School Camping as Curriculum:

Using Schwab's commonplaces to investigate how teachers at a school camp and a school understand curriculum, to consider the curricular status of school camping

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Submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

APRIL, 2020

Graduate School of Education

The University of Melbourne

Justice is an ideal rather than a state of existence. We do not achieve it; we pursue it.

(March, 1972, p. 414)

Curriculum is an ideal rather than a state of existence. We do not achieve it; we pursue it.

This is my pursuit.

Changing March's "justice" to "curriculum," as hinted by Reid (1992), captures the ongoing quest to improve curriculum, a pursuit which is evident as one investigates the curriculum literature, talks to teachers, and observes them at work.

Declaration

This is to certify that:

(i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD;

(ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used;

(iii) the thesis is fewer than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables and bibliographies.

Signed: Malcolm Nicolson

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which this story unfolded and the place where it was written. I pay my respect to those who captured the stories of the ways of being of their people, the first people on this country. I took inspiration from their stories to tell this, the story of the ways some of my colleagues understand their work, practised on this same land.

Words alone will never be able express the depth of gratitude I feel towards my partner Lee for the sacrifices she has made to provide the support and the space for me to be able to tackle and complete an undertaking of this magnitude. I also thank Lee and our children, Torrin and Calum, for always having belief in the value of the research and in my ability to get it done, especially at those times when I felt the destination was so distant it was located in someone else's lifetime.

To John Quay and Daniela Acquaro, my supervisors, I offer my heartfelt thanks for the time and effort they invested in me and in this research project, most of which, I am aware, was above and beyond the scope of their work. Their guidance, experience, and encouragement, especially in the moments of doubt, was invaluable.

Without willing participants, there would be no research project. I will be forever grateful that the teachers who contributed to this study not only made themselves available, but jumped at the chance to participate, providing the data, without which there would have been no project. I also thank all those who, without hesitation, let me observe practical curriculum being enacted in their "classrooms."

To all those who expressed interest in what I was doing I say thanks. Each conversation represented another step towards completion. Amongst those, I would particularly like to thank Carmel McInneny-McRae, whose interest in and engagement with the project was beyond collegiality.

ABSTRACT

As curriculum is a fundamental element of education, occupying the attention of teachers, and constituting most of their work, it is important to understand the ways those engaged in its enactment perceive curriculum, and whether it has an impact on the scope of their work. With space in the crowded Victorian Curriculum at a premium, and a push to narrow and control subject-matter by neo-liberal governments globally, it is a matter of importance to those practicing in the domain of school camping, as to whether their contribution to education is considered curriculum. In-depth, semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and examination of artefacts were used to gather data from two groups of teachers - one at a school camp and one at a primary school. The purpose of investigating the primary school, combined with a review of selected curriculum literature, was to provide a reference point from which to view school camp teachers' understanding of curriculum. To display and analyse the data, Joseph Schwab's commonplaces of curriculum (subject-matter, student, milieu, teacher, and curriculum-maker) are employed. As topics which must be included in any discussion of curriculum, the commonplaces provided a framework for understanding how curriculum is perceived by teachers and in the literature.

Five traditions of curriculum are used as perspectives from which to view the data, focusing on two in particular. As it is a close representation of the situation in Victoria, Australia, the location of the two research sites, data were viewed from the perspective of the systematic tradition. It is also viewed from the perspective of the deliberative curricularist, as this is closer to the way the informants understand curriculum and the way it is enacted at the School Camp.

This study makes a number of contributions in the field of curriculum. By listening to the voices of teachers at a primary school and a school camp, an understanding of the practical way they perceive curriculum is developed. Detail was added to Schwab's commonplaces by developing aspects which reflect themes, relevant to the places in which I collected the data, demonstrating the practical applicability of Schwab's work. Relevance of scope of curriculum to students, rather than its subject-matter breadth, emerges as an important aspect of curriculum to teachers. Raising awareness of the influence of curriculum traditions on teachers work was an unintended contribution of the study, as was demonstrating the practical role Schwab's commonplaces offer as a framework for teachers to reflect on and develop an understanding of curriculum. This has the potential to assist teachers in their efforts to release the potential of curriculum in the service of their students. Determining whether school camping, as enacted at the School Camp, is reflective of curriculum practice at the Primary School and as represented in the curriculum literature, is the major contribution of this study.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. School Camping as Curriculum: An Overview of the Study

Curriculum is often understood as an academic discipline, discussed in theory on the pages of textbooks and in lectures at universities, or presented as a document outlining what will be taught and learned in schools. In the first instance curriculum is a practical enterprise, an enterprise involving real people in real learning spaces, interacting with particular purposes in mind. In 1971, Joseph Schwab, whose writings on curriculum provided the framework for analysis and discussion in this study, stated in the second of his four *Practical* essays on curriculum that:

> Theories of curriculum and of teaching and learning cannot, alone, tell us what and how to teach, because questions of what and how to teach arise in concrete situations loaded with concrete particulars of time, place, person, and circumstance. Theory, on the other hand, contains little of such concrete particulars. Theory achieves its theoretical character, its order, system, economy, and above all its very generality only by abstraction from such particulars, by omitting much of them. (p. 494)

The purpose of this study is to explore those particulars of time, place, person, and circumstance in concrete situations to attempt to understand if school camping can be considered curriculum. My focus, as a practicing teacher with an interest in residential outdoor education, is to investigate the practical understanding of the notion of curriculum held by teachers in a primary school camp, using the understandings held by teachers at a primary school as a point of comparison. Addressing Nicol's (2002a) question when he asks, "what is the relationship between mainstream education and outdoor education?" (p31) points to the need to consider whether or not school camping can be understood as curriculum. The study also examines whether the notion of curriculum held by teachers effects the scope of their work, and whether there are differences or commonalities between the different settings and the curriculum literature discussed in Chapter 2. Teaching at a senior primary (grades five and six – ages 10 to 12) school camp which delivers residential

outdoor and environmental education programmes, my research interest is in school camping. For this reason, the School Camp and the Primary School chosen as sites for the study, are both Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) facilities. The sites are described in detail in Chapter 3. Data were generated by participant observation, analysis of artefacts, and interviews with six teachers from the School Camp and five from the Primary School. An ethnographic (Creswell, 1998) approach was selected as the methodology to guide data collection and interpretation, as it describes and interprets "a cultural or social group or system" (p. 58), in this instance, teachers and curriculum. Themes were generated from the data. There was considerable synergy between the ways curriculum was understood by both groups. Differences tended to be in emphasis and interpretation, rather than substance. Other ideas emerged which could not be described as themes because they did not have the necessary level of representation. None the less, they indicated a deep level of reflection on the topic by each informant. The themes were discussed in the light of Schwab's (1971) commonplaces and other existing research to develop an understanding of the teachers' perception of curriculum and to identify potential programme enhancements.

2. The Question: School Camping and Curriculum

2.1. Perceptions of curriculum

Curriculum is a polysemic and contested term (Bobbitt, 1918/2012; Freire, 1970/2010; Greene, 1974; Pinar & Grumet, 2015; Schwab, 1978; Tyler, 1949/1969). But, and somewhat problematically, it is often perceived to be quite a simple concept which should be easy to understand and work with. The development and introduction to schools of the Australian Curriculum[1] (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2013), and its Victorian incarnation, the Victorian Curriculum (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority [VCAA], 2015) are cases in point. Not long after the implementation of the Australian Curriculum had begun, a government review was commissioned to "evaluate its

[1] Under the Australian Constitution, education is a state government matter. As such, a national curriculum cannot exist. To achieve the equivalent of a national curriculum, all state governments must agree to implement the Australian Curriculum as their own curriculum. Thus the Victorian Curriculum is ostensibly the same as the Australian Curriculum.

development and implementation" (Australian Government, 2014, p. 1). The DET submission expressed the opinion that, consistent with its charter, ACARA had developed "curriculum content" (p. 227). As made clear by the authors of the review, the "majority opinion is that a national curriculum should address content" (p. 116), which was the way most respondents to the review were reported as understanding the notion of curriculum in the first instance.

And yet the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government, 2014) also found "wildly varying conceptions of curriculum in Australia and abroad" (p. 118). However, rather than acknowledging the complexity of this situation, the review's authors instead argued for the "need to pursue some common capture of perceptions within Australia . . . before further curriculum is developed" (p. 118). This reveals an identifiable issue that sits at the heart of curriculum development: How to acknowledge the "wildly varying conceptions of curriculum" and yet at the same time achieve some "common capture" which is more than majority opinion? Further complexity is introduced into this discussion when school camping is included.

2.2. The problem with curriculum at the School Camp

School camps, for the purpose of this study, are understood as Victorian state government residential outdoor schools. They are registered as schools and operate with school councils, registered teaching staff, and are financed by DET, just as in a mainstream school. Private camps typically offer accommodation and activities. The activities are run either by instructors or the teachers accompanying the students. School camps have their own written curriculum, although they are not expected to teach to the Victorian Curriculum or test and report against its standards. Like schools, they must have School Strategic Plans[2]. These were introduced by the Liberal/National government in Victoria as part of the Schools of the Future (Caldwell & Spinks, 2013) policy in 1993 and have remained a part of state school accountabilities since then. Schools developed a three year strategic plan with priorities focused around improving student learning outcomes. Accountability at the end of the three year cycle was through an externally managed review process, with recommendations for priorities in the next School

[2] School Strategic Plans – originally three and now four year strategic plans guiding the direction in all state government schools. They are reviewed by an external panel on completion of the cycle. Part of the review process is to set the direction of the succeeding plan.

Strategic Plan outlined as part of the review. Despite a long connection with the formal education system in Victoria as a DET school, one of the School Camp teachers recalled that a School Charter reviewer in the late 1990's found that assessment and reporting of student learning outcomes were not a part of the School Camp programme, identifying one significant school-like aspect of curriculum which was missing. Tackling the assessment aspect of this omission became a School Strategic Plan project in the early 2000's. This was the first time at the School Camp, the longer serving teachers reported, that research had been conducted on matters relating to student learning at the camp. Previously, research, development, and implementation in the curriculum space at the School Camp had focused on creation of educational contexts - usually facilities such as the ropes course or the climbing gym - which necessitated new subject-matter. Those teachers remembered the research receiving the approval of the School Strategic Plan reviewer and plaudits from the teaching staff as a valuable enhancement of the curriculum, as it introduced formal reflective practice into the approach to teaching and learning employed at the School Camp. The tools also provided the opportunity for assessment of student achievement and programme evaluation.

As recently as 2014, the School Strategic Plan listed as key improvement strategies development of: learning intentions for lessons; standards of achievement; reporting to parents; and documentation outlining the pedagogical approaches used and the reasons for the selection of these approaches. Are lesson intentions, standards of achievement, reporting, and pedagogy part of curriculum? They are certainly an important part of the work of teachers, so it becomes a question of interest as to why they were not evident in the School Camp programme before 2014, providing the basis of the research questions.

3. The Research Questions

As curriculum "resides at the very core of education" (Eisner, 1984, p. 209) it suggests that curriculum is the main focus of the business of schools and it represents most of the work of teachers. If curriculum is at the centre of the work of teachers in schools, how is curriculum perceived in the work of teachers at school camp? This leads to the question this research seeks to explore:

Is school camping curriculum?

To investigate this question, it is necessary to address the following sub-questions:

1. How do teachers at a school camp understand curriculum in comparison to the ways it is perceived by teachers at a primary school and in the curriculum literature?
2. How does the understanding of curriculum by teachers at a school camp and at a primary school influence their enactment of curriculum?

To be able to provide a context from which to investigate the research question and sub questions, it was first necessary to review a broad range of literature on the topic of curriculum, to examine the ways in which curriculum is understood.

4. Methodology: Describing and Interpreting Curriculum at School Camp and at School

This research project uses a qualitative approach, which has the capacity to facilitate discovery of the understandings teachers at school camp have of curriculum, how this effects the scope of their work, and whether that work can be considered to be curriculum. Discovering the understandings teachers at primary school have of curriculum is also required to provide a point of comparison to that of the School Camp teachers. The study involves one state government senior primary school camp and one state government primary school.

Of the qualitative traditions of research, I chose ethnography for this study. According to Creswell (1998), the purpose of ethnography is to describe and interpret “a cultural or social group or system” (p. 58). Grundy (1987) describes curriculum as a “cultural construction” (p. 5), positioning ethnography as an appropriate methodology to describe and interpret how curriculum is understood in both a school camp and a primary school, and to explore its place in the culture of those organisations. An ethnography looks at the language people use, the way people behave, the artefacts they create and use, and the tensions which arise between what they do, what they say, and what they should be doing and saying (Spradley, 1980).

For an ethnography, the process of data collection involves interviewing members of the group, participant observation, and examination of artefacts from the School Camp and the Primary School. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. The semi-structured interview format is able to follow the topic of the research, but has the flexibility to explore emerging lines of inquiry, which is important in the discovery process. The purpose is to reveal “what people think in order to understand why they behave in the ways that they do. This, in

turn, is predicated on the belief that people act in the ways that they do because of the way they define the situation as they see it or believe it to be" (Minichello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 2000, p. 69). Qualitative methods such as surveys and questionnaires do not have this capacity. To strengthen the study, a combination of methods were used to "triangulate" (Creswell, 1998, p. 202) the interview data with participant observation and analysis of artefacts such as curriculum documents, work programs, lesson plans, strategic plans, assessments, reports, and minutes to "corroborate" (p. 202) the findings. Data were analysed to develop themes which revealed elements of teachers' understanding of the notion of curriculum. These themes were interpreted to assist in consideration of whether the way teachers understand the notion of curriculum effects the scope of their work.

5. Significance of the Study

This study is significant because of the curricular status of outdoor education and school camping. Outdoor educators have battled to have outdoor education included in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2013) and the Victorian Curriculum (VCAA, 2015) (Gough, 2007; Gray & Martin, 2012; Martin, 2010). They have not been successful in having it included as a discrete learning area, but elements of outdoor education have been included in the Health and Physical Education learning area (VCAA, 2017b). This is a matter of interest to the School Camp as its core business is delivering outdoor education programmes in a residential setting. The problem for outdoor educators and for the School Camp is to take outdoor education from being found "in" the curriculum (Lynch, 2006) to the status of being curriculum in its own right.

To develop a broad understanding of what curriculum is, how it is understood by teachers in mainstream settings, and to consider whether outdoor education aligns with this image, an investigative framework is necessary. Joseph Schwab's writings, particularly his commonplaces of subject-matter, students, the milieus, teachers, and curriculum-making, are employed in the service of achieving that end. Schwab's (1973) commonplaces are topics he considered must be included in any discussion of curriculum, providing a framework for teachers as they seek to understand, make, enact, and reflect on curriculum. The aspects, used as themes within the commonplaces, allow Schwab's conceptual framework to capture the unique characteristics and requirements of each situation in which curriculum is being

made and enacted, reflecting the practical aspiration embodied in his writing and a benefit of practical potential to teachers. Separating the milieu commonplace into the sub-parts of milieu and context allows for more clarity and focus as this commonplace makes its contribution to curriculum development and enactment. Being aware of different traditions of curriculum, particularly the deliberative approach described by Schwab (1969b), is significant in that it could assist teachers in developing a more complex, nuanced, and critical understanding of curriculum.

Another significance of the study is revealing the teacher voice on the topic of curriculum, particularly the voices of school camp teachers. Exploration of the literature reveals some research (Fisher-Ari & Lynch, 2015; Jackson, 1968; Kuster, Bain & Young, 2015; O'Donoghue, 1994; Sofou & Tsafos, 2009) devoted to the understanding of the notion of curriculum by school teachers, but the voice of school camp teachers on the same topic is silent, a situation this study amends. Analysing the impact of their understanding of curriculum on the scope of their work is another aspect of this research.

6. Significance of the Title

When Lynch (2006) titled her book *Camping in the Curriculum: A History of Outdoor Education in New Zealand*, she indicated that in her opinion, camping and outdoor education were an extra-curricular insertion into the curriculum. The focus of this study is to consider whether outdoor education, in this case represented as residential outdoor education or school camping, is curriculum. Hence the title of my study is *School Camping as Curriculum*, rather than as an extra-curricular insertion into curriculum as Lynch's title suggests. On a deeper level, the title suggests a notion of curriculum which is possessed of a greater vision than the purely academic, incorporating Schwab's (1956, 1959, 1969a, 1969b, 1970, 1971, 1973, 1978, 1983) thesis of the practical. This notion of curriculum embraces a variety of elements which, when working in harmony, yield an enhanced capacity to develop the whole student, which should be the aspiration of a democratic education (Dewey, 1916/2004).

7. Organisation of the Study

To achieve the research aims of the study, the review of the literature in Chapter 2 begins by examining the problems inherent in trying to define a complex concept such as curriculum. It then focusses on an explication of Schwab's (1971, p. 513) "commonplaces," outlining the reasons for their choice. The commonplaces are used as a framework on which to build an understanding of the notion of curriculum as a way of moving past the definitional problem. The third section of the literature review examines curriculum literature, to develop an understanding of the notion of curriculum, examined through the perspectives of five curriculum traditions. This phase of the research develops a broad notion of the term "curriculum," which provides a background against which teachers understanding of curriculum can be examined. The final part of the literature review searches for studies revealing the existing voice of teachers at school and at school camp on the topic of curriculum. Only five studies were discovered examining the ways school teachers understand curriculum, and none including the voice of school camp teachers.

Chapter 3 describes the research contexts and examines the methodology and methods selected for the study. First, the School Camp and the Primary School are described to contextualize them as research sites. Then, the appropriateness of a qualitative methodology for this type of research is explained, and the specific selection of ethnography is discussed in detail. Later in the chapter, in-depth interviews, participant observation, and examination of artefacts are discussed as appropriate methods of data collection for an ethnography, along with ethical considerations, sampling, trustworthiness, and the limitations of this type of research.

Findings from the data collected at the School Camp are presented in Chapter 4 and the Primary School in Chapter 5. Data are displayed according to themes which emerged from analysis and interpretation of the interviews, participant observations, and analysis of documents. Themes are grouped within Schwab's commonplaces: subject-matter; student; the milieus; teacher; and curriculum-maker.

Discussion of the research findings is the focus of Chapter 6, occurring within the framework of Schwab's commonplaces and in the context of the deliberative and systematic curriculum traditions. Themes are scaffolded within the commonplaces as "aspects" (Dewey, 1916/2004, p. 24) and constitute the content of the discussion. To be able to answer the research

question, the ways in which the teachers in the different settings understand curriculum are discussed and compared, as are the ways in which this effects their work.

Chapter 7 summarises the research and outlines implications for the School Camp and the Primary School which have emerged from the research. Finally it addresses the question as to whether or not school camping ought to be considered curriculum.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING THE NOTION OF CURRICULUM: AN EXPLORATION OF THE LITERATURE

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I examine how curriculum is understood in the curriculum literature, starting with a discussion of the problems inherent in defining a complex construct such as curriculum. To address this situation, in the second section I describe Schwab's (1973) commonplaces, proposing their use as a framework for developing practical understanding of curriculum, relevant to the context in which the curricular problem has arisen. Some different perspectives from which curriculum can be viewed are examined, as they have a bearing on how curriculum is understood. In the third section I discuss five of these perspectives. I then use Schwab's commonplaces in the fourth section as a framework to investigate how curriculum is understood in the curriculum literature, from the perspectives of the five curriculum traditions.

The purpose of the fifth section is to search for the voice of the school camp teacher on curriculum, which was revealed to be muted, with most comment by academics. Schwab's (1973) commonplaces were not appropriate to frame the outdoor education literature on curriculum, as the focus was revealed to be its history and its place in curriculum, rather than how it was understood as curriculum. Instead, I have framed the outdoor education section around whose voice was evident in the outdoor education literature, the historical representation of curriculum, and the place of outdoor education in curriculum.

Finally the literature is explored for evidence of the voice of teachers at schools and, where present, to reveal their understanding of the notion of curriculum. As Clandinin and Connelly (1992) comment, the teacher voice "seems absent from the research on teaching" (p. 385), and is barely evident in my investigation of the curriculum literature, especially when the topic is narrowed to teacher understanding of curriculum.

2. What is Curriculum?

2.1. Introduction

In this section, the problems inherent in using definitions to develop an understanding of a complex construct such as curriculum are examined. I then discuss a way out of the confusion created by definitions through the use of a conceptual framework to facilitate understanding of curriculum.

2.2. The problem with defining curriculum

In this section, I discuss the problems associated with trying to understand curriculum using definitions.

Defining curriculum as a way of understanding is problematic. After all, Jackson (1992) points out that the literature is scattered with "as many definitions as there are curriculum textbooks" (p. 5), highlighting the problem. The definitions range from simply "what we ought to teach our students" (Ross & Chan 2008, p. 10) to Jackson's (1992) distillation of three definitions (Caswell & Campbell, 1935; Oliva, 1982; Saylor & Alexander, 1974) into "*all* of the 'experiences' or 'learning opportunities' that the school offers and not just those associated with the teaching of certain subjects or the use of special teaching methods" (p. 5). They continue with Grundy's (1987) "cultural" (p. 5) and "social construction" (p. 10), and Clandinin and Connelly's (1992) "a course of life" (393). Even within one text, Reid (1992) described curriculum variously: as an institution; as the programs offered to students at school; as a pursuit; as practice; and as a subject. Reid expressed concern that the intention of defining curriculum was often to limit what belonged within its "sphere of activity" (p. 17).

Dillon (2009) believed that some entities, like curriculum, "do not lend themselves to definition" (p. 345). He described definitions as "incoherent, and by individual contrast to be divergent when not contradictory" (p. 344), capturing the difficulty of attempting to understand a complex construct such as curriculum via the agency of definition. Capturing the character of curriculum, Ornstein (1987) observed:

> Curriculum, like other aspects of education, involves the use of judgments, hunches, and insights that are not always conducive to laws, principles, or even generalizations. A curriculum often does not emerge as a tightly regulated, predictable or concise set of enterprises, or as a result of a single or theoretical mix of principles or processes, but rather evolves as one act and choice lead to another, as interests emerge, and finally, as educators are allowed time for reflection and quiet self-analysis. (p. 15)

As he described the character of curriculum, Ornstein highlighted the inadequacy of using definition as a way of approaching the challenge of understanding curriculum.

2.3. Using a framework as a way out of the confusion of definition

In this section, the use of a conceptual framework as a way out of the confusion of attempting to define curriculum is outlined. Three frameworks are considered.

Instead of definition, Reid (1992) proposed that a map or framework was needed to assist in the process of understanding curriculum, while resisting "the temptation to use it as a substitute for thinking" (p. 7), a criticism he levelled at definitions. Bobbitt (1918/2012), Tyler (1949/1969), and Schwab (1973) propose conceptual frameworks. I have considered these three authors due to their status as "'giants' in the field" (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, and Taubman, 2000, p. 10) of curriculum. Bobbitt (1918/2012) presented a two-step framework focussed on educational objectives and learning experiences. Tyler (1949/1969) added organisation and evaluation of learning experiences to his framework, which Jackson (1992) describes as "the more 'advanced' of the two" (p. 27). Even though Jackson (1992) believed that Tyler's (1949/1969) *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* could be called the "Bible of curriculum making" (p. 24), he viewed Schwab's work "as an evolution of Tyler's ideas" (Ben-Peretz & Craig, 2018, p. 425). Tyler himself, in personal correspondence with Schwab quoted in Ben-Peretz and Craig (2018) stated that The Practical 4 (Schwab, 1983) "expresses and clarifies the best practices I have observed in curriculum development, and provides meaningful rationale for the selection of the group, the inquiries to be conducted, the deliberative process to be employed and the classroom trial and continuous improvement" (ben-Peretz & Craig, 2018, p. 440).

Confronting the challenge of definition, Schwab (1983) put forward his "conception of curriculum" (p. 240), which Dillon (2009) described as "exemplary" and "marvellously expressed in a single sentence of careful phrasing" (p. 343).

> Curriculum is what is successfully conveyed to differing degrees to different students, by committed teachers using appropriate materials and actions, of legitimated bodies of knowledge, skill, taste, and propensity to act and react, which are chosen for instruction after serious reflection and communal decision by representatives of those involved in the teaching of a specified group of students who are known to the decision makers. (Schwab, 1983, p. 240)

The features Schwab (1983) highlighted in this passage allowed the curriculum territory to be understood rather than simply recognised. What Schwab advocated was exploration, rather than mapping of curriculum territory, as a way of navigating through the confusion of definition. Embodied in the main features of his conception of curriculum was not only a framework for thinking about and understanding curriculum, which consisted of entities Schwab (1971) called "commonplaces" (p. 513), but also a method of approaching curriculum work – "deliberation" (Schwab, 1969a, 1969b), a significant difference from both Bobbitt and Tyler.

2.4. Summary

Using definition as a way of attempting to understand a complex construct such as curriculum has been shown to be inadequate, creating more confusion than clarity. As an alternative, the use of a framework was discussed as a way in which to develop an understanding of curriculum. Schwab's commonplaces, discussed in detail in the next section, have been chosen from amongst others as the framework within which to approach the research question.

3. Capturing the Common of Commonplace: Introducing Joseph Schwab's Commonplaces

3*.1. Introduction*

Having illustrated that definitions add to the complexity, rather than provide clarity, in efforts to understand curriculum, in this section I present Schwab's (1973) commonplaces as an

effective and flexible framework to facilitate the resolution of curricular problems in the situations in which they occur. My first task is to introduce Schwab and position him in the curriculum pantheon.

3.2. Introducing Joseph Schwab

In this section, I introduce Joseph Schwab, his status in the curriculum field, and his belief in a practical approach to the real world problems of curriculum.

Curriculum reveals itself to be a complex amalgam of ideas and perspectives that are brought to bear in ongoing theoretical debates. Schwab (1969b, 1971, 1973, 1983), in his *Practical* essays, recognised this difficulty 50 years ago, positioning him as one of the leading commentators on curriculum during the last half century (Hlebowitsh, 2005; Jackson, 1992; Null, 2011; Reid, 1999; Westbury, 2013). Pinar et al. (2000) described him as "one of the most brilliant and influential minds the curriculum field has ever known" (p. 197).

In his commentary, Schwab (1969b) described the field of curriculum studies as "moribund" (p. 1) due to its over-reliance on theory or "states of mind" (p. 3). He advocated moving to a more practical or "states of affairs" (p. 3) model of understanding curriculum. Reid (1992) contends that "practical problems and the route to their solution lies through knowledge particular to the situation for which the solution is sought: knowledge of persons, places, actions, and the consequences of actions" adding that "there is no general principle that allows us to weight and interpret particular knowledge of this kind" (p. 78). Here Reid advocates for the type of flexible approach proposed by Schwab, based on human, practical needs rather than on theory and definition.

3.3. Schwab's commonplaces as a framework for curriculum understanding

In this section, Schwab's (1973) commonplaces are introduced, explaining what they are, and the role they perform.

What sets Schwab's explication of curriculum apart is its use of a conceptual framework to organise his ideas into a comprehensive conspectus. In *The Practical 3: Translation into Curriculum*, Schwab (1973) outlined five "disciplines" (p. 501) or "commonplaces" (p. 508) he

believed were central to any discussion of curriculum: subject-matter; student; the milieus; teacher; and curriculum-maker. Known as "topoi" in classical rhetoric, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) described commonplaces as devices to solicit the readers affiliation using "widely shared opinion . . . well known instances" or "taken-for-granted references" (p. 200), and in the process establishing standard reference points. North, Clelland, and Lindsay (2018) insisted that they also represented "key bodies of knowledge and experience" (p. 2). For Reid (1992), commonplaces were not "objects of study," but "bearers of knowledge that has to be entered into the process of practical problem solving" (p. 79).

Null's (2011) observed that these five factors achieved their pre-eminence as they "have arisen constantly in educational philosophy and curricular practice for centuries" (p. 27). Reid (1994), when writing about the problem of attempting to reconcile institutional and practical curriculum agreed, adding that "any process of deliberation on curriculum that does not direct its attention to these essential commonplaces is deficient" (p. 29). Schwab (1973) argued for their importance by stating that none of the five could be "omitted without omitting a vital factor in educational thought and practice" (p. 509), highlighting the importance of the commonplaces for teachers as they enact curriculum. Westbury and Wilkof (1978) argued that Schwab used the commonplaces as a rhetorical device for "comprehensive mapping of a territory of a given subject matter . . . which ordered the possibilities that an orator might need to consider as he sought to develop his arguments" (P. 19). Rather than the map so developed being an end in itself, Schwab (1983) pointed out that it was a means to achieve a thorough exploration of the territory of curriculum, focussing on the practical purpose of the map which was to find a destination, or in this case, solve a curricular problem. Schwab's (1971) explained that the commonplaces represented the "*whole* subject matter of the whole plurality of enquiries of which each member-theory reveals only one aspect" (p. 513). Themes derived from analysis of the data constitute the aspects. Once placed in a commonplace, they became more than a theme, adding dimension and detail to the commonplace, while the commonplace reciprocates, giving meaning to the aspect by situating it in the conceptual framework.

According to Pyle and Luce-Kaplar (2014), the commonplaces worked best in "interplay" (p. 1962) with each other. They also helped to identify which part of the whole was being examined at any particular time. In his earlier writing, Schwab (1973) demanded that the

commonplaces be considered "of *equal* rank" (p. 508). By the time of the *Practical 4: Something for Curriculum Professors to Do* (Schwab, 1983), which Tyler (1984) described as a "comprehensive overview of desirable curriculum practices" (9. 102), he had developed a belief that in certain instances, one commonplace may need to be favoured over the others, demonstrating their flexibility. In the ensuing process of exploration, the decision to favour a commonplace needed to be "conscious and capable of defense in terms of the circumstances" (p. 509).

3.4. Using Schwab's commonplaces to understand curriculum

In this section, I examine how the commonplaces are used to solve curricular problems in a practical rather than theoretical way. I also refer to others who have recognised the importance and effectiveness of the commonplaces in curriculum deliberations.

Curriculum revision was Schwab's main interest. He argued that a group revising curriculum needed to attend to each of the five commonplaces (Figure 2) if the curriculum so developed was to work in practice. Many academics writing about Schwab's work talk of four commonplaces (see Figure 1) (Clarke & Erickson, 2004; Craig, You, & Oh, 2008; Dillon, 2009; Hlebowitsh, 2005; North, Clelland, & Lindsay, 2018; Pyle & Luce-Kapler, 2014; Reid, 1992; Ross & Chan, 2008), positioning curriculum-making as the purpose of the other four.

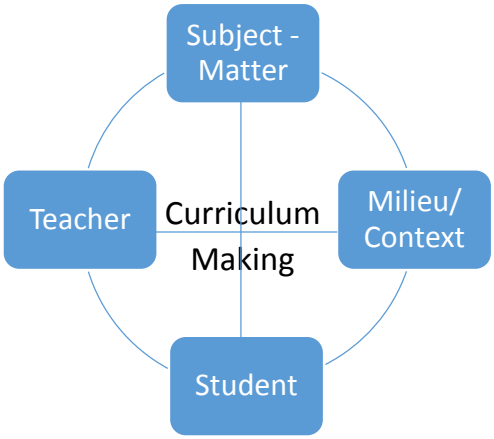

Figure 1. Curriculum understood as four commonplaces – after authors Clarke & Erickson (2004), Craig, you, & Oh (2008), Dillon (2009), Hlebowitsh (2005), North et al. (2018), Pyle & Luce-Kaplar (2014), Reid (1992), Ross & Chan (2008)

Schwab (1973) presents a strong case for inclusion of all five commonplaces in his framework when argues that:

> all five disciplines are necessary, and the curriculum work their possessors do must be done in collaboration. They must learn something of the concerns, values, and operations which arise from each other's experience. They must learn to honor these various groupings of concerns, values, and operations, and to adapt and diminish their own values enough to make room in their thinking for others. They must bring these partially coalesced bodies of judgemental factors to bear on scholarly materials. (p. 501)

It is the integration of the five commonplaces and the collegiality the process demands which constitutes a source of strength of the framework.

The common or utilitarian aspect of commonplace which focused Schwab's attention was to capture the practical in curriculum-making, a process he labelled "deliberation" (1969a; 1969b), referring to the method of curriculum revision he proposed. Schwab (1969b) believed that it was essential for any process of curriculum revision to take a practical approach, as the aim was to have an effect on "curriculum in action" which "treats real things: real acts, real teachers, real children, things richer than and different from their theoretical representations" (p. 12). Supporting Schwab's focus on practical implications, Pyle and Luce-Kapler (2014) consider "each of the commonplaces plays an influential role within a classroom environment thus affecting the enactment of learning" (p. 1973) (see Figure 2).

