behavior or when we are confronted by practical problems in concrete situations. Feelings are considered to be more subjective and less reliable categories, in an empirical-analytic sense, of human thought. This is so even though we admit how feelings usually accompany beliefs. Feelings and knowledge go hand in hand in the learning process. But it is this conceptual distinction between feeling and knowing that Heidegger has substituted, in part at least, for a new concept of knowing. One is reminded of Dilthey when Heidegger replaces the categories of feelings and knowledge for two forms of knowing. In German language this distinction is noted by comparing the terms Erkennen (knowing) and Verstehen (understanding). The

word Erkennen refers to the traditional sense of "theoretical" knowledge as it is used in empirical-analytic science. Heidegger employs a special use of the term "moods" to clarify the idea of knowledge that is capable of cognitively grasping the world. By world is meant not the objectively perceived elements of experience or the physical environment. It is closer to what might be called "our personal world". Heidegger's concept of understanding (Verstehen) is closely bound up with this concept of "world" and with the concept "disclosure" or "unconcealment". Disclosures of human lifeworlds are instances of knowledge as understanding. And such disclosures are accomplished by means of hermeneutic phenomenological method.

It is the task of hermeneutics or phenomenology to make visible the meaning structures embedded in the lifeworlds belonging to the human expressions under study. Interpretive devices are needed to tease out the hidden meanings from culturally or historically alien "documents"--whether these documents are texts, art forms, social events, symbolic structures, actions, and so on. This then is a task of hermeneutics: to make available interpretive procedures and phenomenological method, in a dialectical rather than in a technological sense, for the purpose of gaining practical access, say to the variety of curriculum data emanating from the planning, teaching, and evaluative stages of curriculum practices. At the classroom level it seeks to enhance communcation and existential understanding among teacher and students, and at the more general level of curriculum planning, policy and development the interpretive approach seeks to enhance communication and interpersonal understanding among all participants of the curriculum development process. The attempt is to self-reflectively explicate assumptions, grounds, axioms, preferences, and points of view governing one's curriculum thinking, such, that others can make one's orientation debatable or topical for deliberation. Curriculum orientations which tend to gravitate toward the hermeneutic approach are curriculum as the analysis of educational experience (Dwayne Huebner, William Pinar), curriculum as deliberation, choice-making and consensus-seeking (Joseph Schwab, Decker Walker), and curriculum as qualitative and aesthetic approaches to development and evaluation (Elliot Eisner). But in a brief discussion of the communication model James MacDonald has pointed already to the fact that even in the work of such curriculum proponents there remains some preoccupation with the rhetoric of control.

The phenomenon of understanding and interpreting an educational situation is analogous to the hermeneutic process of understanding and the interpretation of text. Like in a text there is always an excess of meaning in an educational

situation. From the empirical-analytic frame, experience is something that consists of aggregates of distinct and separable perceptions, conceptions and skills. Educational experience in this sense is the experimental ground upon which our knowledge is constructed. It is a past-oriented, cause-and-effect image of experience that Hume offered to empirical-analytic science:

> "The nature of experience is this. We remember to have had frequent instances of the existence of one species of objects; and also remember, that the individuals of another species of objects have always attended them, and have existed in regular order of contiguity and succession with regard to them... In all these instances, from which we learn the conjunction of particular causes and effects, both the causes and effects have been perceived by the senses and are remembered: But in all cases where we reason concerning them there is one perceived or remembered, and the other supplied in conformity to our past experience." (Hume, p.87).

Such concept of experience, as has been articulated by Hume, has made possible behavioral learning theory and a curriculum view of teaching, learning and acquiring understandings that can be formulated in measurable units of cognition and in specfiable behaviors. Thus, learning outcomes are perceived, not as a result of an intentional and voluntaristic activity, but rather as natural inevitable causal processes. Those are the assumptions on which the idea of curriculum-as-effective-treatment is based. In contrast, experience as perceived from the phenomenological frame is future oriented. It is based on a concept of experience that requires openness, choice and that presumes the possibility of reflective actions and voluntary commitments.

