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Viewpoints

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Imagine stopping by the busy suburban mall where you shop occasionally. It is April, prior to Easter and to hotly contested school board elections in your district. Someone dressed as "the Easter bunny" is distributing slingers and hands you one. It warns, in bold print, that if so-and-so is elected to the school board, "our children" no longer will be able to acknowledge the "traditional" Easter and Christmas holidays in district schools with classroom and hall decorations or with holiday assemblies, concerts, and parties. "Our way of life" and "values" are threatened, the bunny and his slinger claim, by those who support the recently enacted district religion policy directing the study and prohibiting the celebration or furtherance, of religion generally or particular denominations.

The religion policy emerged from acrimonious debate following protests from Jewish, Muslim, and other parents and community members against the schools' promotion of Christmas and other Christian observances. In this case, the religious right mobilized noisy opposition to the change but was unsuccessful in doing much more than intensifying existing tensions and dividing an affluent suburban school district. The religion policy became the centerpiece of the district's multicultural policy and practice, in effect minimizing attention to racial/ethnic diversity. It left many teachers uncertain about what was acceptable classroom practice

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and generated grumbling backlash about how things just weren't like (or as good as) they used to be.

This brief, anonymous but actual scenario illustrates key aspects of the curriculum politics-policy-practice nexus that are further explored in this volume. Of particular interest here are questions of knowledge control and the distribution of benefits. By knowledge control I refer to means by which power is exercised to influence the selection, organization, and treatment of curriculum knowledge—the knowledge, broadly defined, that is made available to students, including opportunities to critique and construct or reconstruct knowledge as well as to acquire knowledge offered by teachers, texts, and other sources. Once decisions are made (for the time being since they rarely remain uncontested), who benefits or is disadvantaged, individually or collectively, by a particular selection, organization, and treatment of curriculum knowledge? What does it matter, for example, which or whose history and literature and religion are included in school curricula? Once included, what does it matter how those topics and issues are treated? Controlling curriculum knowledge has long been a means of exercising power beyond school walls by shaping how we understand ourselves, others, the nation, and the world. Curriculum knowledge affects individual and collective identity, capacity, attitude, and action. These questions are particularly important at times such as the present when the culture is in flux.

Of course "it's political!" Instead of claims to neutrality, now it is more common to hear that this or that aspect of education is political—as if that explains it. Saying that education in general or curriculum in particular is political isn't saying much unless one describes what political means, how the politics operate, and why politics matters. The political, for me, refers to the means by which power is exercised to shape if not direct others' actions, in this case curriculum policymaking processes, the policies made, and classroom curriculum practice. What, for example, did conservative religious groups actually do to influence state-level curriculum policy in New York? Or in California or Kentucky or elsewhere? Relatively few contemporary observers or analysts have explicated education politics beyond abstractions that are not very helpful to people outside the academy who are enmeshed in or otherwise affected by particular cases.

Politics and policymaking—including the discourse that surrounds and is prompted by specific political and policy actions and events—are a key aspect of curriculum context. By context, I mean

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the setting in which curriculum plays out in practice and that shapes how it plays out. Closing the classroom door does not close out the outside world. The outside world not only seeps in through the cracks, but closing the door *shuts in* the various, supposedly external, influences on teaching and learning. Ignoring them hardly renders them powerless. My interest is less in curriculum politics and policy *per se* than in their influence on curriculum practice or curriculum-in-use, that is, what students actually have opportunities to learn in school classrooms.

This volume—or one much like it—has existed in my head for almost a decade. *Curriculum Politics, Policy, Practice: Cases in Comparative Context* can be seen as an extension of my own prior work on curriculum context (e.g., *Curriculum in Context*, 1990) and the recursive connections within and between cultural politics and curriculum policymaking illustrated in the New York and California case studies in *The Great Speckled Bird* (Cornbleth and Waugh, 1995) as well as the work of others in curriculum studies.

