

In Practice...

Opening Curriculum Windows: Curriculum Pasts Interpreted Today by Tomorrow's Scholars

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For nearly two decades as a Curriculum Generalist teaching in a doctoral program that still includes Curriculum Studies as an emphasis, I have been challenging students to produce publishable scholarship in my courses even though they are beginners on their scholarly journey. My perspective is that there is no one involved in the work of curriculum scholarship who is a "mere" beginner. We all have voice, life experiences, and perspective: That is, we all have something to say. That doesn't mean that all of the products from our short inquiries in a course for beginning curriculum scholars will be complete, perfect, elegant, or profound. What it means is that we all are entering the fray, and can learn from that journey together about what the work and processes of scholarship are like and what it takes to inquire deeply and to communicate our findings to a broader audience for consumption and critique (Poetter, 2010).

After several successful classroom attempts (and at least one major failure) at shepherding my students' early work, both in terms of published articles and books (Poetter, Waldrop, Amatullah, Weiland, Winn, & Googins, in press; Poetter, 2012; Poetter, Wegwert, & Haerr, 2006; Poetter, Bird, & Goodney 2004; Wegwert, et al., 2003), I received the wonderful opportunity to teach a new course in our program following a curriculum revision of the doctoral course of study that had occurred

over a two-year period (2010-2012). The new curriculum course would be one of five "core" courses that all students in our program would be required to take in the program. I had lobbied for a "core" course in our program to have a curriculum studies focus, and in particular also a pedagogical focus that placed an early inquiry/publishing experience in the syllabus. The faculty agreed and the Department Chair at the time asked me to teach the first pilot section of the course. I have now completed six iterations of the course, which occurs during Spring semester of each academic year. All of the course groups have produced publishable book chapters drafted during the course and as a result of editing stages beyond the course, in a book series called *Curriculum Windows* (Poetter, et al., in press; Poetter, Waldrop, Bolyard, & Bell-Robinson, 2016; Poetter & Waldrop, 2015; Poetter, 2015).

Each semester my students have been connecting to important, influential curriculum books and authors from the past, beginning with the 1960s, and proceeding through the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and then back to the 1950s to complete the project. In each iteration of the course, we do general readings in the curriculum field, then each student writes a book length chapter research essay about a significant book/author from the decade being studied. During this work with them, I ask students to engage in a process that

reflects Pinar's *currere* method: the hope is that students will be able to inquire deeply into the historical implications of the work and connect it to their own personal curriculum journeys. The chapters they write about curriculum books from past decades are forms of curriculum scholarship meant to open a window that sheds light on the historical, while also revealing a way forward, through the present to the future. Our hope is that the chapters and the work in total will include and demonstrate each student's understanding of the work's broader educational/societal implications that are conceptual, practical, and educational, as well as the implications that are personal and that may have an impact on the formation of the self.

In the remainder of this paper, I want to trace the historical journey of the course, my thinking and action in creating it, the historical nature of the work itself, and describe two chapters from our early books that show the project's potential and power. What I mean by the "historical nature of the work itself," is trying to discover how the work relates to curriculum studies, particularly regarding how the work connects past curriculum authors and texts to contemporary scholars, scholarship, and present day and future conceptions of curriculum issues, ideas, and possibilities for teachers, students, schools, and society. My intention is to use Pinar's notion of "currere" as a means of framing this paper and the story I attempt to tell (Pinar, 1992). I also refer often to Schubert, Schubert, Thomas & Carroll's (2002) work *Curriculum Books: The First Hundred Years*, which has been an important tool to course participants and to me for understanding the complex task of choosing, framing, understanding, and using books from past decades in our study together.

The Regressive, Going Back in Time: Norm Overly's Historical Gift

Pinar (1992) describes the stages of the "The method of *currere*" as the "regressive—progressive—analytical—synthetical" (p. 19). The goal of the process is to explore the question: "What has been and what is now the nature of my educational experience?" (p. 20). To help students navigate their own autobiographies for my class and the writing project—to explore the ways that their educational lives now bring them to the brink of producing new scholarship—I introduce Pinar's notion of *currere* and ask students to focus mainly on the regressive phase of the *currere* process. In the regressive phase "One returns to the past, to capture it as it was, and as it hovers over the present" (p. 21). All at once, usually at the end of the beginning of their efforts to draft their chapters, I encourage them to enter the progressive, analytical, and synthetical stages. But my main concern is that students enter and thrive in the regressive stage, theorizing that this is the main body of work in the course; that is, touching the historical meaning and possibilities of the text they read broadly and personally, encouraging the "re-entry to the past and its conscious reincorporation into the present" (p. 266).