Gadamer has been working out a concept of experience which is not based on sense-data. It is the experience of reflection. Experience in this sense is always seen as contributing to our understanding of something. Gadamer has traced the concept of "experience" (by means of the German word Erlebnis) to its historical origin. He says about the word "experience":

> "In the eighteenth century it is not found at all, and even Schiller and Goethe do not know it. Its first appearance, seemingly, is one of Hegel's letters. But even in the thirties and forties I know of only occasional instances (in Tieck, Alexis and Gutzkow). The word appears equally seldom in the fifties and sixties and appears suddenly with some frequency in the seventies. The word comes into general use at the time as it begins to be used in biographical writing." (p.55).

The German word Erlebnis (experience) is a derivative from the term Erleben which means "to re-live", or "to be still alive when something happens." How does this compare with the meaning of the English term "experience"? In Webster's the English word "experience" also possesses the meaning of "living through" but the etymology of the term originates in the Latin experientia which denotes "trial, proof, experiment", and "to put to test". This is of interest, since it may explain, in part at least, the difficulty of rendering an equivalent translation of the German Erlebnis into English language. The meaning of the English term "experience" has experimental overtones. It reflects the empirical-analytic orientation of the Anglo-American tradition, in contrast to the more dialectic-hermeneutic meanings of the Continental stream of thought associated with the word Erlebnis. According to Gadamer it was Dilthey who first gave a conceptual function to the word "experience". In his essay Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung ("Experience and Poetry") wherein Dilthey compared Goethe with Rousseau, he employed the concept to describe the new kind of writing which Rousseau based on the world of his inner experiences. In this context experience referred to the phenomenon of "the immediacy with which something real is grasped--unlike something of which one presumes to know, but the confirmation of which comes through one's own experience". But at the same time, says Gadamer, the word "the experienced" (das Erlebte) is used to mean "the permanent content of what is experienced. This content is like a yield or a residue that acquires permanence, weight and significance from out of the transcience of experiencing." (p.55). For Dilthey the concept experience was seen as a unit or form of consciousness. This view was based on a teleologically conceived life-philosophy. Husserl's phenomenological concept of experience was also a key notion. Experiences exist only insofar something is experienced and meant in them. Thus, experiences are intentional and intentions belong to subjects or individuals and to acts of consciousness. Gadamer characterizes hermeneutics as the confluence point of Husserl's phenomenology, the historicism of Dilthey and the hermeneutic-existential philosophy of Heidegger. But Dilthey's formulation of the meaning of Verstehen as the method for the human and cultural sciences is still naive in its epistemological foundation. Gadamer is careful to point out the shortcomings of the subjectivist theory of intuitive or empathic transposition of the interpreter. He describes the hermeneutic method as a historical, linguistic and dialectical process--not a mysterious communion of souls but the taking part in a common

meaning. The hermeneutic-phenomenological process, according to Gadamer, is of a conversational nature, a type of dialogue which is not adversative but as Socrates expressed it, "like friends talking together". This programmatic idea of method as "friendly dialogue" characterizes all phenomenological social science. For example, John O'Neill entitles his introduction to "wild" sociology "Making Sense Together". And McHugh, Raffel, Foss and Blum explicate the collaborative process of analytical sociology as follows:

> "our conception of analysis--analysis which is reflexive and yet can be spoken--requires collaboration. By this we meant that it requires an ego who speaks and thereby denies his auspices and an alter who formulates the auspices ego forgets by speaking. ...our format is consistent with our analytic notion in that original papers are like egos, responses are like alters, and editing portrays the relationship between ego and alter.... The papers in this book should be conceived of as displays which require alters. This is where readers come in. Readers are asked to treat our papers reflexively. They are asked to become our collaborators. This is our version of how to read." (pp.7, 8).

For Gadamer, too, reading an author who has something to say amounts to a collaborative activity. I, as reader, discover my own motives in conversing with the author. I discover what interests me in the topic or subject matter to which the author has addressed himself as well, and thereby I learn or am instructed about the topic about which I have questions. According to Gadamer one starts with answers and ends with questions, in the sense that one is now being questioned by the author or by the text-materials.