In this volume, our intent is to go beyond the state-level, politics-policy cases and sketches of practice in *The Great Speckled Bird* and various publications spawned by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (e.g., Massell, 1994) to offer a range of contextualized cases of the intersections of curriculum politics, policy, and/or practice—instead of the more common abstractions unencumbered by specific instances or evidence. Although only a few authors in this volume explicitly use the language of curriculum politics, policy, practice, and their interrelationships, the phenomena—both macro- as, for example, in the case from South Africa, and micro- as, for example, in the case of a U.S. special education placement—are highlighted. While my own illustrations are U.S.-based with a focus on cultural identities, the cases span school levels, subject areas, and national boundaries, thus enriching possibilities for cross-case analysis, interpretation, and insight. While some of that analysis and commentary is offered here, most remains to our readers who will, no doubt, expand the curriculum conversation in drawing on their own experiences and perspectives.

Thus *Curriculum Politics, Policy, Practice* is both more focussed and broader than typical curriculum readers. Its focus on the too often overlooked relations among politics, policy, and practice offers clear implications for other aspects of curriculum such as design and evaluation that are not addressed directly here. It is broader insofar as chapters draw on a range of curriculum contexts within and beyond the United States. Its difference, in sum, lies in

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its interweaving of curriculum politics, policy, and/or practice in a range of particular, contextualized cases that reveal the experiences and perspectives of participants as well as the authors' interpretations. Instances of curriculum politics, policy, and/or practice are both brought to life and situated in their contemporary and historical contexts with particular attention to questions of knowledge control and distribution of benefits.

In the remainder of this introductory chapter, I present the theoretical framework motivating and underlying this volume and its implications here, followed by commentary about the public schools as sites for curriculum politics and social policy contests, the key role of discourse as part of the context shaping curriculum practice, and cross-case interpretation. Finally, I offer an overview of the eight cases. The critical pragmatist theoretical frame is my own and that of the volume as a whole, not necessarily that of individual authors.

A Political Perspective: Critical Pragmatism

The hybrid perspective, critical pragmatism (Cornbleth and Waugh, 1995, ch. 2), is a response to the insufficiencies of both conventional critical theory and pragmatism.

> Bringing together critical and pragmatic traditions . . . links the contextual emphasis and equity goal of critical theory with the self-questioning and pluralism of pragmatic philosophy. The critical perspective gives depth and direction to pragmatic inquiry and dialogue. Pragmatism, in turn, reminds us that cultural critique encompasses us all; none of us or our cherished beliefs, individually or collectively as a member of one or another group, is above or beyond question. Emergent and oriented toward action, this critical pragmatism eschews materialist and theological determinisms on one side and postmodernist quicksands on the other. Critical pragmatism employs standards or principles of judgment, and it subjects them to ongoing scrutiny and possible modification. (Cornbleth and Waugh, 1995, p. 33)

Since all views are partial and necessarily distorting, approaching knowledge (or truth) and justice

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> requires the interaction (not merely the availability or presence or pasting together) of multiple perspectives. For critical pragmatists, this interaction is governed by criteria or principles agreed upon by participants—principles of access and participation as well as of justification—principles which are subject to scrutiny and renegotiation as are the substantive points in question. (p. 34)

Critical pragmatism's assumption of cultural critique makes it especially appropriate as a framework for examination of curriculum politics, policy, and practice. Its location between authoritarianism and anarchy would be uncomfortable both for those who claim acceptance for their views, without reference to substantive guiding principles, simply because they exist and perhaps have been excluded or marginalized in the past, as well as for those who claim unquestioning acceptance for their preferred principles and conclusions. "Whereas the former emphasize principles of access and participation (theirs), the latter emphasize principles of justification (theirs). Critical pragmatism encompasses both [sets of principles] and works toward 'ours'" (p. 34), where "ours" is a more encompassing community. One of the clearest implications of this stance is its "opposition to efforts to limit or close off debate, either by putting topics or issues out of bounds or by *a priori* rejecting particular viewpoints or the participation of particular individuals or groups" (p. 34).