In the Fall of 2011, just before teaching the course for the first time in the Spring of 2012 and just a few weeks before starting the process of putting the new course together to meet that upcoming deadline, I had moved offices, coming back to my departmental office space and back to the teaching faculty full time after five years away in an administrative role. As I unpacked my books and re-shelved them, I thought about all of the books that my mentor and advisor at Indiana University,

Norm Overly, had given me the previous year, as he downsized his book collection so he could move into a smaller retirement living space in Bloomington. The collection of curriculum books he gave me was well over 100 books.

I had read many of the books Norm had given me. I owned some of the titles myself, and some were titles I recognized but hadn't consumed. Some titles I didn't recognize at all. I held the books, leafed through them, took stock of ones I felt I needed to re-read or read for the first time and made a stack as I unpacked them. Some of the titles had been signed by the author to Norm, personal evidence of Norm's broad connection to the field and to the people producing scholarship in decades past; it suggested a bygone era in which scholars shared their books together and gave away copies to friends in the field. Norm kept them, and used them, and read them, and grew in knowledge and stature as a scholar and teacher of curriculum. The books themselves told part of the story.

Then as the stack grew larger I actually started making a list of the books I thought I needed to read that formed what I felt was a gap in my knowledge about the field. I also noticed a trend, probably sparked by Norm's large collection of Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Yearbooks, that the books had started grouping together for me by decade. I thought about how I had read Schubert's (1980) book for Norm's class in the summer of 1990, the first version of his classic work on *Curriculum Books*, so I knew many of the titles and the names and the texts, especially several of the synoptic texts that had cross-referenced other curriculum books of the period. I knew a lot, and still, at the very same time, very little. For a recent class, I had used Dr. Schubert's

update of *Curriculum Books* that covered curriculum books of the 20th century through the 1990s, and used it that day first hand as I perused my library; I read Schubert, and looked at the books on hand, back and forth. Back and forth.

I finally sat down in a chair in the office, tired from the hours I had already spent moving the books and poring over them. The chair faced a beautiful arched window, with the shades open and a beautiful sunshine streaming into the room, and I held a first edition copy of Eliot Eisner's *The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs* (1979, red cover). I thought back to the summer that I took my first curriculum course with Norm at IU during which we read Tyler's *Basic Principles of Curriculum & Instruction* (1949), Schubert's *Curriculum Books: The First 80 Years* (1980), and Eisner's masterpiece. Truth be told, it really is no secret: Eisner's book changed my life. For me, he brought to life issues in the curriculum field that I had experienced as a beginning teacher but didn't have any vocabulary to name, or frameworks from which to hang understandings and judgments. For me, that summer, because of Norm and Eisner, in particular, I began the process of naming where I stood, what I was committed to, how I understood the complex relationship among teaching, curriculum making, and democratic life. I developed a hunger for learning more about the field, about things studied and questioned and theorized and proven and discussed that would shape my understanding, and ultimately, in very subtle and not so subtle ways, my practice as a teacher and my personality as a human being, and ultimately my professional life as a curriculum generalist.

Eisner's book had gotten me into some trouble, too, when during the year following that first curriculum course the Department Chair in the high school where I was teaching 9th and 10th grade Language Arts was pressured by superiors to rework the curricula in the English Literature and Writing classes for each grade. He assigned me to lead a team in revamping the 10th grade course of study. The team met, we deliberated, reached some crossroads, and while he participated in a meeting, and while I used my newfound vocabulary and knowledge about curriculum issues from reading Eisner in that meeting—in my opinion in order to move us effectively ahead and to take on and answer the harder questions at hand—the Chair got frustrated and yelled at me, "Why don't you just do it then since you know everything about the curriculum field now!" I didn't have any way to respond to that at the time, his response completely shocked me in the moment. I didn't think I was acting like a "know-it-all," and after all I was so new that my naiveté probably deserved at least a little bit of forgiveness and understanding.