An important notion for the curriculum specialist is Gadamer's treatment of the question of "prejudice". In empirical-analytic science the canons of objectivity must guard against the ppssible intrustion of bias or prejudice into the methodology of scientific research and theorizing. But from the interpretive frame of hermeneutics, says Gadamer, prejudice (pre-judgment) is not only unavoidable it is an epistemological feature of the theory of interpretation. In every cultural activity we are addressed by traditions, says Gadamer. "We stand in traditions." And since every interpreter, social scientist, educator always starts with his own existentially defined situation, this orientation itself will lead him to formulate the questions he will pose and the meanings he will perceive from the materials he is examining. What does this mean for curriculum, and especially for the deliberative activity of evaluating curriculum materials for practical use? It means that it is phenomenologically wrong, apparently, to conceive of curriculum materials analysis as a simple "recovering" of meanings, understandings, and intentions which are somehow "objectively contained" in the texts. Which

is not to say, of course, that a text does not have its own integrity. There is a prevalent attitude in existence among educators which conceptualizes the difference between the role of the university based subject matter specialist and the classroom teacher as the difference between "makers" and "users" of the curriculum. The teacher is likened to a consumer who must be trained in deliberative skills so that he can make informed choices from among alternatives. The idea of curriculum knowledge and educational theory as "supermarket" is a form of epistemological consumerism which makes available to the "user" of curriculum, practical knowledge that is provided for by the "expert" in the same manner that advertising business or clothing industry makes available styles from the tradition of fashion. The danger of this instrumental "user-expert" metaphor lies in its tendency to superficialize the interpretive processes of curriculum materials adaptation and indeed of the development process as a whole.

A teacher who turns to a certain set of curriculum materials for the support of his instructional program has to make the intentions and the orientation of the author(s) of the materials his own. But it is naive to believe that this is achieved easily. Moreover, it is wrong to suppose that the orientation and intentions of curriculum materials simply are there to be scooped up. Even collaborators on curriculum projects (a team of designers) seldom share the same fundamental orientation. Think, for example, of the different views held by the main curriculum developers of "Man: A Course of Study". Once a curriculum has materialized it acquires a voice of its own, so to speak. And, thereafter, the meanings engendered by the materials are "interpreted meanings".

In some respect curriculum practice is not unlike the legal practice of jurisprudence. In law the objective is to make practical judgments on the basis of the determination of the state of mind, the intentions and the private perceptions of individuals brought before court. One persistent issue of the jurisprudential enterprise is to determine what went on in the mind of a defendant. This is exemplified by a recent headline in Times magazine which read: "The Battle about Patty Hearst's Mind." Justifications, defenses and judgments are carefully constructed in the process of formulating formal procedures and acceptable rules for practical actions. Teachers act not on the basis of informed scientific knowledge but rather they select their courses of action by referring to established norms, and precedents for ways of acting and dealing with things that have come to constitute "acceptable practice". The

jurisprudence of the study of what constitutes valid curriculum (rather than "effective" or "efficient" curriculum) focuses on the legitimating, rule determining and policy constituting practical activities of educators. This then is a feature of the practical as institutionalized action. But hermeneutic phenomenological knowledge is practical, not only in its facility to provide for justification and legitimation of common practices. It is also practical in the very act of bringing about fundamental understandings. For some subject matter areas the communication metaphor might be more appropriate to describe teaching-learning events than the various control or technological oriented metaphors. In a communication sense, the very act of achieving a genuine understanding constitutes a teaching-learning act. Coming to an understanding is a sense-making and an interpretive enterprise. In this context practical knowledge does not consist of technical-practical recommendations derived from empirical-analysis theory and research. Practical knowledge in a communicative sense is provided by those phenomenological and interpretive bodies of knowledge and scholarly literature that helps the teacher gain access to the Verstehende reality of human life worlds. From personal experience I am reminded, for example, that in Dutch Teacher Education Colleges, there was a form of literature and knowledge available to beginning teachers that seemed almost totally absent in North American educational programs. This literature* is of a phenomenological character exploring the mind of the growing child and of the inner world of the social reality in which pupils live. Beginning teachers were exposed to a form of pedagogy and didactics which is known as philosophical or pedagogical anthropology. The practical usefulness of such material is not of a technical-instrumental nature. It does not so much yield practical know-hows, rules, steps for modifying, structuring or controlling behavior, performances, etc. But rather this knowledge is practical in its quality to "orient" teachers' actions in practical communicative situations--which is curriculum. The pragmatic character of the phenomenological idea of knowledge, in the sense of communicative and interpretive understanding (Verstehen) is situated already in a sphere of experiential immediacy which renders such knowledge, if valid, practically relevant. A serious study of hermeneutics for curriculum may have far-reaching

