



WORLD YEARBOOK  
OF EDUCATION 2011

# Curriculum in Today's World

Configuring Knowledge,  
Identities, Work and Politics

EDITED BY  
LYN YATES AND  
MADELEINE GRUMET



# World Yearbook of Education 2011

How do curriculum, conceptions of knowledge and the schooling experiences of young people engage the great issues of this tumultuous time? Curriculum is always influenced by the events that shape our world, but when testing and benchmarking preoccupy us, we can forget the world that is both the foundation and the object of curriculum.

This edited volume brings together international contributors to analyse and reflect on the way the events of the last decade have influenced the curriculum in their countries. As they address nationalism in the face of economic globalization, the international financial crisis, immigration and the culture of diaspora, they ask how national loyalties are balanced with international relationships and interests. They ask how the rights of women, and of ethnic and racial groups are represented. They ask what has changed about history and civics post 9/11, and they ask how countries that have experienced profound political and economic changes have addressed them in curriculum.

These interactions and changes are a subject of particular interest for an international yearbook in that they are almost always permeated by global movements and influenced by multinational bodies and practices. And as these essays show, in curriculum, global and international issues are explicitly or implicitly also about local and national interests and about how citizens engage their rights and responsibilities.

This volume brings together a new approach to perspectives on curriculum today and a new collection of insights into the changes from different parts of the world which discuss:

- How is the world represented in curriculum?
- How do responses to world events shape the stories we tell students about who they are and can be?

This book will be of great benefit to educational researchers and policy-makers, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate students.

**Lyn Yates** is Foundation Professor of Curriculum and also Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) at the University of Melbourne, Australia.

**Madeleine Grumet** is Professor of Education and Communication Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA.

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# **World Yearbook of Education 2011**

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Work and Politics

**Edited by**  
**Lyn Yates and Madeleine Grumet**

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# Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	x
<i>List of Contributors</i>	xi
<i>Series Editors' Introduction</i>	xvi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xviii
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1 Curriculum in Today's World: Configuring Knowledge, Identities, Work and Politics	3
LYN YATES AND MADELEINE GRUMET	
<b>PART I</b>	
<b>Curriculum and National/Global Identities</b>	<b>15</b>
2 Dressing the National Imaginary: Making Space For the Veiled Student in Curriculum Policy	17
GEORGINA TSOLIDIS	
3 Nationalism, Anti-Americanism, Canadian Identity	31
WILLIAM F. PINAR	
4 Curriculum Policies in Brazil: The Citizenship Discourse	44
ELIZABETH MACEDO	
5 Conceptualising Curriculum Knowledge Within and Beyond the National Context	58
BERIT KARSETH AND KIRSTEN SIVESIND	



**PART II**

**Curriculum, the Economy and Work 77**

- 6 Values Education Amid Globalization and Change: The Case of  
National Education in Singapore 79  
JASON TAN

- 7 Preparing Students for the New World of Work: Critical  
Reflections on English Policy for Work-Related Learning in the  
Twenty-First Century 94  
ANN-MARIE BATHMAKER

- 8 The Curriculum of Basic Education in Mainland China:  
Before and After the Reform and Opening Up 109  
MIANTAO SUN AND JIANG YU

**PART III**

**Curriculum and Knowledge 123**

- 9 Curriculum Policies for a Knowledge Society? 125  
MICHAEL YOUNG

- 10 Knowledge, Knowers and Knowing: Curriculum Reform  
in South Africa 139  
URSULA HOADLEY

- 11 Making Nothing Happen: Affective Life Under Audit 155  
PETER TAUBMAN

**PART IV**

**Curriculum Responses to Politics and Vulnerabilities 175**

- 12 Images of the 'Other' in School Textbooks and Islamic Reading  
Material in Pakistan 177  
TARIQ RAHMAN

- 13 In Search of Identity: Competing Models in Russia's  
Civic Education 195  
ANATOLI RAPOPORT