Ultimately, as Ross and Chan (2008) alluded, the commonplaces had the potential to "broaden our thinking about student academic achievement" (p. 10). This also reflected another of Schwab's (1959) intentions for the commonplaces, which was to facilitate a "process dedicated to the invention of new concepts, new logical forms by which to restructure knowledge and guide its increase" (p. 154), and to act as "backgrounds against which to construct models and plans of alternative enquiries" (Schwab, 1971, p. 514).

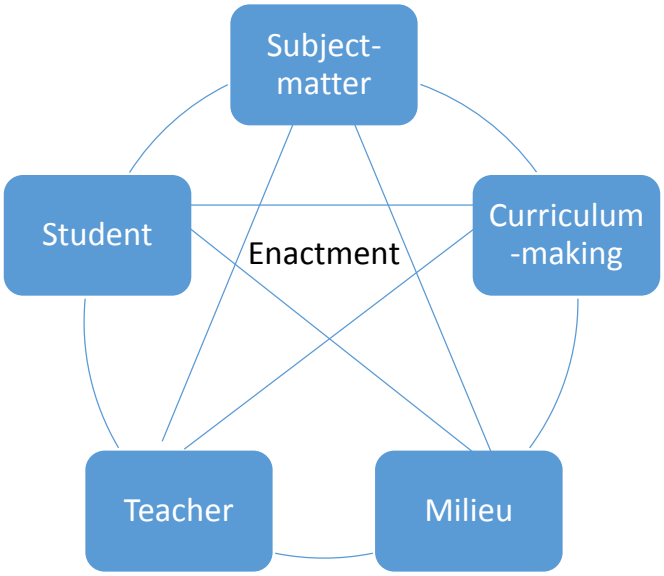

Figure 2. Curriculum enactment understood as five commonplaces – after Schwab (1973)

At the same time, Schwab (1959) was insistent that "these divided factors are placed in communication with one another without sacrificing the special characteristics of each one. But while each retains its special features, each can repair its lack by connection with the others" (p. 149), illustrating his belief that the commonplaces performed at their optimum in concert with each other. His choice of commonplaces: subject-matter, students, the milieus, teachers, and curriculum-making as central considerations in curriculum planning were powerful, because they have been recognised by others (Clarke & Erickson, 2004; Cohen, Pereira, Roby, & Block, 2005; Craig et al., 2008; Dillon, 2009; Eisner, 1984; Kunzli, 2013; Reid 1992; North et al., 2018; Null, 2011; Pyle & Luce-Kapler, 2014) as core components of curriculum and are still being used to frame curriculum research (Craig et al., 2013; Reid, 2010; Rice, 2012; Roskos & Neuman, 2013).

3.5. Summary

After introducing Schwab and pointing out his status in the curriculum field, his commonplaces were outlined and selected as core constituents of a framework around which to aggregate and interpret the understandings of curriculum revealed whilst examining the curriculum literature and the data from the teachers at the Primary School and the School Camp. Although the focus of Schwab's commonplaces was "curriculum-making" (p.501), he

was also interested in the practical application of curriculum, manifest as the "teachers role in the process of education" (Westbury & Wilkof, 1978, p. 20), the focus of this research. Rather than constraining curriculum in the straight-jacket of definition, the commonplaces offer a flexible framework which can respond to the particular situation, theoretical or practical, in which they are required.

4. Curriculum traditions: Five perspectives from which curriculum is viewed

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this section is to investigate five perspectives from which curriculum is viewed, to examine the influence they exert on how curriculum is understood, and to consider why this knowledge is important, a matter of relevance to this study.

As an outcome of their research for the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* in 2014, the authors found that:

> Clearly, there are wildly varying conceptions of curriculum in Australia and abroad but there would seem to be a need to pursue some common capture of perceptions within Australia - especially the basic aims, values and principles, as well as the design and required implementation - before further curriculum is developed. (Australian Government, 2014, p. 118.)

What this statement reveals is that there are differing perspectives from which curriculum can be approached, just as there are different approaches to research depending on the methodological lens chosen. Yates (2009) observed a tendency, "driven by politicians and policy-makers . . . to leave debates about what particular constructions of curriculum represented out of the discussion, and instead to see schooling and teaching as a technical activity with straightforward aims" (p. 18). Hence a curriculum plan, warned Reid (1992), "is inevitably a reflection of some stance on what curriculum is and what it should be doing." It "emphasizes some features at the expense of others," and embodies a "world view that we already espouse, or come to espouse as we make our plan" (p. 9). As Jackson (1983) pointed out, it is used to "persuade as much as describe or define" (p. 5). This helps to explain why perceptions of curriculum are not held in common, but present different emphases,

inclusions, and exclusions in their interpretations. When viewed in this way, rather than a multitude of definitions, Jackson (1992) suggested that there are a "relatively small number of truly dissimilar definitions of curriculum, each of which leads to a distinguishably different set of practices" (p. 5).

Reid (1992) describes these stances as "some well documented ways in which we think about curriculum" (p. 17), which he labels "points of stability" (p. 17) and Null (2011) "curriculum traditions" (p. 9). Traditions included in the discussion are: systematic; radical; existential; and deliberative as described by Reid (1992), with the addition of the pragmatic described by Null (2011). Due to its alignment with the current situation in Australia generally and Victoria specifically, the systematic tradition is discussed first. I conclude this section by discussing the deliberative tradition, as it represents Schwab's preferred approach to curriculum and because it sits in a central position, incorporating effective features of the other traditions.

4.2. The systematic tradition

In this section, the systematic tradition and its impact on curriculum development and enactment are examined.

Sahlberg (2016) uses the name "Global Education Reform Movement" (p. 184) when describing the systematic tradition, including the USA, England, Spain, Singapore, South Korea, and New Zealand as well as Australia amongst its adherents. Systematic curricularists perceive curriculum as a plan of what should be learned and how it should be taught across a whole system. In the case of Australia, one curriculum to serve the needs of a complete country. Context is irrelevant to the performance of a mechanistic system. Students are understood generally rather than as unique individuals, as Schwab (1969b, 1971, 1973) constantly reminds us. In this tradition, Reid (1992) asserts, adherents seek to define curriculum to limit the scope of its activity, facilitating control by establishing lines of demarcation between curriculum and instruction, rather than understanding the need for curriculum to integrate with other societal systems. Null (2011) warned that systematic curriculum, with its focus on institution, too readily overlooked the human element of curriculum, a matter of concern to teachers who were attracted to the profession precisely because of its focus on the human domain. A top down organisational structure based on

business efficiency principles and incorporating a narrow focus on academic disciplines, especially the three R's, Sahlberg (2016) pointed out, were features of the model. It increasingly included standardisation of teaching and learning methods, measurement against universal standards, and bureaucratic control. The final word on systematic curriculum goes to Schwab (1970). He argued against systematic curriculum, commenting that it is "one thing to make wise choices for the instruction of a homogeneous group of children . . . decisions on the same matter for a whole school system or all the schools of an entire state are likely to be less wise" (p. 5).

4.2. The radical tradition

In this section, I examine the radical tradition and its impact on curriculum development and enactment of its perspective.

Some educational theorists, according to Fedotova and Nikolaeva (2015), understand "radical pedagogy" (p. 789) as innovative educational developments, encompassing "the latest theories, techniques and methods that promise to re-invent significantly the processes of teaching and learning" (p. 787). In this study, radical curriculum is understood as a curriculum tradition whose goal, Null (2011) points out, is to effect immediate change to improve social justice and equality. In Reid's (1992) view, it assumes malfunction of the institutions which constitute society. The role of the institutions is to stabilise the social order which has the impact, radical curricularists such as Apple (2004) believe, of oppressing the majority of the population, thus supporting the reproduction of capitalist class stratification and its attendant inequalities. Null (2011) proposed that radical curriculum had a social purpose, which was to serve the community through the moral and intellectual development of students. Equal rights for women, increased visibility and rights for minority groups such as first peoples, wage justice, and compassion for refugees were the types of issues radicals believed should be addressed through the institution of curriculum, which Counts (1932/1969) argued must be political in nature. This placed teachers in a significant role as they were charged with the task of affecting social change. Although radicals are against the idea of institutions, effectively they replace one system with another, which is then under their authority.

4.3. The existential tradition

In this section, I outline the existential tradition and its impact on curriculum development and enactment.

Existential curricularists, Kohn (1992) pointed out, focused on the student with the teacher as a guide. He described a democratic learning community where all are equal and help each other, surrounded by an environment containing exciting possibilities for the students. From these experiences, Eisner (1994) considered, students needed to be able to construct their own meanings. There is no unified course of study. Instead, students must choose their own content which reflects their personal interests, making curriculum, as Reid (1992) notes, an internal phenomenon, leading to Greene's (1988) curricular goals of internal liberation and personal fulfilment. Compared to the theoretical nature of radical curriculum, existential curriculum is practical, taking advantage of whatever is available to achieve its ends. As existential curriculum focusses on the individual, Null (2011) comments, it does not serve the interests of the community, distancing students from the notions of civic interest and citizenship. As such, in Null's opinion, it also fails to act as an instrument of cultural transmission, a component of his understanding of curriculum.

4.4. The pragmatic tradition

In this section, the pragmatic tradition and the way its perception impacts on curriculum development and enactment are outlined.

Pragmatic curriculum is adaptable as it is not captive to an ideology, in which case it has no difficulty incorporating parts of other traditions. Context was an important component of Dewey's (1916/2004) conception of curriculum, as was its ability to respond to the inevitable changes in context which occurred over time. As subject-matter was not important to pragmatists, Null (2011) maintained that they have no place for curriculum-as-plan. Wong and Wong (2009) articulated the need for a flexible approach which was able to deal with the needs and interests of individuals and communities. In place of subject-matter, means assumed a significant role, with a focus on solving problems in real world contexts, giving pragmatic curriculum a practical face. The purpose of curriculum, advanced by pragmatists like Tyler (1949/1969), was not attempting to form the character of students, but instead

changing the way students thought and behaved, using approaches they knew worked as a result of empirical evidence.

4.5. The deliberative tradition

In this section, I examine the deliberative tradition and its impact on curriculum development and enactment as a balanced perspective, incorporating dimensions of the other traditions.

Deliberative curriculum was described by Reid (1992) as "a practical art: the art of discovering curriculum problems, deliberating about them, and inventing solutions to them" (p. 22) which result in action. They tended to be "moral practical problems" (Reid, 1992, p. 86), concerned with formation of students rather than their instruction (Westbury, 2010). As deliberation is not doctrinaire, it listens to others, as Null (2011) advised, bringing together a variety of approaches as it identifies and seeks to solve curricular problems. This relied, as Schwab (1970) articulated, on making "decisions about action in a concrete situation," (p. 36) by considering the "widest possible variety of alternatives" (p. 36) and choosing "not the right alternative, for there is no such thing, but the best one" (p. 36). The deliberative tradition understood, in Reid's (1999) view, that "ends and means are inextricably linked" (p. 47) and that practical curriculum outcomes were "not entirely predictable" (p. 47) in the changing circumstances of real situations. Deliberation resolved the tension Reid (1994) and Schwab (1971) had identified between curriculum theory and practice, as it operated in the "intersection between institutionalized plan and its practical realization" (Reid, 1992, p. 22), the space occupied by teachers.

4.5. Summary

Approaching curriculum from the perspective of each of the five traditions separately, leads to it being understood in different, and for the most part, narrow ways. The systematic aims at maintaining existing social and political power structures and supporting the economic development of society. It focusses on top down management of the work of schools, facilitated by mandated subject-matter, external testing, and bureaucratic control. By contrast, radical curricularists have a political agenda embodying a determination to transform society, ending oppression, and achieving equality for all. Existentialists have the

student at the centre of their attention, with the teacher as a guide, modifying subject-matter and context to suit the needs of the individual. In a similar vein, pragmatists also have a student focus, with the teacher developing and managing contexts to provide rich experiences which add meaning to the lives of the students. Formation of the character of students in a moral framework is important to deliberative curricularists. It sits amongst, rather than beside the other traditions, drawing widely from their best characteristics to find practical solutions to curricular problems. Just as the commonplaces demand that there are topics which must be considered in curriculum deliberations, the traditions focus attention on the importance of understanding that curriculum is perceived in different ways. The relationship between the curriculum traditions and the commonplaces is illustrated in Figure 3.

		Commonplaces				
		Subject-matter commonplace	Student commonplace	Milieu commonplace	Teacher commonplace	Curriculum-making commonplace
Curriculum traditions	Systematic tradition	●			●	●
	Radical tradition			●	●	
	Pragmatic tradition		●	●	●	
	Existential tradition		●			
	Deliberative tradition	●	●	●	●	●

Figure 3. Where Schwab's commonplaces reside in the curriculum traditions

5. How curriculum is understood in the academic literature

5.1. Introduction

Having introduced the curriculum traditions, I use them in this section as perspectives from which to view the ways curriculum is understood in a selection of the academic literature. I also use Schwab's commonplaces as a framework around which to organise the aspects (themes) which emerge from exploration and interpretation of the ways curriculum is understood in the literature. Allocation of aspects (see Figure 4) was to the best fit, not a perfect fit, as they were often relevant to more than one commonplace, reflecting Schwab's (1973) point that commonplaces benefited deliberation best when they operated in concert rather than in isolation. Schwab considered that when using the commonplaces, they needed to be treated as equals. I have kept with Schwab's order of presentation starting with subject-matter, which coincidentally, tended to dominate the way curriculum was understood.

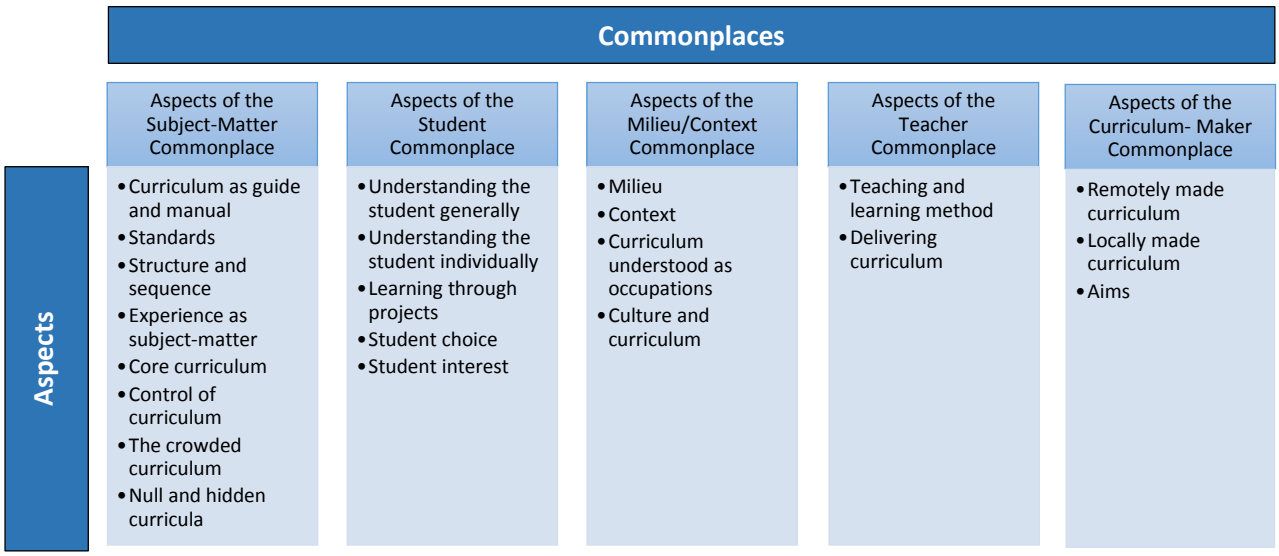

Figure 4. How curriculum is understood in the academic literature using Schwab's commonplaces as a framework

5.2. Subject-matter in the curriculum

In this section, I discuss the importance of the subject-matter commonplace in curriculum deliberations, using the perspectives of the five curriculum traditions to explore the topic.

Subject-matter is what inhabits the educative context, occupying the space between teacher and student, providing the teacher with something to teach and the student with something to learn. Its importance and its status as a commonplace are undeniable. A problem of domination of understanding emerges throughout the community at large, where there is regular substitution of the word curriculum when in fact subject-matter is the topic of discussion, a situation reflected in the curriculum literature. As such, it is important to explore the territory of subject-matter as it is understood in the curriculum traditions, concluding with the deliberative tradition in which subject-matter finds a more balanced position in relation to the other commonplaces, a position favoured by Schwab (1973).

Curriculum is commonly used in place of the words content[3], subject-matter, syllabus, and course of study. Yates (2009) concurs, describing curriculum as "the what" (p. 17) of education. This is particularly prevalent in the systematic tradition. The New South Wales, Northern Territory, and Western Australian submissions to the *Review of the Curriculum* Australian (Australian Government, 2014, p. 227) noted that ACARA should limit its activity to developing the "agreed Australian Curriculum content." This capture of meaning has a severely narrowing effect on the notion of curriculum, one Westbury (2010) labels "curriculum-as-manual" (p. 17).

As Jackson (1992) comments, "today, as in the past, when someone uses the word 'curriculum,' chances are he or she is referring to nothing more or less than the course of study of a school" (p. 9). Sahlberg (2016) observed that, in the latter part of the twentieth century, standards were added to subject-matter. The Victorian Curriculum (VCAA, 2019) is a prime example, indicating not only what students should know at any point as they progress through the education system, but also the quality of their knowing.

Following the rise of neo-liberal regimes, Biesta (2013) observed **"**unprecedented interference of politicians and policy makers in the minutia of education in many countries around the world" (p. 690). It is in the area of curriculum, understood as subject-matter, where Peshkin (1992) indicates that the battle between "subcultures" occurs as they "contend for the right to define what goes on in school" (p. 250). In this systematic tradition,

[3] I have used subject-matter to mean curriculum content in line with Schwab's commonplace. Content is the parlance of teachers when talking about subject-matter. I have left content as such when quoting the participating teachers.

subject-matter is considered complete and certain, with Clarke and Erickson (2004) noting that there is "little discretionary license on the part of the teacher to negotiate or modify it" (p. 200). The teacher's role is simply to deliver the subject-matter of the curriculum without question, much as a courier would deliver a parcel, presented to the recipient in exactly the same condition as it was received from its commissioner.

ACARA (2013), by its own admission, views curriculum as "learning area content and achievement standards." The scope (knowledge and skills) and sequence (organisation and order) of the subject-matter of the Australian Curriculum from Foundation - the first year of school (age 5), to Year 10 (age 15), are set out prescriptively for teachers to follow and demonstrate a clear focus on academic learning. It is divided into eight learning areas: the arts; English; the humanities; health and physical education; languages; mathematics; science; and technologies (ACARA, 2013). The learning areas are supported by four general capabilities: critical and creative thinking; personal and social capability; ethical understanding; and intercultural understanding (ACARA, 2013). These are not additional subjects but are "dealt with, where relevant, through the learning area content on which the curriculum is built" (ACARA, 2013). Likewise there are the cross-curriculum priorities (ACARA, 2016b), whose purpose is to develop "knowledge, understanding and skills relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and Sustainability" (ACARA, 2013), integrated into learning area subject-matter.

The conservative Federal Government of 2013-2015 signalled its intention to make its mark on curriculum by returning to the slogan, "Back to Basics" (Mukhopadhyay, 2014), focusing on literacy and numeracy. Stating that the "Australian Government regards high-quality school science and mathematics education as critically important for Australia's current and future productivity, as well as for informed personal decision making and effective community, national and global citizenship," (Loughnane, 2013) displayed an added determination to make the sciences and mathematics more prominent. These examples exhibit strong political oversight of curriculum. As Sahlberg (2016) warns, "steering education through pre-determined standards and prioritized core subjects," achieves the result that "teaching and learning are narrower" (p. 186). Focusing on what are considered core subjects "reduces focus on whole-child development due to decreasing time for arts, music, drama, and sports" (p. 189). Once again, the outcome was development of a particularly narrow

approach to curriculum which attempted to simplify a complex area of human endeavour, making it easier to control.

One of the main concerns revealed by the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government, 2014) was the "excessive amount of content" (p. 139) leading to the cry of the "crowded curriculum" (p. 192). Some respondents to the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* suggested that the mandated subject-matter should occupy 80% of student time, allowing for 20% of the subject-matter to be locally relevant and generated by teachers in their classrooms. In the *Review of the Australian Curriculum,* it was estimated that the prescribed subject-matter, particularly in the primary years (ages 5 to 11), would occupy 120% of student time if fully implemented. As a result of the crowded curriculum, flexibility and the ability to exercise choice at the class level were reduced, restricting the capacity of teachers to cater for the learning needs of individual students. This had the effect of de-skilling teachers, as they no longer had time to practise the craft of curriculum-making from first principles, a point made in submissions to the *Review of the Australian Curriculum*. Exacerbating this situation, submissions to the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* reported that many teachers "possess generalist degrees with minimum disciplinary content" (Australian Government, 2014, p. 241). This left them without sufficient qualification in the "scholarly materials under treatment and with the discipline from which they come" (Schwab, 1973, p. 502), to be included in curriculum development as a subject-matter specialist.

Subject-matter is not a strong commonplace in the radical tradition. For radical curricularist Paulo Freire (1970/2010), curriculum is inherently political, part of a hegemonic system which reinforces the status quo of oppression by elites of the populace. Curriculum in the radical tradition is envisaged as transformative, focussing the common good, equality, and justice. As the radicals do not perceive students as a vessel to be filled, there is no emphasis on subject-matter which might provide the filling. Subject-matter, the radicals believed, should be used to further the social and political agenda of eradicating oppression, with politics being the most important subject. Freire (1970/2010) argued that subject-matter was something to be understood, not memorised. His "problem-posing method" (p. 80) strives to develop consciousness and critical thinking through reflection of the praxis of knowledge and action. Michael Apple (1993) asks "Whose curriculum is this anyway?" (p. 118), questioning both who should control curriculum and whose interests it should serve. Radical curricularists like Apple

reject the notion of common subject-matter, as control of the knowledge is considered part of the process of oppression.

Existential curricularists have an almost singular focus on the individual student and personal freedom. According to Null (2011), students in the existential tradition progress at their own pace, with teachers mindful of the developmental stage of each individual. Hence, they do not support the notion of formally prescribed subject-matter, placing more importance on experience. Rather, they believe that the subject-matter of the curriculum should reflect the interests of the students. For Kilpatrick (1918/1929) and Kohn (1992), subject-matter should reflect student choices rather than "curriculum as plan." Kilpatrick (1936) added that the "child must come before subject matter" (p. 36). He argued that students are made to fit subject-matter when it should be the other way around. In project based learning, Kilpatrick (1918/1929) believed students found knowledge to be meaningful. Eisner (1994) agreed, expressing the idea that subject-matter should be replaced with meaningful learning experiences which develop knowledge. Grundy (1987) believed it was not an either or situation, arguing that experience was the combination of knowing and doing, which should be wedded by student interest. It is a "truism of the curriculum field" in Flinders, Noddings, and Thornton's (1986) opinion, "that schools cannot teach everything" (p. 24). When it was impossible to contain all knowledge in any curriculum, the important question for Yates (2009) became what was made "visible and invisible" (p. 18), and what were the reasons underpinning those inclusions and exclusions. Apple (1993) and Dreeben (1970) labelled the subject-matter not included in the curriculum the "unstudied curriculum." Eisner (1985) called this the "null curriculum" and considered that it might be as important as the explicit or official (Apple, 1993) curriculum, and the implicit, also known as the hidden (Jackson, 1968) and informal (Berk, 1992) curricula. An important contribution of the null curriculum is to offer a different stance from which to examine what subject-matter will be included and excluded from the curriculum. In curriculum deliberations, Flinders et al. (1986) maintain that if goals are the starting point and then subject-matter alternatives are considered, the process is broadening. But if the goals are determined on the basis that they justify the subject-matter, the process has a narrowing effect.

The problem with a view of curriculum which has little emphasis on subject-matter, according to Peshkin (1992) and Reid (1992), is that it overlooks the important role subject-matter plays

in transmitting cultural heritage. Some commonality of subject-matter is necessary as the binding agent of community and society. The existential emphasis on the individual is not conducive to the role individuals have as citizens in a community and their civic responsibilities in society. Not only is this a narrow perspective of curriculum, but its effect is to narrow the outcomes of curriculum.

Pragmatic curricularists concern themselves with how to teach and what works in these endeavours, rather than what to teach. It is an approach based around resolving practical problems in action. To this end, experience and the context in which the experience occurs are important. Dewey (1916/2004) captured the place of subject-matter in the pragmatic curriculum when he suggested that it should be assimilated into the ever expanding experience of the student, expanding meaning and enhancing the ability to solve problems, especially where it involved "learning by doing" (p. 178). Adding that "no experience having a meaning is possible without some element of thought" (p. 139), Dewey included two elements of thinking. The first is thinking about activity beforehand which "makes it possible to act with an end in view. It is the condition of our having aims" (p. 140). Preflection was the name Falk (1995) and Looi and Longkai (2015) gave to this process, involving imagination and anticipation of future events which Looi and Longkai (2015) claim "will increase students' capabilities for focusing on learning during subsequent concrete learning experiences and allow students to prepare for learning" (p. 611). Reflection was Dewey's (1916/2004) other mode of thinking, which he described as the "intentional endeavor to discover *specific* connections between something we do and the consequences which result, so the two become continuous" (p. 140).

Tyler (1949/1969, p. 26) had a similar, although longer view of the place of subject-matter when he asked of the subject specialist: "What can your subject contribute to the education of young people who are not going to be specialists in your field?" Schwab's (1973) reply was to advise that it was foolish to consider that the student could be made into an expert, a point reiterated by McDonald (2018) in relation to residential outdoor education programmes in the UK, where most students enter with little or no experience. He quoted Cyril Machin, a volunteer instructor at the White Hall Centre, who insisted that "the [White Hall] Centre does not aim to produce an expert in any activity, its aim is to start the beginner on the right road, the safe road, the most rewarding road" (McDonald, 2018, p. 194), focusing on development

of attitudes rather than hard skills such as navigation, rock climbing, or kayaking. It did not mean that students were given diluted subject-matter. It did mean that relevant subject-matter would be constructed to develop insight into the discipline in question, allowing the student to begin the journey that progressed towards mastery and further exploration of the opportunities offered.

Schwab (1973, p. 504), speaking from a deliberative perspective, while acknowledging that curriculum must contain relevant "bodies of knowledge" (p. 510), asserted that subject-matter was a "resource of education rather than a model for it." This position views subject-matter as a vehicle or means, used by a teacher in a specific context to achieve the end of development of individual students, rather than curriculum-as-manual, or as material with which to fill the empty vessel, both of which are teleological and independent of a particular student. A problem Schwab (1956) perceived with a heavy focus on subject-matter for its own sake was that it quickly went "out of date" (p. 138). What he believed had a "much longer life-expectancy" (p. 138) and more benefit to students were "conceptual principles of investigation" (p. 138) which could be used repeatedly and had wide applicability in the process of developing understanding. Expanding this notion, Westbury (2010) proposed that subject-matter constituted an "authoritative selection from cultural traditions that can only become educative as . . . interpreted and given life by teachers" (p. 17) and in the process, Deng (2013) asserted, achieving significance for students. If it was to be assessed, Holt (1995) maintained it "should be sensitive to the different ways in which students can demonstrate their understanding of the subject matter" (p. 8).

An important extension of the commonplace of subject-matter is the idea of the originating discipline from which the subject-matter emerges. Schwab (1973) emphasised that it was not enough, in the case of history as an example, for the group planning curriculum to be familiar with the relevant historical subject-matter as contributed by the subject-matter specialist. It was also important to understand what it is "to be a historian" (p. 502). Schwab expanded on the importance of this notion of the student, when he remarked that "possession of such disciplines is possession of avenues toward freedom of thought, feeling, and action" (p. 516). He continued, arguing that knowledge and experience of the discipline in discussion provided students with insight into that discipline, equipping them to master the discipline and achieve the appropriate outcomes. Schwab was careful to explain that this did not mean that the

student was an expert historian, but that being an historian provided a greater level of access to and understanding of the discipline. Acknowledging Schwab's approach, Quay (2015) affirms that "as teachers we plan for doing and knowing; now we must acknowledge that we also plan for being" (p. 157). It is not enough to develop just the academic student, as it represents a "poor model for adulthood in a democratic society" (p. 157) based as it is on unquestioning compliance. Taking Quay's point, Grundy (1987) maintained that the purpose of deliberation was to produce "a state of being rather than some final result" (p. 64) which a systematic curricularist would seek, illustrating that the process of becoming is an ongoing project. This takes the commonplace of subject-matter to a deeper level of meaning beyond simply being-an-academic-student and memorising facts and dates. As Schwab (1973) pointed out, subject-matter only achieved this deeper level of meaning in consort with the other commonplaces.

Amongst his discussion of subject-matter, Schwab (1973) noted that it was "organized. There is a thread which leads us from one piece of subject-matter to the next. Each piece appears contingent on what went before and to make necessary what comes after" (p. 510). Here Schwab observed the presence and importance of structure and sequence in curriculum, once again broadening the perception of subject-matter and curriculum he was projecting.

In this section, I have argued that substitution of the word curriculum for subject-matter has allowed it to occupy the lexicological habitat of curriculum, reducing the influence of the other commonplaces to their detriment. Supporting this subject-matter dominant perception of curriculum in Australia, ACARA (2013) described the Australian Curriculum in its introduction as "what students will learn and what teachers will teach." The *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government, 2014, p. 123) reported that "such a view is prevalent across the various state and territory educational jurisdictions." These statements and observations indicate a particularly narrow perception of curriculum held by the educational jurisdictions throughout Australia. Rather than being wildly divergent, they are perceptions in the systematic tradition which converge around the commonplace of subject-matter, itself crowded with academically focussed core subjects including literacy, numeracy, and now science, facilitating control over much of what happens in schools. In the radical, existential, and pragmatic traditions, subject-matter holds a position of lesser importance. It is in the deliberative tradition, I point out, that subject-matter works in concert with the other

commonplaces to achieve formation of the student's character and develop their sense of being. What is not included in the official curriculum - the content of the null curriculum, and the development of students which happens in the hidden (unofficial) curriculum - must be acknowledged if there is to be a full understanding of the notion of curriculum.

Subject-matter, and indeed curriculum itself, is nothing if it cannot be enacted for the benefit of students, the next focus of Schwab's commonplaces.

5.3. Students and curriculum

In this section, I investigate how the student commonplace assists in developing an understanding of curriculum as it appears in the literature. The investigation focuses on the way the five curriculum traditions perceive the place of students in curriculum.

Including the student as a commonplace in discussion of curriculum appeared fundamental to Reid (2010). Without students, there is no need for curriculum. Curriculum has no purpose if students and their place in curriculum are not understood. The way students are understood, the place they occupy in curriculum, and the purpose of their achievement, although quite different across the five traditions, does exhibit some commonality at times. Systematic curriculum, which places less emphasis on the student commonplace, is the first discussed.

It is teachers who teach and develop pedagogical relationships with "this student, in that school," Schwab (1978, p. 289) asserted. Education systems and their curriculum-makers never deal with individual students in a specific classroom in a particular school. Their focus is on those parts of the system which deliver the most control over what they value most highly – subject-matter. Control over subject-matter effectively delivers control of teachers and thereby the curriculum. To strengthen control, curriculum-makers attempt to make subject-matter "teacher-proof" (Grundy, 1987, p. 31). Consequently, the Australian Curriculum (Australian Government, 2014), and its Victorian manifestation the Victorian Curriculum (VCAA, 2015), barely mention students. This situation is not unique to Australia. The National Curriculum in England, the New National Education Standards in Germany, and the Common Core State Standards in the USA, are listed by Sahlberg (2016) as other examples. In this curriculum tradition, students are seen as receptacles to be filled by the

teacher. Freire (1970/2010, p. 72) labels this the “banking concept of education” with the students as bank accounts into which deposits of knowledge can be made. The role of the student is simply to receive, file, and store the deposits, memorising subject-matter rather than understanding the concepts presented by the teacher.