*Examples are: J. H. van den Berg en J. Linschoten. Persoon en Wereld. Utrecht: Bijleveld, 1903. N. Beets, De Grote Jongen (1964), and Volwassen Worden (1965) Utrecht: Bijleveld. Wilhelm Hansen. Die Entwicklung des Kindlichen Weltbildes. Munchen: Kosel-Verlag, 1960. M. J. Langeveld, Beknopte Theoretische Pedagogiek. Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1965.

consequences in making the deliberative processes increasingly reflective and increasingly capable of communicative clarity.

However, from a critical frame the phenomenological idea of the practical as reflectively displaying alternative orientations, traditions and the accomplishment of interpretive and interpersonal understandings is still limited. The higher level of practical reflectivity, says Habermas, coincides with the progress in the autonomy of the individual, with the elimination of human misery and the facilitation of concrete happiness. Habermas' critique of hermeneutics and phenomenological social theory is that it falls short in its analysis of the nature of communication and consensus as the achievement of practical understandings. In his view hermeneutics has no adequate way of dealing with the theoretical-practical problem of systematically distorted patterns of communication which resides in the historical structures of everyday institutions. What hermeneutics cannot do, according to Habermas, is providing criteria by which the practical would be elevated to its original classical status, thereby addressing the question of wisdom and the art of living. "In the major tradition of philosophy", says Habermas "the relation of theory and praxis always referred to the good and the righteous--as well as the "true"--and to the life, both private and collective, of individuals as well as of citizens." (1974, p.253). Habermas is articulating a new paradigm for describing, understanding and improving the quality of human life. It is the commitment to unlimited inquiry to constant critique and to fundamental self-criticism that is most vital to the critical tradition furthered by Habermas.

> "The cognitive interest of this enlightenment theory is declared critical; it presupposed a specific experience, which is set down in Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind, just as it is in Freud's psychoanalysis--the experience of an emancipation by means of critical insight into relationships of power, the objectivity of which has as its source solely that the relationships have not been seen through. Critical reason gains power analytically over dogmatic inhibition." (1974, p.254).

In curriculum terms this means that curriculum knowledge is tied to educational practice through a concept of curriculum as critical analysis and emancipation. This practical attitude has not been explored much by curriculists. However, it is recognizable in the work of educators such as Paula Freire:

"There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes "the practice of freedom", the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world."

"... we must take the people at the point of emergence and by helping them move from naive to critical transitivity, facilitate their intervention in the historical process."

"But how could this be done? Our method was to be based on dialogue which is a horizontal relationship between persons."

The critical approach to curriculum seeks to establish interpersonal and social conditions necessary for genuine self-understanding, emancipatory learning and critical consciousness. Examples of this approach probably are best provided by some experiments in alternative schooling and curriculum practices of oppressed or minority groups, e.g. Black Studies, the raising of critical consciousness among citizens, and the culturally more acceptable rhetoric of the women's liberation movements. The organizational character of this approach is dialogical. How does one determine whether a curriculum or indeed a school, allows for the possibility of practical understanding in an Aristotelean politico-ethical sense? According to Freire the possibility for the development of a critical consciousness (conscientization) is directly related to the practical possibilities of reflective understanding. This practical possibility, says Freire, is dependent upon the critical participation of men in their unstanding of norms which they have interiorized as a part of their institutionalized social roles. Conscientization, in the sense of Freire, is the paradigm for critical practice. It refers to "the process in which men, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality." Thus, the practical as emancipatory action, in the sense of praxis, has the quality that it transforms the life of the person who has adopted this highly reflective frame.

