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Towards learner-centred design: the development of a model for considering curriculum design

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Purpose

- To pose some key questions about curriculum

- To introduce a model that aids us in posing questions and considering our own beliefs

- To share a little of the story of the development of the model

Bound, H., Rushbrook, P. & Sivalingham, M. (2013). What is quality Curriculum? Programme design, delivery and management in Singapore's Diploma in Adult and Continuing Education. Singapore: IAL.
http://www.ial.edu.sg/index.aspx?id=380

*The modern curriculum development rationale has truncated the etymological meaning and **reduced curriculum to a noun**, the **racecourse itself**.*

Thus generations of educators have been schooled to believe that the curriculum is a tangible object, the lesson plans we implement, or the course guides we follow, rather than the process of running the racecourse (Slattery 1995, p. 56 in Schwab 2006, p. 450)

What is curriculum?

"A good teacher can make a subject live even if it is a bad curriculum... I'm not sure if a bad teacher can make a good curriculum live like the same way."
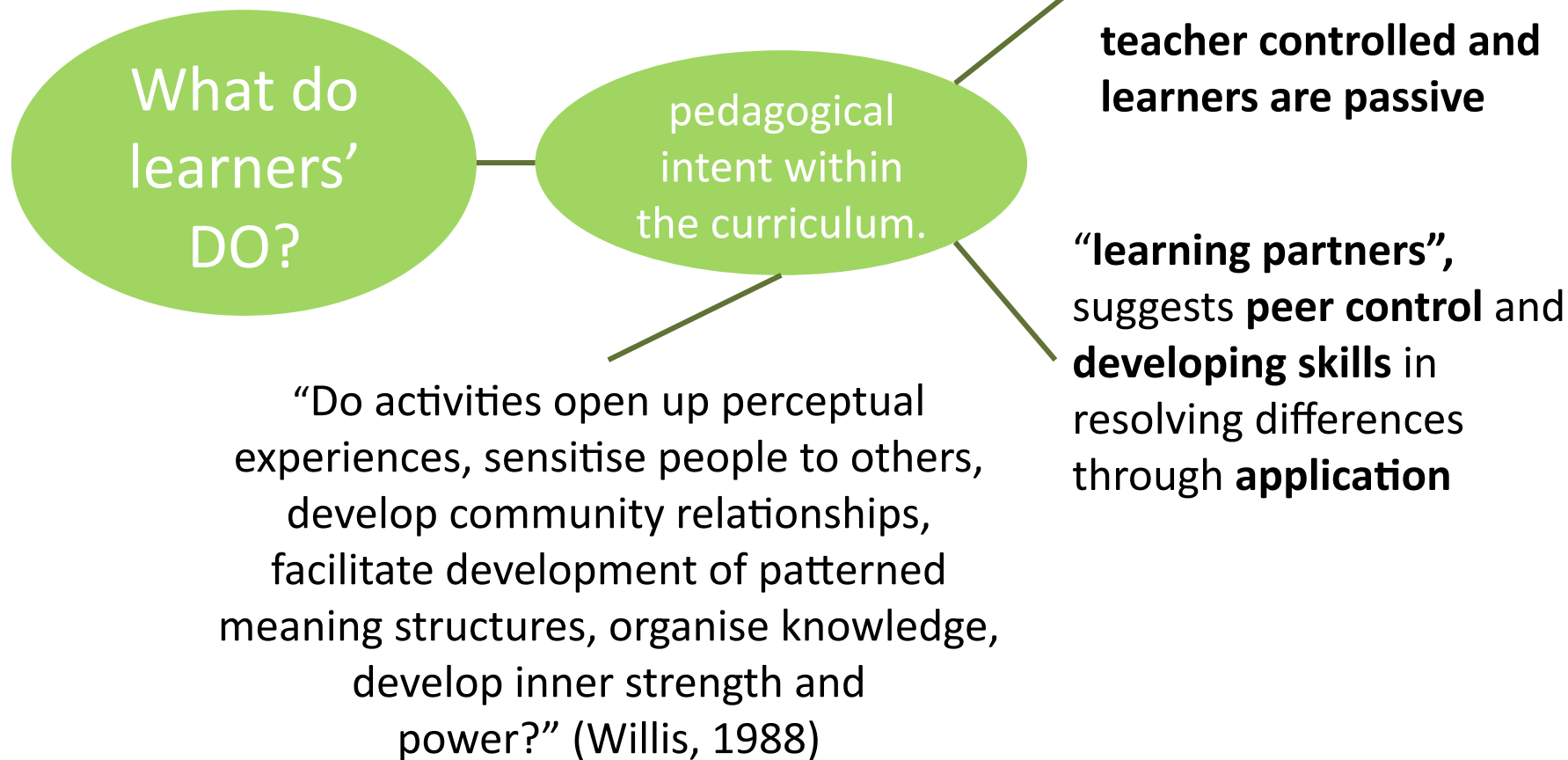
Who is the curriculum for?

