

Assignment #1 -

Historical Background of Curriculum

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EDTC 807: Implementation and Evaluation of Curriculum

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CURRICULUM

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, education was undergoing significant changes that led to a number of struggles over the content and structure of the curriculum. During this period, the United States was transitioning from an agricultural to an industrial society, and there was a growing need for a workforce with new skills and knowledge. In response, educational leaders began to rethink the traditional curriculum and consider new subjects and approaches that would better prepare students for the changing world.

Traditional curriculum development began around 1856 with Chicago's superintendent of schools, William Harvey Wells, and continued until 1864. Wells devised the idea of categorizing students into grade levels and designing separate courses of study for each subject at each grade level (Cutler, 1976). Debates raged over which subjects should be taught in schools and how they should be taught. This included debates over the role of subjects such as history, literature, science, and mathematics. Pedagogy debates arose as there were disagreements over the best method of teaching, with some advocating for more traditional methods and others pushing for progressive, child-centered approaches.

In 1892, Charles DeGarmo founded the National Herbert Society, which aimed to devise a unique educational syllabus. However, the society did not take any action until 1895 when they challenged the National Education Association under the leadership of Harris (National Education Association, 1895). The actual confrontation had a more profound effect than the event's substance.

These debates also reflected larger societal and political issues, such as race relations, women's rights, and the role of government in society. These debates also played a significant role in shaping American education and continue to influence education policy and practice today. Herbert M. Kliebard studied these curriculum struggles in late 19th and early 20th century

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America. In his work, Kliebard highlights how the debates and tensions around what should be taught in schools reflected larger societal and political conflicts (Kliebard, 2004).

In Kliebard's research, there were disagreements about the purposes of education, the role of schools in society, and what subjects were considered important for students to learn as mentioned earlier. Kliebard's research shows how these struggles played out in the design and implementation of curricula, and how they helped shape American education as we know it today. Kliebard also studied the disagreements over pedagogy, with some advocating for more traditional methods and others pushing for progressive, child-centered approaches. The provision of a liberal education to everyone was the emphasis of the humanist curricular philosophy (Kliebard, 2004). This emphasized providing knowledge of academic subjects, the value of reason, and observance of traditions. Kliebard's child study curriculum theory from 2004 proposes that an effective curriculum should be designed to facilitate the natural development of the child, while also considering their unique needs and interests.

Kliebard also explored the debates over curriculum content, including disagreements over which subjects should be taught in schools and how they should be taught. This included debates over the role of subjects such as history, literature, science, and mathematics. Kliebard's research showed how these curriculum struggles played out in the design and implementation of curricula and how they reflected larger social and political issues, such as race relations, women's rights, and the role of government in society.

In conclusion, Herbert M. Kliebard's work on the curriculum struggles of late 19th and early 20th century America is a valuable contribution to the field of educational history. His works provide insight into the debates and tensions that shaped American education and continue to inform education policy and practice. One of the defining features of Kliebard's work is his

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approach to curriculum, which is heavily influenced by his background in history. Kliebard's perspective on curriculum is largely historical, emphasizing the importance of understanding the past in order to inform the present and shape the future. As he states in "The Struggle for the American Curriculum," "We must first learn what has been done before we can determine what ought to be done" (Kliebard, 1986, p. 10).

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References

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