Thus critical pragmatism is consonant with political democracy and with democratic dialogue more than competitive debate. Acknowledging the politics of pragmatism, Gunn (1992) notes that, without advocating a particular politics, pragmatism possesses a politics

> distinguished by the democratic preference for rendering differences conversable so that the conflicts they produce, instead of being destructive of human community, can become potentially creative of it; can broaden and thicken public culture rather than depleting it. (p. 37)

The case studies in this volume, in contrast, reveal less concern with "rendering differences conversable" than with avoiding conflict in the schools. For example, in "They Don't Want to Hear it," Suzanne Miller and Gina DeBlase Tryzna document apology for and subsequent silencing of non-mainstream views of US race rela-

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tions—and the future avoidance of explicitly racial topics in the perceived interests of classroom and schoolwide peace and seeming harmony. In this case, an African American student's expression of a "different" view in the context of studying Claude Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land* was seen as destructive of community, not creative of it.

Further implications of a critical pragmatist perspective for study and understanding of curriculum politics, policy, and/or practice are several. One is the interweaving or overlapping of theory and practice. Theory is seen to emerge from practice and to act back on it; theory has practical consequences. How we "see" the world or a part of it—our theoretical perspective, assumptions, conceptions, explanations, and so forth—influence how we think about and act within or on it. In "Science for All Americans?" for example, Margery Osborne and Angela Calabrese-Barton invite readers to witness science education practice informed by critical feminist conceptions of science, curriculum, and pedagogy. Instead of the more common assimilationist "science for all," they illustrate a liberatory science for all students that is inclusive of and responsive to differences among their students.

Not only are theory and practice intertwined in a critical pragmatist perspective, but there is no practice apart from theory, although operative theory may remain tacit knowledge. It may be that often-encountered practitioner hostility to theory "usually means an opposition to other peoples' theories and an oblivion to one's own" (Eagleton, 1983, p. vii). The connections and clashes among theories and practices in high tech business and public education are vividly revealed in "A Tale of Two Cultures and a Technology" by Vivian Forssman and John Willinsky who are attempting to construct business-education partnerships that will reconstruct technology education in Canadian secondary schools from computer programming to service learning projects that enable students to support their schools' and communities' technology needs in ways consistent with the emerging work world.

Akin to my emphasis on curriculum practice—shaped by but not synonymous with curriculum policies, guides, and good intentions—is critical pragmatism's emphasis on decision and action in particular, specific circumstances. Pragmatic inquiry is not only situated and contingent, but cognizant of its contingency. Interpretations and conclusions are judged in part by their consequences in action. The attention to practice, action, context, and consequence are inextricably theoretical and practical.

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Perhaps the clearest implications of critical pragmatism for curriculum politics, policy, and practice concern opposition to efforts to limit or close off dialogue, either by putting topics or issues out of bounds or by *a priori* rejecting particular viewpoints or the participation of particular individuals or groups. Research from a critical pragmatist perspective would, for example, examine how the dialogue is framed and who is allowed or invited to participate. Multiple perspectives and questioning of received views are present in all of the chapters and prominent in several.

For example, in "Curriculum as a Site of Memory," Nadine Dolby provides an account of privileged white female students' responses to their history teacher's apartheid unit in an integrated, academically advanced history class in Durban, South Africa during the period of Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in 1996. Most white students were experiencing at least two "new" perspectives—the widely broadcast, publicized, and talked about Commission hearings and their teacher's "restoring" of South African history 1948–60—and they were trying to make sense of the recent past and their own places in it. Dolby's case illustrates the difficulties of sustaining a dialogue consistent with critical pragmatist tenets in what she calls a "struggle for history." There are parallels here with Miller and DeBlase Tryzna's case insofar as many students just "don't want to hear it" even though the teacher in Dolby's case introduces rather than silences some of the more disturbing topics and issues.

In addition to highlighting a case of limiting curriculum practice to a narrow range of acceptable dialogue, Miller and DeBlase Tryzna provide illustrations of more multivocal curriculum practice in literature classrooms. More inclusive curriculum knowledge and practice also are illustrated in Osborne and Calabrese-Barton's "Science for All Americans?" and my "National Standards and Curriculum as Cultural Containment?" where some school districts and teachers are found to ignore and/or move beyond limiting social studies curriculum policies and history textbooks. And multiple perspectives and wide participation are not only racially/ethnically/culturally-based as the other chapters in this volume aptly show. Jason Tan's "Politics of Religious Knowledge in Singapore," for example, highlights the contradictions in the government's positions with respect to diversity and to morality vs. utilitarianism.