- Curriculum can unproblematically **reproduce, cultural and political assumptions** counter to the interests of learning practice, innovation and reform;

- Danger of curriculum as a normative product and formulaic evaluation , rather than an ongoing process, inclusive of **critical and cyclical interrogation;**

- Need for including the development of **metacognitive skills**;

- the importance to foreground and value the **contribution of facilitators and their learners** as the nucleus of any curriculum design exercise;

- the assumption at all times of curriculum as a **process or journey** rather than a pre-packaged, fixed and immutable product.

Naming our beliefs and assumptions

What do learners' DO?

pedagogical intent within the curriculum.

"**lectures and set texts**" denotes reception of selected content that is **teacher controlled and learners are passive**

"**learning partners**", suggests **peer control** and **developing skills** in resolving differences through **application**

"Do activities open up perceptual experiences, sensitise people to others, develop community relationships, facilitate development of patterned meaning structures, organise knowledge, develop inner strength and power?" (Willis, 1988)

The **intent** needs to be **clear** and the messages **consistent across a programme**

Methodology

Semi-structured interviews, documentary evidence, and participant observation – field notes

First set (n=7) : Purposive **sampling**: identified for their deep knowledge of and practice within adult and vocational education

No.	Name	Role
1	Stanley	Prof. vocational education, Australian university
2	Nancy	AP vocational education, Australian university
3	Evan	Prof. postgraduate studies, US university
4	Kate	Senior researcher NZ gov. research
5	Quentin	Prof. education British university
6	Vincent	Educator & curriculum designer Singaporean CET provider
7	Barry	Senior manager from a Singaporean CET provider

Second set (n=11): Singaporean DACE stakeholder curriculum designers, learning facilitators and quality assurance managers. (**purposive and convenience**)

Name	Role
Anthony	WDA QA manager + experience in learning facilitation & curriculum dev.
Diane	former curriculum accreditation freelancer.
Kevin	computer systems' engineering training.
William	Has worked in WDA's ... curriculum design and Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ) standards development.
Nicholas	A former secondary teacher now senior CET manager & learning facilitator.
Francis	experience developing and implementing industry Voc. Ed. programmes.
Sharon	facilitator experienced in the development and delivery of curriculum.
Leslie	Develops WSQ QA policy. Quality assures WSQ-related courseware.
Sydney	Former secondary teacher, experience developing language-based curricula; an expert CET facilitator
Kenneth	Former university lecturer, now develops vocational programmes for languages other than English and WSQ-related courses.
Norman	Former university academic develops electronics industry programmes.

Bricoleurs:

- quality of the relationship between theoretically informed programme construction its capacity for interpretation by a full range of educators

- Learners working with the facilitator to re-read programme outcomes according to their needs and capacities.