Looking back after that outburst, during that year, and even for the past 25 years, I realize that the task of doing curriculum work intimidated the whole team and my chair. We had very little understanding of what we were doing, or about how to name the things we cared about and about how to discuss them. And the clock ticked down with a great deal riding on the group producing a new curriculum document. But how to get there, and for what purposes? That event confirmed to me how important it is for all teachers and school leaders to have a baseline of knowledge and information about general issues in curriculum and

teaching. Practitioners didn't have to be experts in the curriculum field, but they could benefit wildly by knowing at least a little bit about curriculum problems and issues. Like, just centering the self and the team and the school and students and parents and the community on critical questions such as, "What knowledge is of the most worth? Why? And who decides?" Or, on understanding the complex factors that have an impact on everyday decisions for planning and teaching, such as power and politics and ideologies and economics. Or on understanding the close relationship between planning and teaching, and how to view the work of teaching as an art, as opposed to viewing the work technically, as a scientific, mechanical, rule-bound, even as a "teacher proof" endeavor (Eisner, 1979). And more. That summer class and that subsequent outburst shaped my professional life, the person I became, and the things I cared about.

Eisner's book also inspired me to think about how I could do the kinds of scholarship that he displayed in the book that his own doctoral students at Stanford worked on in their program with him in the 1970s and beyond. Not only that, in general, but in particular, Barbara Porro's piece "Playing the School System: The Low Achiever's Game" really captivated me. The form of the piece, with the vignettes sequenced in short snippets by number, and the drawings that complemented the movements in the piece and the themes of it, and the story, how she wove it all together to say something meaningful about students and schools of that era rocked me. I thought that might be the type of work that I would want to do myself as a scholar, and even that long ago I thought that I'd like to coach my own group of doctoral students someday who studied

school life and students and curriculum and teaching and said insightful things about what they saw, and theorized and practiced ways to improve our human condition and our commitments to schooling in order to provide a quality education for all children.

As all of this came rushing back to me in that chair, with the light streaming in through that window, it dawned on me that students should read several strong foundational curriculum books in the course (Schubert et al., 2002; Eisner, 2002; and Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2002), and then use books of the decades, a la Schubert, to story their own connections between those historical texts and their current lives. Like in my own story, of being in a place where practice meets theoretical constructs, concepts, and ideas of a field, students of curriculum deal with their own stories of interaction and conflict, on both a historical and present level, and maybe even on a futuristic level if they are involved in a progressive, forward thinking school system or educational project of some sort that requires extensive planning. And it came to me in that moment that the key motif would be "window," as the light streamed in through the beautiful arched windows of my office. My aha moment of moments in that moment—one of the many in my entire life (we all have them!) but significant in this case since it "stuck" and had legs and lived on in future action—was that students in the course would read a significant curriculum book from a decade the entire class would be focused on for the course, and then write a curriculum treatment of the book that turned on the writer's ability to "open a window" from past to present. Meaning, each student would write a book chapter that showed the reader how she interacted with the book with the purpose, ultimately, of

sharing the story of how the ideas in it made a connection personally and publicly (the *connection* is the "window") with curriculum issues, problems, and possibilities of yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

This required several tremendous leaps of faith on my part, and on the part of the scholars in my classes, and by those who would become potential future readers.

Regressive Leaps of Faith

I had to leap backwards with the faith that my students and members of the curriculum field would respond to the project. So what if curriculum books from the past had been written and consumed, and subsequently forgotten? It's not 1963 anymore, or 1975, or 1987... So what? Isn't today all that matters? What if the books and ideas were perceived to be out of date, or a waste of time to revisit? What if the students read the books and couldn't make a connection, and just wound up making things up to complete the assignment? I worried about all of it, and actually discovered with practice that students, most of them in their 30s and born after 1980 or so, really enjoyed learning about decades that preceded their adult lives. They found the work to be illuminating, as they juggled realizations as they read and participated in the "regressive phase" that "we've been down this path before, I see now," and "I never knew how powerful and robust these ideas are until now," etc. Students found meaning and stamina in the authors and the books.