14	Configuration of Knowledge, Identity and Politics Through the Current History Curriculum in Israel	210
	EYAL NAVEH	
15	The Challenges of Writing 'First Draft History': The Evolution of the 9/11 Attacks and their Aftermath in School Textbooks in the United States	223
	JEREMY STODDARD, DIANA HESS AND CATHERINE MASON HAMMER	
	<b>Afterword</b>	<b>237</b>
16	The World in Today's Curriculum	239
	MADELEINE GRUMET AND LYN YATES	
	<i>Index</i>	248

# Illustrations

## Figure

5.1	How matter relates to meaning within the tradition of <i>Didaktik</i> and according to the licence model	68
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## Tables

7.1	The CBI's seven-point framework for employability	103
10.1	Shift from traditional to constructivist classroom	143
10.2	From a content-based to an outcomes-based approach	144
12.1	Numbers of schools in Pakistan	180
12.2	Influences other than textbooks on students	181
12.3	Tolerance of the 'Other'	182
12.4	Language-wise ideological contents of language textbooks expressed as percentages of total items	183
12.5	Images of the 'Other' in English textbooks of the pre-2002 era	188
12.6	Images of the 'Other' in Urdu textbooks of the pre-2002 era	188
12.7	Images of the 'Other' in social studies textbooks of the pre-2002 era	189
12.8	Ideological contents of language textbooks expressed as percentages of total number of lessons (Urdu, English and Pashto)	190
12.9	Ideological contents of language textbooks expressed as percentages of total number of lessons (Urdu, English and Arabic)	190
12.10	Ideological contents of language textbooks expressed as percentages of total number of lessons (Urdu, English and Sindhi)	191
12.11	Ideological contents of language textbooks expressed as percentages of total number of lessons (Urdu, English and Persian)	191
15.1	Selected textbooks	225
15.2	Comparison of descriptions of the 9/11 attacks in <i>The Americans</i>	228
15.3	Comparison of the descriptions of reasons for invading Iraq in <i>MacGruder's</i>	230

## Contributors

**Ann-Marie Bathmaker** is Professor of Education at the University of the West of England, Bristol, UK. Her research focuses on vocational and post-compulsory education, and new forms of higher education. She is particularly interested in constructions of teaching and learning in changing policy and socio-economic contexts, and the implications for social justice, equity and human agency. Her recent research includes a study of widening participation in new forms of higher education (the FurtherHigher Project), an evaluation of Work-Related Learning in English schools, and a longitudinal project exploring the construction of professional identities in English further education. She is currently working on a project which investigates working-class and middle-class participation in higher education at the two universities of Bristol in the UK, and a study of the construction of knowledge in English General Vocational Education.

**Madeleine Grumet** is Professor of Education and Communication Studies at the University of North Carolina, where she has served as Dean of the School of Education. Prior to her appointment at Carolina, she served as Dean of the School of Education at Brooklyn College, City University of New York. A curriculum theorist, specializing on arts and humanities curriculum, Professor Grumet has published many essays that interpret curriculum and teaching through the lenses of feminism, psychoanalysis and the arts. She is the author of *Bitter Milk: Women and teaching*, a study of gender and the relationship of teaching and curriculum to experiences of reproduction.

**Catherine Mason Hammer** is a middle school social studies and language arts teacher at New Kent Middle School in New Kent County, Virginia. She recently completed her M.A.Ed in curriculum and instruction with a focus on secondary social studies education at the College of William & Mary. Previously she worked as a research assistant and program coordinator at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC.

**Diana Hess** is Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Madison, WI. Her research focuses on democratic education, social studies, and the use of controversy in the curriculum. Her

xii *Contributors*

2009 book, *Controversy in the Classroom: The democratic power of discussion*, won the 2009 Exemplary Research Award from the National Council for the Social Studies.