Similarly, questions of equity and social justice are raised in all of the chapters and prominent in several. Gaby Weiner deals directly with questions of equity and social justice in "Understanding Shifts

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in British Educational Discourses of Social Justice" where she compares the politics, policies, and related discourses of the 1940s and 1990s. Despite political rhetoric and promises to extend social justice in both periods, the new Labour governments' education policies were "profoundly conservative." Weiner broadens the conversation about equity and social justice not only by providing historical perspective but also by employing Iris Young's conception of justice and "five faces of injustice" in her analysis—a conception that likely will break new ground for many readers. Moving from macro- to micropolitics and policy, Diana Lawrence-Brown addresses equity questions in the context of special education placement and curriculum practice. She too provides significant historical perspective but then takes us from broader movements to "The Segregation of Stephen" and a face-to-face case of practice and effects.

Curriculum Politics and Policy: Schools as Arenas

Given the purposes for which national systems of mass public schooling have been established over the past two centuries, it is not surprising that school curriculum frequently becomes the arena for public discussion and debate of national social, political, and even economic issues. Public schooling was established for nation-building and maintenance purposes: to prepare citizens and obtain their loyalty; to provide knowledge that will enable students to participate productively in the economy; and to confer credentials and allocate young people to different positions in society (see, e.g., Cornbleth, 1990, chs. 2 and 6).

In the United States a primary purpose of the so-called common school of the nineteenth century was to transmit an emerging American identity to an increasingly non-Anglo population. In this century the public schools have been charged with major responsibilities for the Americanization or assimilation of the children of immigrants. Rarely, until recently, has even the possibility of multiple, coexisting visions of America been considered seriously. Insofar as school curriculum is seen as a major vehicle of cultural definition and transmission, battles for control of curriculum knowledge are fierce. Schooling has been the site of numerous contests over community and societal values and priorities. Curricular inclusion serves to legitimate and sustain one's views or position by having the schools endorse and transmit them via curriculum policy and practice.

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As I have observed elsewhere (Cornbleth and Waugh, 1995),

> How or on what basis curriculum knowledge is selected has been obscured by the so-called classic curriculum question, 'What knowledge is of most worth?' which dates to an 1859 essay and subsequent book, *Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical*, by Herbert Spencer. 'Worth,' for Spencer, meant anything that contributed to the self-preservation of a people and its civilization. Although subject to varying definition, 'worth' has been widely accepted or at least proferred as the primary criterion for selecting curriculum knowledge. (p.50)

Framing the question of the selection of curriculum knowledge in this way gives the appearance of beneficence in the public interest while deflecting questions of what, or who, or which, peoples are left out "in the public interest" (see, e.g., Appleby, 1992.) The case studies that follow illustrate quite clearly the clash of interests that shape the knowledge that actually is sanctioned by curriculum policy and incorporated in curriculum practice.

Within and across school subject areas, selection of curriculum knowledge has been shown to be less than coherent and more a result of tradition and politics than any public determination of worth (see, e.g., Cornbleth and Waugh, 1995; Goodson and Ball, 1984; Kliebard, 1995; Popkewitz, 1987; Reid, 1990). And the decisions that are made are continually contested so that both victories and defeats are rarely if ever complete or long-lasting. Curriculum policy is continually being made, remade, and unmade in hundreds of thousands of schools and classrooms. Multiple political and policy influences, sometimes at odds with one another, work themselves out in myriad ways in classroom practice across the nation, or within a single school in the United States. Despite the historical record of conflicting values, interests, and traditions in curriculum policymaking, the "most worth" claim holds continuing appeal. It gives the appearance of wisdom and good intentions as well as conveying the assumption of common interests and universality across time, place, and person. And it well supports calls for common culture.