What the systematic curricularists such as Bobbitt (1918/2012) and English (2010) talk about is not the student, but the outcome of the process applied to the student, which aims to transform the student into a productive unit in the economic milieu and into a responsible member of the social milieu. As Quay (2015) asserts, “being-an-academic-student sits (prominently) in the background as hidden curriculum supporting achievement of this official curriculum” (p. 159). It certainly does not allow for “incidental learning” which Jackson (1992, p. 8) indicates is where “great changes can happen.” Commodification of the student effectively eliminates them from the spectrum of the human domain of curriculum, inserting them as a component in a Tayloresque (Taylor, 1911) industrial process, effectively diminishing their humanity and narrowing the range of dimensions comprising curriculum. Sahlberg (2016) traces the unrelenting rise of systematic curriculum over the last few decades. Noting that the changes wrought by these curricular developments have been “generally neither well planned nor well resourced,” North et al. (2018, p. 2) maintain that implementing these changes has often been difficult for teachers, as they attempt to do it in ways that do not interfere with student learning, demonstrating the high level of status and care afforded students by teachers.

Systematic curricularists, Reid (1992) contends, implausibly assume that transfer of knowledge from teacher to student can be “predictably brought about through efficient means - a well-designed curriculum, a theoretically sound pedagogical strategy, or an effective teacher” (p. 103), echoing Taylors (1911) principles of business efficiency. Students, this implied, were a commodity in the system in which they had a process performed on them - teaching. This notion of curriculum expressed by the systematists separates subject-matter, pedagogy, and teachers, achieving the opposite of what Schwab intended with the commonplaces, which was integration of the component parts.

The place of the student in the radical curriculum tradition was to become part of a political and social reforming movement, which would change what people like Freire (1970/2010) and Apple (1993) perceived to be corrupt institutions. Curriculum was the first of these

corrupt institutions which needed to be reformed, and this, applied to every student in every classroom, would lead the transformation of the rest of society. Radical curricularists perceived students in oppressive societies as products of the culture created by teachers in schools, with little power to control their own destinies - empty vessels rather than conscious beings. The goal of equality extends to the relationship between teacher and student. Freire (1970/2010, p. 75) described the role of teacher as "student among students," and the students "critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher" (p. 81), placing the students in a position of equality with teachers. Apple (1993) believed that the interests of individual students should be subordinate to those of the community. The radical curricularist is not so far removed from the systematist, the difference being that the student is simply a component of a different process, part of a socio-political rather than a socio-economic transformation.

Existential curricularists like Eisner (1984) and Greene (1988) claim to teach children, not subjects. The student is the strong focus of the curriculum, with the other commonplaces taking a back seat. If the student is thriving, they believe, the other commonplaces will take care of themselves. This, Kohn (1992) argued, occurred when students were engaged in projects which developed from their interests and were of their choosing. Eisner (1994) ventured that students needed to create their own meaning from experiences as they represent and share them in "multiliterate" (p. 19) forms. Students in this situation are the equal of teachers, reflecting a democratic classroom.

Kohn (1992) supported the idea that people are by nature cooperative and interested in the civic good. Students, likewise, are not innately competitive in his view, and he is critical of the fact that students learn to be competitive as a result of the emphasis society places on competition, especially through reward structures.

For Greene (1974), the curriculum aimed at internal (personal) liberation of students as distinct from the external (class) liberation of the radicals. Like Greene, Reid (1992) describes existential curriculum as an internal phenomenon, interested in the development of an autonomous and independent student who has the ability to create the kind of life they desire through their exercise of choice. The existentialists argue that the social and political milieus are an external power exerting significant influence over the ability of individuals to be internally liberated. Finding common ground with radicals like Freire, Greene proposed that

in the process of reforming society, students should be shielded from corrupt institutions, which otherwise tend to be self-perpetuating, as people are drawn into them and find it difficult to escape the clutches of their structures.

Agreement between the existentialists and radicals on the need for curriculum to be a reforming influence on society, is an example of the curriculum traditions finding commonality of meaning. Conversely, the systematists' belief in competition represents the polar opposite view to that promoted by the existentialists - cooperation - as an aspect of the commonplaces.

Children are the focus of pragmatic curricularists, a point captured by Wong and Wong (2009) when they insist, like the existentialists, that teachers should teach students, not subjects. Concurring with this philosophy, Dewey (1900/2010) asserted that the "child becomes the sun around which the appliances of education revolve" (p. 16) invoking a powerful Copernican metaphor to emphasise his point. Reid's (2010) noted teachers "unwavering focus on their students" (p. 58), which guaranteed that the student commonplace was central to their curriculum deliberations. In this student centred approach to curriculum, Pyle and Luce-Kapler (2014) maintained, the focus was on the "development of independence and social competency" (p. 1964).

In alignment with the pragmatic tradition, Tyler (1949/1969) considered that the teacher must have "sufficient information about the students' interests and needs and about basic human satisfactions to judge whether or not given learning experiences are likely to prove satisfying to the students involved" (p. 66). Understanding the milieus in which the students are immersed, such as their local community and the online world they inhabit, is another important component of the information required to develop curriculum which is relevant to them. Highlighting this point, Young (2014) emphasises the difference between student experience of curriculum and their experience out of school, and how that places a "constraint on what students can learn" (p. 8). The former, Quay (2015) described as "epistemic" (p. 159), based around knowing, whereas the later he described as "ontological" (159), focussing on being. Quay's research is pertinent to this study as it finds being-an-academic-student leaning towards the epistemic and being-a-school-camper more ontologically focussed. He claimed that it is "absurd to think that we can temporally separate knowing and being, postponing ontological aims as if life itself can be put on hold" (p. 146),

because, in Dewey's (1916/2004) words, the student is being asked to prepare for a "remote future" (p. 77). Teachers' plans, according to Quay, should include knowing, doing, and being as a remedy to this state of affairs. The experiences also need to be appropriate for the stage of development of the particular student, and in the pragmatic tradition, relevant to their interests. Tyler (1949/1969) also pointed out that a range of experiences could be used to achieve the same outcome, and conversely, any particular experience could produce a range of outcomes.

As a deliberative curricularist, Schwab (1973) insisted that curriculum must reflect knowledge of the age cohort of the students to be taught. More specifically, Schwab (1973) believed that knowledge of the "predecessors" (p. 518) of the students in a particular community or school and the effects of curriculum on those students were important background for the curriculum-maker. He also argued that what the child "already knows, what will come easy, what will be difficult, what aspirations and anxieties which may affect learning must be taken into account, what will appear to the child as contributing to an immediate desire or need" (p. 502) must be considered as curriculum was developed, differentiated (Tomlinson, 1999; Vygotsky, 1986) to the needs of the individuals it would serve.

Regularly throughout his essays, Schwab reiterated that the curriculum-maker needed to be cognisant of the unique group of students who were to be taught, not just a standardised notion of children of that age cohort, allowing for the "materials under consideration" (p. 502) to be adjusted to accommodate the difference between the specific student and the general curriculum. At the point of enactment, Schwab realised a significant degree of responsibility for curriculum-making rested with the teacher, as the person with the most knowledge of particular students, through "direct involvement with them" (p. 502). Roth (2010, p. 131) wondered how "misguided is it to seek to teach without knowing the person to be taught." Relevant knowledge of the students extended to an understanding of possibilities of future economic status and function, leisure, aspirations, attitudes, and an idea of the different communities and groupings (geographic, religious, class, or ethnic) to which they might belong.

Schwab's position on the inclusion of the student in deliberations on curriculum developed from *The Practical: Translation into Curriculum* (1973), his third practical essay, where he argued for membership of the curriculum-making committee to include someone who

understood the children both generally for the target age group in question, and specifically about the children to be taught. In *The Practical 4: Something for Curriculum Professors to Do* (1983), Schwab's ideas had developed to include one or two students on the committee. Benefits Schwab envisaged with this change to his conspectus were the unique perspective students could bring to the curricular table, and the sense of engagement they would have of the curriculum developed by such means. Reid (2010) agreed, arguing that ignoring the views of those who are taught left curriculum decisions lacking validity. He accepted students as "rational actors" (p. 102), "serving their own interest" (p. 102), at the same time "serving the civic interest that curriculum represents" (p. 102), and learning "as a means to acting in the world" (Null, 2011, p. 30) rather than as an end in itself.

In considering the interests of the child in curriculum deliberations, Schwab agreed with Dewey (1916/2004). At the forefront of Schwab's thinking in relation to his exposition of the student commonplace was understanding how and why children learn. A central feature of Schwab's learning process involved students being presented with problems which they needed to solve. In the course of having to live with the consequences of their solutions Schwab (1959), like Dewey, believed students changed themselves. Adding to this notion, Quay (2015) postulated that when education is approached through "occupations" (p. 15) which he also described as "ways of being" (p. 17), the outcomes have more significance. Indeed, we each have many occupations which "structure our lives" (p. 18) giving them meaning, more so when they act in concert, just as with Schwab's commonplaces. As Quay explains, they reflect our uniqueness, representing "individual interpretations occurring within social contexts" (p. 17). In the same vein, Young (2013) challenges the limited notion captured in the question "is this curriculum meaningful to my students?" and instead asks "what are the meanings this curriculum gives my students access to?" and "does this curriculum take my students beyond their experience and enable them to envisage alternatives that have some basis in the real world?" (p. 106). To this end, Young (2014) expresses the belief that the role of the curriculum is to "offer opportunities for pupils at all ages to move beyond the experience they bring to school" (p. 8).

In this section I have highlighted the different place and status students occupy in the five curriculum traditions. The way they are understood varies from the general to the individual. They are variously perceived as social, economic, or political entities. What they are expected

to achieve varies from knowing, to doing, understanding, and developing meaning in their lives. At one end of the spectrum students are objectified as parts of a system. At the other end, they are perceived as rational actors, free to make choices and grasp opportunity relevant to themselves. Amongst the divergence, I discovered, there is agreement that without students, curriculum has no purpose.

Having raised the importance of understanding where student have come from and where they might head in the future points to the need to include milieu in curriculum deliberations.

5.4. Milieu and educative context in the curriculum

In this section, I examine the influence of social, economic, political, and cultural milieus exert on curriculum as it is developed. Milieu also includes the educative context in which curriculum is enacted. Due to the differences inherent in the notions of milieu and context, I discuss them as separate branches of one commonplace in this section and throughout the rest of this study. I approach this commonplace from the perspectives of the five curriculum traditions, as they apportion differing degrees of significance to milieu and context.

Schwab (1973) used "the milieus" (p. 503) to describe the complex collection of overlapping situations, conditions, and expectations from which children emerge, in which they will be educated, and to which they will proceed after school. It included elements from the micro through to the macro, from family to community, church, team, club, group, school, town, province, state, and nation, all the way to what could be described as the global milieu. On a large scale, milieu leads to problems which are systemic in nature according to Sahlberg (2016), the solutions to which are usually framed in greater levels of institutional control at the local level. It covered the social, cultural, political, economic, educational, environmental, intellectual, religious, ethnic, and physical domains, amongst others. It also includes understanding the influence these elements bring to bear on curriculum as it is made, especially statewide curriculum. By adding "the school and classroom in which the learning and teaching are supposed to take place," Schwab (p. 503) included what DeLay (2008) called context and Dewey (1931) called educative environment.

Curriculum problems at their core are practical and local, reflecting the differences between individuals, as Schwab (1969b) repeatedly reminds us. The solutions to these problems are

found in educative contexts crafted by teachers to facilitate specific learning outcomes for individual students. These I prefer to describe as contexts, a label which acknowledges their differences from the milieus. Because there is such a difference between the notion of milieu and that of educative context, I use milieu/context as a commonplace heading due to their complimentary nature, but discuss milieu and context separately underneath the general heading.

Milieu, understood as the world outside the school and the classroom and the influence it exerts on curriculum, is the first part of the milieu/context commonplace discussed. Arguing that there can be no deliberation on the topic of curriculum without "reference to various manifestations of the world within which, and for which, curriculum is transacted" Reid (1992, p. 131) elevated what Schwab (1973) named the "milieus" (p. 503) to a position of curricular prominence. The milieus earned the status of a commonplace because, as Reid (1993) argued, they were "called on to do a huge amount of work" (p. 508). Agreeing with Reid, Cochran-Smith (2006) noted that while the current emphasis placed "teachers as the central determining factor in students' success" (p. 98), there were "other complex and confounding variables, the impact of which could be placed in the milieu category" (p. 98). Curriculum could not be understood, in Grundy's (1987) view, without reference to its "historical circumstances and as being a reflection of a particular social milieu" (p. 6).

Describing the positions from which education is viewed as "cultural configuration," Carr (1995, p. 78) announced the cultural milieu as an element of curriculum. When he points out that people live and work in a "cultural environment" (p. 86), it follows that curriculum is an element of culture as it is part of our work and our lives. Peshkin (1992) argued that in the curriculum-making process, those making the decisions do so on the basis of a particular "cultural commitment" (p. 250). Peshkin continued with the observation that "subcultures are in competition with each other as they try to enact their 'meaning systems' in the curricula of their society's schools" (p. 250) It included a "culturally orientated sense" (p. 250) of what should be kept in the curriculum and what should be added, modified, removed, or excluded. This was in order to "insure a fit at some point between curriculum and culture" (p. 253), working from the premise that "schools should transmit the culture of their society" (p. 253), and in Lau's (2001) words, "mould students into a predefined image accordingly" (p. 34), the

process of “enculturation” (Gardner, 1993, p. 240). Deciding in whose image students should be moulded represented the territory of curriculum contested by the traditions.

Milieu is not considered as a significant component of curriculum to systematic curricularists on the whole. Curricular systems like NCLB (US Department of Education, Office of the Secretary, Office of Public Affairs, 2003), RTTT (US Department of Education, 2009), and the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2013), are intended to operate universally - across whole states and countries. These systems stem from political policy and the priorities it espouses, employs government bureaucracy in the service of implementation, often uses finance as an instrument of control, and has prescribed courses of study as its visible face. Sahlberg (2016) claimed that the purpose of these systems was to prepare students for employment in a global labour market. The What Works Clearinghouse (Institute of Education Sciences, 2018) used Scientific Based Research to anoint programs for use by teachers which it deemed to work. “The preferred technique” Holt (1995) observed, was then “recommended for general adoption in schools, irrespective of context” (p. 2), an approach Deming (1993) criticised as simply copying rather than effective practice. There was no sense that differences in milieus mattered when matching curriculum to students. What is important to systematic curricularists is that curriculum focusses on “core subjects that are the same in schools around the world” (Sahlberg, 2016, p. 181) and that they are benchmarked to international standards. English (2000) contended that as long as there is alignment between the written, taught, and tested curriculum, success will follow - anywhere, in much the same way as a McDonalds hamburger is the same - everywhere. Although the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government, 2014) acknowledged that the socio-economic background of students has an influence on student achievement, it was the system and its universality which the reviewers perceived as important. The milieu of the place where the curriculum was delivered, in their opinion, was irrelevant

Milieu is important to radical curricularists as it is the milieu of class which, they believe, facilitates oppression in society. Teacher background, textbooks, subject-matter, the null curriculum, and the institutions of schools and education, all contribute to the reproduction of society, which radical curricularists attempt to change in their effort to unwind economic and social injustice. An important aspect of milieu for Apple (1993) was the hidden curriculum. In this instance it refers to the attitudes and values embedded in school structures and culture

which support a broader societal hegemonic power structure, its purpose being to maintain a particular social order privileging a minority, whilst oppressing other classes. The hegemonic structure itself is a milieu in which curriculum resides. The important point about milieus, for radical curricularists, is that they are the very thing that their curriculum seeks to transform.

Existentialists believe that both the milieus people inhabit and the contexts in which they learn are important. It was Kohn's (1992) contention that immersing students in a milieu of community and self-reliance, rather than competition and reward, resulted in a better society. If we accept the proposition of existentialists that the environment in which people find themselves is the dominant factor in their development, milieu becomes an important commonplace. Greene (1974) suggested that the importance of milieu was that it influenced the choices students made in relation to their learning.

Dewey (1900/2010), as a pragmatist, believed milieu was important, when he urged making "each one of our schools an embryonic community life, active with types of occupations that reflect the life of the larger society" (p. 14). In agreement, Tyler (1949/1969) commends the desirability of problems for students, "set up in the kind of environment in which such problems usually arise in life. This is more likely to result in his viewing this as a real problem worthy of his effort to solve" (p. 69). For Dewey (1916/2004), "education in its broadest sense" (p. 2) meant the "means of this social continuity of life" (p. 2). When Dewey described "life" as "customs, institutions, beliefs, victories and defeats, recreations and occupations," (p. 2), he could just as easily have used the word culture, and instead of education, enculturation. Not just the subject-matter of curriculum, but also the process of schooling, according to Sockett (1992), provided for "moral learning, discipline for life in society, loyalty to a nation learned through attachment to school communities, and the moral climate of the school" (p. 544). In this case school mirrors milieu and milieu is transmitted by school.

Milieus, particularly social and cultural, are important to deliberative curricularists. Most of the milieus Schwab (1973) mentioned he labelled accurately as "social milieus" (p. 508). They include the social milieu of school, the family, the local community and the amount of overlap between community and school. He also listed social milieus that are not necessarily closely bound to physical location. They included communities based on "religious, class, or ethnic genus" (p. 503), and how these communities related to and shared the values of the entire genus of these groups. Reid (1984) described Schwab's understanding of milieu in curriculum

as the reflection of community and the means of maintaining a vision of community which embodied action, emotion, and human relationships. At the same time Schwab celebrated common purpose and embraced differences, cultural elements he placed at the core of community. This view of context is described by Tsoukas (1992) as the "setting of interactions, itself internally differentiated, specifying the contextuality of interactions, rather than if we treat it as merely a well-bounded geographical area" (p. 444). The idea of context becoming detached from physical place is one that is gaining hold in the postmodern era (Lau, 2001).

By selecting milieu as one of the commonplaces, Schwab (1973) highlighted its status in curriculum deliberations. Agreeing with Schwab, Reid (1993) argued that if curriculum was to be successful it must address the needs and aspirations of the "communities whose values it reflected" (p. 506). Examining the idea of the nexus between learning and community at a deeper level, Reid (2001) proposed that, although we can learn about community, "learning is something essentially implicated with the idea of community" (p. 33).

Educative contexts, the places where teaching and learning occur, are the second part of the milieu/context commonplace I discuss in this section. Schwab (1973) included these in the milieu commonplace and described them as "manifold" (p. 503). The concept of educative contexts captures this aspect of Schwab's notion of milieu. The school, the school camp, and the classroom, both indoors and out, become the physical contexts in which curriculum enactment can occur.

Systematic curricularists make almost no mention of context. The assumption is that the contexts for the delivery of curriculum are almost always traditional classrooms in schools, which are ostensibly the same everywhere. Although considered a systematic curricularist, Bobbitt (1918/2012) in his book *Curriculum*, devoted a chapter to ''Where education can happen" (p. 34), he expressed a view close to those of pragmatic and existential curricularists, emphasising the importance he placed on the educative context. In the chapter, he stated that "training needs to be taken care of where the work can be normal, not where it may be most convenient for teachers" (p. 35). He believed that often this was not at schools, but in what he called "the Great School" (p. 100), by which he meant the broader community. More progressive schools, he affirmed, moved some of the work activities of the community to the school and placed some students in the community where they could experience work in real world situations. Integration of curriculum was not simply to be within the school subjects,

but throughout the community as well. Bobbitt (1918/2012) saw living as the purpose of life. In his opinion, learning through living "in the world of reality" (p. 14) made education purposeful. In this regard, Bobbitt emphasised learning ahead of teaching. Context became the environment in which the most effective learning could take place, focusing on local context rather than universal milieu. Bobbitt's views on context illustrate the variations which exist within a single tradition and the overlap between traditions.

Because radical curricularists are focussed on transforming society, milieu is of prime importance to them. But, like systematic curricularists, they are another group who do not mention the educative context. Ultimately schools, Freire (1970/2010) believed, as hegemonic institutions which oppress minorities, would also have to be transformed.

Educative contexts were more important for pragmatic and existential curricularists. Kohn believed that a teacher's prime responsibility was to create an environment in which student interests could flourish, motivating and engaging them with learning. Dewey (1916/2004) agreed, recommending that it was a significant responsibility for teachers "in the enterprise of education to furnish the environment which stimulates responses and directs the student's course" (p. 174). It was not enough that the learning environment be left to chance. It should be "deliberately regulated with reference to its educative effect" (p. 18), which Schwab (1959) reported of Dewey, was not the "quickest route to mastered habit and attitude . . . but provocative of reflection, test and revision" (p. 147). Tyler (1949/1969) concurred, believing that manipulation of the learning environment was the teacher's most effective way of controlling the learning experience. At the same time, Holt (1995) warned of the pitfalls of appropriating curriculum, regardless of the context it was developed in or for, and expecting it to be successful elsewhere.

Selecting social context as particularly important, Dewey (1916/2004) indicated that "isolation of subject matter from a social context is the chief obstruction in current practice to securing a general training of the mind" (p. 65), a point supported by Gardner (1993). The emphasis placed on context by both the pragmatists and the existentialists had a narrowing effect in light of their approach to curriculum. On the other hand, the strong case they present for context, when added to the other traditions, supported the proposition for the benefits of a broader aggregation of curriculum perspectives, as is the wont of deliberative curricularists.

Context is important to deliberative curricularists, as it is another variable which they argue cannot be dealt with theoretically. They believe curriculum must respond to the reality and uniqueness of the situations in which it is being enacted. According to Schwab (1978), it was through "solving problems and living with their solutions, we alter ourselves" (p. 176), borrowing from the pragmatic and existential perspectives. Emphasising the impact of context, Cohen, Pereira, Roby, and Block, (2005) observed that by eliminating the adult perspective and its attendant expectations in the camp situation, educational opportunities and achievements outside of the usual realm became possible. This happened because the "campers were placed in a dependent relation to the camp milieu, thus rendering them more liable to its effects" (p. 195). In this case, I would interpret "milieu" as "context," but with camps functioning as communities, albeit quite self-contained and developing their own cultures as they go, there is a crossover with the idea of milieu. In a similar vein, Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1990) found that students beginning to learn to read prospered in social contexts in classrooms, incorporating mutual assistance and friendship as elements of an effective learning programme. This example alone illustrates significant integration between the commonplaces, a strength of the deliberative approach to curriculum. The student, the student as teacher, the teacher, and the context are seen working together in a balanced way to deliver the subject-matter - in this instance learning to read.

Taking the notion of context further, Quay (2015) explained that "knowledge is not a universalized object that can exist outside of any context. Knowledge has a particular meaning in an occupation" (p. 19) which it does not have when isolated from life. By occupations, Quay was referring to "ways-of-being-in-the-world" (p. 16), a broader notion than that usually understood as vocation in an employment sense. These "systems of meaning" Gardner (1993, p. 240) called "sense of self" (p. 243). For the child it could include being-a-student, being-a-friend, being-a-school-camper, or more specifically being-a-climber-at-camp or being-a-waiter-at-camp. The ways-of-being which constitute our lives, Quay (2015) observed, "are many and varied" and "while each is lived as a simple whole . . . these multiple occupations highlight the complexity of life" (p. 16). As the idea of occupation aligns with activity in social life, the social life of children becomes a significant context for learning according to Reid (2010), introducing culture as an aspect of curriculum, which in Gardner's (1993) view, acts

as a symbolic code, allowing students to interpret experience, as does Schwab's (1973) broader notion of milieu.

In this section, I have outlined the important place milieu holds in curriculum deliberations as it reflects and transmits the cultural commitment of those developing the curriculum, whether that be the broader society in the case of systematic curriculum or a more local community in the instance of deliberative curriculum. Although systematic curricularists believe well-crafted curriculum will work anywhere, immune to the effects of milieu, Holt (1995) cautioned against the effectiveness of this in practice. Bobbitt (1918), reflecting the views of existential, pragmatic, and deliberative curricularists, questioned the appropriateness of the traditional school classroom as the best context for learning to occur, supporting the incorporation of contexts beyond schools where a greater variety of occupations can develop meanings in the lives of children beyond that of the-academic-student. Curriculum was most effective, Schwab (1983) believed, when the commonplaces were working together and in reasonable equilibrium. When Dewey (1916/2004) wrote that the "isolation of subject matter from a social context" (p. 65) was detrimental to effective education, he emphasised the importance of integration of the elements of curriculum, just as Schwab had.

Practical curriculum represents the focus of Schwab's curriculum deliberations. Teachers and students intersect in the enactment of practical curriculum, and so it is to the place teachers occupy in the curriculum literature that I now turn.

5.5. Teachers and curriculum

As it is teachers who stand in classrooms and enact curriculum, in this section I investigate the importance of the teacher commonplace in developing an understanding of curriculum. I also explore the broad variations of the perception of the teacher's role in curriculum, which are evident across the spectrum of the curriculum traditions. Teaching and learning method and curriculum enactment are other aspects discussed, as part of the teacher commonplace.

Teachers, reported Clandinin and Connelly (1992), are the "vantage point for anyone wanting to understand Schwab's writing on curriculum" (p. 380), making them an essential commonplace. According to Cochran-Smith (2006), "there is widespread and nearly universal

agreement that teachers are central to the success or failure of students" (p. 98). It is a job which Darling-Hammond (2006) insists is "nearly overwhelming" (p. 301), Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1990) find "uncertain" (p. 89), and Cochran-Smith (2003) notes possesses "unforgiving complexity" (p. 3). Ross and Chan (2008) acknowledge teachers themselves as a complexity overlooked in the "value-added" (p. 13) or "banking" (Freire, 1970/2010, p. 72) concept of curriculum supported by the systematic curricularists, who Sahlberg (2016) argues hold sway in many educational jurisdictions. As Reid (2010) points out, "decisions on curriculum risk invalidation when the viewpoints of the individuals who teach . . . remain untapped" (p. 55), indicating the importance of including the teacher as a curriculum commonplace.

Systematic curricularists, Reid (1992) argues, perceive teachers as "curriculum implementers" (p, 87) of subject-matter which is as "teacher proof" (Grundy, 1987, p. 31) as possible. This allows them to be controlled much the same as workers involved in production or distribution of goods or services. Reid (1992) believed that this positioned teachers as "mediators between institution and practice" (p. 102), an appropriate role for them within a system according to the system builders. Instead of the change desired by the system builders, Quay (2013) points out, "the change is primarily a result of the compromises that teachers make in order to accommodate the reform cycles" (p. 8). Goodman (1988) argued that teachers have been disenfranchised from their profession through accountability structures and curricula-as-manual developed outside of the school and classroom. By putting as much detail as possible into the "plan or blueprint" (Reid, 1992, p. 17), systematisers hope to specify more unambiguously "what was to happen" (Reid, 1992, p. 88), effectively diminishing the "opportunities for teachers to exert judgement - both individually and collectively" (Biesta, 2013, p. 609). When learning does not happen, responsibility can be laid at the feet of "inadequacy on the part of the teacher" (p. 88)**.** Naming systematic education as a "banking concept", Freire (1970/2010, p. 72), described the role of the teacher as a "narrator" (p. 71) who "deposits" (p, 72) knowledge into the student as "depository" (p, 72). Doll (1993) believed this was ineffective because, as teachers, "we cannot, do not, transmit information directly; rather, we perform the teaching act when we help others negotiate passages between their constructs and ours, between ours and others" (p. 180). Schwab (1959) was critical of the systematic approach which provided "teachers with fixed techniques, content to be learned by rote, and imposed curriculums" (p. 147). The teacher in this tradition is

considered knowledgeable while the student knows nothing; a narrow and controlling view of both teacher and student.

Teacher quality, according to the systematic curricularists, has the greatest impact of any of the commonplaces on student success. Systematic curricularists believe that teachers "*cause* learning, when in reality they only increase the likelihood that learning will take place" (Null, 2011, p. 59). Learning in this tradition is to "know" the subject-matter. It is often maintained that teachers are the biggest influence on student achievement. What is usually omitted is the phrase "after socio-economic status." In the *No Child Left Behind Teachers Guide* (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) it stated that a "wide achievement gap remains between poor and more economically advantaged students" (p. 6), highlighting the reality of the relative impact of socio-economic status and teachers on student achievement.

Discussion of the teacher commonplace is not complete without mentioning teaching method and standards. ACARA (2013) noted that the "Australian Curriculum focuses on learning area content and achievement standards that describe what students will learn and teachers will teach." A conspicuous feature of systematic curriculum is the emphasis on student achievement and teacher accountability, measured against standards imposed centrally by education authorities (Connelly, 2013; Hardarson, 2018; Hargreaves, Earl, Moore, & Manning, 2001; Sahlberg, 2016), with Connelly (2013) adding that "standards in and of themselves are not curricular" (p. 632). Standards, Sahlberg (2016) notes, "are easy to write, inexpensive to fund and they spread like wildfire" (p. 131). In practice, he observed that standards were "revered in administrative and policy circles but by-passed or resisted in classrooms" (p. 131). Wyse, Hayward, Livingston, and Higgins (2014) report that, according to practitioners, "it is clear that the 'sharp end' of heavy handed top-down political control of the curriculum is most unwelcome" (p. 5). Despite comprehensive scholarly and other criticism, Hopmann (2013) indicated that there is no evidence to support NCLB or RTTT being abandoned. He declared NCLB to be "one of the biggest export hits in the history of modern schooling. Similar systems have been introduced in most countries in the world within the last decade or so. The drive towards such policies is still very much alive" (p. 1). As Sahlberg (2016) reports, this approach to curriculum tends to narrow teaching to "desired content only and promotes use of teaching methods beneficial to attaining preset results" (p. 189) and ignoring "not-so-important" study, which these academic measurements don't cover" (p. 191). Sahlberg (2016) argues

that “standardization is a counterforce to innovation” (p. 189) and “limits risk-taking in teaching and learning and therefore reduces creativity” (p. 189).

Another feature of systematic curriculum in Australia, is that it has begun to explore the territory of how the curriculum will be taught. Systematists, such as English (2010), argue that teachers should have no choice in either the subject-matter or its method of delivery. Their job as workers is to deliver subject-matter using prescribed methods, a position emerging in Victoria with the introduction of *The Victorian Teaching and Learning Model* (State Government of Victoria, 2019). On a national level, the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government, 2014) mentioned that most of the respondents to the review believed that “a national curriculum should address content” (p. 116). The prevalent view of respondents was that “classroom teachers and schools are in the best position to decide issues related to pedagogy” (p. 123). This indicates that ACARA’s perception of curriculum, supported by the majority of respondents to the *Review of the Australian Curriculum*, does not include pedagogy. If curriculum is viewed as the work of teachers, a perception of curriculum which has only subject-matter and standards within its gaze has the work of teachers tracing a very narrow orbit.

In the systematic curriculum tradition, according to Sahlberg (2016), there has been standardisation of outcomes supported by standardised assessments, competition, devolution of governance, and accountability for every other aspect of school life. Biesta (2013) believed this has resulted in a considerable narrowing of curriculum and professional practice in the past 20 years. Teaching in this guise, Hargreaves (2000) maintained, is “de-professionalized” (p. 169) with skills and knowledge no longer passed from expert to novice, “but where practice can at best only be reproduced, not improved” (p. 168). Testing in the systematic tradition, Elliot (1994) maintained, is used as an instrument of control of teachers by governments. Curriculum, in the systematic tradition, is controlled centrally to the exclusion of teachers.

Pinar et al. (2000, p. 244) stated that curriculum is not “politically neutral.” This contextualises the “radical” (Reid, 1992, p. 89) or “politically oriented” (Pinar et al., 2000, p. 243) curriculum tradition. From the radical perspective, the teacher, rather than being responsible for managing the student experience of the context or enactment of the subject-matter, is “depicted as a reproducer of social relations of dominance and subordination” (Reid, 1992, p.

89). According to Bowles and Gintis (1976, p. 131), the structure of relationships in schools "replicate the hierarchical divisions of labor" and the alienation of labour is "reflected in the student's lack of control over his or her education." Equality and community service are core dimensions of the radical curriculum, which aims to eliminate oppression based on class, race, gender, or socio-economic status.

In the radical tradition, more than any of the others, the teacher is the most influential of the commonplaces, because it is an inherently transformative and political role. Counts (1932/1969) demands "teachers should deliberately reach for power" (p. 26), becoming agents of social change in their classrooms and through the influence on their students, in their communities and society at large. Freire (1970/2010) proposed a "dialogical" (p. 79) model where action and reflection are joined through communication, generating meaning from thought. This occurred through a "problem-posing" (p. 83) method, developing critical thought and cognition, encouraging inquiry, and aiming to be transformative.