Key feature of curriculum is the flexible and dynamic interpretation
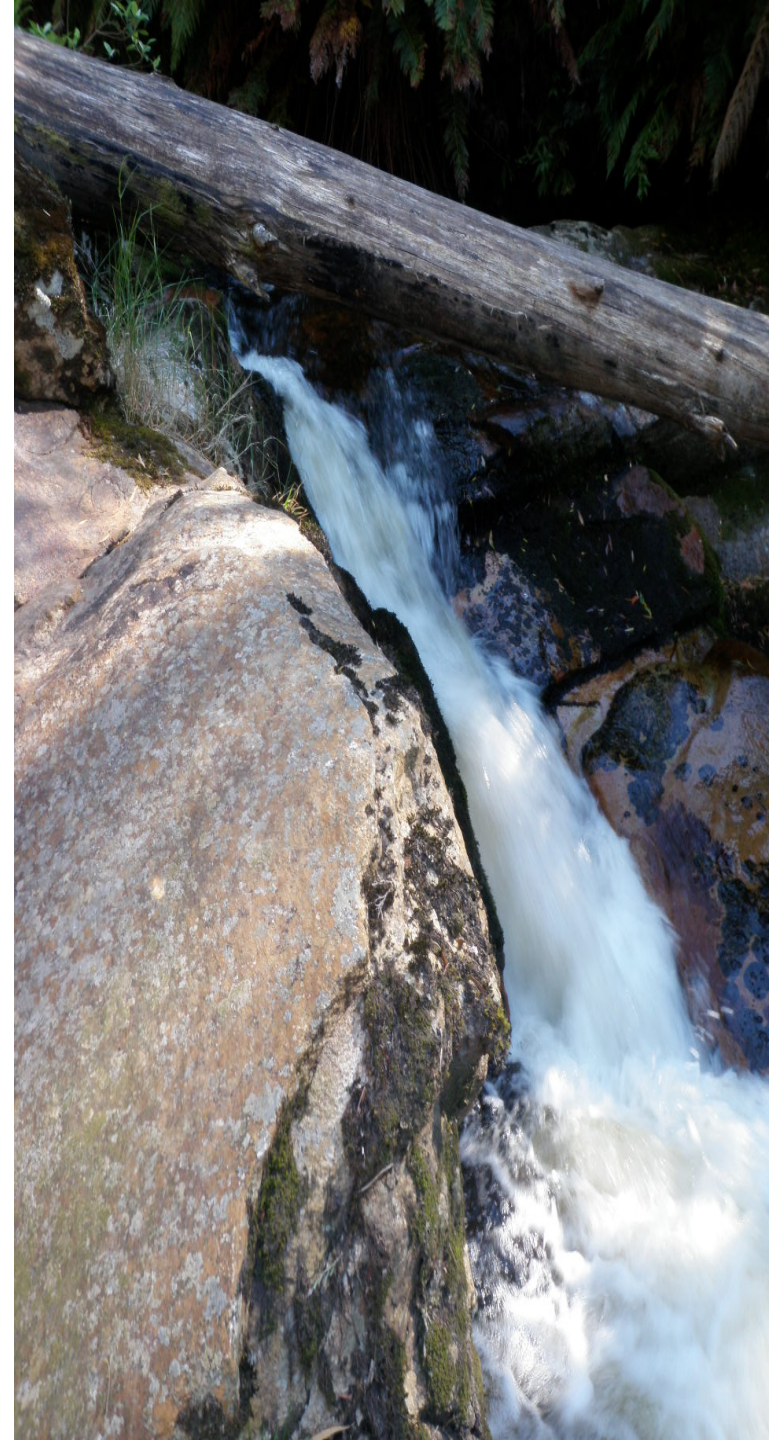
Pragmatists

- Curriculum's capacity for higher level compliance within a set of WDA system legitimised rules and standards.
    - consistency of alignment between the WSQ competency standards and the curriculum design objectives,
    - the logic of modular or syllabus sequencing derived from the curriculum map,
    - the variety or appropriateness of selected pedagogies,
    - the level of fit between the developed programme and its underlying theoretical assumptions,
    - the degree of interpretive freedom and risk taking – or not – given to the facilitator and learner,
    - the level of economic return measured through increased productivity as a result of training,
    - or the observed changes in learner workplace behaviour.

"quality through compliance"

the Interpretive approach has a tendency to favour an **active relationship** between the learner and facilitator; the learner is to be respected for his or her choices in education as a lifelong journey …