I found that colleagues in the field, especially Bill Schubert himself, would be responsive and interested in the work as a form of curriculum history. Looking back can be very helpful, even for a veteran. And

the work of connecting prior works with future possibilities energized Bill as he met my students, interacted with them, and presented with them at conferences (Bergamo Conference Sponsored by the *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 2012; The American Association for Teaching and Curriculum Annual Conference, 2013). Bill has had a profound impact on our curriculum windows project in terms of helping to move the work forward and to connect the work the students have done with his recollections, and his historical memories of the texts and authors themselves. Many of these recollections are framed in his written Forewords included in each of the volumes.

By the way, I have never pitched the work we are doing as history, per se. However, we are developing and approaching texts and authors that are historical, and situating our work in the historical, complicated conversation that is curriculum (Pinar, 2012). So in that regard, we are honoring and participating in curriculum history. I have Bill Schubert to thank for helping us think through that puzzle.

I also worried when formulating the course and the project that curriculum texts prior to the reconceptualization in the early 1970s could be viewed merely as texts stuck in the curriculum development era of the field (Pinar et al., 2002), that is in an era thought of by many to be "dead" by 1969 and having been produced prior to the era of "understanding" as a predominant metaphor signaling worth in the field. How would I theorize my way into a position that viewed the 1960s as important enough to study given the field's general penchant for moving past the past? Pinar himself, who had proclaimed the previous field of curriculum development to be dead (1918-

1969), provided the cover for my initial position, arguing in *Understanding Curriculum* (2002) that notable transformational curriculum scholars such as Macdonald, Huebner, Kliebard, Eisner, Greene, Berman, and Klohr (most of them featured prominently in our books on the curriculum books of the 1960s and 1970s!) provided the foundation for the reconceptualization in the 1960s (p. 184). So I had dodged a significant conceptual bullet, which had been slowed by time but that still bothered me to some degree. Being concerned with this is mostly related, no doubt, with my inner turmoil regarding my own positionality as a curriculum scholar, since I would say that I occupy a progressive, humanist, interpretivist space and less of a critical, post-modern space in my work. And here I am going back in time to what some contemporary scholars might view as "ancient texts," and perhaps not very helpful for understanding who we are today and where we are going. I would beg to differ at this point, but critics may have some very good arguments.

Regressive Matters of Choice and Their Possible Historical Impact

Another key set of historical moments that began occurring and recurring from the very beginning of this project—and that are especially acute just before a section of this class is taught—comes about in the book selection process, not only the process of choosing books to be read but also then of assigning each student in the course to read a certain book. Over the years, I have developed means for dealing with the quandaries and difficulties associated with these processes, but they never really get any easier and make me extremely uneasy on several fronts.

On some curriculum projects in the past done with students as the primary authors, for instance with my project *10 Great Curricula* (Poetter, 2012), I intended for the choices of "Great Curricula" studied by my students to be provocative. Judging by the weak, nearly non-existent response to this work by the field (I've never seen one review of the book nor have I heard from one scholar or student in a curriculum course who has read it or cited it), it became obvious that no one really cared. But this lack of care didn't help me—as in emboldening me—when I went to make "legitimate" choices of 15-20 books from the 1960s and subsequent decades for my students to read. The reason is that I do actually care about what people think of the choices, especially my students and Bill Schubert, and I want them to know that I was thoughtful and deliberative about the choices; and if the books had any chance of being consumed or read after being published by anyone else outside the curriculum windows' family of participants, I wanted our processes and the books to be defensible, at least. And while there is some amount of historical mystery to the process, I also had criteria for selection that became clearer over time even if they existed only tacitly at the beginning.