The radical curriculum perspective is narrowing because it is restricted, as Reid (1992) observed, to those "who support and understand a particular kind of doctrine" (p. 20). That doctrine tends to be progressive, as conservatives are considered to be part of the dominant social class. It is also narrowed by the emphasis on teachers to the diminution of the other commonplaces. Once the radical agenda has been achieved, do the radicals then become systematists in their position as the dominant political group, exercising the power to implement or impose their system on others?

In Reid's (1992) summation, existential teachers direct their energies toward "enhancement of personal consciousness, with significance for the development of the individual" (p. 91), what Maslow (1970) described as self-actualization. It was Reid's (1992) contention that a good teacher modified and manipulated the curriculum to serve the interests and needs of individual students, indicating the need for both teacher and curriculum to be flexible. As Eisner (1994) pointed out, to be successful, teachers needed to make personal connections with students which are beyond the mere academic. Kilpatrick (1918/1929) believed that the most appropriate method to achieve the personal development inherent in existential curriculum was through projects of a purposeful nature, emphasising the importance of teaching method as a dimension of curriculum.

Teachers in the existential tradition, Kohn (1992) maintains, act as guides for students, someone who Thuermer (1999) suggests, "gently challenges them, subtly disorients them, and throws them off balance with new ideas that the students have to struggle to reconcile with the way they'd been looking at things" (p. 95). Priest and Gass (1997) call this dissonance in their model of experiential education. To this, Greene (1974) added confronting the student with new possibilities. The teacher must display "flexibility, a high tolerance for unpredictability, and a willingness to give up absolute control of the classroom" (Kohn, 1992, p. 217). In this role, the teacher is a less important commonplace than the student, unbalancing the existential perspective of curriculum.

Dewey (1916/2004), viewing curriculum from a pragmatic perspective, saw one of the most important roles of the teacher as developing an educative environment which was "deliberately regulated with reference to its educative effect" (p. 18). This not only promoted context to a prominent position within curriculum, but nominated the teacher as the developer of the environment appropriate to a particular educative situation. Tyler (1949/1969) added that the teacher needed to understand not only the interests and background of the students, but also their stage of development, to develop and direct their experiences effectively, connecting the teacher and milieu commonplaces and acknowledging the teacher as a curriculum-maker**.**

In the pragmatic tradition, learning involved teachers assisting students in developing meaning from knowledge through "active participation" (Schwab, 1978, p. 173) in, and reflection on, experience. The experience so generated, Dewey (1929/1958) described as "a store of practical wisdom, a fund of insights useful in conducting the affairs of life" (p. 354). This experiential method, or "learning by doing" in Dewey's (1916/2004, p. 178) words, with its emphasis on context, elevated both the student and context commonplaces above the others, consequently unbalancing the relationship between the commonplaces.

Deliberative teachers involve themselves in the formation (Westbury, 2010; Luth, 2000) of the character of their students. They are much more than production workers delivering information as product, which is not a character forming activity. Teachers in the deliberative tradition accept the notion of state authorized curriculum as a guide which they translate into classroom action, linking and balancing understanding with action - a process of enactment rather than delivery, requiring application of their professional skill. Schwab (1978) observed

that deliberative teachers not only apply knowledge of the students they are teaching to their work, but also knowledge of the impact of the curriculum on previous students in their charge, asking whether it was "appropriate to the age and experience of the children under consideration" (p. 382) and then reflecting on whether or not it was in need of modification. They focus on the "what, how and why as they concentrate on their teaching of their students, in their classroom" (Westbury, 2010, p. 17). When Schwab (1973) advised that curriculum-makers should know if teachers are open to "new ways of teaching" (p. 504), he placed teaching method squarely in the domain of the teacher commonplace. When he argued that "given patterns of teaching," must "be seen to be appropriate to the curriculum which has been envisaged," Schwab (1973, p. 506) highlighted the importance of integration between the commonplaces and the aspects. At the same time, he overlooked an important connection - the relationship between teaching method, learning style, and the student.

McKeon (1952, p. 86) perceived curriculum as a "human domain, involving social, political and ethical matters," making it first and foremost a cultural phenomenon, contributing to the promotion of what Biesta (2013) described as "the human good" (p. 693). Deliberators are similar to pragmatists in wanting students to learn to solve problems. The difference is that deliberative curricularists want students to reflect on the influences that guide their decisions. To that end, Null (2011) advised, teachers in the deliberative tradition act as "normative agents" (p. 162) for their students.

Although the deliberative tradition demonstrates a balanced approach to the commonplaces, Schwab's (1973) position on curriculum-making emphasises the difficulty of finding commonality of approach even within one curriculum tradition. He argued that curriculum-makers needed to be aware of the range of personal and professional qualities possessed by teachers, as they would have an impact the success of the curriculum. As such, Schwab was inferring that teachers were not part of the process of curriculum-making. It was "knowledge of the teachers" (p. 367) he saw as important, not their participation in the curriculum-making process. In *The Practical 4*, Schwab (1983) had moved from knowledge of the teachers as a requisite for the curriculum-making body, to hailing "THE TEACHER" (p. 245) as his first selection for membership of the group. Schwab's evolving view of teacher membership of the curriculum-making group demonstrates that even within one person's perspective, let alone

one tradition of curriculum, there are significant differences of understanding and emphasis regarding the role of just one commonplace and its relationship to the others.

Biesta (2013) insisted that teachers became essential actors in curriculum as they responded to issues they face in their daily work. In 1978 Schwab commented that:

> Theory by its very character, does not and cannot take account of all the matters which are crucial to questions of what, who, and how to teach; that is, theories cannot be applied, as principles, to the solution of problems concerning what to do with or for real individuals, small groups, or even real institutions located in time and space - the subjects and clients of schooling and schools. (p. 287)

While this leaves teachers to develop and enact curriculum for their students, in Schwab's conception it must be curriculum which is appropriate to those particular students and their individual needs.

In this section I have described how the relationship between teachers and curriculum varies widely across the five curriculum traditions examined in this study. At one end of the spectrum, teachers in the systematic tradition are presented with a prescribed, teacher-proof, curriculum-as-manual, accompanied by teaching methods and supported by standards to serve as a control mechanism over their work, which is to deliver subject-matter. One effect of this approach is to deprofessionalise teachers, removing skills such as curriculum-making from their professional repertoire. At the other end, radical teachers are ceded the responsibility of eliminating oppression and advancing equality. Occupying the middle ground, existential teachers act as a guide, modifying subject-matter and context to suit the individual student, while pragmatists develop and manage experiences which are meaningful to students. According to Sahlberg (2016), high performing education systems engage teachers to set their own teaching and learning targets, to craft productive learning environments, and to design multiple forms of student assessments to best support student learning and school improvement" (p. 193). They are involved with formation of the character of their students in a moral framework. Teachers do this most successfully as autonomous professionals working in a collaborative school culture, hallmarks of the deliberative curriculum tradition. I have also discussed the different ways teaching and learning method are treated in the five curriculum traditions and the different emphasis they place on curriculum enactment.

As curriculum enactment is the central role teachers describe for themselves, they have a vested interest in curriculum as made and given to them. They also have a role in curriculum-making, Schwab's final curriculum commonplace.

5.6. Curriculum-making in the curriculum

In this section, I examine the role the curriculum-making commonplace has in developing understanding of curriculum, and the different perspectives the curriculum traditions bring to the process. I also discuss the impact of the traditions on who participates in curriculum-making, the place of aims, and the tension between theory and practical experience in the process.

Curriculum does not magically materialise out of the ether - it is made. Without what is made, there is no entity known as curriculum, in which case curriculum-making must be included as a commonplace. As this study is concerned with the way in which teachers perceive curriculum, it is instructive to start with Schwab's (1983) belief of the place teachers should occupy in deliberations on curriculum-making:

> There are a thousand ingenious ways in which commands on what and how to teach can, will, and must be modified or circumvented in the actual moments of teaching. Teachers practice an art. Moments of choice of what to do, how to do it, with whom and at what pace, arise hundreds of times a school day, and arise differently every day and with every group of students. No command or instruction can be so formulated as to control that kind of artistic judgment and behavior, with its demand for frequent, instant choices of ways to meet an ever varying situation. Therefore, teachers must be involved in debate, deliberation, and decision about what and how to teach. (p. 245)

Schwab expressed the importance of including teachers in deliberations over curriculum in no uncertain terms. In the light of his powerful statement, I examine how the other curriculum traditions approach curriculum-making and the part teachers play in the process. In this section of the literature review, I also examine the place of aims in curriculum and control of curriculum.

Underlining the position of the teacher in curriculum-making, Westbury (2010) pointed out that the "role of the teacher as an interpreter and author of the curriculum has been uncertainly seen in the dominant traditions for thinking about the curriculum" (p. 35). This is evident in the systematic tradition.

The work of curriculum-making in the systematic tradition, Bobbitt (1918/2012) proposed, should fall to specialists - "curriculum discoverers" (p. 43) and "scientific curriculum-makers" (p. 51). Responding to this situation, Schwab (1969b) asserted that "the field of curriculum is moribund" (p. 1). Explaining Schwab's statement, Reid (2010) detailed that, lack of attention to practice made the theoretical work of curriculum scholars irrelevant. No one else, including teachers, was mentioned by Bobbitt as having a part to play in this role. The Scientific Based Research process was a cornerstone of the NCLB curriculum and moved "the testing of educational practices toward the medical model used by scientists to assess the effectiveness of medications, therapies, and the like. Studies that test random samples of the population and that involve a control group are scientifically controlled" (U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Secretary, Office of Public Affairs, 2003, p. 18). Science is used in this instance to justify political control of curriculum. That level of control elicited comment from McDonald (2018) when talking about the introduction of the Education Reform Act of 1988 in the UK, observing that "schooling appeared dependent on a recipe handed down by the government rather than being the exercise of professional expertise by teachers" (p. 585).

Curriculum-making was a matter of serious concern for the *Review of the Australian Curriculum*. It set out 15 "curriculum design principles" (Australian Government, 2014, p. 82) garnered from what the review had decided was international best practice, providing clear direction as to how this process should work. While the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* recommended the deployment of Bobbitt's "curriculum experts" to develop the curriculum, it took Taylor's business model even further, preferring that the governance structure of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) was reformed by "establishing it in a company format" (Australian Government, 2014, p. 227). Important control mechanisms in this system, highlighted by Kunzli (2013) were the "specification of standards of achievement as well as the verification of its attainment" (p. 678), leading to a "clear segregation of educational policy and administration on the one side, and the teachers and school dealing with the mandate on the other side . . . has decisively changed the process

of curriculum development at the same time" (p. 678). When these goals and standards are expressed numerically, with NAPLAN[4] (ACARA, 2016a) in Australia and PISA (OECD, 2018) internationally being prime examples, Deming (1993) warns that it can lead to "distortion and faking, especially when the system is not capable to meet the goal" (p. 33).

From evidence provided in the submissions, the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government, 2014, p. 241) also reported that "many teachers, through no fault of their own, no longer have curriculum development skills." This statement indicates that teachers individually or as a profession did once possess these skills. The fact that they do not have these skills now can be attributed to State mandated curriculum, introduced from 1995 in Victoria with the Curriculum and Standards Framework, which has seen teachers relieved of the responsibility of making curriculum from first principles. This specifically reflects the narrowing effect of the systematic approach to curriculum by diminishing or removing curriculum development from the work of teachers.

Curriculum development and implementation would be more likely to be of a permanent nature, Bobbitt (1918/2012) argued, if it was directed by clear aims, progressed in small steps, and was properly trialled. The *Review of the Australian Curriculum* warned that:

> It is important that any change to the Australian Curriculum acknowledges the fact that Australia's education community - especially schools and teachers - have invested a great deal of energy, time and resources in its development and implementation. As such, any change should not contribute to reform fatigue or further exacerbate the work of teachers and schools. (Australian Government, 2014, p. 6)

This statement emphasised the point that the investment of effort in developing curriculum needs to respect the efforts of those implementing it, if it is to be successful and endure. Donmoyer (2014) saw it as "foolhardy for schools to continue to embrace theory-based reforms du jour that all too often contribute to rather than solve problems" (p. 15). Conferring, Schwab (1969b) advised, curricular changes should be "affected with minimum tearing of the remaining fabric of educational effort" (p. 31), suggesting incremental rather than wholesale change.

[4] NAPLAN (ACARA, 2016) is the external system-wide assessment of students across Australia conducted by ACARA. It assesses reading, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and numeracy in years five, seven, and nine against standards of student achievement outlined in the Australian Curriculum.

Because of the centralised structure of systematic curriculum, it easily becomes captive of those with power. Aims which constitute the foundation of curriculum, Wyse et al. (2014) point out, "cease to be democratically developed" (p. 2). RTTT and NCLB in the USA are examples of using school funding to guarantee the implementation of centrally developed curriculum. The Victorian Curriculum is mandated by legislation. Both are powerful forms of control of curriculum which can only be achieved with a centralised system of education of which systematic curriculum is an exemplar.

Curriculum is perceived as an institution by radical curricularists. As such, it is part of the process of reproduction of the societal status quo which privileges a dominant class and oppresses others. As Lau (2001) points out, a "major problem with the modernist curriculum model is that power is taken away from the teachers and students. In other words, only knowledge selected by the powerful is considered valid" (p. 34). Lau then states that in a "modernist society, power lies in the hands of those who are financially rich and those who are politically rich. Their power is so massive and significant that they can exert influences on other institutions, such as education" (p. 34). This leads to conflicts among "different parties, based on social class, economic interest, religion, political beliefs and so forth. The dominant group that holds power will attempt to shape schools for their own interests" (p. 30). Gender and race are also discriminated against by the decisions of curriculum-makers (Apple, 1993; Pinar et al, 2000). Once this order has been changed, another system would take its place; that imposed by the new order of the radicals. Apple (1993) argued that curriculum-making is an important hegemonic process, as it is controlled by those in power. It is obvious, especially with the exponential expansion of knowledge, that everyone cannot be taught everything. Choices have to be made. It is the curriculum-maker who chooses what will be included in the curriculum, as well as the even more significant choice of what will be omitted, ignored, or deleted, populating Eisner's (1995) null curriculum. Apple believed that, as every act of curriculum was political, so the choices of inclusion and exclusion in the curriculum were political acts, supporting the hegemonic structure. The important consideration for radicals was who controls curriculum-making.

Curriculum-makers in the existential tradition create curriculum which can be modified to suit individual students, according to Eisner (1994). For curriculum to be designed at the individual level, it implied that teachers are the main curriculum-makers, and that students have a

significant hand to play in curriculum-making, particularly if student choice and student interest play the part demanded by existential curricularists. Reid (1992) postulated that if the "curriculum that matters is the curriculum that we personally experience, then everybody is his or her own expert, indeed the only true expert" (p. 21).

As individual students are the focus of pragmatic curriculum, Tyler (1949/1969) took the view that the curriculum-maker needed to be as close to the students as possible. The teacher is in the best position to understand the students, their interests, and their developmental stage, and respond to the curricular objectives with appropriate learning experiences. If they do not participate in curriculum planning, he declared, the teachers will not gain "an understanding of the aims and means" (p. 126) of the curriculum reconstruction. Dewey (1916/2004) saw a place for specialised knowledge, but only as it could be brought to bear on a particular problem a student was attempting to solve, preferably in the form of a meaningful project.

Both the existential and pragmatic approaches to curriculum ignore the role of curriculum and subject-matter specialists. This tends to unbalance curriculum-making as much as other curriculum traditions which privilege the curriculum-maker and subject specialist ahead of the other commonplaces. Tyler (1949/1969), although a pragmatist, stated that a variety of sources of information should be considered in "planning any comprehensive curriculum program" (p. 5), echoing Schwab (1969b) and the deliberative tradition of curriculum inquiry.

Deliberative curricularists, in Reid's (1992) view, perceive curriculum problems as "moral practical" (p. 86) problems. Reid (1978) thought they were best solved by all citizens, as he saw curriculum as a public good. Deliberation, or practical reasoning, brought together "diverse sources of knowledge in discussion - as the method of practical problem solving" (Reid, 1992, p. 22), in a method he called "collective deliberation" (p. 148). He goes on to suggest that the expertise for curriculum-making "lies with all those who have either a theoretical interest in the general case, or a practical interest in the concrete case. The perspective is not technically or doctrinally circumscribed, and therefore is prepared to *listen* to what other people have to say" (p. 23). Reid outlined: identifying the problem; gathering data; formulating solutions; and finally seeking resolution, as the components of the deliberative curriculum-making method.

Informed by Dewey's (1916/2004) writing, Hardarson (2018) was critical of the systematic approach when he commented that "school-work cannot be directed successfully by detailed mandates" (p. 546). If Dewey is right, he argues, then "current policies emphasising learning outcomes predetermined by external authorities are seriously misguided" (p. 546), an emphatic point in Schwab's Practical essays, particularly in *The Practical 4* (1983) where he is alert to the fact that "teachers will not and cannot be merely told what to do" (p. 245), as if they were mass production factory workers. Pointing out the futility of such an approach, Schwab was well aware that teachers do not need to object via defiance. Rather, there were many and varied ways they could ignore the mandate and do what they thought right and best for their students. As a remedy, Schwab outlined a deliberative solution to the problem he identified. Emerging from Schwab's (1983) observations was his conviction that "teachers must be involved in debate, deliberation, and decision about what and how to teach" (p. 245), affording them "proprietorship" (Schwab, 1970, p. 10).

Curriculum is always an uncertain situation with uncertain solutions according to Connelly (2005). It needed to embrace multiple perspectives (Kunzli, 2013) to develop what Pyle and Luce-Kapler (2014) described as a "richer and more holistic educational experience" (p. 1963) for students and teachers alike. Theory alone, cannot assist with the realities of curriculum (Kunzli, 2013; Pyle & Luce-Kapler, 2014). Once curriculum is put into practice it is sure to have impact beyond the scope intended. "It is only through following an idea into practice," Shulman (1984) advises, "that one begins to appreciate the greater richness or potential of the idea" (p. 188), an important role for teachers. In a globalized world, Sahlberg (2016) was convinced of the need for a more personalized and creative curriculum, matching the "interests, curiosity, and passion of students" (p. 181).

Curriculum-making for Schwab (1973) displayed an iterative structure. This process of "realization" (p. 506) involved planning, development, trialling, evaluation, and correction or addition to ensure that, before being enacted, it was achieving outcomes in accord with the aims which guided the project. Reflection, Schwab (1983) added, "must take place in a back-and-forth manner between ends and means. A linear movement from ends to means is absurd" (p. 241). Emphasising that the practical was about incremental change, Schwab (1969b) insisted that changes to curriculum must be carefully planned and so well integrated

“with what remains unchanged that the functioning of the whole remain coherent and unimpaired” (p. 14).

Curriculum as a guide may be welcomed by teachers. However, Ditchburn (2012) warned, unless direction from authorities like ACARA is “framed around collective and collegial dialogue (rather than top-down ‘advice’) then any well-intentioned support may smack of paternalism” (p. 355). Wyse et al. (2014) added that top down advice is usually considered most unwelcome. This gave the impression, Ditchburn (2012) asserted, that “teachers as professionals are less able than an outside authority, removed from the school community, to make decisions about what is right for their students within a particular local context” (p. 355), a point Schwab (1969b; 1971; 1973; 1983) constantly railed against. When making curriculum in the process of curriculum enactment, Ornstein (1987) found that teachers constantly use their powers of observation and intuition, but the outcomes are not always compatible with those generated by theory. It is precisely this act of making curriculum in the moment of interaction with students, which defines the difference between enactment and delivery of curriculum.

Teachers have an important role as curriculum-makers. In the German didaktik tradition of curriculum, similar in many ways to the deliberative approach, Deng (2015) reports that the “curriculum framework does not prescribe the meanings associated with the contents, which is only to emerge in the interaction of students with contents in a classroom, under the guidance of a teacher” (p. 781). Teachers, in Schwab’s (1959) view, must be able to "improve a policy or change it as problems change" (p, 159).They are expected to incorporate both the art and science of teaching and balance all the commonplaces in their practice. Teachers in the deliberative tradition are described by Clarke and Erickson (2004) as “active constructors of curriculum and not merely automatons who implement curriculum, and that they critically reflect upon their beliefs and actions as educators” (p. 205). This is essential when, as Shulman (1983) declared, curricular situations confront teachers every day, requiring decisions about “what to do, how to do it, with whom and at what pace” (p. 190).

Including teachers as curriculum developers, Keiny (1993) suggested, overturned the “traditional hierarchical order of teachers located at the bottom of the professional pyramid” (p. 67), allowing them to occupy the territory usually reserved for curriculum developers. If planning teams include “classroom teachers who must use the curriculum,” Beauchamp

(1982) recommends, “implementation is greatly facilitated” (p. 26). Taking ownership of the curriculum rather than being controlled by imposed changes, North et al. (2018) insist, makes teachers “more effective and this improves student outcomes” (p. 3). Schwab (1973) was convinced that curriculum-making should not be too far removed from where teaching and learning was happening because, as Ornstein (1987) reminds us, curriculum enactment involves the use of intuition in its search for practical solutions, which is rarely found in curriculum theory.

To be a curriculum-maker, Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1990) recognise that teachers must also be researchers, “generating knowledge about teaching” (p. 83). Clarke and Erickson recognise this as “*teacher knowing*,” a dynamic state, rather than teacher “*teacher knowledge*” (p. 201), where teacher practice is static. Teacher learning, Hargreaves (2000) declared, occurred most profitably “in their own professional communities” where it is “built into ongoing relationships” (p. 165) and to be effective needs an allocation of time, as Ornstein (1987) recommends, to reflect and self-analyse.

It is in the curriculum-making process that aims assume an important role, making this an appropriate place to discuss the topic. The first and fundamental point about aims is made by Dewey (1916/2004) who declared that without them, education is aimless. Holt (1994) added more definition to Dewey’s point when he insisted that the “function of an aim is not to define curriculum, but to inform it” (p. 4), a point of conformity between Bobbitt and Tyler, noted by Jackson (1992). A curricular aim should only be chosen, Schwab (1983) believed, if the “means, materials, and teaching skills” (p. 240) were available to achieve what was intended, as well as the flexibility to cope with the unintended. An aim should not specify what activity or method teachers are to undertake, according to Holt (1995). Curriculum should have the flexibility to allow consideration from amongst a range of possibilities, that approach which might best achieve the aim, described by Biesta (2013) as “teleological practice - practice constituted by aims - which means that judgements in education always need to encompass both means and ends, and those in conjugate relationship” (p. 689). In the systematic curriculum tradition, Lau (2001) was aware that in determining aims, there is no “interaction among planners and learners” (p. 33) which makes it difficult to cater for the complexities of curriculum. Aims developed outside the situation in which they will be manifest, in Hardarson’s (2018) experience, are not shared with the student and so cannot guide their

activity. This also prevented a response to aims which Hardarson (2018) explained might not be "predefined but discovered along the way" (p. 538). Dismissal of such flexibility could only be of detriment to effective curriculum enactment.

In this section, I revealed how curriculum-making, like the other commonplaces, is perceived in a broad range of ways in the literature reviewed for this study, particularly when aligned with the five curriculum traditions. The literature has shown that aims guide some curriculum-makers but not others. It shows for some, curriculum is made remote from where it is delivered. Others make the curriculum they enact. Theory and the general notion of the student guide some as they make curriculum - practical experience and knowledge of specific students guides others. In some instances curriculum-making is a top down exercise, vesting power in a structure which delivers effective control over practical curriculum enactment, resulting in a gradual atrophication of teachers' curriculum-making skills. In other cases, curriculum is made in the school and classroom, responding to the practical needs of specific students, with its inherent flexibility allowing curriculum to be responsive in the moment of teaching and learning. Schwab's own approach to curriculum-making evolved over the course of writing his *Practical* essays. It started with a curriculum-making group which represented but did not include all those involved at the level of enactment and eventually moved to a democratic process including teachers and students.

5.7. Summary

Schwab's (1973) commonplaces provide a solid core of elements, without which, any examination of curriculum would be deficient (Reid, 1992). Schwab also proposed that the commonplaces provided a starting point for further enquiries rather than a blueprint, a point evident in the development of his own views between the first three *Practical* essays and *The Practical 4*.

Tyler (1949/1969), Reid (1999), Reid (2010), and Westbury (2010) all use the commonplaces in their discussions of curriculum. Other authors have used combinations of the commonplaces without referring to all of them. Although significantly differing perceptions of curriculum emerged between the five curricular traditions examined in this study, there were also some points of convergence. At the same time, there were variations of perception

evident within particular traditions. This blending and convergence reflects the reality of life. It is rarely lived in clearly defined compartments. Curriculum is the same, as reflected in Schwab's explication, experienced as Quay (2015) observed, in "various versions positioned along a continuum" (p. 4). Explaining further, Quay describes the situation as he finds it where "traditional education remains dominant, with features of progressive education incorporated where possible in an effort to strike a dynamic balance or compromise between the two: child and curriculum" (p. 5). Although teachers appear to be satisfied with this state of affairs, in Quays experience, "this satisfaction is rarely a deeply felt contentment and more often a tolerated coping" (p. 5).

Whilst examining the academic literature to develop an understanding of curriculum, a list of strong themes emerged, including aims, control, balance, assessment, and reporting. Minor themes include scope and sequence, values, choices, funding, hidden curriculum, null curriculum, time, crowding, standards, teacher-student professional relationships, and flexibility. Others (Clarke & Erickson, 2004; Novak, Mintzes, & Wandersee, 2005) have argued for the addition of commonplaces to Schwab's model. In my analysis, all of the other aspects (see Figure 4) which emerged from the literature fit comfortably within the structure of Schwab's commonplaces. As with the integrated nature of the commonplaces themselves, the aspects operate most effectively when they are not forced into a discrete category, but contribute across the breadth of the commonplaces, capturing their complexity and assisting in the process of understanding curriculum.

Throughout this literature review, one tradition emerged as more balanced and inclusive of a greater range of commonplaces than the others. In *The Practical: A Language for Curriculum*, Schwab (1969b) described some of the qualities of the deliberative perspective. He points out that it does not generalise or abstract as it deals in the concrete case. It treats ends and means as mutually determining. When confronted by curricular problems, the deliberative approach focusses on inquiry as it seeks to identify all the relevant facts and searches for practical action as the resolution, having considered the widest possible variety of alternatives. Improvements occur incrementally. After considering the probable consequences, Schwab (1969b) advises that it trials "not the *right* alternative, for there is no such thing, but the best one" (p. 21), testing and correcting the chosen alternative before fully committing to it. An important feature mentioned by Schwab was that changes should be implemented in such a

way that they have minimal impact on, and are synergistic with, what remains unchanged. Deliberation, Donmoyer (2014) notes, rather than focussing on the theoretical takes a practical approach based on "choice and action . . . oriented toward making defensible decisions" (p. 9). Reid (1992) adds that deliberation employs discussion and a rhetorical approach which first determines which commonplaces should be considered. At this juncture, deliberation and the commonplaces intersect. Other matters can be considered, which I have named aspects, but the commonplaces as listed in the *Practical: Translation into Curriculum* (Schwab, 1973) must be included as the framework around which the aspects can be aggregated.

Deliberative curriculum occupies the central ground (Null, 2011), incorporating the strongest features of the other traditions into its structure. As the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* implores, it does not prescribe an approach but embraces a common capture of perceptions. Teachers, the focus of this study, enjoy a more balanced position in the deliberative tradition as they are involved in deliberations about students, subject-matter, and context whilst participating in curriculum-making which is both experimental and purposeful.

Searching for the voice of teachers at school and at school camp on the topic of curriculum is the focus of the last part of the review of curriculum literature.

6. Understanding Curriculum: The Voice of School Camp Teachers in the Literature

6.1. Introduction

In this section, my intention was to examine the curriculum literature for discussion of school camping as curriculum, particularly the voices of school camp teachers. Due to the dearth of literature on that topic, I moved my focus to outdoor education more generally. I examine whose voice is evident on the topic of outdoor education curriculum and some historic perspectives. I also examine the curriculum literature to identify the place outdoor education is perceived to occupy in the curriculum and identify the features it exhibits which warrant its acknowledgement as curriculum, worthwhile topics of investigation to situate this study. Schwab's commonplaces were not used as a framework as the emergent topics were not compatible with the framework, although still relevant to the research question.

A common theme in the outdoor education literature reviewed was to examine the place outdoor education occupied in the curriculum (Gough, 2007), or recording that it did exist in the curriculum (Georgakis & Light, 2010). This reflected studies where the focus was on history rather than discussion of outdoor education understood as curriculum, the focus of this research. Lugg and Martin (2001) suggest that "school camping programmes are the most common form of OE (outdoor education) occurring in all types of schools" (p. 43). Martin (2008b) observed that outdoor education in Victorian government schools could be a subject, a camps programme, activities in a residential programme, or extra-curricular activity. To this list Higgins and Loynes (1997) added an educational approach as an often held perception of outdoor education. Reporting on the situation in New Zealand, Cosgriff (2008) agreed, stating that "no two schools, teachers, or students for that matter, attribute exactly the same meanings to outdoor education" (p. 17). Accepting these views and expanding the scope of the literature to include outdoor education more generally includes more writing worthy of review. In this context, it is important to address the question of whether or not school camping is curriculum in its own right, is part of a curriculum (as subject-matter or context), is part of another subject (such as physical education), or is simply an extra-curricular offering.

6.2. Whose voices are heard in the outdoor education literature on the topic of curriculum?

In this section, I address the question of whose voices are heard in the outdoor education curriculum literature - teachers or academics.

In Australia, writing worthy of review on the subject of residential outdoor education as curriculum tends to be by academics, although some, such as Lugg (2004) and Martin (2008a; 2008b; 2010), indicated an earlier background in secondary teaching and Bucknell and Mannion (2006) were secondary school teachers at the time of their publication. As an example, an investigation of issues of the *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education* from 1999 to 2017 on the topic of teachers understanding of curriculum found only one relevant article by secondary teachers, none by primary teachers, and none by teachers at school camps. None of the literature investigated discussed the topic of teacher understanding of curriculum. Commenting on the dearth of writing focused on curriculum in outdoor education, Brookes (2002) reasoned that "considering some criticisms that have been made of some outdoor education, silence in curriculum studies on the subject of outdoor education

might seem appropriate or tactful" (p. 21). This makes investigation of the voices of teachers at school camps on the topic of curriculum a worthwhile dimension of this research project.

6.3. The history of outdoor education as a topic in the outdoor education literature

In this section, I refer to the historical focus of some of the outdoor education literature.

Adding to the lack of teacher voice on the topic of curriculum at school camps is the dearth of literature on the topic of school camping as curriculum. A title such as *Camping in the Curriculum* (Lynch, 2006) holds promise, but was described by subtitle on the first page as "a history of outdoor education in New Zealand" (p. i), immediately moving the subject from a specific discussion of the place of camping in the curriculum to a discussion of the broader topic of the history of outdoor education in New Zealand. In a similar vein, McDonald's (2018) historical treatise, *The Story of White Hall Centre - Outdoor Education Across the Decades,* holds promise but traces the journey of outdoor education and an outdoor centre in the UK, rather than delving into the curricular landscape. Writings in the historical genre fulfil an important role in the outdoor education and school camping literature, but highlight the fact that there is little writing representing the core business of outdoor education and school camping - developing and enacting curriculum.

6.4. The place of outdoor education in the curriculum as a topic in the literature

In this section, I explore the outdoor education and curriculum literature, to ascertain the place outdoor education and school camping hold in discussions of curriculum. I also identify features displayed by outdoor education programmes which warrant their inclusion as curriculum, and discuss the barriers to that happening.

The *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government, 2014) described school camps as "co-curricular" (p. 13) activity, in the same category as "debating, sport, drama, music . . . and community engagement" (p. 13). In agreement with the tenor of the *Review of the Australian Curriculum*, Lugg (1999), Lugg and Martin (2001), and Bucknell and Mannion (2006) observed that outdoor education has historically been viewed by many schools as an extra-curricular activity (p. 25). Reporting in *Outdoor Education: Aspects of good practice*

(Ofsted, 2004), the Office for Standards in Education found a similar situation in the U.K., where often, outdoor education was of an "extra-curricular nature" (p. 14), providing "depth to the curriculum" and making "an important contribution to students' physical, personal and social education" (p. 2).