Curriculum Practice and Context: Discourse Matters

Curriculum practice results from the ongoing interaction of students, teachers, knowledge, and the context in which that inter-

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action occurs—both the immediate classroom, school, and community setting and the broader milieu of education system and society. Changing curriculum practice, for example, to make it more inclusive, multicultural, or otherwise equitable, requires not only designing or planning the desired practice but also bringing about the necessary supporting conditions or context. This is a recursive process that I envisage as a double helix, moving back and forth between design and context (see Cornbleth, 1990, ch. 7). Ignoring contextual considerations is like planting seeds in dry clay—or bringing in rich soil but no water. Thus, conventional curriculum policy, planning, and product development are not sufficient to reform classroom curriculum practice.

The political and policy aspects of context on which we focus in this volume have both direct and indirect effects on curriculum practice. Indirect effects include the mediation or interpretation of state policies by local school districts and building administrators. I recall, for example, one veteran high school teacher and department chair in whose classroom I spent considerable time as an observer telling me that he doesn't pay much attention to what comes out of Albany (meaning the state capital and education department). He does consider what the district subject area coordinator and his principal say, and he takes the required state exams very seriously.

Substantial indirect influence appears in the form of "expert" and public discourses that surround curriculum politics and policymaking. Discourse does matter, in some cases perhaps more than the policies made. That is, curriculum practice may be influenced less by official state policies than by continuing and widely accessible dialogues or debates about what should be taught, to whom, and how. How the discourse is shaped and plays out affects the perceptions and practices of policymakers, teachers, and other school personnel whether or not they are active participants (see, e.g., Cornbleth and Waugh, 1995, and my chapter in this volume). By discourse I refer to the prevailing language (including symbols and images) and manner of argument or rules of engagement, both tacit and explicit.

More than fifty years ago, Walter Lippmann observed that "he [or she] who captures the symbols by which the public feeling is for the moment contained, controls by that much the approaches of public policy" (cited in Alterman, 1992, p. 19). Lippmann's observation about the power of symbols (e.g., family values, common culture, cultural literacy, multiculturalism), and the power to shape

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policy by capturing or controlling public symbols, presaged Foucault's (1970) analysis of power, knowledge, and discourse.

Power, Foucault pointed out, resides not only in individuals and groups but also and perhaps more importantly in social organizations, institutions, and systems—in their familiar, formal or authoritative roles and relationships (such as government bureaucrat, high school teacher, and principal) and in their less obvious, historically shaped and socially shared conceptions and symbols (such as literacy, equality, student). In modern societies, power increasingly operates through the definition of these conceptions and symbols as well as through the definition of appropriate patterns of communication, including rules of reason and rationality, what Foucault called "regimes of truth." A residue of past practice and conventional ways of thinking can exert a powerful hold on everyday life and discourse.

Knowledge about prevailing conceptions, symbols, patterns, and roles—and with that knowledge the opportunity to instigate change—is enhanced by further understanding of the nature of prevailing discourse or discursive practices (see Cornbleth and Waugh, 1995, pp. 43–49). The discourse of common culture and of history as cultural literacy, for example, seems to have become a code for Eurocentric or western-dominated, upper class history. As code or symbol, cultural literacy can be seen as an attempt to control curriculum knowledge not only by means of official curriculum policy but also by dominating the public and professional discourse that (re)defines legitimate or appropriate curriculum knowledge and teaching.

Of importance here is not only opportunity to participate in the discourse—to be heard—but also to shape it. For example, the adversarial discourse—the culture wars or "America debate"—since the mid-1980s in the U.S. has been cast in dichotomous terms by defenders of the status quo as a choice between pluralism or unity. Various groups' objections to marginalization, exclusion, and misrepresentation were recast as threats to national unity (e.g., Schlesinger, 1991). Tyack and James (1985), in their historical analysis of the efforts of various "moral majorities" to "legalize virtue" (p. 513) by obtaining the passage of laws that prescribed inclusion of their preferred knowledge and values in school curricula, conclude:

> Not until the recent generation would excluded groups develop the power legally to challenge the precedents set by

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> this earlier legalization of values in order to broaden the scope of schooling and legitimize their values as well as those of dominant WASPs. Then, ironically, the results of their efforts to secure equality of dignity in public education would be labeled legislative meddling and litigiousness, partly because the pressure came from people who had traditionally lacked power. (p. 533)