**Ursula Hoadley** is Senior Lecturer at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Her research and teaching foci are curriculum, teachers' work and the sociological study of pedagogy. In particular she is concerned with the foundational years of primary schooling, and with social class and the differential social and academic outcomes engendered through educational processes. She has also conducted a number of comparative studies of national curricula, and has engaged in policy processes related to the construction of the national curriculum in South Africa. She has authored numerous journal articles, book chapters and a book, *Curriculum* (with Jonathan Jansen, Oxford University Press, 2009).

**Berit Karseth** is Professor at the Department of Education at the University of Oslo, Norway. Her main research interests are curriculum policy and issues related to professionalism and knowledge development. Professor Karseth is for the time being president of the Nordic Educational Research Association. Her most recent publications in English include: *Qualifications Frameworks for the European Higher Education Area: A new instrumentalism or 'Much Ado about Nothing'?* (Learning and Teaching, 2008); 'Building Professionalism in a Knowledge Society: Examining discourses of knowledge in four professional associations', (co-editor Monika Nerland, *Journal of Education and Work*, 2007); and 'Curriculum Restructuring in Higher Education: A new pedagogic regime?' (*Revista Española de Educación Comparada*, 2006).

**Elizabeth Macedo** is Curriculum Professor at State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), Brazil. Her current research focuses on curricular policies of Brazil, viewing them as enunciations, and concentrates specifically on struggles between a universal knowledge and the demands of the difference in the curricula. She is also studying Brazilian curricular thought of recent decades. She is the author and editor of books published in Brazil. She is Chair of the Division of Curriculum of the National Association of Research of Brazil and Treasurer of the International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies (IAACS).

**Eyal Naveh** is Professor of History at Tel Aviv University and at the Kibbutzim College of Education and a senior fellow at the Israel Democracy Institute. He teaches US history at the history department and the law school. He has also taught Israeli history in Israel and abroad. Professor Naveh received his PhD from UC Berkeley, USA. His major research fields are history education and US intellectual and cultural history. Beside his academic publications he has written seven textbooks for the Israeli public school system. His last three books are *Reinhold Niebuhr and Non Utopian Liberalism* (Sussex Academic Press, 2002), *Histories: Toward a dialogue with the Israeli past* (Babel Publications, 2002),

and *United States – an Ongoing Democracy* (Open University Press, 2007). He is the coordinator and adviser of the Israeli–Palestinian two narratives history teaching project.

**William F. Pinar** Before moving to the University of British Columbia in 2005, where he holds a Canada Research Chair in curriculum studies, William F. Pinar taught curriculum theory at Louisiana State University, where he served as the St. Bernard Parish Alumni Endowed Professor. He has also served as the Frank Talbott Professor at the University of Virginia and the A. Lindsay O'Connor Professor of American Institutions at Colgate University. Pinar is the author, most recently, of *The Worldliness of a Cosmopolitan Education* (Routledge, 2009) and the editor of *Curriculum Studies in South Africa* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

**Tariq Rahman** PhD is Tenured Distinguished National Professor of Sociolinguistic History at the National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. Since June 2007 he is also Director of NIPS. He is a highly published scholar with over 90 articles in scholarly journals; 9 books; 4 encyclopaedia articles; 22 contributions to books and several book reviews. His most famous book, *Language and Politics in Pakistan*, published by Oxford (Pakistan) in 1996, remains in print and has recently (2007) been published by Orient Longman in India. His history of language-learning among the Muslims of South Asia, *Language, Ideology and Power* (OUP, 2002), remains a landmark in the field. His latest book, *Denizens of Alien Worlds* (OUP, 2004), connects the medium of instruction with world view, poverty and politics in Pakistan. He now intends to write a social history of Urdu. Dr Rahman has been a guest professor in Denmark and Spain. He has been a Fulbright research scholar (1995–96) at UT Austin. He was also the first incumbent of the Pakistan Chair at UC Berkeley (2004–05). He has lectured or contributed conference papers in the UK – where he obtained his MA and PhD – as well as the USA, Germany, France, China, Korea, India and Nepal. He also contributes columns and book reviews to the English language press in Pakistan.