The social significance of such radically reflective concept of the practical has been explored in a most scholarly manner by Jurgen Habermas. However, because his writings are steeped in philosophical and social science traditions, and as a

result, maybe, of his convoluted academic style, Habermas' works are not easily accessible to educators who are less familiar with the literature relevant to critical theory. The importance of Habermas for educators is that he makes available a thoroughly intellectual tradition of scholarship and research for a form of practical reasoning and practical acting that is, like Freire's work, rooted in an emancipatory concern for man and society. Key concepts in Habermas' critical theory are the epistemological theory of "cognitive interests" which reside in all forms of knowledge, the sociolinguistic notion of "communicative competence", the analytical concept of "ideal situation of communication", and the normative theory of "systematically distorted communication". Critical theory utilizes a method of reflectivity, which differs from the empirical-analytic and the hermeneutic phenomenological paradigm, in the way that it employs an emancipatory concept of truth. Truth is recognized in the deliberative rationality of formulating norms, roles, and knowledge about possible ways of life which are undistorted by repressive forms of authority, privilege and exploitative vested interests. Truth as social wisdom acquires the meaning of justice, the possibility for happiness, and undistorted life forms in the practical art of living. Such truth can only come about, according to Habermas, in a socalled ideal situation of communication. An ideal situation of communication is a distortion free model of a consensus seeking community. Habermas argues that every person has an understanding of the meaning of an ideal communication situation by virtue of the fact that every speaker of a language possesses what Chomsky has called "communicative competence". Everyone who speaks a natural language has intuitive knowledge of it, and therefore, is confident of being able to distinguish a true consensus from a false one. An ideal communication situation specifies norms and roles of a social situation in such a manner that no repressive dominance, asymmetry, or inequality exists among the participants of that social situation. In Habermas' words, "it belongs to the structure of possible conversation that we contra-factually operate as if the imputation of an ideal speech situation were not simply fictitious but real." (p. 132). The concept of ideal speech situation is an abstraction which posits pure symmetry of relations among the participants of the communicative process. But even though few social situations are likely to be characterized by such symmetry, the power of the concept of ideal speech is very real since it provides an "ideal" measuring stick against which hidden patterns of distorted communication and their underlying repressive social structures can be recovered. Thus, for a community to

arrive at universal consensus free from delusions or distortions it must anticipate the social structure of a living together in unforced communication.

> "The formal anticipation of idealized discourse as a way of life to be realized in the future first guarantees the final supporting consensus which binds us for the moment and by means of which every defective factual agreement is subject to the critique of being false consciousness." (p. 126).

A prominant task of critical theory has been its social critique of the ideological character the knowledge industry of science and technology in advanced industrial society. As has been noted in the earlier parts of this paper, empirical-analytic science virtually has laid monopolistic claims on the concepts of knowledge, truth, and social understanding. The cognitive interests of efficiency, effectiveness and control are powerful moral forces which exercise legitimating functions at the levels of everyday life institutions, social interactions and policy making. In education the scientific consciousness is visible in the obsession of bringing the primary domains of thinking, valuing and feeling of the thoughts of school students under the effective control of the school curriculum. This is no doubt a function of the fact that accountability is most readily translated in the obligation to be "countable". Michael Apple, who makes explicit reference to the promissory note of critical theory, and especially Habermas' works, recently has expressed this concern in the form of a credo:

> "the dominant consciousness in advanced industrial societies is centered on a vulgar instrumentality--a logical structure that places at its foundation the search for certainty, order, the cooptation of significant social dissent, process/product reasoning, therapy to treat surface symptoms rather than basic structural change, and the search for even more efficient instrumentality. It, thereby, vitiates or redefines into less potent issues the political, ethical, and even esthetic questions of any moment: Hence, politics and manipulation become coequal; educating and the guaranteeing of certainty in human interaction become synonymous...
>
> the problem lies ... in a fundamental ethic that all important modes of human action can be known in advance by educators and social scientists; that certainty in interaction among people is of primary import; and, underlying all of these, that the primary aspects of thought and sentiment of students should be brought under institutionalized control." (Apple, pp. 90-120).

The cognitive interest of radical reflection is served by what Habermas calls "emancipatory" or "practical" action. Deliberations can only be truly practical, in an emancipatory sense, when they lead toward forms of life which are mediated by justice, equality and the possibility for concrete happiness. If Schwab's idea of the arts of the practical and the eclectic are extended to this level of critical reflectivity, then the concept of deliberation acquires potentially far reaching notations. In order for curriculum policy making to be most effective, special study must be made of the institutionalized forms of authority and the social arrangements of knowledge and influence which may either facilitate or hinder practical decision making processes.

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