So, while I have developed several criteria for helping me do this, they are loosely held. I have never taken the step of just asking students to make a choice of a book on their own. I didn't want students to drag the process out, have trouble finding the books, get a late start, and/or all want to read the same thing, etc. All of that would produce a greater level of choice, but perhaps more chaos for me, and overall perhaps less challenge to the students. Before each course, I introduce Schubert's (2002) chapter on the decade of focus. I

take stock of the books that I actually have on my shelves and don't have to purchase and that I can share with students easily. Then I ask a series of questions about titles under consideration. For a decade, I seriously consider up to 50 books. I usually choose 15-20 titles. I always ask:

1. Is the book accessible? Can the book be read and consumed and perhaps connect with a student, offering an opportunity for the student to be successful in developing a historical window from yesterday to today?
2. Has the book had a lasting impact? Has the author had a visible and meaningful career in the field? Are the ideas, concepts, practices, and theories in the work robust enough to stand the test of time?
3. Does the book's author and/or the subject matter represent the perspectives and/or experiences of a marginalized group? Given the paucity of authors of color in the early days of the curriculum field through the 1960s, can the students see themselves in the work, connect to it, and resonate with it if they don't feel represented by it?
4. Is the area of intellectual pursuit covered by the book already covered by another book? Does the book stand out as extremely important in an area of endeavor, say on the curriculum of teacher education, or as a synoptic curriculum text, etc.?
5. Will the book connect with a member of the class and his or her interests? I know most of the students fairly well by the time they take my course. In the case of the 2014 spring semester, I taught them all in a course in the previous Fall. In other semesters, I knew many of the students well as a result of serving on the admissions committee or having

taught them previously in a master's level course in curriculum.

6. Do I like the book and can I stand to invest the time necessary to read it?
7. Is the book really a curriculum book? Schubert includes a great many books in his list and description of curriculum books by decade that are tangential to the field, related but tangential. Is the book at hand of central importance to the curriculum field? For instance, for the 1990s, I didn't include Kozol's *Savage Inequalities*, even though I included several education writers of the romantic tradition in the 1960s book such as Kohl, Holt, and Herndon. I didn't feel Kozol's effort in the 1990s had as much impact on the curriculum field as the writers from the 1960s had. And I didn't think of his book so much as a curriculum book as another kind of book critiquing the inequities in our public system of education, especially regarding the ways it underserves the poor, people of color, and those living in cities, mainly. I may be wrong!

All of these considerations go into the complex calculus of deciding what books to list for students and to actually have on hand for the first night of class. Perhaps the most important factor is whether or not I have read the book and whether or not I think the author and the book have had a profound impact on the field as I know it. This is where the process is most subjective. I am not keeping a scoring pad on the books or a record of my own self-deliberations. The task is more artistic and intuitive than that and thus way more fun and exciting.

On the first night of class, I ask students to sign a contract with the publisher to produce a book length chapter on a curriculum book from the decade

being studied (students may opt out and not sign the contract without penalty. They still have to write a chapter for the course, but they do not have to pursue publication of it). Then I introduce a written list (in APA format) of the books chosen to be read. I send all of the books around the room for students to peruse as I give a brief background of each book and its author(s). I ask the students to ask me any questions they might have about the books, then I give them an opportunity to rank order the books they would like to read on a 3"x5" notecard. They can write a short rationale for why they would like a particular book or books.

Over the next week I read their cards and choices and attempt to give everyone possible their first choice of curriculum books. Over the six courses, I would say I've been able to award about 60% of students their first choice. Then for the remainder of the book assignments I do a complex calculus based on looking at the cards, thinking of each student and what I know about them, as well as taking stock of any further pleas made on email by students in the intervening week. It is the case that oftentimes several people want the same popular book. Sometimes a student is the only person to list one of the books anywhere in the top three; they usually get that book! No student has ever rejected a book or not lived up to the challenge, though I do say to them in class that if they just can't stomach the assignment after a few weeks that I would do what I could to change the book. They know the complex calculus I am using, and usually accept the challenge.

I go through this process because many of these books have had a profound impact on how I think and what I know. They have been important to many others

as well. They have been studied and consumed by a generation, at least, and their ideas found their way, many times, into contemporary practices in schooling and in education broadly conceived. That really should mean something to us in the curriculum field as we consider works of the past, the giants on whose shoulders we all stand. I really want to do right by them and honor their work. Perhaps this is a commitment to curriculum history we all should make at some point, that is to continually connecting to our pasts, the texts in our traditions, the books and authors we should have but haven't read. I know that the renewed commitment and set of opportunities have greatly enriched my life and work, and that of my students. I recently, in fact, gave Louise Berman's (1968) *New Priorities in the Curriculum* to a student because she was very interested in curriculum processes. I wouldn't have had that in my back pocket if hadn't read Berman for this project, and after having noticed Berman's book continuously popping up over the years on my shelf and in references in the field.