Physical and Sport Education for Victorian Schools[5] (Department of School Education [DSE], 1993) was a review of physical and sport education in Victorian government schools. The authors placed outdoor education as a subset of physical education, alongside gymnastics and aquatic activities. Lugg (2004) agreed, recording that "outdoor education has historically been seen as a branch of physical education, leading to a focus on outdoor recreation and adventure activities" (p. 7). This tradition has continued in Victoria with outdoor education being reduced to outdoor activities in a continuum of state authored curriculum incarnations from the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* (Board of Studies, 1995), *Curriculum and Standards Framework 2* (Board of Studies, 2000), *VELS* (VCAA, 2005), to *AusVels* (VCAA, 2013). In the most recent iteration, the *Victorian Curriculum* (VCAA, 2015), outdoor education is not mentioned in the rationale, the levels, or the standards. There are scant references to outdoor activities, outdoor games, outdoor settings, the natural environment, and outdoor recreation, teamed with physical activity and sport as an area of social and historical study by students, rather than their involvement through practical participation. The South Australian Curriculum places outdoor education within the realm of the Health and Physical Education learning area (Polley & Pickett, 2003). A similar situation exists in New Zealand where the Health and Physical Education section of the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2014) lists outdoor education as one of seven key areas of learning subsumed within its remit. Likewise, the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPHER, 2004) model of physical education has outdoor education as one of its eight components. Another example is the attitude to the English National Curriculum, expressed by the staff at the White Hall Centre in the UK, through the structure of their courses. It represents an excellent case of deliberative curriculum, developed by dedicated and talented outdoor educators, who believe in what they do, as McDonald (2018) writes:

> In the 90's there was considerable talk in the UK about linking courses to the new National Curriculum through Outdoor and Adventurous Activities. Much of the talk

[5] Also known as the Moneghetti Report.

> was openly critical because it was felt, by many of us, that the notion represented a dumbing down of the essence of outdoor education, which was all about an approach aimed at developing the whole person in a different way to the traditional school-based approach. Reducing it to a mere add on to PE . . . was seen as derisory. In my time (until 1998) I don't think that linking courses with the National Curriculum was ever considered seriously at White Hall in a way that might have had major expression in the content of courses. (p. 607)

According to Ofsted (2004, p. 11), reporting on the situation in the UK, "outdoor education remains a minority area in the physical education curriculum of most secondary schools." Gray and Martin (2012) state firmly that "Outdoor Education is not Physical Education" (p. 45). While conceding that they are complimentary subjects, they note that "outdoor education and physical education each draw upon a different body of knowledge, have different accreditation pathways in some States, seek differing educational outcomes and respond to different educational and social imperatives" (p. 45).

Since 1991, in the Victorian Certificate of Education[6] (VCAA, 2017a), Outdoor Education, more recently known as Outdoor and Environmental Studies, has existed as a discrete subject at the senior secondary school level. This demonstrates that at times, outdoor education is considered a subject within curriculum (Bucknell & Mannion, 2006; Martin, 2010; OEA, 2010), inferring that curriculum is simply a collection of subjects, a particularly narrow view of curriculum. Acknowledging outdoor education as a subject, Lugg (1999, p. 25) asks "what makes it different to other subjects and what educational imperatives exist to compel schools and education institutions to include outdoor education in the curriculum of the 21st century?" Lugg (1999) in those comments, like Lynch (2006), perceived outdoor education and school camping as a component (subject) in the curriculum, not as curriculum in its own right. Answering Lugg's (1999) question, Quay (2017) suggests that "outdoor education draws culture and place together educationally, but not as a discipline like geography, where they exist to be studied," rather they are "encountered in a living unity" (p. 464). In the mainstream subjects, place and culture are in the first instance "dealt with as concepts to be investigated and defined (usually in connection with situations other than that of the geography

[6] The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) – the course of study for the final two years of secondary education in Victoria, Australia.

classroom) for purposes of learning commonly driven by assessment. In outdoor education, by contrast, learning occurs more directly through living" (p. 464) and is relevant to living as it is being experienced.

Arguing that outdoor education "has unusually wide acceptance in schools as a distinct curriculum offering," and that it should respond "to particular geographical, social and cultural contexts," Brookes (2002, p. 405) made two points. First, his belief that outdoor education was curriculum, and second, that milieu was a component of curriculum for him. Discussing place-based knowledge through expeditions and journeys, Martin (2008a) emphasised the importance of context. The Curriculum Council (1981) saw outdoor education as a method of achieving educational outcomes in a context. Usually the method was experiential (Warren, Mitten, & Loeffler, 2008; Priest & Gass, 1997) and the context the outdoors. Lugg (1999 & 2004), having variously described outdoor education as extra-curricular, part of a subject, and a subject, also described it as curriculum, listing qualities which made it thus when she observed that "Victorian outdoor education curriculum is gradually evolving and in the process is developing a strong ideological basis, a distinctive body of knowledge and a coherent sequence of learning . . . and teachers with specialist skills" (Lugg, 1999, p. 31). Gray and Martin (2012) included learning processes, with Martin (2008b) adding assessment to the list of curriculum components, which he did not believe needed to imitate school-like approaches to be relevant and successful. Neill (1997) argued that if outdoor education was to develop, it needed to incorporate research and evaluation, essential elements if outdoor education and school camping are to defend their claims of curricular inclusion. Nicol (2002b) added aims, values, and a "coherent philosophical standpoint" (p. 90), often missing in school curriculum, to the list of components of curriculum, a list in which just six authors suggest 13 components as parts of curriculum. The conception outlined here paints a coherent picture of the ways in which outdoor education contains a broad spectrum of the elements required for it to be considered curriculum. Outdoor education and school camping also need to lay claim to some of their own curricular territory to achieve relevance. Two obvious candidates suggested by Staempfli (2009) are adventure and risk, which she describes as important but diminishing elements of childrens' lives.

To appreciate their veracity, the elements of outdoor education listed above need to be viewed against the expectations for curriculum held at the national level. In its report describing the scope of the proposed Australian Curriculum, the National Curriculum Board (2009) directed that it should "make clear to teachers what is to be taught, and to students what they should learn and what achievement standards are expected of them" (p. 9). This presented curriculum as a subject-matter model, but also acknowledged the place held by teachers, students, and standards in the Australian Curriculum. The *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government, 2014, p. 123), commenting on the subject-matter model of curriculum, observed that "such a view is prevalent across the various state and territory educational jurisdictions," adding that even pedagogy is "usually a matter for schools" (p. 82)**.** Although a small sample, the authors reviewed in this study writing on the topic of outdoor education, have outlined a much broader perception of curriculum than either the National Curriculum Board (2009) or ACARA (2013) have for the Australian Curriculum.

Nicol (2002b) pointed out that outdoor education has been "unsuccessful in becoming established as a mainstream school subject" (p. 90). He added that the difference for outdoor education was that it has "never enjoyed statutory protection nor a societal tradition to support it whereas many existing school subjects are considered a good thing and beyond question," even though "outdoor education shares with mainstream education a philosophy which is more likely to be a reinforcement of the status quo than a visionary pedagogical endeavour" (p. 90). Lugg (1999) states that if outdoor education is to gain acceptance and develop as a profession, "outdoor education curricula in schools and tertiary institutions needs to be forward thinking, not merely a reflection of past practice" (p. 31).

6.5. Summary

In this section, the curriculum literature in the outdoor education field was examined to reveal the place of outdoor education in curriculum. While ACARA and the National Curriculum Board present a minimal notion of curriculum - simply as subject-matter that teachers will teach and students learn, the picture of outdoor education curriculum which emerges from the literature is painted on a much broader canvas. Although outdoor education is often perceived as simply school camps, a subject, part of a subject, or extra-curricular offerings, authors in the curriculum literature ascribe a significant array of

curriculum qualities to it. Amongst them are: a body of knowledge; contexts; specialist skills and accreditation; a philosophical standpoint; research; aims; values; learning processes; sequence of subject-matter and skills; and assessment.

The momentum of history and finding space within the "crowded curriculum" (Australian Government, 2014, p. 14) to implement a model of curriculum in mainstream settings as proposed by Nicol (2003), mitigate against school camping and outdoor education achieving mainstream inclusion in educational programming. If that position is to be changed, outdoor education will need to be perceived as Nicol's (2002b) "visionary pedagogical endeavour" (p. 90) and in the process, carve out its own curricular territory.

A gap which I have identified in the outdoor education literature is the voice of teachers articulating the ways they understand curriculum. Exposure of more of the voice of school camp teachers in curriculum deliberations would be beneficial in outdoor education and school camping scholarship, a situation this study aims to address.

Having explored the literature for evidence of the voice of teachers at school camp on the topic of curriculum, the next task is to continue the search, this time with school teachers as the focus.

7. Understanding curriculum: The Voice of School Teachers in the Literature

7.1. Introduction

In this section, six studies are examined which investigate teachers' understanding of curriculum. I identify aspects (themes) which are then allocated to Schwab's (1973) commonplaces. I use the commonplaces as an organisational framework to assist with interpretation.

Although the voices of teachers are described by Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1990) as being "conspicuous by their absence from the literature of research on teaching" (p. 83), a point reiterated by Clandinin and Connelly (1992), six studies were found. Schwab's (1973) commonplaces were used as the framework around which to develop an understanding of the voice of teachers in relation to curriculum in the studies examined: *Archaeology, Legos,*

and Haunted Houses: Novice Teachers' Shifting Understanding of Self and Curricula Through Metaphor (Fisher-Ari & Lynch, 2015); *Fifth Year Art Teacher' Maturing Understanding of Curriculum* (Kuster et al., 2015); *Preschool Teachers' Understandings of a New National Preschool Curriculum in Greece* (Sofou & Tsafos, 2009); *The Impact of Restructuring on Teachers' Understandings of their Curriculum Work: A Case Study* (O'Donoghue, 1994); *Commonplaces in Practitioner Curriculum Deliberations* (Reid, 2010)*;* and chapter four titled *Teachers Views* from *Life in Classrooms* (Jackson, 1968). Each study investigates a group of teachers with a common interest, but each group is different: novice Teach For America teachers; Greek preschool teachers; established art teachers in Arkansas and Texas; primary teachers undergoing a curriculum restructure in Western Australia; three primary school teachers in a school in south-western USA; and outstanding teachers from suburban Chicago as judged by administrators.

The aspects of curriculum have been allocated to the commonplaces as displayed in Figure 5.

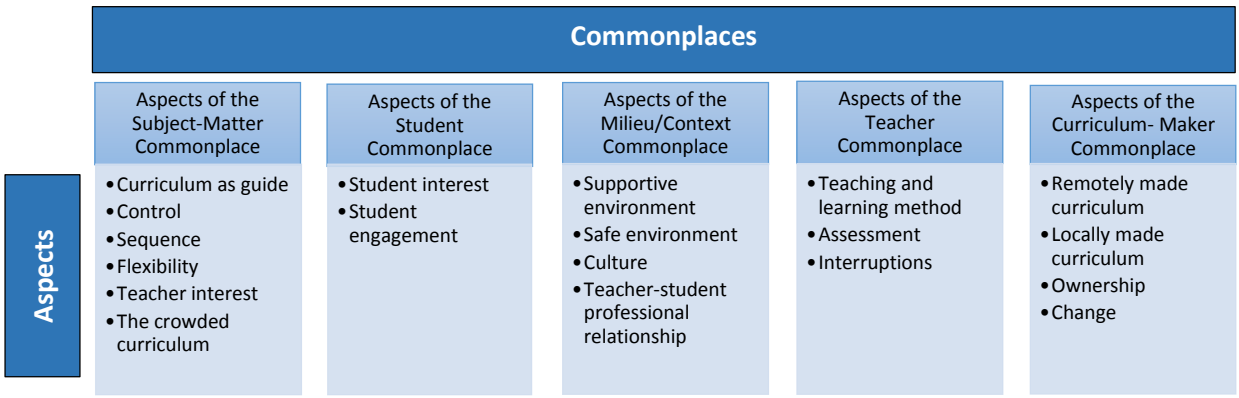

Figure 5. How teachers understanding of curriculum is described in the literature

Subject-matter is the dominant commonplace, reflected in the number of aspects in its purview. It is the first commonplace discussed.

7.2. Teacher understanding of the subject-matter commonplace

In this section, the six studies are searched for aspects of curriculum which give more dimension to the subject-matter commonplace and its contribution to the way teachers understand curriculum.

When talking about students, milieu, teachers, or curriculum-makers, the words are not substituted with the word curriculum. In the literature reviewed here, the word curriculum is regularly substituted for content, syllabus, subject-matter, or course of study, all a variety of ways of describing what will be taught and learned by both the teachers involved in the studies reviewed and the authors of those studies, to the point where this notion tends to dominate their understanding of curriculum. Illustrating this point, one of O'Donoghue's (1994) subjects commented that teachers can only make decisions about what they value in the syllabus, while the school encouraged them to adapt the existing curriculum. Although using two different words, both were talking about the same thing – subject-matter.

In Western Australia (W.A.), teachers believed that while the Western Australian Ministry of Education had devolved some power to schools it had kept "ultimate control over the content of curriculum" (O'Donoghue, 1994, p. 33), emphasising the importance control of curriculum occupies in the political milieu. Just as curriculum has commonplaces, commonplaces have aspects. In this instance, external control was an aspect of subject-matter.

In Kuster, Bain, and Young's (2015) study of art teachers understanding of curriculum, the authors noted that the participating teachers based the subject-matter on their own interests, expressing "genuine enthusiasm in sharing their own interests and experiences with their students" (p. 378). This supported the observation of Sofou and Tsafos (2010) that subject-matter is "interpreted, mediated and recreated" (p. 420) by teachers. In the instance of Kuster et al.'s (2015) informants, curriculum was understood in alignment with their artistic interests, demonstrating a level of teacher agency with regard to subject-matter in their art syllabi.

In O'Donoghue's (1994, p. 36) study, one teacher observed that "so much is being plonked on the curriculum and nothing is being taken out," making the crowded curriculum an aspect of subject-matter, a sentiment echoed in all the studies.

Most teachers in the Sofou and Tsafos (2010) study felt that a curriculum guide was "essential and useful" (p. 415) to provide a framework which helped them "organise their work" (p. 417). Still, some of the older Greek teachers in the Sofou and Tsafos (2010) study had not even read the new curriculum documentation, trusting their many years of experience instead. On the other hand, the early career teachers found it "indispensable" (p. 414) in telling them what to teach. As the teachers became more experienced they required the curriculum to be flexible to allow them to achieve what was "best for their students" (Kuster et al., 2015, p. 376).

One of the ways teachers work was organised was its sequence, another important aspect of subject-matter. A teacher in Fisher-Ari and Lynch's (2015, p. 541) study described sequence as a "road map" where the directions need to be followed, in order, if the destination was to be reached. Kuster et al.'s (2015) study described sequence as an important organisational procedure within and between grades.

In this section, the teachers have articulated a subject-matter dominant understanding of curriculum. They appreciate the guiding role remotely developed subject-matter provides, both in what to teach and when to teach it. When the opportunity presented itself, the teachers appreciated having the flexibility to base subject-matter on their personal interests. They also understood that remotely developed curriculum took away much of their control over curriculum, as did the crowded curriculum.

The student commonplace, which does not attract as much comment in the literature from the teachers, is next to be examined.

7.3. Teacher understanding of the student commonplace

In this section, I examine the contribution the student commonplace makes to the way teachers understand curriculum. Students are an important "who" in curriculum. Without them, curriculum serves no purpose as there is no group with which it can be enacted.

Teachers in all the studies believed that the curriculum needed to be flexible enough to accommodate the "children's needs and interests" (Sofou & Tsafos, 2010, p. 415) as a primary consideration. Jackson's (1968) interviews showed that teachers placed a great deal of importance on students' enthusiasm and involvement, and the flexibility of the curriculum to

facilitate their interests and support their wellbeing. The teachers in O'Donoghue's (1994) study questioned the ability of a centrally developed curriculum to respond flexibly to both the number of students in a particular class and their individual needs. This did not apply to the special education teachers in his study, who had "much smaller classes, were under much less stress and work at a leisurely pace" (p. 31). What is not mentioned is whether the special education teachers were implementing the new central curriculum or had developed and implemented a curriculum of their own.

In the study by Kuster et al., aspects of curriculum perceived as important by the art teachers were its ability to connect with "students, other subjects, cultures, and life in general" (p. 374), as well as building self-esteem and facilitating the students growth as creative individuals. Flexibility is noted as an aspect of curriculum necessary to accommodate the "students maturity and ability levels" (p. 375) and their "needs and interests" (Sofou & Tsafos, 2010, p. 415), with the teachers believing they, rather than an external authority, had the capacity to adapt curriculum to suit local contexts and individual students.

Some of the teachers in the Fisher-Ari and Lynch (2015) study believed that curriculum should be responsive to the agency of teachers. Those same teachers believed they needed to be able to work with others to "build the type of community that one would hope for" (p. 543) and to make and enact the curriculum needed to support students to function within their communities as children, and in the future as adults.

While not as strong as subject-matter, the aspects of the student commonplace revealed in this section have added dimension to the way teachers understand curriculum. Teachers understood the need for curriculum to be flexible enough to engage the students by catering for their needs and interests. An important function of curriculum the teachers identified was to prepare students for life in the milieu of their communities - milieu being the next commonplace to be investigated.

7.4. Teacher understanding of the milieu/context commonplace

In this section, the influence of milieu and the educative context on the teachers understanding of curriculum is investigated.

The idea of milieu as a commonplace is not as universally noted by teachers in the studies as part of their understanding of curriculum as are the first two commonplaces – subject-matter and students. Not many teachers in the studies commented about the impact of the social, political, economic, and cultural landscapes on their work.

O'Donoghue's (1994) teachers, who were involved in a state government curriculum restructure, mentioned "financial savings" (P. 33) and "change" (p. 31), indicating the impact of the economic milieu. The teachers thought that in both cases the politicians were acting simply so they could be "seen to be doing something" (p. 33), demonstrating the influence of political milieu. Although the preschool teachers in the Sofou and Tsafos (2010) study were also involved in a restructure, it was only the authors who noted the influence of milieu and context. The art teachers in Kuster et al.'s (2015) study all "noted the importance of incorporating art history, cultural traditions, visual culture, and/or historical contexts into a meaningful curriculum" (p. 376). There was no comment on the impact of other aspects of milieu on the curriculum they were developing.

The art teachers in the Kuster et al. (2015) study were the only ones to mention the importance of context when they commented that "psychological safety and freedom are major conditions that foster creativity" (p. 374) and "acknowledged their role in promoting a safe and supportive environment necessary for artistic growth" (p. 378).

Milieu and context were not front of mind issues for teachers in the six studies as they paid them scant attention. The milieus of political influence over school finance and the cultural relevance of art were the only points mentioned. Providing a safe and supportive learning environment was the only aspect of context mentioned.

The teacher commonplace, by contrast, whilst not represented by a great range of aspects, attracted much comment from the six groups of teachers.

7.5. Teacher understanding of the teacher commonplace

In this section, I outline the part the teacher commonplace plays in the way teachers understand curriculum. Curriculum constitutes most of the work of teachers. As such, it is essential to consider how teachers perceive their own place in the way they understand

curriculum. Implementing curriculum, whether it is of the teachers making or imposed externally, is a large part of that work.

O'Donoghue's (1994) study revealed that teachers resented interruptions such as implementing new curriculum or attending curriculum planning meetings, as it distracted them from what they considered most important - teaching students. This point was emphasised by the frustration of having new courses of study imposed without consultation, only to have them revert to the original under a new administration. Time, whether it be to attend to the needs of the students, prepare for instruction, develop curriculum, or perform a growing list of tasks including administration, was an aspect of the teacher commonplace evident in all the studies.

The older teachers advised their younger colleagues to "take it easy, things come and go, just go along with it at the time" (O'Donoghue, 1994, p. 37) demonstrating that it is one thing to develop and mandate a curriculum, it is yet another to have it implemented. An observation of the responses of the Teach For America (TFA) teachers was that even though curriculum may be offered by others it was "flexibly recreated, modified, and shifting in response to those living it out" (Fisher-Ari & Lynch, 2015, p. 545), demonstrating curriculum-making as an aspect of the teacher commonplace. Almost all of the teachers in the Sofou and Tsafos (2010) study referred to the "insufficient training they received with respect to the new curriculum framework" (p. 418). One art teacher (Kuster et al., 2015, p. 375) opined that she thought "the main reason I have total control is they [administration] don't know what curriculum is."

The teachers in O'Donoghue's (1994) study wondered whether there could be such a thing as teacher agency when they were so accountable to outcome statements. One of Jackson's (1968) interviewees captured a common sentiment in the studies when she stated that, if confronted with a mandated curriculum, she would "walk out the door tomorrow" (p. 129).

As teaching method is used by teachers to facilitate learning, it is an important aspect of the teacher commonplace. The art teachers reflected on various aspects of their work including "methods, activities, and materials" (Kuster et al., 2015, p. 375) and sought alternative approaches to increase their effectiveness. One teacher "modelled the artistic process and skills to his students," (p. 378) as an effective method. The preschool teachers mentioned "introduction of new child-centred methods" (Sofou & Tsafos, 2010, p. 416) as an important change which was part of their new curriculum.

Assessment and reporting is an important part of the work of teachers. Reporting is not mentioned in any of the studies. This can only mean that it falls within the scope of their work, but outside their perception of curriculum. Assessment is not mentioned in the TFA teacher's metaphors (Fisher-Ari & Lynch, 2015). The art teachers (Kuster et al., 2015) must have carried out informal assessment of their students to develop knowledge of their levels of maturity, ability, and interests, but no formal assessment is mentioned. The Greek preschool teachers (Sofou & Tsafos, 2010) mentioned "assessment and recording" (p. 416) being an important change in the new national curriculum. Of the Western Australian teachers (O'Donoghue, 1994), only one mentioned evaluation as part of an accountability framework to control implementation of new subject-matter.

Jackson's (1968) study mentioned that testing, "when it is mentioned at all, is given little emphasis. These teachers treat it as being of minor importance in helping them understand how well they have done" (p. 123). He noted that teachers found evidence of their effectiveness from the "continual flow of information from the students during the teaching session" (p. 126). Jackson found one of the most interesting aspects of his interviews to be "the absence of reference to objective evidence of school learning in contexts in which one might expect it to be discussed" (p. 123).

This section has added to the ways teachers understand curriculum by looking at the significance they afford their place in the commonplaces. They valued their time with students and begrudged any interruptions, including new courses of study, especially those mandated without consultation and implemented without training. They resented not being involved in developing curriculum from first principles. Teaching method was mentioned, but not universally. A surprising omission was the lack of discussion on formal assessment and reporting, as it represents such a large part of the work of teachers. One mention was made of assessment of students in the moment of teaching.

The final commonplace to be discussed is curriculum-making, a role teachers in the studies were interested in embracing.

7.6. Teacher understanding of the curriculum-making commonplace

In this section, I examine the commonplace of curriculum-making and the different ways it effects how teachers understand curriculum and their place in it.

Curriculum-making has two immediate aspects (Fisher-Ari & Lynch, 2015) which are remote curriculum-making and locally designed curriculum. Remote curriculum-making is performed by "individuals external to the classroom who have made decisions about what is worth knowing, teaching, and learning. Simultaneously, it is designed and enacted by those within the classroom community, flexibly and meaningfully co-created, based on questions that are valued and curious to learners themselves " (p. 545), demonstrating the importance of interpreting generic curriculum documents for specific use.

In the Western Australian study, teachers "clearly recognized that schools are not free to design their own generic curriculum from first principles" (O'Donoghue, 1994, p. 35), demonstrating an understanding of the control implicit in having the power to design and mandate curriculum. They resented not being a genuine part of the process. For the curriculum to be effective the Greek teachers in the Sofou and Tsafos (2010) study indicated they needed to "own it" (p. 415) by being involved in development of the curriculum. Fisher-Ari and Lynch (2015) observed that initially, the TFA teachers displayed "uncritical acceptance of curriculum that was imposed on them by external developers" (p. 550). Over time, many of these teachers came to challenge that position. One of O'Donoghue's (1994) subjects noted outcome statements and external evaluation as measures used to control teachers' implementation of centrally developed curriculum.

Implicit in the aspect of control is the notion of exclusion and inclusion. The Western Australian teachers were unhappy about their role in the restructure of the state curriculum, because they had been "excluded from the debate taking place on the possible introduction of a national curriculum" (O'Donoghue, 1994, p. 25). They expressed the opinion that they should be included in "curriculum decision making" (p. 34).

Schwab's (1973) commonplace of curriculum-making acknowledged change as an aspect of curriculum, otherwise a curriculum, once developed, would continue ad infinitum. One of the TFA teachers used the words "persistent motion", "grow" and "evolve" (Kuster et al., 2015, p. 536) to describe the change aspect of curriculum. O'Donoghue's (1994) study found that

teachers were in favour of the new curriculum but believed it was moving at too fast a pace, with not enough time to implement the changes. “Scarcity of time” (Kuster et al., 2015, p. 374) to develop curriculum was noted as the first year art teacher’s most common problem, proposing time as an aspect of curriculum-making.

7.7. Summary

In this section, curriculum-making in the first instance was revealed as made remotely. Teachers resented not being involved in the process but were aware of the importance of their role in recreating it to suit their students. They were critical of the frequency of change to the curriculum but recognised that curriculum had to evolve. Lack of time to develop curriculum was cited as an issue.

8. Summary

Curriculum, even in this limited review of studies, presents itself as a complex concept. I am aware, although this review may represent the extent of teacher understanding of curriculum, because of the limited number of studies involved, the depth and breadth of understanding teachers have of curriculum universally may be greater than recorded. Adding to the teacher voice on the topic of curriculum a worth component of this research. Schwab’s (1973) commonplaces have provided an effective framework for discussion and understanding of curriculum, which has accommodated the teacher’s points of discussion. Milieu received scant attention for a commonplace, a point worthy of examination in this study, especially in light of Reid’s (1993) comment that it is expected to do a huge amount of work in curriculum deliberations. Assessment did not receive much attention in these studies and reporting none, even though they are obvious dimensions of the work of schools and teachers. Although Novak, Mintzes, and Wandersee (2005) suggest assessment and reporting as a sixth commonplace, I believe they find relevance within Schwab’s existing commonplaces rather than on their own. They do not represent an essential topic of curriculum deliberation. Adding them and other dimensions of curriculum revealed in the literature as “aspects” (Dewey, 1916/2004, p. 24) of the commonplaces, assists with capturing the complexity of curriculum in the way they are revealed in the literature.

The other theme to emerge from the teacher studies was their approach to curriculum. While not stated overtly, the teachers in their comments articulated a preference for a deliberative approach to curriculum, due to its recognition of the place they aspire occupy in its balanced view of the commonplaces. In stark contrast were comments expressing resentment at their status in the systematic tradition of curriculum, which, according to Sahlberg (2016), is so dominant at this time. As deliberation is such an important theme for Schwab and runs in parallel with his explication of the commonplaces, it features in the discussion chapter.

Without collection, display, analysis, and interpretation of data relating to teachers' understanding of curriculum, the research cannot progress. It does not occur in a vacuum. Ethnography was chosen as the methodology for this study. The reasons for its choice and the methods employed in its service are now discussed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce myself as the researcher and outline why I chose ethnography as the methodology most appropriate to this study. Access to the research sites and recruitment of informants are discussed and the research settings are described to provide more contextual detail, all designed to assist in understanding the nature of this study. I then explain how the use of an ethnographic methodology provided a focus for the way in which the research question was approached, the ways in which data were collected and themed, and how it facilitated interpretation. Finally, I identify some limitations of the research.

2. Methodology

In this section, the choice of ethnography as the research methodology is explained.

As a practicing teacher, my interest, as reflected in the research question, is in understanding teachers' perceptions of curriculum in Schwab's (1971) practical way, found in "concrete situations loaded with concrete particulars of time, place, person and circumstance" (p. 494). To achieve this, I needed to enter into those states of affairs.

As curriculum constitutes a significant cultural aspect of school life and the work of teachers, ethnography represents the most appropriate methodology to guide this research. Ethnography, Fetterman (1998) maintained, "is the art and science of describing a group or culture" (p. 1), teachers and teaching in this instance. To that, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) add, developing an understanding of the culture of the group being studied. Culture is inferred from the speech and behaviour of a group in Creswell's (1998) view. "It consists of looking for what people do (behaviors), what they say (language), and some tension between what they really do and what they ought to do as well as what they make and use (artifacts)" (p. 59), then assigning themes to the patterns which emerge from that investigation. Creswell (1998) includes cultural systems in what ethnography describes and interprets. The cultural

system in this study is curriculum. According to Patton (2002), ethnography "takes as its central and guiding assumption that any human group of people interacting together for a period of time will evolve a culture" (p. 81). Programs, he asserts, "develop cultures, just as organisations do. The program's culture can be thought of as part of the program's treatment. As such, the culture affects both program processes and outcomes" (p. 82), a point of relevance to my research questions. Both of Patton's points indicate the appropriateness of ethnography as a platform on which to display the "observable and learned patterns of behavior, customs, and ways of life" (Creswell, 1998, p. 58) which constitute the data and as a lens for "sense-making" (Wolcott, 2005, p. 17) from the data.

3. The Researcher

In this section, I provide a brief account of my professional and research background to contextualise my place in the research.

Most of my teaching career has been spent in the residential outdoor education sector at the School Camp. Over that time I have held the positions of teacher, leading teacher, and acting campus principal. With a strong background in owner building, I have been involved in design, project management, and at times construction of facilities, usually related to curriculum provision. Outside of curriculum enactment, curriculum development and implementation is my main area of professional interest, which led to a personal involvement in, commitment to, and passion for, research in outdoor education.

My first involvement with research was as a member of an action research team in the early 2000's. Its focus was assessment of student achievement, but developed explicit reflective methods as an off-shoot. Although well received in academic circles, the research was assessed as lacking an obvious thread - the student voice. I tackled this in a research master of education project. That in turn suggested exploration of the teacher voice in relation to curriculum. I have chosen to research my own workplace because of a passion I hold for the curricular achievements it makes. Others at the School Camp have also completed research projects focussed on dimensions of the work we do. Those research projects have made a valuable contribution to the development of the School Camp. Without the research efforts of its teachers, there would be no research shining a light on the path forward at the School

Camp. The way I perceive and have managed my position as a researcher at both the Primary School as an outsider, and particularly at the School Camp as an insider, was guided by Adler and Adler (1987), Jorgensen (1989), and Wolcott (2001). My position, and the impact that had on the completed study, is discussed in the participant observation section below.

4. The Research Contexts

In this section, I describe the settings, to provide some contextual detail of the data collection sites. First is the School Camp, chosen as the focus of the study to investigate if school camping can be considered to be curriculum, and then the Primary School, chosen as a point of comparison between a mainstream school and a school camp.

4.1. The School Camp

In this section, I describe the School Camp, to assist in contextualising the data.

Much of the description of the School Camp is based on information retrieved from its website, which captures how the School Camp describes itself. Other information came from documents sourced at the School Camp and my observations. Although the School Camp is a registered school within the DET, it does not appear on the My School[7] (ACARA, 2018) website, removing a potential source of information. By not having to be involved in one of the major compliance processes, education bureaucrats have placed school camps in an "other than mainstream" category in which promotion on My School is unimportant. It then begs the question of whether or not the same people value the product of school camps, a matter of constant interest to those involved in residential outdoor education. The gradual erosion of government support documented in *The Story of the White Hall Centre* in the UK (McDonald, 2018) provides an excellent example. In line with the requirements of ethics approval for this study, all identifiable references have been removed, including web addresses, which have the potential to compromise the anonymity of the teachers and the School Camp.

[7] The My School website provides information about every Australian school, accessible for anyone interested. Data are provided on a range areas including staffing levels, NAPLAN results, school profile, funding, and enrolment.

Located in rural Victoria, the School Camp has been operating for 60 years, providing a residential camping experience for year five and six (ages 10 to 12) students from DET primary schools across Victoria. The School Camp employs 18 teachers and 20 support staff. Each camp programme provides an opportunity for 160 students (80 boys and 80 girls) and nine visiting teachers to participate. The students and teachers are selected from a network (a cluster of approximately 30 schools), with each network in Victoria represented over a two year rotation, requiring 19 camps per year. Delivering a statewide service, the School Camp differs from mainstream primary schools in that it does not service a local community. It also differs in having students for nine days, rather than up to seven years in the case of primary schools.