**Anatoli Rapoport** is Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at Purdue University College of Education. Before he received his PhD in Social Studies Education, he worked as a classroom teacher and school administrator for almost 20 years. His research interests include comparative aspects of education, influence of culture and ideology on education, and global and international perspectives in citizenship education. He has published in *The Social Studies*, *International Journal of Social Education*, *Journal of Social Studies Research*, *International Education*, *Intercultural Education*, *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, *Educational Forum*, *Contemporary Issues in Comparative Education*, and *World Studies in Education*. He is the author of two books: *Fields Unknown* and *Civic Education in Contemporary Global Society* (with A. Borshevsky).

**Kirsten Sivesind** is Associate Professor in Education in the Department of Teacher Education and School Research, University of Oslo. She researches on education governance, curriculum policies, general didactics and philosophy of comparative history. She currently participates in the coordination team for 'Foundational texts', a research group within Cultrans, at the University of Oslo. Her publications in English include 'Reformulating Reform: Curriculum history revisited' (Dissertation for the Degree Dr. Philos., 2008); 'Norway' (co-author Tobias Werler, *The Education Systems of Europe*, Springer, 2007); and 'Curriculum Theory and Research in Norway' (co-authors Bjørg Brandtzæg Gundem and Berit Karseth, *International Handbook of Curriculum Research*, LEA, 2003).

**Jeremy Stoddard** is Assistant Professor of Curriculum & Instruction in the School of Education at the College of William & Mary. His research focuses on critical and socio-cultural analyses of curriculum, pedagogy, and media in social studies and democratic education. In particular, he examines the construction of ideologies and nature of intellectual work in teacher pedagogy with different types of instructional texts, including textbooks, historical evidence, film, and other digital media.

**Miantao Sun** is Chief Professor of Shenyang Normal University and Director of the Research Institute of Educational Administration of Shenyang Normal University. His research interest mainly focuses on philosophy of educational administration, educational policy and educational administration.

**Jason Tan** is Associate Professor in Policy and Leadership Studies at the National Institute of Education, Singapore. He has a keen interest in comparative and international education.

**Peter Taubman** is Professor of Education in the School of Education at Brooklyn College, where he teaches graduate courses in education and English. He is also a co-founder of the Bushwick School for Social Justice, in Brooklyn, New York. He has written extensively on teacher identity, classroom teaching, psychoanalysis and the problems with audit culture. His most recent book, *Teaching by Numbers: Deconstructing the discourse of standards and accountability in education*, published by Routledge Press, received the 2010 Outstanding Book Award from AERA's Division B, the 2010 Critics Choice Book Award from the American Educational Studies Association, and the O.L. Davis, Jr Outstanding Book Award from AATC. His most recent book, *Disavowed Knowledge: Psychoanalysis, teaching and education*, will be published by Routledge.

**Georgina Tsolidis** was a secondary school teacher and educational consultant and policy analyst before taking up academic positions at Monash and Ballarat Universities. She has an on-going interest in social justice issues. She has researched extensively in schools and has a particular interest in cultural difference and ethnicity.

**Lyn Yates** is Foundation Professor of Curriculum at the University of Melbourne, Australia, where she is also Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research). She is a past president of the Australian Association for Research in Education. Her publications include *What Does Good Education Look Like? Situating a field and its practices* (Open University Press, 2004), *Making Modern Lives: Subjectivity schooling and social change* (with Julie McLeod, SUNY Press, 2006) and *The Education of Girls: Policy, research and the question of gender* (ACER Press, 1993). Her research interests are in knowledge, inequalities, identities and changing forms of education policy and practice. She recently (with Michael Young) edited a special issue of the *European Journal of Education* (45 (1) 2010) on 'Knowledge, globalisation and curriculum' and is preparing for 2011 publication a book on *Australia's Curriculum Dilemmas: State perspectives and changing times* (Melbourne University Publishing).