In addition to polarization, the America debate in New York State during the early 1990s period of social studies curriculum review and reform efforts was characterized by a "discourse of derision" directed at both multiculturalism and the state commissioner of education who supported it until his 1994 change of direction. Borrowing from Ball's (1990) account of neo-conservative education politics in Britain, "discourse of derision" refers to efforts to undermine a position, person, or argument by first caricaturing and then ridiculing and dismissing it. In New York, multiculturalism in social studies education was linked to an extreme ethnocentric version of Afrocentrism and then both were scornfully dismissed (Cornbleth and Waugh, 1995, pp. 131–132) as "self-esteem pablum" (by the *New York Post*), "ethnic cheerleading" (by Diane Ravitch who served as Assistant Secretary of Education during this period), and leading to "the Tower of Babel" (by historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.). By advocating their preferred version of U.S. history and demeaning a strawperson, that is, "by setting reason against madness" (Ball, 1990, p. 44), critics of more multicultural curricula were able to dominate the discursive terrain and thereby shape curriculum policy and perhaps practice. For example, Schlesinger's admonition against "too much multiculturalism" was repeated more than once by more than one member of the 1992–95 New York State social studies committee on which I served until March 1994 when I resigned (Cornbleth and Waugh, 1995, ch. 5).

I mention these examples to illustrate symbols or images that have entered into both public and professional discourse and become part of how policymakers and educators talk about and act on matters of curriculum knowledge. The discourse about history, social studies, and multicultural education in New York, California, and elsewhere redirected attention to the selection of knowledge to be included in curriculum, particularly to the purposes that different selections might be expected to serve and to the criteria for knowledge selection. Such attention might well have prompted school districts, schools, and individual teachers to reexamine their

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social studies programs and modify curricula in multicultural directions even if official state policies did not change very much—as I illustrate in "National Standards and Curriculum as Cultural Containment?"

All of the cases in this volume illustrate context and discourse dynamics in one way or another. For example, Weiner interrogates the "social justice" discourse in 1940s and 1990s Britain. Tan examines apparent contradictions in the official discourse about morality and religion in a secular state, diversity and appropriate behavior, and the efficacy of knowledge, facts, and values in fostering appropriate behavior—in relation to the short-lived religious knowledge policy in Singapore. And Dolby shows how the discourse of "truth and reconciliation" enables white South Africans to avoid confronting systemic violence and inequity.

Cross-Case Interpretation

Here I suggest that particular chapters in this volume and/or different national contexts can inform each other and curriculum understanding more generally. It may seem that the suggestion of cross-case analysis and interpretation is at odds with my theoretical and practical emphases on context and contingency. This would be the case only if one assumes a technical analysis whose results are to be generalized, used instrumentally as guidelines if not prescriptions for practice, or simply applied to or implemented in other situations.

The kind of cross-case analysis I have in mind, however, is conceptual and interpretive. It is characterized by trying out conceptual frameworks, by wondering and questioning, by raising questions to be tested against available data or pursued in future inquiries. It actively involves readers interacting with the text, drawing on their experiences and perspectives to enrich the interpretive possibilities and decide what they will take from the encounter. These notions of conceptual and interpretive analysis and use date at least to the work of Dewey (1929) and Waller (1932) who argued that education research should help educators gain social insight, "insight into the social realities of school life" that can enhance their observation and interpretation of events in their own situations (see Cornbleth, 1982, pp. 9–10).

For me, such cross-case analysis and interpretation highlights the widespread importance (and local variability) of diversity—of

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class and gender differences as well as racial/ethnic/cultural ones—not surprising given my long-standing interests and recent work. Others no doubt would focus elsewhere.

Diversity is no longer unseen, unheard, or automatically glossed over in curriculum and school classrooms. Difference is no longer something to be controlled statistically or otherwise in the interests of generalizability or social equilibrium. It may not always be welcome (for example, in the cases of Derek's outspokenness or Stephen's school placement), but it is there to be reckoned with, no longer hidden away or simply segregated. As I read the chapters for this volume, I wondered how the students and teacher in Dolby's history classroom in South Africa would deal with a black student's statement of feelings akin to Derek's in the urban U.S., or how Osborne and Calabrese-Barton might encourage and support diversity in both of those classes. Even in a seemingly highly centralized education system and regulated society such as Tan describes in Singapore, diversity makes itself felt. And I wonder whether the education reform rhetoric and policies in Britain described by Weiner aren't as much an effort to contain diversity as to promote equity.