Operating in a safe and secure environment, the programme includes a variety of outdoor and environmental education activities. This includes: abseiling; art; archery; bike education; boating; bushcraft; challenge swing; drama; flying fox; environmental studies; indoor rock climbing; orienteering; ropes courses; and surfing. The informal curriculum focusses around community living which involves: making friends; participating in sustainability activities (recycling, composting, orchard, and kitchen garden); managing personal space in the dormitories; assisting in the dining room; and caring for the camp environs. In the evening the students participate in games sessions, dances, concerts, a hike, a campfire, and each group takes a turn visiting the nocturnal sanctuary. Singing is a feature of the morning assemblies and is used to contribute to developing a sense of community. Like the White Hall Centre (McDonald, 2018) in the UK, the School Camp does not aim to produce experts in any field, just to provide beginners with opportunities which may pique their interest. Although the School Camp audits its curriculum against the Victorian Curriculum, teaching to, assessing, and reporting against the learning areas of the Victorian Curriculum is not the focus of its programme. The School Camp does not participate in NAPLAN or other external testing, nor does it report formally to parents or to the students' home schools.

The site covers nine hectares with a blend of parkland containing camp buildings, indigenous bush, and restored indigenous landscape, quite a large area relative to the enrolment of the School Camp. It has more staff (particularly non-teaching), buildings, and facilities than an equivalent enrolment primary school due to the residential nature of the programme and the ratios required to mitigate the risks inherent in the type of curriculum offered.

For the students, developing friendship and becoming part of a new community is their major project, as they come from up to 30 different schools and know very few other campers at the start of the programme. Their connection to the community is evident by the pride with which the students guide their families around the camp during visitors' time on the afternoon of the sixth day. The engagement they develop with each other is demonstrated by emotional farewells as they board the buses for the journey home.

Central to the operation of the School Camp is the educational programme which is guided by a Vision Statement and Statement of Aims (see Figure 6), both developed by the teaching staff. The most recent revision of the aims by the teaching staff was dated 2017 and reflects an ongoing commitment to development of the programme.

Vision statement

Experience **FOR** a Lifetime

Aims

The School Camp aims to inspire optimism and develop in students, consciousness of and care for:

- Self – through expanding their sense of self as they are presented with opportunities and invited to accept challenges.
- Others – through building and living in a supportive community.
- Environment – through engagement with nature and living sustainably.

Figure 6. Vision and aims of the School Camp

The Curriculum Resource Booklet records the course of study as lesson plans. It is constantly evolving, with frequent incidental edits and occasional significant modifications as a response to: changes in regulations and standards; whole staff revision sessions on individual parts of the programme; and when completely new additions have been made to the programme. Being subject to constant peer observation and review, on a fortnightly basis, by the visiting staff is a feature of the School Camp, which is markedly different from a mainstream school. The reciprocal aspect of the relationship with the visiting teachers is to offer the School Camp

experience as a professional development opportunity, recognised with the presentation of certificates, by students, in the final assembly. These professional development hours are recognised by the Victorian Institute of Teaching for compliance with teacher re-registration provisions. Engagement with professional development is considered by the School Camp teachers to be an important means by which the programme remains relevant and continues to develop. Conferences were mentioned by the teachers as a significant dimension of professional development, with examples given of participation and presentation at local, national, and international level, and with the School Camp as a host venue. Another contribution to professional activity was the hosting of work experience students, local undergraduate education students, international outdoor recreation interns, and international exchange teachers. There have also been regular visits from local (Australian) educators and international guests such as those from the Ministry of Education, Singapore and the Republic Polytechnic, Singapore.

4.2. The Primary School

In this section, I describe the Primary School which was chosen to provide a reference point against which to compare curriculum at the School Camp.

A state government primary school was chosen as they are the source of the School Camp enrolment. Immediate acceptance of the research proposal by the principal and the teachers of the first school I approached meant that the recruitment process for an appropriate research site was brief.

To describe the Primary School, I have used information from the school website, data from the My School website, with the addition of some personal observations. Material which would identify the Primary School has been omitted to preserve the anonymity of the school and the informants, a requirement of ethics approval for this research.

The Primary School is situated in a rural area. Hobby farms comprise the majority of out of town land use rather than commercial agriculture. Located centrally in the town, the Primary School is surrounded by houses. A modest sized primary school oval, an asphalt basketball court, and a junior play area, which is also the entrance to the school, represent the quantum of outdoor recreation space. All of the buildings are relocatable, other than the original school

house which is now the art room, and a school hall which also houses three open plan senior unit classrooms. The hall was funded under the federal government “Building the Education Revolution” scheme (ANAO, 2010). Sustainability education is a school focus, with the efforts being rewarded with Sustainability Accreditation (Sustainability Victoria, 2018). The Primary School runs a range of extra-curricular programmes to broaden the interests of the students.

The Primary School claims to be, and indeed did feel like a community, displaying a sense of unity, order, and purpose. Students appeared happy to be at school as evidenced by their arrival, greeting each other, teachers, and the principal, who was usually positioned prominently each morning to welcome all to the new school day. Before and after school care programmes were a part of the Primary School’s focus on wellbeing and engagement with the whole school community.

The staff, teaching and non-teaching alike, appeared committed to their work and happy to be at the school. As teachers were the focus of my attention, I took particular note of their presence in the school. My overriding observation was how busy they were. They arrived at school early, usually through the gate by eight o’clock each morning. Most were still at work after four p.m., the after school time occupied by chatting with parents, participating in a variety of meetings, preparing the classroom for the following day, and participating in professional development activities. Adding to the busyness, some lunch times were devoted to student interest programmes and student supervision. My abiding feeling of the teachers was that the students were the significant focus of their work. Everything else took a distant second place. There were some student management issues. Most were dealt with in class, with a small number referred to the principal or assistant principal. The significant increase in student enrolment and the low turnover of staff indicate general satisfaction with the school. Some dissatisfaction over the increase in school population, the numbers of students with special needs, and the focus on NAPLAN results, did emerge from the interviews with the teachers. Despite the school website indicating a focus on all areas of student development, my observation was that the focus of the school leadership was academic performance supported by empirical data, whilst the teachers would have preferred a greater emphasis on social and emotional growth and wellbeing.

Professional development was undertaken at the Primary School and I participated in all the events scheduled while I was at the school. Most were in school, considered by all to be the

most efficient method of delivery. One was a visit to another school to observe a teaching and learning programme which the Primary School was proposing to adopt. Undergraduate education students were constantly passing through the Primary School, and a recent graduate was doing regular volunteer work to enhance her employment prospects.

To the information provided by the school, I have added data from the My School website – 2017, which illustrates the growth of, and changes in, the school population. Enrolment was 301 students (164 male, 137 female) having climbed steadily from 171 in 2011. Indigenous students made up on average 3% of the student population between 2011 and 2017. In 2017 it was 5%. Students speaking a language other than English as their first language averaged 2% between 2011 and 2017. Teaching staff numbered 20 (Full Time Equivalent – 16.5). Non-teaching staff totalled 28 (Full Time Equivalent – 15). Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)[8] for the school in 2017 was 1034, slightly above the Australian average of 1000.

Listening to the teachers and supporting that data with my observations of the school, provided me with a context in which to view the NAPLAN results. Looking at the NAPLAN data over the years 2011 to 2017 as the enrolment increased, the average NAPLAN scores across all disciplines tested (reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy) had steadily declined from being above or substantially above the Australian average to being close to the Australian average. According to the teachers, the school has developed a reputation for achieving good results with students with special needs. This, they claimed, resulted in an increase in the enrolment of students who fitted that profile, and a consequent increase in the number of teacher aides employed. At the same time there was a decrease in enrolments from local families who did not support these changes. It is also interesting to note that over the years 2012 to 2017, the bottom quartile of the ICSEA for the school increased by 6%, while there has been an equivalent drop in the middle quartiles, which may be a further mitigating factor in the NAPLAN scores. This information helped to contextualise points made by the Primary School teachers in the interviews.

[8] ICSEA – The Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage is a measure of socio-educational advantage/disadvantage which is calculated for all schools in Australia, allowing comparisons to be made between schools.

5. Gatekeepers

In this section, the process I used to gain access to the research sites is outlined.

Early in the project, I approached the principals as "gatekeepers" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 4) of the Primary School and the School Camp regarding the availability of their organisations as sites for my research. After explaining the purpose and scope of the project, both principals indicated their enthusiasm to be included. Despite their enthusiasm, neither of the principals tried to influence or direct me at any stage, whilst always being accessible to answer questions and provide access to documents. Plain Language Statements outlining the research project were given to both principals, as well as a verbal explanation. Formal permission was granted with the signing of consent forms.

At the education system level, the Victorian Department of Education and Training acts as a gatekeeper through its research approval process, aligning university ethics approval and permission from individual schools, before granting its own approval.

6. Sampling and Recruitment of Informants

In this section, I outline the process I used to recruit and sample participants for this study.

Before asking for teachers to volunteer as participants, I was careful to explain the purpose and scope of the research to the staff in each setting, so that they had a clear understanding of their commitment and what I was doing in their school/school camp. In both settings this took the form of a presentation during a staff meeting and distribution of Plain Language Statements. An invitation was extended to anyone who wanted more information to approach me personally, which no one did. All teachers who volunteered signed a consent form.

I intended to select a "purposeful random sample" (Patton, 2002, p. 240) of five or six teachers from each location, to improve credibility, maximise the variation in responses, and manage the quantum of data. As it transpired, I attracted five volunteers from the Primary School and six from the School Camp. This represented about one third of the teachers at each location. At the Primary School, one male teacher out of the three (including the principal) volunteered, reflecting the gender ratio for primary teachers across Victorian state schools (ACARA, 2017).

The informants who volunteered represented a range of age, experience, and seniority, removing the need to approach other teachers. Two male and four female teachers volunteered from the School Camp, not quite representative of the equal gender profile of the teaching staff at the School Camp. I accepted all of them, as they matched the numbers of informants I intended to recruit. As it turned out, the participants were well "stratified" (Minichello et al., 1995, p. 161) according to age, experience, and seniority, increasing the potential of achieving maximum variation (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 28) of responses. The teachers were allocated pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. From the School Camp they were:

Margaret - Highly experienced in residential outdoor education at the School Camp and beyond. Secondary teaching experience. Contributed to the writing of the sustainability cross-curriculum priority of the Australian Curriculum.

Karen – Very experienced in residential outdoor education at the School Camp. Secondary teaching experience.

Fiona – Experience in residential outdoor education at the School Camp.

Liz - Experience in residential outdoor education at the School Camp. Attended the School Camp as a student.

Peter – Very experienced in residential outdoor education at the School Camp. Primary teaching experience.

John – Very experienced in residential outdoor education at the School Camp. Primary teaching experience.

From the Primary School they were:

Neil - third year teacher with two years as a physical education and art specialist and one year in a classroom.

Dianne - classroom teacher with 30 years primary teaching experience. Currently a leading teacher.

Robyn – 44 years primary teaching experience in the classroom, as a head teacher, leading teacher, and currently teaching the remedial reading programme.

Joan - classroom teacher with 40 years primary teaching experience and previous experience as a leading teacher.

Jenny - mature aged graduate with 10 years classroom teaching experience.

7. Data collection

7.1. Introduction

In this section, I explain the data collection methods I employed for the study and the reasons for their selection.

Creswell (1998) proposed that data collection methods appropriate to ethnographic research are participant observation, interviews, and examination of artefacts. This satisfied Pole and Morrison's (2003) advice that interviews alone were not sufficient to discover what was happening at the research site. Examining the data collected, a more complete picture emerged through the use of multiple methods, whilst also improving the "plausibility and credibility" (p. 33) of the research. Using a variety of sources allowed me to triangulate the data, looking as Spradley (1980) advised, for convergence and tension between what I observed (participant observation), what I heard (participant observation and interviews), and what I read (examination of artefacts). When using multiple methods of data collection, Patton noted that the "strengths of one approach can compensate for weaknesses of another approach" (p. 306).

Using two research settings, I was seeking to strengthen the "external validity" (Minichello et al., 1995, p. 177) of the findings, by providing some sense of whether the perceptions of curriculum held by teachers exhibited "stable features that transcend immediate contexts" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 163), in this case a primary school and a school camp. Length of interviews, time spent immersed in each setting, and key artefacts are displayed by location in Figure 7.

Location	Interview length (minutes)	Participant observation Time immersed in location	Key artefacts
School Camp	Margaret – 76 Liz – 69 Fiona – 63 Karen – 61 Peter – 60 John - 58	Two weeks full-time 10 days intermittent (40 years of immersive observation in my workplace)	School Camp website School Strategic Plans School Review (quadrennial) School Camp aims School Camp vision Curriculum Resources book
Primary School	Joan – 73 Dianne – 63 Robyn – 61 Jenny – 59 Neil - 55	Two weeks full-time 10 days intermittent	Primary School website My School website NAPLAN results School Strategic Plan School review (quadrennial) Teachers planners (work plans)

Figure 7. Summary of data collection

7.2. Participant observation

In this section, the approaches I took to participant observation are described. In one setting I was an insider, in the other an outsider, which meant that the approach employed in each place differed.

Participant observation is an important form of data collection for the ethnographer, a method not used by all qualitative researchers. I used a block of two weeks of direct observation in each setting, followed by the equivalent of two weeks of intermittent observation. This allowed me enough time to become immersed in the activities of the teachers' day to day lives (Creswell, 1998; Jorgensen, 1989; Wolcott, 2005), balanced against the amount of time I was away from teaching duties that the School Camp could manage. The intermittent observation allowed time for reflection and consequent focus which I found particularly valuable. Patton (2002) lists a number of benefits including: to develop a broader perspective of the setting by understanding the context; to use the observation to move

beyond prior conceptions in seeking to understand the setting; to notice aspects of the setting insiders have overlooked or become used to; to have the opportunity for insiders to reveal aspects of the setting they would not talk about in an interview; and to have personal knowledge to help inform interpretation. Jorgensen (1989) adds that it can describe "what goes on, who or what is involved, when and where things happen, how they occur, and why - at least from the standpoint of participants - things happen as they do in particular situations" (p. 12). By contrast, the stand alone interview is quite isolated, and aspects of the setting can remain hidden from the view of the non-participant. Using participant observation benefited this study by broadening the capture of data in the ways described by Patton (2002) and Jorgensen (1989). From qualitative analysis of the data, Jorgensen (1989) explains, participant observation seeks to "generate practical and theoretical truths, grounded in the realities of daily existence" (p. 14), also the focus of Schwab's (1969b; 1971; 1973; 1983) "Practical" essays. Participant observation varies across a range of involvement. Patton (2002) notes that:

> The extent of participation is a continuum that varies from complete immersion in the setting as a full participant to complete separation from the setting as spectator, with a great deal of variation along the continuum between these two end points. (p. 265)

My research interest is in how teachers understand curriculum. That is only possible, Ezzy (2002) states, by consciously "entering into their world" (p. xii). What is necessary is the ability to then "engage in analytical self-reflection. Self-reflection is not enhanced by objective detachment, but is a trait that occurs naturally in some people and that can be cultivated by others" (p. 23), a process I employed each time I stepped out of the research settings and began analysing and interpreting data and writing.

This process required me to be reflexive, to be conscious of and attentive to "cultural, political, social, linguistic, and ideological origins of one's own perspective and voice as well as the perspectives and voices of those one interviews and those to whom one reports" (Patton, 2002, p. 65). As Fetterman (1998) points out, ethnographers have "biases and preconceived notions about how people behave and what they think - as do researchers in every field" (p. 1). Reflexivity recognises that researchers are shaped by their environments (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). What I observe and record and how I interpret that data are

influenced by my life story. This rejects the notion that ethnography can be conducted in an "autonomous realm that is insulated from the wider society and from the biography of the researcher, in such a way that its findings can be unaffected by social processes and personal characteristics" (p. 16). To deal with the issues of reflexivity, Adler and Adler (1987) suggest that the researcher enter into the experiences of the informants, which was the strategy I employed, but on a level I could sustain in relation to the scale of the study. I also reminded myself constantly to be sure I was listening to the teachers' voices, whether directly or through the data.

I entered the world of the participant observer as an insider at the School Camp, being a long-time member of the community having taught there for many years. At the Primary School, by contrast, I was an outsider, a person not normally a part of their school community. I was buoyed in my presence at the Primary School by a comment made by Schwab (1950/1989) when he asked, "how many of us would wish our purposes in education to be represented in an observers mind by what he is likely to grasp from a chance visit or two to our classroom?" (p. 5). Each of these situations presented challenges for me as a researcher - at one, to be accepted inside the research site to a degree which allowed the collection of rich layers and deep levels of data, whilst at the other, I was challenged by the need to step far enough outside the research site to be able to collect, analyse, and interpret data with an appropriate level of objectivity.

Once I had gained entry to the Primary School, it was important that I considered my strategy. As Jorgensen (1989) observed:

> There is no perfect participant strategy. Most human settings , however, do not give up the insiders' world of meaning and action except to a person willing to become a member. The deeper meanings of most forms of human existence are not displayed for outsiders. They are available primarily to people for whom these meanings constitute a way of life. (p. 60)

Keeping this in mind, I decided to start at the Primary School in a role Adler and Adler (1987) describe as a "peripheral-membership-researcher" (p. 36,) which allowed me to gain experience at first hand, without taking on any of the formal roles. My first task was to experience the Primary School much as any new staff member would, allowing me to become "socialized to the setting, to learn the taken-for-granted assumptions, to grasp the setting as

insiders do and, as much as possible, to feel the way insiders feel" (p. 23). Being aware of how people are perceived as they enter new situations, I was cautious in my approach to entering the sites as a researcher. If people enter as brash, all knowing experts who want to tell the members how everything should be done, they are not accepted. By interacting "closely, significantly, and frequently enough" (p. 36), listening actively, displaying genuine interest, and by taking time, I acquired "recognition by members as an insider" (p. 36). The principal outlined my role at the first opportunity and I was able to present my project soon after at a staff meeting. I visited classes (after asking the teachers permission), ate lunch with the teachers, interacted with the students during breaks, participated in professional development activities, and attended curriculum, staff, and school council meetings. Early on, I did not participate as a member in activities that "stand at the core of group membership and identification" (p. 38), as that would have been presumptuous, a characteristic which does not foster acceptance. For some time after the data collection concluded, I continued to be invited to professional development activities, which I always accepted.

As I became more familiar with the Primary School, and the teachers and students became more familiar with me, I began to offer assistance, a role Adler and Adler (1987) label "active-membership-researchers" (p. 50). I was surprised at the enthusiasm with which the offers were accepted. I was even more surprised when other teachers approached me mentioning that "You haven't visited my class yet." At a certain point I began to feel my role was being accepted, with the process corresponding "to the way people become involved with groups, organizations, and social movements, more generally, in naturally occurring social interaction" (Adler& Adler, 1987, p. 54). Another characteristic of this role, Adler and Adler (1987) described, was interacting with the teachers as colleagues, not just me in their work, but also they in my research, in the process developing deeper levels of trust in each other. Only at that point did I consider conducting interviews, which could then take on the persona of conversations between trusted colleagues, rather than an interrogation by an outsider. As an active-membership-researcher, my commitment to the setting was not complete. Commitment to the research was my driving force and ultimately my future lay elsewhere. I still maintained my outside interests and occasionally recalibrated my perspective with others outside the setting to maintain a critical stance, features noted as characteristic at this level of participation by Adler and Adler (1987).

At the School Camp by contrast, I was an insider, having taught at there for many years. This required me to be aware of a different set of challenges. Discussing this tension, Ezzy (2002) advised:

> The best qualitative researchers do not separate their lives from their research, as if people could be understood through distancing ourselves from them. Qualitative research, and qualitative data analysis, involves working out how things that people do make sense from their perspective. This can be done only by entering into their world, so that their world becomes our world. (Ezzy, 2002, p. xii)

My advantage as a researcher was that I was in what Ezzy described as a privileged position to collect and analyse data. However, Adler and Adler (1987) warn that, in moving towards the insider end of the continuum as a researcher, an especially critical approach should be taken, as personal experiences are more critically examined than those of others. Words of advice from Jorgensen (1989) gave me confidence that the insider role was reasonable and manageable. “As commonsense actors, people have the ability to manage multiple roles and selves” noted Jorgensen (p. 64), while expanding that most researchers “become quite adept at turning on and off their analytic functions. You many times experience the world of daily life as a matter of common sense, while later turning on to an analytic perspective to deal with a particular situation” (p. 64).

Having stated that familiarity with the research setting may interfere with the ability of the researcher to notice relevant features, Adler and Adler (1987) go on to accept that if researchers can “defocus and desensitize oneself enough to do research, the previously attained membership role offers many clear advantages” (p. 23). Making the “familiar” or “normal” setting unfamiliar is Pole and Morrison’s (2003) solution “when a researcher works in his or her own school” (p. 25). Without becoming a researcher in an ontological sense and immersing myself in that occupation (Quay, 2015), I would not have been able to make the School Camp unfamiliar, and I would have been rudderless in my data collection and analysis. For me, being a researcher included three essential elements. First were the research questions. They focussed my attention on specific aspects of the settings I was investigating and away from irrelevant aspects which would only serve to generate unnecessary data. Then, having the framework of Schwab’s commonplaces meant that I was not only looking for, but finding specific trees within the wood. Finally, understanding the curriculum

traditions and looking for evidence of their presence, provided another point at which to direct my gaze. Without these three elements, I would not have been able to collect, let alone understand the data. The research questions allowed me to keep one foot in the research camp and the other in the participant camp during data collection, allowing me to become heavily invested as a researcher without loosing touch with the memory of the settings.

7.3. Interviews

In this section, I outline the use of the semi-structured long format interview as my second data collection instrument.

Interviews, Fetterman (1998) contends, are "the ethnographer's most important data gathering technique" (p. 37), whereas Patton (2002) bestows this title on participant observation. Both are important, but I agree with Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), that there are "distinct advantages in combining participant observation with interviews; in particular, the data from each can be used to illuminate the other" (p. 131). Working together, their impact was greater than the sum of their parts. I decided to use what Minichello, Aroni, Timewell, and Alexander (2000) call semi-structured, in-depth interviews. More conversational than a structured, survey style of interview, the semi-structured interview allowed the informants to be more at ease and therefore more responsive. To assist in the process of making the interview as comfortable as possible, I invited the informants to choose the location and time of the interviews. The interview format allowed interesting leads to be explored, assisting in discovery of informants' perceptions of curriculum. In-depth interviews also provide access to aspects of the culture sharing group "which cannot be observed directly by the researcher" (p. 70). Mindful of Patton's (2002) advice that "the quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer" (p. 341), I chose to use an interview guide (Patton, 2002) to keep the focus of the interview relevant to the topic of curriculum where necessary, while not controlling it. When the informants' conversation slowed, items from the guide reinvigorated the discussion, providing new avenues for them to pursue. Using the long interview format allowed time for the informants to be able to develop deeper levels of thought on the topic. Mindful of the imposition of my research on the informants' time, I restricted the interviews to approximately one hour. Interviews were recorded using the Audionote software program on my laptop computer

which is user name and password protected. Files were backed up into my email account which is also user name and password protected. I also used Audionote to transcribe the interviews. Transcription was a valuable process, as it became the first step in becoming familiar with the data.

I started the interviews by emphasising that the efficacy of my research would be a product of the respondents' contribution, reflecting what they thought and believed, rather than a corporate response or what they thought I might want to hear. I also reminded them of the process which would be employed to protect their identities. By conducting the participant observation before the interviews, and triangulating participant observation, interviews and examination of artifacts, I was drawn to respect the professionalism of the respondents and the forthright nature of their responses.

Starting the interview with the question "What is curriculum?" could have resulted in the interviews terminating immediately with the response "It's what we teach." Instead, following Patton's (2002) lead, I started with a general opening asking "What is the purpose of the school/camp?" and "What is your role?" In all instances this lead to plenty of relevant conversation immediately. I was surprised when some of the informants asked for a copy of the interview guide beforehand. I readily supplied the guide. When I asked why they wanted it, they all responded that they did not want to be caught with nothing to say. I was impressed that they took the process so seriously, some even arriving with aides-memoire so as not to forget to mention points which were important to them. This assured me that the informants had contributions they wanted to make to the research topic, rather than responding to me as the researcher. Confident that they had plenty to say on the topic, it was my responsibility as the interviewer to prompt the informants to respond in areas they had not mentioned and to encourage further exploration of previously unchartered territory. As Minichello et al. (2000) point out, it is not my perception of the research question as the researcher which is being explored, "it is the informant's account which is being sought and is highly valued" (p. 68), a quality bestowed on the process by the in-depth interview and a reason for its choice.

7.4. Analysis of artefacts

In this section, I explain how analysis artefacts contributed as the third method of data collection I employed in this study.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) assert that ethnographers need to "take account of documents as part of the social setting under investigation" (p. 158). As the capacity and requirement to produce documents is part of teachers working life, it follows that I should include them as a valuable source of data. Artefacts, Patton (2002) recommends, can provide a "behind the scenes look," (p. 307) which can result in uncovering issues worthy of pursuit which have not previously surfaced in interviews or observations. He also cites the need for unobtrusive methods of data collection, of which examination of artefacts is one. Documents in this study, particularly those relevant to curriculum, were an indication of what was important to the teachers at the Primary School and the School Camp, at the same time revealing what is not being done that is expected to be done, and what is done which is not recorded, points explored in Chapter 6.

8. Analysis and Sorting of the Data

In this section, I outline the use of Schwab's (1973) commonplaces as a conceptual framework, and the five curriculum traditions as a perceptual lens to facilitate analysis and sorting the large volume of data generated through the interviews, participant observation, and examination of the artefacts, and which guided presentation of the data. I also discuss the use of aspects to add detail to the broad topics of the commonplaces.

Wolcott (2009) suggested using a "conceptual framework" (p. 7) to analyse and sort the data. One of the most important discoveries I made searching literature on the topic of curriculum was Schwab's (1973) "commonplaces." They provided an "etic" (Patton, 2002, p. 267) or theoretical structure to my reading, note taking, coding of data, allocating the coded data to themes, and my writing. Schwab's five commonplaces are understood as familiar categories within curriculum, allowing the similarities and differences of the two settings to be analysed within a common framework. Embracing the use of Schwab's commonplaces as a conceptual framework, Pyle and Luce-Kapler (2014) acknowledge, improved the quality of their exploration of kindergarten learning. The value of the commonplaces as a conceptual

framework around which to structure the research cannot be overestimated in trying to understand a construct as complex as curriculum (Kunzli, 2013; Ornstein, 1987; Taba, 1962; Westbury, 2013). Their value is not in "forcing interpretation" according to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 163), rather they were "used as resources to make sense of the data."

Another layer of categories pointed out by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) were those "used for interpreting what people say or do but are not built into the data collection process . . . instead, they are generated out of the process of data analysis" (p. 3), out of the thoughts of the teachers as expressed in their words, capturing "relevant aspects of these data" (p. 161). These "emic" (Patton, 2002, p. 267) or practical themes I called "aspects" after Dewey (1916/2004). The aspects sit within the commonplaces, sometimes in more than one commonplace, emphasising Schwab's (1973) comment that the commonplaces should not be silos, rather they should act together as an integrated entity, finding more effect and a more accurate reflection of reality in synthesis. The aspects assume importance, as they guard against robbing the study of "its "analytic cutting edge" and "novel insight" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 201) by responding to the teacher voice. This prevents all the emphasis from falling within the received wisdom of the commonplaces and helping to answer Wolcott's (2009) question, "what's going on here?" (p. 22). According to Fetterman (1998), "good ethnography requires both emic and etic perspectives" (p. 22), with the challenge from Patton (2002) "to do justice to both perspectives" (p. 268), my aim in using the commonplaces and the aspects.

To assist in "understanding what is going on here" (Wolcott, 2005, p. 6) from the teachers' perspective, I turned to the curriculum traditions discussed in Chapter 2. I was looking for alignment or divergence between what the teachers were saying and doing, and how the five traditions understood curriculum within Schwab's commonplaces. Although all of the traditions had some points of convergence and some divergence from the ways teachers understood curriculum, the deliberative understanding stood alone in synthesising more of their perspectives within its purview. This is not surprising, as it takes parts of all of the traditions and blends them into a central position between the extremes of theory and practice on the one hand, and the acceptance or rejection of social institutions on the other (Null, 2011). Schwab (1969b) positions himself within the deliberative tradition in the first of his practical essays, *The Practical: A Language for Curriculum*.

9. Limitations

In this section, I acknowledge the limitations of the study to assist in the exposition of clarity around the purpose of the research, and to point out some aspects which are beyond the scope of a qualitative study of this nature. The limitations relate to aspects of the research design, and so are included in this chapter.

Selection of particular settings, in this case one school camp and one primary school, limited the study (Patton, 2002) in the breadth of opinion it collected. Physical proximity to the settings was an important consideration, allowing me to use the time I had available more efficiently. It is not possible to "study everyone everywhere doing everything" as Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 24) emphasise. This point is relevant to many of the aspects of the study, which were limited by the resources I could allocate to the study and the scale permitted for a project of this type.

A small sample of informants, as Patton (2002) points out, "does not permit statistical generalizations" (p. 241) as a large quantitative study might, and limits what can be inferred from the research. The purpose of a small sample is to facilitate in-depth exploration and discovery of the ways in which two small groups of teachers understand curriculum, rather than being representative of an understanding of curriculum held by teachers universally. All the factors which coalesce in the context of the Primary School and the School Camp, and the broader milieu in which they exist, make them unique situations. That being said, these findings may resonate with other teachers in the Primary School and School Camp, and as Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1990) advise, "although teacher research is not always motivated by a need to generalize beyond the immediate case, it may in fact be relevant to a wide variety of contexts" (p. 85).

The gender balance for the interviews could be seen as a limitation of the study. Knowledge of the gender balance in Victorian primary schools indicates otherwise. Two of the six teachers interviewed at the School Camp were males. This does not reflect the gender balance at the School Camp which is 50:50. The ratio at the Primary School was 18% male. This reflects the ratio of males to females in Victorian primary schools in 2014/2015 which was 21% male (Department of Education and Training, 2017). The overall gender ratio of the interviewees in the study (school and camp combined) was 27% male, which is slightly above the primary teacher gender ratio across the DET.

Using an ethnographic methodology favours certain data collection methods over others, which limits the breadth of the data. As ethnography seeks to discover data which can be used to describe a "cultural or social group or system" (Creswell, 1998, p. 58), it avoids collection of data which may not be relevant to that focus. Ethnography also focusses the analysis and interpretation of the data to develop understanding of a cultural group or system. While this bounds the analysis and interpretation, the limitation assists in the process of containing the study and keeping it focussed on the intent of the research questions. The study is also limited by the fact that it is my analysis and interpretation. Another researcher may interpret the data differently. Using a theoretical framework, which I have outlined earlier in this chapter, adds clarity to my purpose in analysis and interpretation, helping to overcome this limitation. Member checks of the findings chapters were used to add credibility and validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to my interpretations.

How much time each informant could or would reasonably spend with me, particularly in the interviews, limited the quantum of data gathered. Informants can exhibit biases, political agendas, or simply provide self-serving responses Patton (2002) warns, another potential distortion of the data. As participant observation is an important method of data collection, time spent in the research setting was a limiting factor. Patton advised that data collected by observation could be limited by my presence as a researcher in the setting and by the fact that I was observing behaviour while what was going on in the minds of those being observed remained invisible. In my case, without funding to support the research, there was a limit to the amount of time I could spend or absence my employer could manage to allow me to conduct participant observations. Artefacts relevant to the research may have been kept from me. I cannot know. Although each teacher's response to the interplay between the contexts in which they work and the research question is acknowledged as being subjective, it is hoped that they volunteered to participate in the research in good faith and, therefore, responded honestly and openly. Any other motive may have served to distort the findings and limit the worth of the research. My impression is that this was not the case. Triangulation of methods (Patton, 2002) was used to increase the validity of the data by exposing any tensions which may have been present.

I could not be everywhere. I could not see everything. Data collection was limited by what I did not see and what teachers did not want to tell me. That may well have been a null set, but I will never know.

10. Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to explicate the research design. This included developing a picture of the research settings, and explaining why I have chosen ethnography as the methodology, with its attendant methods, as the process of gathering and attempting to make sense of the data. Of particular importance was describing the challenges of being an insider in one of the research settings and how I proposed to address those challenges. It is now time to explore how teachers understand curriculum in their own words and actions.

CHAPTER 4.

HOW TEACHERS AT THE SCHOOL CAMP UNDERSTAND CURRICULUM

1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to give voice, through interview, supported by participant observation, and examination of artefacts, to a group of six teachers at a senior primary school camp. The focus of the data collection was to discover how the teachers understood the notion of curriculum and how that had an impact on their practical task of enactment. I use Schwab's (1973) commonplaces as a conceptual framework, to expand discussion rather than contain it, adding coherence to the developing picture of curriculum. I also use aspects, which are derived from themes emerging from analysis and interpretation of the data, to add detail to the picture.

Whilst Schwab (1973) provided only a cursory explanation of the commonplaces as he introduced them, which is expanded to some extent in other writing (Schwab, 1950/1989; 1959; 1969b; 1971; 1983), the interviews with the School Camp teachers revealed curriculum as a complex amalgam of ideas. In all, 25 aspects emerged from the interviews, developing the commonplaces into much deeper and richer entities. Moving the gaze of the interviews beyond curriculum-making by incorporating teacher practice, added curriculum enactment to the investigation. Analysis and interpretation of the aspects, in the light of Schwab's (1973) commonplaces, found that they could all be subsumed within the scope of the commonplaces: subject-matter; students; the milieus; teachers; and curriculum-making, which constitute the five sections of this chapter. Integrity of the aspects was maintained by allocating them as subsections within each commonplace. Allocation of aspects to the commonplaces was by what I considered the strongest, rather than the most perfect alignment. To contain the writing, they needed to reside in one commonplace. Often the aspects overlap commonplaces and commonplaces themselves intertwine. In action, the commonplaces and their aspects, as Schwab (1973) advised, serve curriculum deliberation best when there is "coalescence" (p. 501) amongst them. The aspects, which emerge as

themes from analysis and interpretation of the data, are allocated to the commonplaces as displayed in Figure 8:

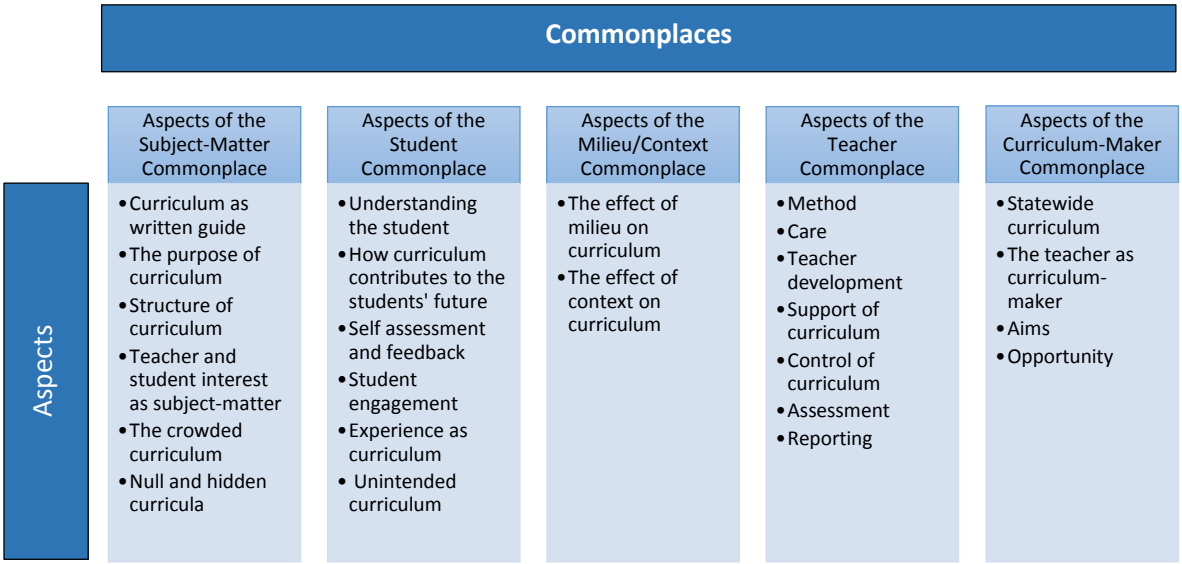

Figure 8. How teachers at the School Camp understand curriculum

As with the review of the curriculum literature, the way the understanding of curriculum is presented is developed from the combined perspectives of six individuals. The perspectives of each individual are much closer to that of the aggregated understanding of the group than is the case of individual authors in the literature review. Creswell (1998) credits this to the fact that the views expressed by the School Camp teachers reflect the "interactions of the culture-sharing group," (p. 58) of which they are members. This state of affairs is magnified by the fact that the topic of interest, curriculum, is the focus of their membership of the group.

2. The subject-matter commonplace at the School Camp

2.1. Introduction

In this commonplace, I outline the dominant place subject-matter has in the School Camp teachers understanding of curriculum, using aspects derived from the data to provide detail.

When asked at the start of their interviews “what is curriculum?” John and Karen answered “what we teach” and Fiona “content” early in their interviews, indicating the pre-eminent place subject-matter held in their understanding of curriculum. The School Camp Curriculum Resource Booklet uses the words “curriculum” and “lesson plans” interchangeably. Subtly different, Peter perceived it as “what should be taught to children,” in one breath joining subject-matter with teachers and students in a practical understanding of curriculum, demonstrating the integration of the commonplaces. One teacher, Margaret, opined that “subject-matter is only one part of curriculum” right from the start of her interview. Over the course of the interviews, all the teachers expanded their initial notion of curriculum. Subject-matter expanded from being understood initially as a guide to include aspects such as the purpose of curriculum, its structure, scope, and sequence, teacher interest, and the crowded, null, and hidden curricula.

2.2. Curriculum understood as written guide: an aspect of the subject-matter commonplace

In this aspect, I describe how the School Camp teachers’ understand curriculum as a written guide to subject-matter, facilitating alignment of their work with their colleagues. It is discussed as a reference point for ongoing curriculum development, and as a starting point for practical curriculum enactment.

Questioned on how curriculum is understood, Liz offered a detailed response.

> Curriculum to me is a set of guidelines, a skeleton structure that educators follow to keep us all on the same page, so it's consistent across the state. I think each state's very individual but, no matter where you go across Victoria, you're at the same level, you're being taught similar things, so if you change schools, things aren’t repeated. It should be a tool that teachers use to assist their teaching but not to direct their teaching. You should be able to broaden it.

Liz saw curriculum first as a statewide guide, providing coordination and consistency across an education system via the state mandated Victorian Curriculum. It did not direct teachers toward a particular method in her perception, but should allow for expansion of subject-matter. John noted the importance of curriculum at the local level in coordinating the efforts of teachers, especially where it was not always possible to have the same teacher following a

particular sequence of activities with the same class. “You can't have shambles. You all need to be on the same page. Then you need to pass them over to teachers on the next page from you.” John added another dimension when he stating that, “everyone's got to align. You don't want one teacher saying this is Australian history, and they're a revisionist teacher, and then you have another who says Cook is when Australian history began.” For John, curriculum also included being told how the subject-matter should be interpreted for presentation to students, crossing the line between guidance and control. Whether John thought the interpretation should be that of “the government that’s in at the time and who’s lobbied them” (Liz) with a view such as “John Howard’s black arm band history” (Margaret), or a “group of principals who are invited to participate” (Fiona), he did not specify.

Curriculum needed to be contained in a “very formal, and consciously worked out document” according to Peter and Karen, who both believed it was an important tool to facilitate consistency. “Archiving written curriculum allows reflection on the way curriculum has developed in the past,” Margaret explained, “informing its ongoing development,” demonstrating another level of guidance provided by curriculum documents. Teachers at the School Camp identified two such documents as evident in their working lives. First was the School Camp Curriculum Resource Booklet which described the subject-matter of the activities of the School Camp programme in detailed lesson plan format, the accurate enactment of which was confirmed in most instances by my observations, making this document a powerful organising force.

The second curriculum document identified by teachers at the School Camp was the Victorian Curriculum. “The School Camp falls under the Victorian Curriculum. We're particularly strong in the capabilities, in the personal and social capabilities, ethical and intercultural capabilities,” Karen recounted. What Karen noted was that the School Camp aims aligned conveniently with the personal and social capabilities of the Victorian Curriculum, rather than being designed from them, a point also made by Margaret. “I started here before CSF [Curriculum and Standards Framework] which was the first government curriculum. Our programme and aims had been in place for a long time by then, some of it for 35 years and didn’t change when that came in during the 90’s.” The momentum of a curriculum with deep historical roots had carried it up to and past the introduction of statewide curriculum. Conformity to the academically focussed statewide curriculum was not seen as part of the

remit of the School Camp, as Liz ventured. “We don’t follow the Victorian Curriculum, teaching exactly what they want us to teach,” with John adding, “when we get such great feedback from everyone on what we do, why would we teach the Victorian Curriculum? They do that at school.”

Knowledge of the Victorian Curriculum was claimed by the teachers. Yet whether there was any alignment between what the teachers know and practice and what was prescribed in the Victorian Curriculum was largely irrelevant, because they believe intrinsically in the curriculum they have inherited and developed. What I observed at the School Camp was a tension between what was known (very little of the Victorian Curriculum), what was said (claimed knowledge of the Victorian Curriculum), what was done (teaching practice), and what was written (local curriculum documents). Hovering over all of this was Margaret’s observation that “leadership say we deliver the Victorian Curriculum. I’m not sure whether they really believe that. If they do then they haven’t read it. We don’t actually teach much of it.” Fiona claimed that “for me it's important to follow the written curriculum that's given to us, you know, Vic[torian] Curriculum. I don't stick to it as strongly as a teacher in a school. I include it in every lesson.” When asked for examples, the response was “well, not very much really.” As it only delves as far as learning area headings, the School Camp curriculum interprets the Victorian Curriculum subject-matter in a way which is not consistent with the greater detail as outlined at subject-matter description level.

Like Karen, John attested that, at the School Camp we “cover a lot of KLA's [Key Learning Areas] in what we do.” However, when broken down to the actual quantum of subject-matter in the School Camp curriculum and what I observed being taught, John gave a more realistic appraisal remarking that “we shouldn't stretch it. We shouldn't say that because of this or that we are teaching the Victorian Curriculum, because that's ridiculous. Actually we don’t do much.” Liz initially proffered that “I think we do plenty of maths in our lessons.” Questioned further, she admitted that “no, we don't run formal maths lessons,” and that “we aren't really sticking to the sequence at all.” As an example, observation of practice in lessons revealed that simple addition was used a little but not taught and maths topics at level five and six of the Victorian Curriculum were not taught at all. Whilst claiming alignment with the Victorian Curriculum, observation and deeper questioning of the teachers revealed that, in reality, it did not have much influence on the official School Camp curriculum or its enactment.

2.3. The purpose of curriculum: an aspect of the subject-matter commonplace

In this aspect, I reveal how the School Camp teachers understand subject-matter as a vehicle to achieve the documented programme aims of student personal, social, and environmental development, their deeper priority.

Subject-matter was seen as a medium with which to achieve the aims, but in a way which interested and engaged the students. As Margaret explained, "often what we are doing with the children is only translated as a formal low ropes course. In fact that is not curriculum. It is one part of curriculum which is a vehicle to achieve the personal, social, and environmental aims of the programme." One of the newer members of the School Camp teaching staff was focussed on the activities for their own sake, rather than their purpose in a broader curricular sense.

> I look at the camp programme as very activity based and regimented and I think I've written the word disjointed. I guess in the fact that you're stuck in an hour with no flexibility either side and the changes I'd like to see in the future would be more continued learning throughout a whole day. A more extended period of time and I also think that there'd be value in it being focussed more, like one focus for a whole day or a whole half a day. So it could be marine environment focussed, then a challenge through adventure day where all those sorts of activities are grouped together. (Fiona)

Karen emphasised that the "activities are a way that deliver aims and objectives, a tool of curriculum." The explanation Karen offered was that activities which make up the programme are used to achieve, and are linked by, the School Camp aims which are read in conjunction with the vision statement. Where Fiona indicated a desire to have a focus for a whole day, the aims, when employed, provided a focus for, and a link between, every one of the nine days of the programme, and every part of each day as Karen pointed out.

2.4. Structure: an aspect of the subject- matter commonplace

In this aspect, I highlight the significance the School Camp teachers place on structure as an aspect of subject-matter. Included in the discussion is the impact of structure on students, the sequential structure of the programme, the balance of programme components, and structures to facilitate community living.

Commenting on the reality of written curriculum, Liz remarked that it was very “structured and prescriptive.” Agreeing with Liz, Fiona commented on the written curriculum of the School Camp specifically, describing it as “regimented,” indicating her preference for less structure and more flexibility. A different perspective on the value of structure was provided by Margaret, who presented a reasoned account on the value of structure, identifying a number of elements. The structure of the timetable provided a number of benefits to the student, first amongst them security.

> We take upper primary school children to create this community through adventure, recreation, environmental activities, social interaction and how that looks on the ground is the timetable. The timetable is a controlling factor which first of all gives structure to all these new arrivals. Then what I've noticed over and over again, by about day four or five the children know the timetable, it gives them a sense of security. (Margaret)

Students become acquainted with the timetable early on their first day at the School Camp by copying it into their camp booklet. This has the effect of reducing the unknown and beginning to make the new community more familiar and predictable to the student, increasing their sense of security. Margaret emphasised the point that the students sense of independence and agency grew as they felt more familiar within the new community.

> Some camps we could withdraw over the last three or four days and the camp would operate. By then it is a well-oiled, functioning, I don't want to use the word machine, but it's almost like that and the ownership suddenly goes to the kids. When that happens I believe we're right on track. What they own is the community they’ve had a part in creating. (Margaret)

Another structural aspect of subject-matter was sequencing.

> We bring a group of 20 kids together who don't know each other to live in a hut. Immediately we're putting them in this whole new social experience. Then we introduce outdoor activities, but sequentially developed, which lets them take little steps, and gives them a taste of where they’re heading. So the timetable is a way of easing in. It goes from introductory to intermediate to final wrap up sort of sessions,

> so hopefully the children can progress along their own journey. Where possible, one teacher will follow a group through a sequence. (Margaret)

Margaret noted that the programme was purposefully designed to sequence the subject-matter, experienced as activities in this case. “Sequencing lessons, low ropes, through to high ropes, and then to rock climbing I think is really important. If you want the child to achieve the most they can, if you can sequence something you're more likely to have success,” Karen surmised, highlighting incremental progression as an aspect of sequencing. Supporting Karen’s observation, John ventured that “because our curriculum takes small steps the kids are less likely to stumble. But I’ve got to say, what we think are small steps are massive for some of them.”

Mutual trust and respect created a context which was more conducive to learning in Karen’s view. “Because we get students we are unfamiliar with, and they are unfamiliar with us, we need to build that level of trust with them. They associate their success with us and respect our ability in our role as teachers.” Standards have been set and structures established as part of curriculum, which led Karen to comment that “then I spend less time on student behaviour management.”

Keeping a balance between adventure, creative, passive, environmental, and more recently reflective activities, acknowledging the variety of interests and strengths students possess, while providing opportunities for them to explore and develop new areas of interest, was an intention expressed by the School Camp teachers and is reflected in the timetable. “That’s why we have activities like art and library and scrapbooking in the programme,” John exclaimed. “It’s important to have balance, especially towards the end of camp when they are starting to get tired.” Karen asserted the importance of “providing activities for children who have a more creative orientation. It shouldn’t just be about adventure activities. That doesn’t cater for everyone. And we want them to move outside what they normally do.”

The structures which support the programme and develop the students’ involvement with the School Camp as a community extended to the efforts of the non-teaching staff. Margaret included their contribution and acknowledged its significance**.**

> The other side of what does it look like is the cleaning, the maintenance, the presenting of food, which is an enormous task. That's a whole other side that's not

> really seen, per se, but it's such an important aspect that holds it together and the kids are involved in a lot of this, helping with the catering, cleaning, respecting the facilities so maintenance is reduced. It's all part of community living.

For Margaret, this was about living as learning and learning being in the context of community living.

2.5. Teacher and student interest: an aspect of the subject-matter commonplace

In this aspect, I outline the emphasis the School Camp teachers place on subject-matter, reflecting their interests and those of the students, as an aspect of their understanding of curriculum.

In stating that particular subject-matter may "not be common to everyone's curriculum, like what I choose to focus on in my art lessons," Karen noted another level of curriculum. As well as national, state, and local levels of curriculum, Karen identified that teachers also had a curriculum, which hinted at a certain degree of autonomy. A case in point was Peter, who declared that "when I am delivering something that's not part of a written curriculum document, it is still part of my teaching," explaining that in the process "I'm broadening the documented curriculum." Liz agreed, asking "what if the kids want to learn about stuff or they bring it up? I should be able to do that. If I want to bring stuff up, I'm going to be more passionate and engaging about that." By responding to student interest, subject-matter which would otherwise languish in the null curriculum (1.7. below) is exposed to the light of day. A major factor which mitigates against teachers pursuing incidental topics of interest with students is the crowded curriculum, or at the School Camp, a full and heavily prescribed curriculum.

2.6. The crowded curriculum: an aspect of the subject-matter commonplace

In this aspect, I investigate how the School Camp teachers deal with the demands to include more subject-matter in the curriculum.

Rather than trying to fit indigenous studies into an already crowded curriculum as a stand-alone subject, the curriculum team responsible for the project gradually integrated

indigenous culture into a variety of areas of the existing programme. In meetings with indigenous elders, Karen reported that “normalising indigenous language was suggested as a good starting point for reconciliation.” The first instance was to name the nocturnal enclosure “Burrun Dha” meaning “night time” in the local indigenous language, followed by the naming of two boats used in the boating programme. A trend noticed by Peter emanating from this process was a “focus on indigenous plants in new landscaping which is great for environmental studies lessons” and a “positive to come out of our indigenous engagement.”

As the timetable specifies when each activity occurs and the lesson plan specifies what teaching and learning should happen within an activity, Liz remarked that “lessons can be very tight on time.” In activities like rock climbing, flying fox, or archery the teachers had a tendency, as Fiona noted, to give the kids as many goes as possible.” Sometimes this was at the expense of the formal reflective activities, with Liz musing that “it's something that really upsets me when we have really challenging activities, maybe a height challenge or something that's really worried kids and I don't have the time to reflect with them on that.” For Margaret it was important to “share the aims with the kids at the start and reflect at the end. Otherwise it’s just activity. If you value learning you make time.”

2.7. Null and hidden curricula; an aspect of the subject-matter commonplace

In this aspect, I reveal how the School Camp teachers understand the null and hidden curricula, and their impact as aspects of curriculum.

As is common practice with documents of its type, the Curriculum Resource Booklet at the School Camp only describes the subject-matter of the lessons. Rarely considered in discussions of curriculum is what is not included, the null curriculum. Karen’s initial reply when asked “how do you decide what will be left out of the curriculum?” was “I've not given that a lot of thought to be honest, but there’s too much knowledge to teach people,” a response shared by the other teachers interviewed.

After reflecting on the question of the null curriculum, Peter addressed the issue from a different perspective, that of curriculum having aims.

> I think particularly at a primary age level, my take on the intention in the first instance is that the curriculum is teaching children how to operate in a modern society. To be able to read, to write or type, to communicate, to speak, to listen, to understand.

Peter's response to the notion of the null curriculum was to focus on the purpose of the curriculum and consideration of what "vehicle might best achieve that aim," once again highlighting a difference between enactment and simple delivery of curriculum. At the level of a primary school, he believed the aim should be to furnish children with the skills to be able to operate in today's world. Fiona described this as the "foundation of what's required in curriculum." This raises the question of curriculum having aims and the status of aims in discussions of curriculum. Having aims to guide the design and enactment of curriculum goes some way towards providing a solution to the problem of the null curriculum.

Pursuing another perspective, Fiona proposed "choices, high school does that." Peter also introduced the idea of student agency as a contributor to the null curriculum.

> By the time kids get to secondary school the expectation is that they've got the basics of that, or the majority have. Now do you want to branch out into some more specifics which is based on choice? There's too much knowledge to teach people so children are given the opportunity to make choices and follow more specific pathways. (Peter)

Here Peter and Fiona highlighted different levels of the null curriculum, pointing out that students create their own null curriculum as they move through the school system and are asked to make subject choices. The choices may reflect a vocational or academic pathway students perceive as possibilities. Equally, the students' choices could be as a result of opting out of subjects in which they were having limited success or show little interest. All of the choices result in some of the subject offerings available in the school curriculum inhabiting the null curriculum of an individual student.

Much of the curriculum at the School Camp was not recorded, occupying the hidden curriculum, which for Karen also included the "things we do outside of formal lessons and the things that happen in lessons that aren't written down." There is no written document for induction on the first day which makes it part of a hidden, but no less important, School Camp curriculum.

At the School Camp, part of the hidden curriculum is the reward structure. Praise is a common reward for preferred behaviour such as raising the hand or listening quietly. Preference is another reward I observed. Preferential entry to the dining room is given to an orderly group, and a quiet group may be dismissed first after a meal. Rowdy behaviour around the captive animals may lead to exclusion, in deference to the well-being of the animals. To reward positive behaviour, John introduced "priority pick cards for optional activities. I like the idea that good behaviour is rewarded." Well organised groups get more turns at archery or the flying fox, with teachers making sure that the students understand the cause and effect implications of their choices of behaviour.

The hidden curriculum also involves process. "When I take a group of children for the first time," Peter related, "as a practitioner, my method is I don't want to hit them straight away with our intended curriculum until I feel I've got those children paying attention." Pointing out that "It's not just a matter of be quiet, look at me, that's a very crass way of doing it," Peter emphasised the importance of the hidden curriculum in his practice and its place ahead of and supporting the intended curriculum.

2.8. Summary of the subject-matter commonplace

For the teachers, subject-matter embodied numerous aspects, including its role as an important guide to curriculum, but it was much more than that. There was a purpose to it, as a vehicle to achieve the aims of the School Camp. As it had not been mandated externally, but was designed by the teachers, they displayed complete ownership of it. It was structured and sequenced to be appropriate for senior primary students, with teachers adding their own elements where they thought it would enhance the programme. Finally, they discussed the significance of the crowded, null and hidden curricula.

Curriculum is irrelevant without those for whom it is enacted – the students, constituting the greatest topic of interest for the teachers as they discussed curriculum.

3. The student commonplace at the School Camp

3.1. Introduction

In this commonplace, I explore the way the School Camp teachers understand the student commonplace through the aspects which emerged from the data. Aspects which they discussed included: understanding the students generally and as individuals; thinking about the impact of the curriculum on the students futures; unintended curriculum; engagement of students; and their belief in experience as the most powerful and effective form of learning.

When asked what topics needed to be included when talking about curriculum, Peter insisted that "the children have to be a part of the discussion." According to the teachers, the prime focus of their work was the student and achieving the highest outcomes possible in their interactions with every student.

3.2. How the School Camp teachers understand the student - generally and individually: an aspect of the student commonplace

In this aspect, the School Camp teachers explain why they believe it is important to understand students both generally and individually.

In the process of calibration, "any curriculum makes broad assumptions about where the majority of children are at a particular age," Peter accurately remarked. This is as it must be with written curriculum, whether at the level of the state or the School Camp, it can only deal with generalisations of real people and situations. Reflecting on the School Camp curriculum, Margaret considered that it was "appropriate for these kids, where we've observed they're generally at developmentally by this age and I should say that this has changed over time as we have noticed changes in their development," indicating attention to curriculum as a living process.

Due to its residential context, homesickness is an area in which the School Camp has had much experience. Liz, who had completed post-graduate research on the topic, attested that "for the majority it is very low level. You couldn't tell without asking them. Even for the ones you can notice it goes away quickly as they make new friends." A suite of strategies had been

implemented over time. In Liz's experience, "it's just a matter of finding the right solution for each child." Counselling by teachers was effective in most cases, helping them to establish friendships being the most common solution. Counselling from the Campus Principal, who had also researched the issue, was the next level of support. One or two students on average would go home with their parents after visitors' day, the sixth day of the programme, with the School Camp mindful of not allowing a situation to develop where the students had a mis-educative experience. Pre-camp information on homesickness, which Liz had helped to develop in recent times, had "made a difference. The kids are better prepared. It might be that some parents realise their kids aren't ready and don't send them," she commented. In contrast to this were the emotional scenes as students separated from their new found community at the end of the camp, reflecting the intensity of the experience for them. Building a general understanding of homesickness, armed the teachers with the strategies necessary to deal with the specific ways it presented in individual students.

More important to the teachers was specific knowledge of the students in their care. Margaret's observations, accumulated over a long career, were that "every child brings different experiences." By responding to the differences, she believed, teachers include "learners as contributors to curriculum." This included observations of how individual students differed from the norm, what each of them knew and could do, and the attitudes they possessed. Karen had noticed a change in philosophy of the School Camp, from one size fits all to a more differentiated model of curriculum.

> There have been changes in the type of students we have. An increased diversity of students we get now than we used to. In response, the culture of teaching at the School Camp has changed. So when I first started it was in an era that all students would complete all tasks. Now I believe, it's much more individualised, where we consider the needs of the students more, and tailor the delivery and structure of the programme to be more individually responsive.

As Karen pointed out, it was the enactment of the programme that was differentiated rather than the written syllabus as "we've always had to deal with a mixed group of students, not knowing their prior experiences or knowledge or what they're capable of and we have little time to work it out." When reflecting on the impact of this on her work, Karen added that "it's one of the most constant parts of my work when I think about it. You never stop assessing

what's happening as you are working with the kids and adjusting constantly to make sure they're achieving the outcomes."

Regardless of the lack of knowledge of the background of the students, John advised that "you've got to be watching the actual way the lesson develops, the behaviours of the kids, the way they're picking things up, what's working for them, and modify things to respond to all of that." I observed this in the actions of the teachers as they: accompanied a student around the high ropes course; gave a quiet student an important task; maintained close physical presence with a student with behavioural problems; changed the partners in a boat; eased a homesick student into a cricket game in free time; or organised a different meal for a student struggling with the food on offer. This was done with such a delicate touch, immediately responsive in the moment, and so subtle that an inexperienced observer might not notice anything at all.

One of the ways the School Camp differentiates the programme, to accommodate the variety of students it encounters, is through the flexible structure of the contexts. Using a rope course to illustrate the point, Peter explained that "some elements everyone can do, some most can do, and one or two only a few can do. Everyone is challenged. At the same time everyone succeeds because of the way we structure it." Providing more detail, Liz explaining that the "standards I expect differ for every child but there's a minimum standard I would expect each kid to get to for each lesson. Our programme's been designed to allow everyone to achieve but there's plenty of top end too," demonstrating the capacity of the School Camp curriculum, through its contexts, to allow all students to achieve by differentiating the outcomes and expectations to match the student.

Milieu was in Liz's mind when she described method as something "I think you modify to suit their backgrounds and where they come from. It's just finding how they learn." Reflecting his assessment of the way most of the School Camp students learned as kinaesthetic, John structured his teaching "so that the kids are doing, not listening. When I talk too much, they just glaze over," warning that sometimes "you're flogging a dead horse to keep going. You've got to know when to stop. There's always tomorrow. Move on to something else." At times, when students for a variety of reasons are not receptive, to persevere would lead to missed curriculum, or worse, a mis-educative experience. John's decision to stop teaching at those

times appears prescient, leaving students to return at another time when they may be more receptive to achieving the aims of the lesson.

3.3. Contributing to the student's future: an aspect of the student commonplace

In this aspect, I examine how the School Camp teachers understand their role in contributing to the future of their students as an aspect of the student commonplace, including a discussion of the importance of student exposure to risk and the responsibilities of community living.

It was John's hope for the outcome of participation in the School Camp programme that it might "help kids as they move through life." His aspiration was shared with the teachers through the vision statement of the School Camp – Experience **FOR** a Lifetime (see Figure 6)**.** The School Camp vision statement expressed the hope that the experiences in which the students participated would provide a springboard from which to continue to explore, as John mused, "opportunities and new possibilities." Printing **"FOR"** in bold capitals symbolised the fact that, as Peter explained, "I don't expect that this will be the best experience the students will ever have. No way. But I honestly hope it might contribute to their future." John expanded that idea, expressing hope that "they will become something at the end of the lesson - a climber, or a boater, maybe even a team member, a waiter, a well organised person, or a conservationist." The approach Margaret took to achieve this was by "breaking down the activity and teaching them how to perform the skill, but having them own what they enjoy about it. Then there's an element of success, an element of achievement that lights the fire." John expressed the same hopes.

> That would hopefully provide the impetus to go off and develop the skill, or develop a taste for adventure. It might be travel, or it might be something that we don't even do like the caving I did recently. But they trace the bug to get out and have a go back to here.

Adding to John's vignette, Karen reported that "when I speak to students I have taught at Camp, they often express that they have continued things outside of Camp. I heard of one who became an Olympic archer and he picked up his first bow here." Both John and Karen suggested that a longitudinal study would be interesting to investigate the long term impact

of the School Camp, although John did wonder “how you would isolate the influence of Camp from other experiences they’ve had since then,” an insightful comment.

Exposure of students to controlled risk was mentioned by the School Camp teachers as a valuable aspect of the programme. Being involved in the outdoor and environmental education disciplines, the School Camp teachers believed in children spending as much time as possible outdoors, both at camp and at home. Confronting appropriate risks was a “benefit the kids will gain from these experiences for the future,” Fiona hypothesised. “These types of incidents that they experience in our lessons will teach them how to identify and manage risks for themselves,” a point supported by Peter when he mentioned that “they need to learn about cause and effect, not sheltered from consequences which seems to be the norm now.” John was frustrated by the response to perceived danger in society. Over-regulation he believed, far from making society safer was making the situation worse by “denying kids the experiences I had when I was young which were important in my development.” John had visited a primary school which “had a creek running through it that they could splash around in, throw rocks into, light a fire beside. That absolutely aligns with my belief of what curriculum should be.” He asked “why aren’t we allowed to include elements of risk in an activity that would benefit from it? There’s too many barriers in place, too much irrational fear.” The real problem identified by John was that “if you're not prepared to step out of your comfort zone to take risks, then I don't think you're an active student, and that includes us as teachers.”

Learning to contribute to community was an area Fiona noted. “I don't think that learning is obvious to kids when they are doing the dishes. They just see it as a chore. It’s only when you front load it and reflect afterwards that they get it,” adding the judgement that “I wouldn’t think many of them do much at home. Hopefully that changes after being here. I think they actually enjoy it.” John went further, venturing that “we really are about a holistic approach to crafting a citizen in our nine days, someone who will contribute to their community in positive ways” invoking the aims of the School Camp in the comment.

3.4. Self-assessment and feedback: aspects of the student commonplace

In this section, the School Camp teachers explain how they understand self-assessment and feedback as an aspect of the student commonplace.

Self-assessment by the students is a powerful aid to their learning journey. When the students believe they have achieved, the learning has been effective. The development of sense of self does not require a numerical grade, what it requires is self-belief. The structure of the programme provided inbuilt reference points against which the students can mark their own progress. Some typical reflections Peter reported from the students as evidence were: "I didn't think I could be away from home for nine days, and I have; I haven't lived with 160 other kids before, and now I have; I wasn't a surfer, and now I am; I performed on stage, and survived." Self-assessment was also important for the students in Liz's experience. "To do an assessment at the end you need to do a pre-assessment. The kids need to realise where they are at when they start, so that they can see where they are in comparison at the end," adding a qualifying comment that "kids know where they are at. You can't con them."

The sense of achievement was magnified when accompanied by teacher acknowledgement, due to the respect the students invested in the opinion of an expert. Illustrating the point, Peter ventured that "the feedback we give in surfing is a classic at reassuring the students they've been successful. It's not uncommon for children in that circumstance to honestly believe they couldn't do it." Continuing to explain the process, Peter described how when you give them "the thumbs up after they have caught a wave**.** The look on their faces when they have affirmation from us that they have - priceless," demonstrating the power self-assessment supported by teacher feedback has on student achievement.

3.5. Student engagement: an aspect of the student commonplace

In this section, I discuss how student engagement forms a valuable part of the understanding of the student commonplace for the School Camp teachers.