**Michael Young** is Emeritus Professor of Education at the Institute of Education, University of London and holds the post of Visiting or Honorary Professor at the Universities of Bath (UK), Witwatersrand, and Pretoria (South Africa) and Capital Normal University (Beijing). His most recent book is *Bringing Knowledge Back In* (Routledge, 2008). His research interests focus on the sociology of knowledge in school, vocational and professional curricula. He is currently leading a research project funded by the British Academy on 'Educational Futures: lessons from the sociology of knowledge' with Professor Johan Muller (University of Cape Town).

**Jiang Yu** is an academic in the Research Institute of Educational Administration, Shenyang Normal University.



## Series Editors' Introduction

*The World Yearbook of Education 2011* takes up the question of curriculum and its relationship to 'the world'. Addressing this theme, the volume editors, Lyn Yates and Madeleine Grumet, remind us, that 'the world' is not a simple entity. What counts as 'the world' is never still. It shifts over time and space, according to standpoint and the means of making it knowable. 'The world' is also 'our horizon' that defines 'what is, has been and what is possible' for us in our local lives. Yet it is 'this world' in all its ambiguity that sits at the heart of curriculum, the instrument that prepares young people for the world and their lives within it.

Working through four key themes, the volume offers a perspective on curriculum that teases out its relationships with the world. What emerges is an understanding of curriculum that fixes the fluidity of this world-in-the-making as publicly agreed messages for those who learn at particular points in time and space. These curricular moments capture the sense of what matters to adults who, through their involvement in official decision making processes, define and authorize curricula that are conveyed to the young. But as the chapters show, these intergenerational communications, the way they are fixed and their implications in forming personhood, are always contested. Curriculum is a consequence of struggles to fix knowledge, identities, work and politics that make the world.

The chapters grapple with the relationship between curriculum and what sometimes seems to be an emerging world. Ten years on from 9/11, the idea of the world is in flux. Vulnerability, hope and pragmatic efforts to sustain economies, even build a world without violence, motivate curriculum making. Yet together these chapters reveal the persistent anchoring of curriculum in nations, regardless of 'one-world' global policy steering or the complexities of local relations, cultures and conflicts. Curriculum is formed in local places that are lived and negotiated as part of a nation. This national frame lived through everyday experience further complicates the relationship between curriculum and the world. So the struggles that fix curriculum confront the dilemmas of contemporary personhood, how to be part of one world, local worlds and nations, that pursue international competitive advantage as well as national belonging.

The strength of this volume lies in the way it establishes a platform for rethinking curriculum in the world that is simultaneously global, local and national. In this powerful contribution, Lyn Yates and Madeleine Grumet take us beyond the one-world imaginaries of knowledge economies and millennium goals. They remind

us that, as in the past, curriculum is the locus not just for our hopes and fears, but also for 'the contradictions and tensions of our history, our institutions and our politics'. They surface an agenda for curriculum making, research and politics that is about making the future and the contribution that knowing the world educationally can make to that collective project.

*The World Yearbook of Education 2011* is a powerful contribution to the Routledge World Yearbook of Education series. Since 2005, these volumes have taken up the challenge of identifying, grasping and understanding the implications of globalizing education. The past six volumes have problematised these issues. *WYB 2005* opened up the question of globalization and nationalism. Volumes from 2006 to 2008 tackled emerging effect at the interface between education and the worlds of knowledge, work and politics. *WYB 2009* took these questions back to a consideration of childhood and *WYB 2010* surfaced the complexities of global–regional–national relations that are sedimented and mythologized in a notion like 'the Arab World'.

Now, *WYB 2011* takes us back to core questions of schooling, the curriculum. As series editors, we are grateful that scholars of such standing as Lyn Yates and Madeleine Grumet took on the work of preparing this volume. Editing a *World Yearbook of Education* is never easy, given the intellectual demands of the intellectual agenda that the series pursues and the time frames that must be negotiated alongside busy lives. Yet this volume helps us, collectively as education researchers in the world, to move towards more fruitful analysis and public knowledge about education and its contribution to the world.

Terri Seddon, Jenny Ozga, Gita Steiner-Khamisi and Agnès van Zanten  
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