A second aspect of diversity that I "see" in these cases is diversity's non-categorical quality. Gender, for example, is not simply a category for statistical analysis. It represents a configuration of historically and socially contextualized expectations and relations both intra- and interpersonal. Gender matters but not to the same extent or in the same way for every (fe)male in every circumstance. The meanings of ability/disability and of ethnic and cultural group categories are similarly relational and contingent. What it means to be Italian-American, for example, has been constructed and modified *in relation to* the identities of and interactions with other groups both mainstream and subordinate (e.g, Conzen et al., 1990).

I have come to view race and ethnicity in similarly non-categorical or nonessentialist terms. What does it mean to be black? in South Africa today? in northeastern U.S. urban areas? in Great Britain? for an individual African-American young man in an urban high school where he is a star player on the championship basketball team? or that same young man in an affluent suburban high school where basketball is not a major sport? I am not arguing for an individualism that eschews all group characterizations and affiliations to celebrate some ideal-type, supposedly autonomous or unique individual. The individual is, after all, formed in social circumstances. This is to argue for treating group categorizations and

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characterizations as partial, multiple, situation-specific, and fluid (e.g., McCarthy, 1995).

The relational, fluid nature of identity and diversity also serve to remind that the world does not stand still, that further movement in one or more directions might be expected in all of the schools and settings presented here. The cultures of high-tech business and of public education, for example, while seemingly different realms, are neither mutually exclusive nor immutably fixed. So, we invite readers to talk with the text and its authors as well as each other. To facilitate that curriculum conversation, we include our email addresses along with our brief bios at the end of this volume.

Overview of the Cases

Eight contextualized cases are offered readers. They might have been grouped in a number of ways. As editor, I decided not to group them because to do so might unnecessarily limit readers' insights into various connections among them. Placing Forssman and Willinsky's unusually-told case of business-school partnership efforts at the beginning is intended to set the stage for thinking differently. Ending with my own case of policy in seeming conflict or opposition to social change is not merely an editorial courtesy to contributing authors; it seems to encompass several themes developed in the other case studies.

In "A Tale of Two Cultures and a Technology," Vivian Forssman and John Willinsky explore cultural politics, practice, and conflict in describing their forging of a business-educational partnership dedicated to creating a new curriculum for high schools that (a) is project-based and directed at providing technical support services to the school and community, (b) provides students with skills for a new economy, and (c) enables the schools to take greater advantage of the educational opportunities offered by technology. The Information Technology Management (ITM) program was developed through a partnership of an IT professional and a professor of education who here step back to analyse the clash of business and education cultures involved in initiating this new curriculum in approximately forty Canadian high schools.

In "Science for All Americans?" Margery D. Osborne and Angela Calabrese-Barton highlight the politics of curriculum policy and practice, nationally and locally. They examine the political implications of recent policy pronouncements and suggest an alter-

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native science education politics and curriculum practice. Recent reform efforts in science education suggest that all students should attain some foundational knowledge of the substance and processes of science. Encapsulated by the phrase "science for all," these efforts fail to address the implications in defining such a canon or enabling its acquisition by students—they don't ask hard questions about the sources or functioning of such knowledge; they sit on all sides of conflicting beliefs about the function of knowledge in society without acknowledging any of them. The authors are concerned that many people see a "science for all" involving an "all" that becomes increasingly homogeneous. "All" is not a word that suggests heterogeneity, suggesting instead likeness and similarity, with the children who are "different" becoming more like the rest of us (whoever we are). Instead, they argue for rethinking assumptions and purposes of science education, and teacher roles, in ways that do not remake different children in others' images—but in ways that remake schooling and science in students' often multiple images. Through instances of their own teaching, they explore what it means to think about questions of difference in constructing a science curriculum and pedagogy "for all."