I suppose another reason I invest in the book choice process is that I am tied to a legacy in the field through Norm Overly. One of the American Education Research Association's Lifetime Achievement Award winners for 2014 in Division B, Curriculum Studies, Dr. Overly had a profound personal and professional impact on my life. The inclusion of his key works of the 1970s in our recently published volume is a testimony to his tremendous impact on the field and the effect he had on me. Every day of my life is enriched by knowing him, so long ago, and still today. I want others to know him as well, at least through his scholarship. Perhaps our books of windows will live on to illuminate greats of past

decades, and the ideas of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. And perhaps others will create their own regressive projects in an attempt to see more clearly, or to challenge more potently the processes, behaviors, systems, and possibilities of the present day field.

In my final regressive look back for this paper, I'd like to interact with two chapters written by my students, the lead off chapter of our volume on the 1960s by Kyra Shahid, her window to Sidney Walton's *Black Curriculum* (1969), and Deb Heard's window to Norm Overly's *Lifelong Learning: A Human Agenda* (1979), which closes the recently published book on the 1970s.

Examples of the Conscious Reincorporation of the Past into the Present: Windows

There are few authors of color in the curriculum field in the 1960s who wrote significant books. Some white authors in the 1960s confront issues concerning students of color in schools and cities, such as Kozol's (1968) *Death at an Early Age*, Kohl's (1968) *36 Children*, Herndon's (1969) *The Way It Spozed to Be*, etc. Several students of color in my class grappled with those works. But to grow opportunities in the first course on the 1960s for students of color in the class to read authors of color, I adopted Walton's (1969) *Black Curriculum* and won an argument with myself (see criteria #7 above, in particular) to include WEB Dubois' (1959) second novel in his Black Flame Trilogy series, which he wrote at the end of his life in the 1950s and early 1960s.

I assigned Kyra Shahid to Walton's book; she really wanted to read Walton. After reading it for the first time myself in preparation for the course, I felt moved, inspired, in awe of the work and thrilled for Kyra's opportunity to read it, too. Walton

describes his fight to win what we might think of today as completely minor concessions for Black students and faculty in the curriculum and pedagogy of Oakland Community College at the height of the civil rights era in the mid 1960s. But Walton's detailed story of his fight to grow an Afro-American studies program shows the deeply racist roots of structural domination by whites in mainstream institutional settings of the 1960s. Walton, posing with firearms and Black Panther garb in a photo at the beginning of the book, captures the revolutionary feel of the book; but his writing shows us where the real lasting, racial war lies and motivates us to recalibrate, see more clearly, and open up to the truth embodied in the moral high ground, social justice, and equity.

Kyra Shahid (2013) examines Walton's work, using a term from the Akan language of Ghana, *sankofa*, "which articulates the importance of taking from the past what is good and bringing it to the present so that through the benevolent use of knowledge, progress can be made" (p. 2). She juxtaposes this framework with a discussion of the violent imagery of Walton in that opening photo, hoping that the tension can lead to the energy that will allow her and her readers and Walton's readers to envision a "window of opportunity," a life-changing direction, in spite of the distortions and violence that often keep many from emerging from behind cracked windows of hope.

In her chapter, Kyra develops four conceptual windows of hope. The first is the bulletproof pane, the one that protects Black intellectuals from the bullets of destruction fired at them by the mainstream. The second pane is a two-way mirror that equips the Black intellectual with the ability to see both the oppression

and the opportunity residing in the systems they inhabit simultaneously. The third pane is a tinted pane, meant to signify the care that Black intellectuals must take in being lulled into a false sense of security and hope in a system that continually acts to oppress. The fourth pane is stained glass, signifying the many levels of beauty and hope that do ultimately win out in life as Black intellectuals continue to fight for new levels of acceptance and humanism. In the end, she connects Walton's reality with the reality of public schools, still yearning—especially where Black students are underserved—for curricula that more closely reflects their life experience, and perhaps even powerful "new" structures such as "Afrocentric" schools that change the power and paradigm completely.