… where curriculum is defined in **instrumentalist and pragmatic** ways … it is more often than not considered **purposive and directed to the skill development needs …**
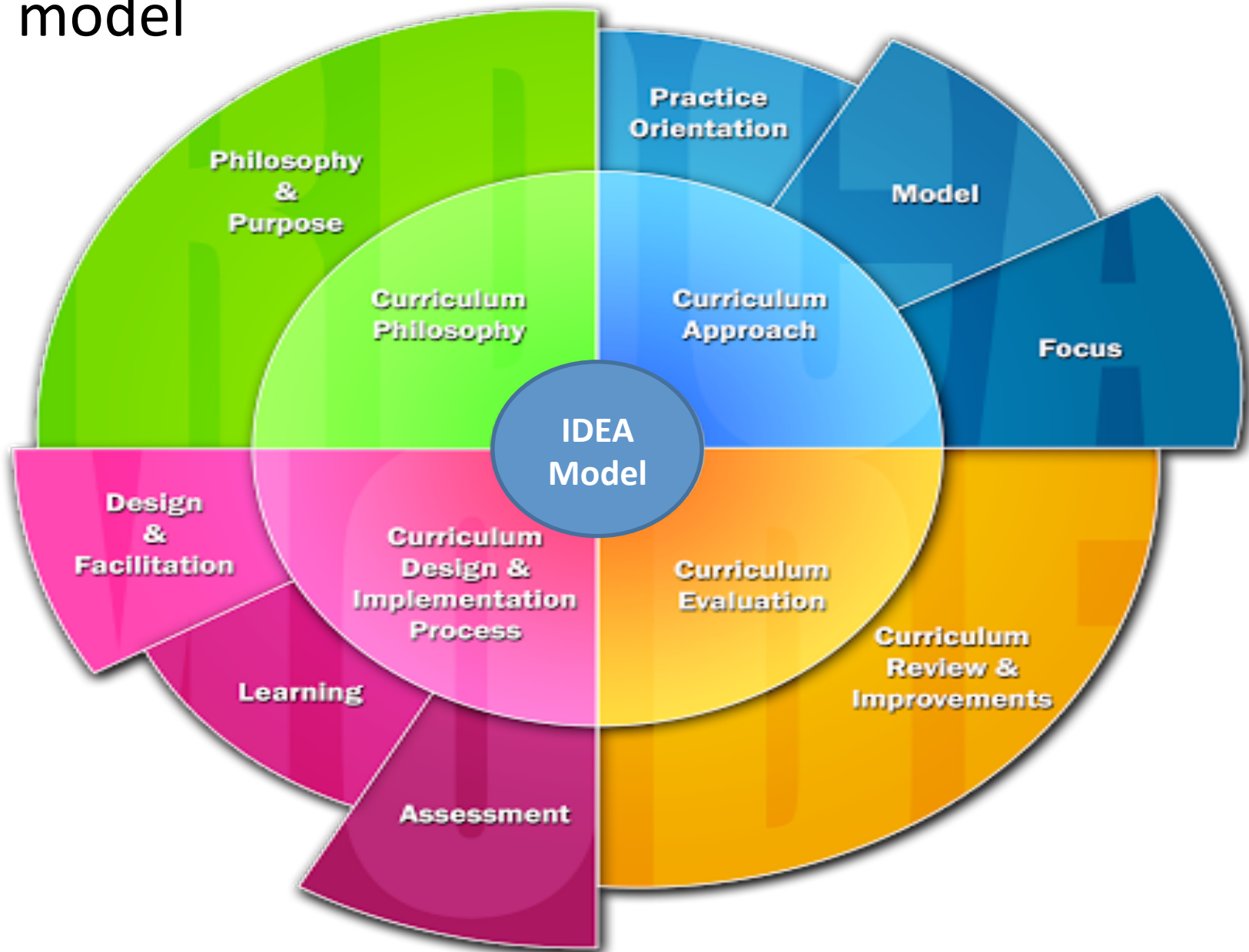
Interpretative curriculum

Instrumental curriculum

Curriculum is flexible, dynamic, assumes deep engagement of learners, is dialogic

Curriculum is strongly informed by national skills agenda in a highly regulated environment

The model

IDEA: Reflective IAL Design Evaluation Approach

Aim of the Model

- The purpose of the program / course and whose purposes the program / course serves

- Delivery choices (e.g. classroom, elearning, workplace learning)

- Learning and graduate outcomes

- Pedagogical beliefs and practices

- Assessment strategies

- Evaluation strategies and processes

Try it out!

Discuss what you
discovered with
your neighbour

Next steps

Refine the model
- Interviews with practitioners (n=6)
- Interviews with 2-3 people responsible for curriculum design from 8 CET providers
- Focus group to validate refinements

Individuals interaction with the heuristic and their reflexive processes

Identify any emerging patterns

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Your suggestions and feedback please!