In "The Politics of Religious Knowledge in Singapore," Jason Tan follows the course of policymaking and unmaking in a highly centralized and seemingly authoritarian education system—the short-lived imposition of Religious Knowledge as a compulsory subject for upper secondary students. Religious Knowledge was the government's response to its concern that the society's moral values and behavior were threatened by modernization and undesirable "Western" beliefs and practices. It is a case of macropolitical analysis on a relatively small and thus manageable scale that suggests what other researchers might look for, to, or at in their own circumstances. Clearly illustrated are the management of participation or consultation as a legitimation strategy, the influences of extra-educational politics on education policy, and how governing bodies can limit dialogue by setting its terms and participants. Even conservative, top-down systems, however, are neither immune to external pressures nor able to resist change.

In "The Segregation of Stephen," Diana Lawrence-Brown deals with micropolitics in examining the very personal politics of special education placement and curriculum practice. Efforts underway internationally to include students with significant disabilities in general education classrooms are seeing mixed effects. Here a particular case is explored in its immediate social and his-

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torical contexts in 1990s western New York. Stephen is a student with multiple disabilities who was included in general education classrooms from second through sixth grades, and then transferred to a self-contained special education classroom away from his home district. Underlying policy, politics, and practice connections are explicated, including the ebb and flow of people and power relationships affecting the case. The impact on what Stephen does and does not have the opportunity to learn is highlighted. His perspective as well as those of his teachers are an integral part of the story.

In "They Don't Want to Hear It," Suzanne Miller and Gina DeBlase Trzyna examine how broader social and political dynamics enter into and influence curriculum practice as a multicultural literature class tries to avoid dealing directly with racism close to home. Against the background of recent ethnographic studies of English teachers with pluralistic goals for curriculum and pedagogy, the authors examine a critical incident in an eleventh grade English class in an urban high school. The class's struggle with issues of race and racism while studying Claude Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land* erupted into a "major incident" when Derek, a black student, shared his personal, emotional response to the book and class discussion of it. Using interview transcripts and field notes from classroom observations as the primary data sources, versions of the event and its aftermath are shown from the very different perspectives of the teacher, six students, and the principal. Analysis reveals how "multicultural" took on differing meanings from their different perspectives. The negotiations among them were shaped by variously constructed notions of literacy, safety, cultural identity, and empowerment.

In "Curriculum as a Site of Memory," Nadine Dolby explores a case of the continuing "Struggle for History in South Africa" by juxtaposing the experience of an academic history class in an urban area of South Africa with a unit on apartheid against the ongoing, nationwide Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings. She examines the views of the white students in the class in a prestigious girls' high school as they negotiate the two divergent stories of the past and try to make sense of their nation's history and their own place or role in it. The voice of the researcher and the voices of the young women are interwoven in this account of national politics, local practice, and personal meanings. Dolby's account illustrates how the personal is political, politics are personalized, and structural inequalities remain largely unacknowledged.

In "Understanding Shifts in British Educational Discourses of

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Social Justice," Gaby Weiner provides a critical comparative analysis of 1940s and 1990s Labour educational rhetoric, policy, and practice. Of particular interest to her are how policies claimed to foster social justice (e.g., to reduce educational and social class disparities) affect working class and poor students, girls, students of color, and disabled young people. Despite the discourse of social reconstruction in the 1940s and of school effectiveness and "zero tolerance" of failure in the 1990s, it has been the already advantaged who have benefited from educational provision and change. While progressive in other areas, both new and old Labour educational policies have served more to maintain than to reform the social order. If anything, it appears that the number and diversity of disadvantaged groups has increased in the past fifty years.

In "National Standards and Curriculum as Cultural Containment?" Catherine Cornbleth examines both curriculum politics and policy activity and life inside classrooms to see how recent efforts to set state and national history standards and curriculum are playing out in local curriculum practice in California and New York elementary and secondary schools. Her analysis draws on and extends prior work to show that national standards and curriculum intended to serve purposes of cultural containment are unlikely to succeed. Instead of a single set of standards, official curriculum, or historical narrative, she suggests multiple possibilities for braided and reciprocal history that offer coherence through connections, not supposed or imposed commonalities. In so doing, she reverses the emphasis of prior chapters by using cases for illustration, rather than foregrounding them, as she highlights major themes in the volume as a whole.

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