Also, and for example, Deb Heard (2015) read Norm Overly's *Lifelong Learning: A Human Agenda* (1979) and originally decided, after meeting with me, to attempt to write a contemporary piece using the unique format of incorporating descriptive "reportage" into a set of vignettes à la Norm's original text. I actually pushed her toward this idea, thinking that it would provide a structural window that would yield comparative insights to the issues and ideas confronting students and society today in schools and education. Norm's ASCD book from 1979, truly written by committee, resonated with Deb, but she struggled with collecting items for her chapter. At that point, she felt that meeting Norm would help. I helped her to contact Norm; he graciously agreed to meet with her, and Deb drove to Bloomington to meet face-to-face with Norm in April.

Of course, she found him to be delightful and very much enjoyed the meal she shared with him, his time, his forthright answers, and his spirit. But she stumbled

across a key fact that really hit home with her; Norm mentioned that a member of the original writing team, a Black higher education administrator, had not actually participated in the meetings or contributed to the edited volume. This took her aback, and she began to wonder what a version of *Lifelong Learning* would have read like if it had incorporated the voice of an African American educator/curricularist.

Subsequently, her data collection for the piece took off. Friends and neighbors and colleagues began contributing pieces highlighting the difficulties, the questions, the wrongs, and the joys that people of color and other marginalized groups experience in schools and society today. Deb's chapter has that revolutionary feel, the one that can be accomplished when the window of voice is opened up and people's life experiences and travails are actually spoken, hit the page, jump out at the reader. Hers is one of the most profoundly written pieces in the series so far, capturing the spirit of the period she is addressing (the 1970s) through the technique, form, and commitments of that era's authors, but also taking a next step by opening a window to multiple new marginalized voices to enter the fray, and perhaps even to lead the way. What a gift, from Norm and Deb.

Conclusion: Are We There Yet?

I'm pretty sure the regressive phase never ends. Being historical—looking back—might sometimes feel to lookers and onlookers like being stuck on a long family trip, riding in the station wagon in the backseat looking out the window as the world passes by uninhibited by our presence. But we are more than voyeurs when we look back; the process is much more active if we give ourselves the opportunity to do so and to value the things

we find. We are historians when we look back, painting our currere pictures, and opening windows to new frontiers. My friends and family members often lament the song library on my iPhone, contending that the mélange of 70s soft rock and disco reveals me as hopelessly stuck in the past. But I resist them, arguing all the while that these songs make me feel good. The songs reconnect me to moments of insight, excitement, carefree days, and significant life events. For me, the melodies trigger old memories, and new possibilities. Each time I think back, I reimagine these moments anew, and they subsequently transform the present as I reinterpret them, reshape them. It doesn't matter how many times I listen to the same song. Same thing, sometimes more powerful than the last listen. This is what happens, in a way, when we look back at the curriculum scholarship of past decades. We connect with the past, and reinterpret our presents, and no doubt our futures are shaped as a result when we re-examine ideas, old and new alike. Ultimately, we move in our writing about these great curriculum books and writers past the regressive, into the future (the progressive), and toward the meaningful creation of new ideas in new times, in the analytical and syncretical phases of our *currere*.

For me, the process of looking back at the curriculum scholarship of past decades, especially through the medium of published books and their authors, is invigorating. I like learning new things, uncovering mysterious connections, recognizing the obvious things I couldn't see before, and more. Engaging history can have an impact on us and on our present work. Many times over the past five years I have handed off new books to students, outside of class, because an idea or theory

or concept or possibility connected with my regressive reading. And this process made all the difference, setting off new connections, and developing new avenues of thought. This is the acute, present promise and return of opening new curriculum windows.

For my students, the process of looking back has presented a great challenge to them as scholars new to the field. They enter with less background than established scholars do, but they bring fresh eyes and ears to the scene, and as was the case with Kyra and Deb and so many others, they interact with historical texts with fervor, closely examining the possibilities they hold and bringing a sometimes radical, new interpretation to the text. The texts, as a result, and the regressive lives of the new scholar are brought into stark relief in the present, yielding, in almost every case, a new light. Such is the case with the process of opening new windows; sometimes the old, shadowy places are illumined with new light, and new shadows form, and the field radiates.

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