One of Liz's recollections of her participation in the School Camp as a student was "being excited by the way the teachers were excited. I remember an archery lesson where the teacher was so excited about teaching it that I was excited, which is something I try to replicate now." Liz revealed the importance of motivation in achieving the desired learning

outcomes with students and the different ways this can happen. Incorporated into Peter's understanding of curriculum was as a guide "which instructs practitioners what should be taught to children. Curriculum won't tell me how to engage the children." Focussing on community Margaret believed, "allowed children to be actively engaged. When it's going really well, they don't even know they're at camp. They're just living and learning through it," an important advantage offered by the context of the School Camp. "I feel the most benefits from my lessons come when I have a relationship with the kids. That engages them on a personal level," Liz purported.

Karen self-assessed her personal professional efficacy "through the level of engagement of the students in my lessons." In the nocturnal session John described the students as "spellbound. How could you not be engaged by those animals? Most of the kids wouldn't have seen them before and they're hand feeding them. They won't forget that. That's effective learning." "I don't think you can really get a meaningful learning experience in a classroom with four walls. It's about experience and the real world, the environment here. That's what engages them," introducing the notion of experience to curriculum.

3.6. Understanding experience: an aspect of the student commonplace

In this aspect, I outline the significant presence experience has in the School Camp teachers understanding of the student commonplace of curriculum, including a discussion of how they understand experience as learning.

Experience is mentioned both insistently, persistently, and in different ways throughout the interviews. It is certainly an aspect of curriculum, finding accommodation in more than one commonplace, a quality it shares with other aspects. As it is the student to whom the experience is directed, who has the experience, and who acquires experience from the process, it is the student commonplace which has been selected as the principal place of residence of experience in this study. Experience is understood by the School Camp teachers in three ways.

First was experience as doing, experiencing in the moment. Liz stated that "kids learn through experience." Emphasising experience as learning style, Fiona attested "that's how we learn things as humans, experiencing and interpreting it in way that has meaning for the individual

is something that cements that learning," acknowledging the place of the ontological in determining what the student takes from curriculum. As Karen pointed out, because it was the experience of an individual, it was open to be interpreted differentially, which in the past she noted had sometimes been mis-educative. Using experience, Fiona thought, was "more meaningful" and in contrast to "our instruction and us just telling kids how something is done," interpreting experience as a kinaesthetic activity. All of the School Camp teachers used the word experience, regularly and deliberately, instead of lesson, a more school like word to describe the interactions between teachers and students in a context. Differentiating between experience and activity, Margaret proposed that "we take them on an experience, a journey into the outdoors and try to achieve our aims in that setting through the experience." Highlighting Margaret's point, John explained that in bushcraft "the kids collect wood to make a fire, they light a fire to cook food, they cook food because they're hungry, they put the fire out for safety, they clean up to care for the environment. Everything has to have a purpose, otherwise it is just an activity." A group of students Peter took surfing included 10 who had never been to the beach. He reported the surprised looks on their faces as for the first time "they smelt and tasted salt water and felt the prickliness as the salt dried and got crusty on their skin. Best of all is the screams of excitement when they feel the force of the waves move them. I work for those moments."

The second way School Camp teachers understood experience was as having an experience. This way of knowing experience is similar to experiencing. It is still doing but is located across time. It is represented by the experience of the whole nine day camp, rather than the experiencing of its individual parts. The School Camp "experiences themselves lead towards children developing social connections," and in the process, proposed Peter, "developing a sense of creating their own community," the bigger unifying project at the School Camp. For Margaret, the purpose of the School Camp was "to provide an experience. Not the lessons. I don't consider that experience. It's the programme. It's how it all comes together over the whole camp linked by the aims. That's what experience is for me." Aims, for Margaret, operated as an important factor linking the individual lessons with purpose and investing them with deeper meaning. Successful achievement of learning outcomes, John believed, was due to "the intensity of the experience compared with school. It's full on. You only have to

see the looks on their faces when they go from 'I can't' to 'Look what I just did' in an activity and the emotion of the whole experience as they leave camp to know it's true."

The third way of knowing experience revealed by the teachers was when the student has experience which can be brought to bear on the situation at hand. Here, experience is understood as application of reflection on experiencing. This experience travels with its bearer across time and space, but is memory dependent. Rather than conducting lessons as such, Karen saw the purpose of the School Camp as being to "offer an experience to the students so they can increase their self-awareness, their social awareness, and their environmental awareness and then hopefully that leads them to develop more active care and purpose in their role in the community." What Karen identified was a cycle of insight, gained from reflection on the experience of the activity, informing the foresight of the student. The student thus became more experienced, the point of the School Camp according to its teachers.

3.7. Unintended outcomes: an aspect of the student commonplace

In this aspect, I report on the occasional unintended outcomes the School Camp teachers noticed as a result of student interaction with the curriculum, usually flowing from issues which should have involved choice, and the impact this can have on curricular outcomes.

Early in his tenure at the School Camp, Peter had witnessed "a kid dragged, kicking and screaming, along the high ropes course when the student had asked to be lowered off the high ropes course." According to Peter this "wasn't what the student desired or needed in the situation." "Once she got to the ground, the student yelled at the teacher," quite angrily Peter reported, "'I'm never doing anything like this again and I'm never going on a camp again,'" certainly falling into the category of an unintended curriculum outcome and that of a mis-educative experience. Being aware of the potential for unintended consequences of the programme, the School Camp teachers were ever vigilant to prevent them occurring.

Responding to homesickness was another issue of choice, which elicited a variety of opinions amongst the School Camp teachers. Liz had researched the issue and believed "the kids need a lot of support, not only here but before they come to camp and it should be their choice. Sometimes it's not." On the other hand John felt "they should tough it out. I haven't seen

anyone who wasn't happy they had stayed at the end." In Margaret's opinion "sometimes the support crosses into pressure to stay. Some of these kids just aren't ready, but I think it's changing. It's a tough call between what's good for the child and them having choice." In these instances, the curriculum was not differentiated to cater for the individual student. The choice of opting out was not offered, effectively diminishing the student commonplace. Over time, Peter had seen a growth in student agency through the "concept of children being allowed to, and being encouraged to make their own choices." Alongside the choices sat an expectation of the "children to be responsible for what they do, how they learn, and how they approach life at camp. I think it's a wonderful change I've seen."

3.8. Summary of the student commonplace

Having a general understanding of the students was an important aspect of curriculum identified by the teachers when they made curriculum. It developed out of their experience working with students and accumulated as institutional knowledge, passed on from teacher to teacher. The teachers indicated that to be effective, curriculum enactment required constant attention to gathering specific knowledge, mainly through observation of the individuals in their care, and noted this as a core part of their work.

Engagement of the students was also identified as an important indicator of success which the School Camp teachers used to assess themselves. The ultimate measure of success was engagement of the students with their new community, the central project of the programme. With the vision statement in mind, the School Camp teachers were as one in considering the future benefits of their work with the students. Finally, they discussed the student commonplace through the lens of the first word of the vision statement - learning through "experience." Although everyone aspires for education to be a positive experience, the School Camp teachers indicated that they had developed awareness of the potential for unintended consequences to result from exposure to the School Camp curriculum. Over time this had become less of an issue, particularly with the increased respect afforded to students in relation to their opportunities to make choices.

Experiential education relies heavily on the context in which curriculum is enacted, and understanding the student and subject-matter requires an appreciation of the impact of milieu, essential topics in Schwab's (1973) curriculum deliberations.

4. The milieu/context commonplace at the School Camp

4.1. Introduction

In this commonplace, I divide the commonplace into two parts - milieu, discussing what Peter described as the "wider world," and context, to capture what Margaret labelled as the "teaching space."

Context dominated a clearly differentiated understanding of milieu held by the teachers. They perceived it as a significant strength of the School Camp curriculum. Separating the two aspects allows exposition of the commonplace to reflect the different perspectives more accurately. As the catchment of the School Camp is the whole state of Victoria and the teachers are not familiar with most of the communities it encapsulates, finer aspects of the milieu of the students are largely unknown. I observed cultural differences being accommodated in food choice and religious observance where requested. Socio-economic differences mean that some students arrive with more experience, having enjoyed a greater range of experiences with their families. Once in the programme, all students are on an even footing (except for experience as mentioned), leaving the trappings of their lives behind. On that basis, milieu did not figure as a strong theme.

4.2. How teachers at the School Camp understand milieu: an aspect of the milieu/context commonplace

In this aspect, I focus on how milieu effects the way the School Camp teachers understand curriculum, and the impact social, political, cultural, and economic factors have on student learning and curriculum development.

Thinking about curriculum, which he described as "written by and for the affluent," Peter wondered about its "relevance to students in the western suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne."

Margaret worried that “cultural domination” caused by appeasement to “populist reactionary views is quite negative, it can distort curriculum,” and she found it hard to believe that a national curriculum could be relevant across a whole country, where “Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory would be delivering the same content as Longford in Tasmania.” The point being made was that one curriculum could never hope to be reflective of the diversity of the social, economic, cultural, and environmental milieu found in Australia. At the same time, Peter argued that “any society has expectations of behaviour, very broad expectations of what is expected and what is relevant. The curriculum should be reflective of that,” declaring his belief that milieu must effect curriculum. By including behaviour in his understanding of curriculum, Peter acknowledged the hidden curriculum.

Lowering her gaze from a national perspective, Liz pondered whether “a state might be too broad. But are Perth kids the same as Derby kids? Or could it go even more narrow.” On further reflection, Liz suggested that she “felt for the people that set the curriculum,” expressing empathy for the task of reconciling “what’s important to us here at the School Camp may not be important to people at an inner city private school, let alone Arnhem Land.” John agreed, expressing the view that even at the level of state education “you can't design a curriculum which suits everyone” because, as Liz pointed out, “there's such a huge background difference.”

Mentioning that “statewide curriculum and testing isn’t equitable,” Karen reasoned that it “favours students from certain socio-economic backgrounds. Students who can articulate their response in the format that's required will perform well. Those that can't will be perceived as unsuccessful.” This statement by Karen captures the impact milieu has on the success individual students will have in deciphering not only curriculum, but the culture it represents, and how they will be ranked by their interaction with it.

An insight Liz shared when discussing milieu was that it “comes down to a teachers background as well,” indicating that the teachers world view will probably be influenced by where in society they have come from, and where in society they believe they fit. As discussed earlier in this study, system wide curriculum has little influence on the School Camp curriculum. This places the School Camp teachers in the role of curriculum-makers. It then becomes a matter of relevance to this study to understand the milieu of the School Camp and the influence it exerts over curriculum development and its enactment.

As the students participating in each camp come from a catchment of around 25 schools across at least a few suburban boundaries and at times large areas of rural Victoria, it is difficult to identify what their milieu might be. They do not start as a culture sharing group. “We put them in this whole new social experience and build a new community,” Karen explained. They become a culture sharing group over the course of the camp as the new community develops, because, as Margaret emphasised, “children knowing, doing, and understanding, that doesn't happen in isolation. You connect with other people, the sharing of knowledge, of an experience, of understanding, is the basis of community and the starting point of our curriculum delivery.” At a surface level, the School Camp presents as a collection of educative contexts. Taken together, it becomes a community, displaying its own milieu, albeit on a micro scale.

Claiming that you “need to modify your delivery of the curriculum to match the cohort of kids that you're working with, to suit their backgrounds and where they come from,” Liz acknowledged that it is enactment rather than the subject-matter which differentiates the programme to suit particular individuals and groups of students at the School Camp. Karen asserted that “because we get a mixture of students, I don't see that we target particular changes in the curriculum for the students that come to us.” Certainly social, economic and political differences are not considered as they are largely unknown. “The students are treated as equal members of the School Camp community, but we individualise it if they have special needs” Karen added. John corroborated, stating “I think we are really good in our setting. We very quickly get a feel for what the group has and we allow for individual differences, cultural differences.” But he also added that “we are really well set up to say, if a little kid is sitting in the dining room and there's no chopsticks for them, we just get them. There’s a space provided for a prayer room for the Muslim kids. We can accommodate anything.” John revealed that the programme, albeit through the hidden curriculum, was responsive to milieu.

Describing the School Camp as “our little isolated situation,” Fiona meant a small, physically self-contained community which is home to the students for the nine days of the camp. Regardless of the impact of societal milieu on the School Camp curriculum, “if the curriculum doesn't support what's happening in the wider world then what's the point in teaching it” Fiona argued, pointing out that “sustainability and indigenous studies have become bigger

issues in society, which we have embraced." In Liz's opinion, "this comes back to the real world. I love that we can deliver learning in context here at Camp. Students need to see the curriculum as relevant to their own lives," which supported Fiona's point that regardless of the milieu from which it emanates, the curriculum must prepare every student to be able to function and prosper in the milieu to which they will return and in which they will live.

4.3. How teachers at the School Camp understand context: an aspect of the milieu/context commonplace

In this aspect, I outline the important place context holds in the School Camp teachers understanding of curriculum. The discussion includes identification of a variety of contexts and layers of contexts, and the advantage the School Camp teachers believe it bestows on their work.

While milieu is not a strong theme in discussions of curriculum with the teachers, the same cannot be said for what Margaret called her "teaching space" and John and Fiona labelled their "teaching and learning environment." There are places at School Camp which are not usually perceived as traditional curriculum contexts, some of which Margaret identified.

> The dining rooms, the playground, the dormitories in particular where we're not necessarily present. That's another whole side of School Camp that, if we referred to it as free time, I think that works at a whole different level of cohesion or it can work against it. Relationships have to be considered within curriculum if we are talking about a learning environment. That's where the friendships really blossom and that's the start of community. (Margaret)

It was Liz's belief that "even if it's not structured activities, when they're here at camp I think they're immersed in curriculum for the whole time, whether they're aware of it or not." Students were given some freedom to develop the social cohesion upon which community is founded. At the same time, teachers were allocated to cast an eye across the situation to ensure the social development was progressing along lines deemed appropriate, acknowledging that education, no matter how subtle, is a directed activity. If not managed, as Margaret declared, "it has the potential to go awry."

It is through building a sense of community in each camp that the teachers provide the conditions for living that underpin the learning. Peter was emphatic when asked if context was part of curriculum. “My word” was the response, adding “our context is completely different to a school. Explaining that “we immerse kids in a whole different environment, it’s the starting point of our curriculum delivery. If it isn’t really a significant difference, why do it here. This is a huge advantage we have over schools,” highlighting the value the teachers placed on context and inserting it as a part of their teaching method at the same time.

When discussing contexts, Karen declared that the fact that they were “authentic” at the School Camp and led to “genuine experiences that allow the students to learn from what they are doing. So much more powerful than worksheets and equations on a whiteboard in a classroom.” A “real life sort of thing,” Fiona expanded. Karen highlighted the purposeful nature of contexts maintaining that the “learning environment makes the experience so much more powerful. That to me is our real strength. We have created an environment that highlights to the students what our aims are, so context is very important. The aims and the context are appropriate to each other. They intensify their effectiveness.” John agreed, claiming “We've got an amazing setting for outdoor learning. And so we should, after years of refining the site to the way that we want it. It’s no accident,” adding that “they keep working for you, over and over. They represent a great investment.” Concurring, Peter used surfing, a recent addition to the curriculum, to illustrate this point. “Curriculum in the ocean at last. It’s a great session, but we don’t stop tinkering with it and it gets even better. That’s how we do things here,” also highlighting a commitment to constant improvement. At the School Camp, context, guided by the teachers, played a significant part in the achievement of desired student learning outcomes.

A powerful aspect of context articulated by the teachers was the social context. “Living for nine days with most people you don’t know at the start and by the end you know them really well. Some of the kids are crying as they leave,” was Fiona’s summary of what happened in the social context. Helping to “set up social situations where the kids learn about themselves and each other,” Peter declared, was one of his prime roles as a teacher. Liz had no hesitation in listing this dimension of life at School Camp as “part of the curriculum,” a point affirmed by all the teachers interviewed.

Real problems, in authentic contexts, were considered by the teachers to be their most powerful curricular ally. Insisting that "the beauty of our lessons is they're in context. We're not doing a lesson on conflict telling them this is what you could do," Liz explained. "We set up situations where it is likely to happen and let things unfold. The kids can work it out and learn from the experience. We only help if things aren't going well. They don't learn from theory." Illustrating the point using boating, John reported that the students were arguing because "the boat's not going where they want. They blame each other. They want to do well so they have to work it out. Our lessons are right here, right now. That's a real life problem for them. The learning's powerful." In this instance, John went beyond creating the teachable moment, to creating the learnable moment, through the use of a purposefully crafted context. In the process he embraced the concept of the students being in control of their own learning**.** Explaining the use of the School Camp contexts, John remarked that "I know what I want the kids to get out of the session and I let the setting do its work with a little help from me."

As Peter described, "we have a range of different activities that can be challenging contexts in some way - emotionally, physically, intellectually, psychologically." Outdoor education takes advantage of this to facilitate "learning through challenge, take them out of their comfort zone," Margaret expanded. "There are so many types of challenges," according to Fiona, who went on to detail them.

> Being away from your family is an emotional challenge straight up. 19 kids they don't know in the hut is a social challenge. So is eating at a table for some of them and eating our food. We have lots of physical challenges with the adventure activities. We get them out of their comfort zone. The python's an interesting one. Some kids can't handle that. I guess it's psychological. Being responsible for themselves. Some kids struggle with that. The personal stuff like being on time and keeping their rooms tidy. Their mums must do that at home when you look at it. Even environmental studies we try to make intellectually challenging. It's intense and it doesn't stop for nine days.

Using a raft of challenges to take the students into a dissonant state was another context, the teachers believed, which intensified the learning, symbolised as Peter reported, by the "emotion displayed by the kids at the campfire and the final assembly and as the buses leave."

Risk, both perceived and real, particularly with the adventure activities in the School Camp programme, was another context the teachers identified. “As a teacher you learn what's a mistake, what's going to cause injury,” Liz remarked, also observing that “the kids pretty soon figure out what they can and can't do. You do have to give them an opportunity to make mistakes themselves in a controlled way, otherwise they won’t learn how to look after themselves.” John had been involved in the development of various teaching facilities over time. He found it frustrating that the School Camp leadership were so risk averse, defying common sense in his opinion and ignoring facilities and practice he had observed at other camps and some schools. He also articulated a firm belief in teachers taking risks with curriculum, as “it’s the only way the place will continue to move forward.”

Context was an important difference identified by the teachers between school and the School Camp. “I changed my whole career because I believed the context was stultifying. I had a class of 45, 15 and 16 year old girls. They were very low achievers,” Margaret intimated. “That context, that's not education. I just couldn’t keep doing that.” The context being referred to was a combination of the traditional classroom and academic streaming. Margaret’s analysis was that “the situation was completely irrelevant to the lives of those girls. Where they were at the time and where they were going to end up.” In a powerful statement of educational philosophy, Margaret declared that the “fundamental difference I am committed to is the difference in context between school education and outdoor education. It is the experience of moving children into the outdoors.” Fiona pointed to a “different space to learn in and we're offering different opportunities. They’re our strengths over a normal school,” describing it as “part of curriculum.” In a blunt assessment, John went beyond commenting on differences when he declared that “this is so far better than a school. Just look at it. The kids are so happy here. They enjoy learning. That’s why they take so much on board. What they achieve in nine days. It’s intense.” It did not just happen according to Margaret. **“**For a stranger to walk in here they would see kids running around the place, doing exciting things. It looks like it just happens. Behind the scenes there’s a lot going on that sets this up, for it to work successfully,” capturing the fact that contexts at the School Camp are professionally crafted with the intention of achieving specific student learning outcomes. The significance of context to the teachers, justifies its shared place with milieu in Schwab’s commonplaces.

4.4. Summary of the milieu/context commonplace

While milieu did not have much impact on their work, the School Camp teachers were mindful of attempting to create and enact a curriculum which harboured as little cultural, social, or economic bias as possible, a state of affairs they were aware did not exist in statewide curriculum and testing. Conversely, they articulated context as a critical aspect of their understanding of curriculum and its success. It was described as enmeshed with their teaching and learning method. Its real power was in creating situations which felt authentic and relevant to the students and where they felt a degree of independence, even if that was largely imagined. All of this gained even more authenticity by being part of a larger project - building a community. The teachers were possessed of a committed belief that context held the key to achieving the most successful student learning outcomes.

It is now appropriate to turn to how the teachers understand their place in curriculum.

5. The teacher commonplace at the School Camp

5.1 Introduction

In this commonplace, I explore how the School Camp teachers perceived their role in curriculum. It includes the ways they enact curriculum, how they care for students, and the professional development they believe is required right from the start of their careers to discharge their duties, in a way which matched their own expectations. They also expressed their thoughts on the place of assessment and reporting in residential outdoor and environmental education, and who controlled curriculum.

5.2. Enacting curriculum: an aspect of the teacher commonplace

In this aspect, I outline the importance the School Camp teachers place on teaching method as an aspect of curriculum, as it sits at the nexus between context, subject-matter and student. The School Camp teachers reported a variety of approaches as part of their pedagogy.

“Delivery of the curriculum is the most important part of my work,” Liz insisted. Like Liz, “effectively transferring the curriculum, whether that's the knowledge or the experiences through to the child” constituted the core of Karen’s teaching. All of the teachers articulated curriculum delivery as the prime responsibility of their work, although my observation revealed enactment of curriculum, with its attendant layers of complexity, rather than simple delivery, was what they actually did. Peter thought that “curriculum delivery can legitimately vary between practitioners. It’s up to them. I don't think the delivery of the curriculum has to be as specific as the curriculum would be,” hinting at a degree of autonomy for teachers as they decided how they will teach, compared to what they taught. When asked if teaching method was a part of curriculum, John replied “absolutely. Teaching method is the most critical thing. There's the actual way the lesson develops, the behaviours of the kids, and the incidentals you bring in during that. What’s the point of curriculum if they don’t get it?” To John’s comments, Margaret added that’s where the “richness and the depth of learning occurs, the interaction between teacher and student.” Margaret was aware that “younger teachers or teachers who have a very narrow experience base don’t understand that using a less appropriate approach limits their effectiveness.” Highlighting the point, Fiona, a younger less experienced teacher, thought that method “sits outside curriculum because there's a 100 different ways to do the dishes. Like you could still reach the same outcome, so the method's not important,” conflating a process involving an inanimate object with the complexities of an existential process such as teaching and learning. Teaching method must be considered as an aspect of the teacher commonplace as it is teachers’ observations and choices, often in the moment of enactment, which determine how students are taught and how effective their efforts will be, emphasising once again the integrated nature of the commonplaces and aspects of curriculum.

Over time, Margaret had observed a **“**lessening of teacher directing and an increase of lessons where children feel they have more control and they end up being more engaged.” John was at pains to point out that “we're not the star of the show. It's about the kids.” Focussing on learning rather than teaching, Liz ventured that “some teachers are delivering their curriculum and aren't broadening to all the learning styles**.”** The role of teachers at the School Camp, according to Fiona, was “to provide opportunity and then guide the learning,” having previously describing the programme as “very activity based and regimented and I think

disjointed" whilst admitting that "I haven't done a lot of research or haven't looked into it much." How Karen avoided that pitfall was to base her teaching on the programme aims, shared with the students.

> It's important to tell children, that in this space and time we have together, this is what I hope we will achieve. I tell them why I am hoping we will achieve this. Because this is what the Camp is on about, and it usually comes back under the auspices of care. This particular session, however we label it, this is going to be our pathway to this, through doing a, b, c, or d. So I tend to allow children to know where we're headed.

Illustrating the variety of methods employed at the School Camp, John started his boating lesson by demonstrating the skills. He reported higher participation levels as the students were invited to provide commentary on his performance. Later in the lesson he would "get some peer coaching going," insisting that "it helps the weaker rowers and teaching is the best form of extension for the ones doing really well." John used the pressure applied by peers to conform to group norms, the desire of students to be acknowledged by a respected elder, and the benefits to both the coach and the coached in a peer coaching situation, to achieve the social and physical objectives of his boating lesson. Applying a light touch to support these methods and develop a sense of agency, Karen used "subtle direction, trying not to interfere with the children's sense of independence and control."

Aims are mentioned constantly throughout the interviews by the teachers and are discussed comprehensively in the curriculum-making commonplace. A particular method of sharing the intention of lessons with students mentioned by the teachers was front loading. "The kids always want to know what's going to happen" Liz explained. According to Margaret, "front loading certainly allows them to understand the expectations of community, where they're going to be, what's going to be happening, and how it's going to happen. It removes the mystery and gives them security. I think that's valid." Peter frontloaded the surfing session using achievable criteria listed in the student booklet. As well as understanding the intention of the lesson, the ability of the students to self-assess left them feeling genuinely pleased with themselves, as the success indicators were obvious and relevant to the discipline. Reassurance the students received from various forms of front loading helped them to feel more comfortable amongst the dissonance embedded in the context – no family, very few school mates and nine days away from all that was familiar in their lives. Without dissonance,

outcomes such as developing greater levels of independence would not be as effective. Too much dissonance has the potential to interfere with other learning outcomes, if the resultant levels of anxiety rise too far. Front loading allows fine tuning of this aspect of the curriculum, responsive to the maturity of the students.

All of the teachers interviewed indicated that they valued reflection. “If the students don't reflect on what's done they may not process the learning that they've gained, so you really need to have a reflection time that allows them to turn it into learning,” was Karen’s opinion, adding that “an activity that's done and not processed by them, if they don’t reflect on it later, it loses its value. That’s just time filling activity, like an amusement park, it’s not education.” Karen also felt that “reflection allows the students to realise they have achieved our aims.” These acts of reflection demonstrate the intention of the teachers to value what they are doing as curriculum. Picking out another style of reflection used at the School Camp, Peter mentioned “children reflecting formally in their diary at the end of the day. Awesome.” As well as the journal, Liz mentioned the “written reflective tools in their booklet,” which included prediction, observation, and explanation, fortune lines, and relational diagrams. A postcard sent to the next occupant of the student’s bunk was another activity that Fiona believed required serious reflection and benefited their learning. For John “the only way they get a take away from a particular lesson is the opportunity to reflect on what they have done. Then they can use what they’ve learned in future.” Although the interviews revealed a strong belief in the importance of the reflective activities, inspection of student booklets revealed many incomplete pages, indicating that not all teachers valued reflection as an important part of the learning process.

Another form of front loading was preflection involving imagination and anticipation of future events. “It’s great to watch the kids’ eyes light up when they see the timetable for the first time and they realise they have the chance to do things they’ve only dreamed about,” Peter enthused. “Then we take them for a walk as part of the induction and they see the places where it’s going to happen, and they can barely contain themselves. ‘Can we do this? Can we do that?’ It’s hard to hold them back.” Introducing the students to the timetable and walking them around the camp site on the first day, then showing them a video of the camp on the second day gives them a chance to imagine themselves in those situations and anticipate what it might be like to participate. On their first viewing of the timetable I observed quite a

lot of excitement amongst the students, as they not only told each other which activities they thought would be their favourites, but also began to relate to each other their imagined performance. Karen indicated how much she valued this time to set a tone of excitement for the ensuing nine days.

Much of the student experience of the School Camp concerned the solving of problems. They ranged from controlling a boat, to lighting a fire and cooking some food, finding orienteering check points, climbing the indoor rock wall, surviving for nine days, and making new friends. "The kids should experience learning in the real world with real problems," Fiona recommended, "rather than inside the four walls of a classroom where everything is just a scenario," indicating that problem solving, in an authentic context, was a significant element of her method.

5.3. Teachers caring for students: an aspect of the teacher commonplace

In this aspect, the importance the School Camp teachers place on caring for students is examined, including a discussion of student behaviour management.

In analysing her work at the School Camp, Karen noted that "there's teaching, that's lesson time. That's probably 75% of my time. There's my pastoral time. That to me is a really important role. It's what I gain most satisfaction from." Looking back to her time as a student at the School Camp, Liz remembered "always feeling safe that I had this band of teachers that I knew were always there." It also affirms the efficacy of that part of Karen's work, and that of the other teachers, which is devoted to pastoral care and welfare. It was Margaret's contention that success in curriculum enactment at the School Camp is predicated on the fact that "when we greet these groups, teachers and students alike, we give a genuine air of confidence, of welcome, this is going to be a safe, great place for you to learn. That improves student achievement immensely."

An important dimension of teaching method is student management which, in my observation, was not a significant issue at the School Camp. This was reflected in the small attention it received when the School Camp teachers were talking about their work and curriculum. There may have been a number of factors at play, such as students being outside their normal environment and with very few others they know at the start of the camp. It

could also reflect the situation that students are not at the School Camp long enough to develop behaviour management issues. Supporting this observation, Peter noticed that "recently we had a lot of kids from one school which changed the dynamic. Their behaviour left a little bit to be desired." In John's opinion, all the students are "so engaged they just don't think about anti-social behaviour." Consistency of approach across the organisation was an ingredient Peter identified as relevant to successful management.

> Children will learn things that they do with one teacher and not with another. If you were to say to a child don't do that again or there'll be a consequence, and they do it again and that consequence doesn't occur, they have then learnt that this guy's not fair dinkum. Or I can continue to get away with it. If there is a consequence in that circumstance, they will learn that there are consequences.

A number of points emerge from Peter's comment. He hinted that different standards were applied by different teachers when it came to considerations of behaviour. Far from concluding that the inconsistency inherent in this situation might be difficult for students to reconcile, Peter indicated that they understood the deeper levels of complexity involved. The students not only understood, but displayed the ability to respond to the variety of expectations which can accompany different teachers. They realised that there were layers within a community beyond the immediate context which they needed to decode and incorporate within their conduct.

Observing that "some teachers are good at behaviour management, some aren't but they say they're good," Margaret noted variations in teachers' capacity, particularly in demanding situations when interacting with students. Experience was an essential element in developing strategies to deal with student management issues in Peter's estimation, a point not lost on Liz when admitting that "I have got far better control now than I had when I started, discipline techniques that are more effective."

5.4. Developing teachers and professional development: an aspect of the teacher commonplace

In this aspect, I investigate the value the School Camp teachers apportion to their initial training and their ongoing professional development as a foundation of their understanding of curriculum.

On starting out at the School Camp, Liz remembered that her “first induction was more about just doing the activity and the safety, and I definitely wasn't really taught to think deeper through the curriculum side of it,” exposing an important addition which should be made to the induction process. Commenting on the quality of induction, Margaret highlighted its importance.

> Sure, managing risk is important and should come first, but it should be followed fairly quickly with curriculum. That’s why the kids are here and what our job is. I know not everyone is doing the agreed curriculum. I sometimes wonder if the people running induction know the difference. There needs to be more time given to it and the new staff should be exposed to different staff during induction. It would also make a difference if there was a follow up six months down the track just to see that it is going how we want.

Margaret’s comments are perceptive, but do not abrogate the responsibility of teachers to take control of their own professional development. As Liz remarked, “I’ve done a lot of observation of other staff members during the years I have been here, and I’ve cut and pasted all sorts of skills from everyone,” demonstrating that, although the pace of workplace learning might slow a little from the heady days of induction, professional learning never stops. In Karen’s opinion, “learning from my peers and mentoring others is an important part of my professional role.” Fiona held a belief in “the importance of reflection on my own performance always, especially in our area of teaching at this place and outdoor education because they're experiences that kids don't have on a regular basis, you really need to reflect on what has happened.”

Moderation was the next step in curriculum enactment that was identified by Margaret, stating that “everyone needs to be on the same page, but that doesn’t mean a photocopy of the page.” It needed “a common language, an understandable language, as well as a common framework that is open to teachers, parents, students, community, so it's accessible.” As a tool to assist accountability, Karen thought that moderation was useful, “if someone's not working within the framework or the standard. The curriculum revision sessions we have with the whole staff are good for that.”

A feature of the School Camp curriculum Margaret identified as significant was the fact that it’s carefully considered rate of evolution and repetition allowed teachers to develop mastery.

> The repetition that allows people to become very confident in their area, so that people aren't running around thinking how will this work? How will that work? That comes from not changing things every other year. We know exactly what we're going to do. We have confidence in it. We have training in it. We have expertise in it. We've got R and D in it. We've got history behind us. We get really good at it through practise.

Professional development was important to Liz who considered that "if I'm not constantly learning, how can I be the best possible teacher I can be for the kids? I'm a learner, always." All the other teachers who were interviewed agreed, considering that their learning and that of the students were intertwined. Participation in and presentation at conferences, visits to schools and other camps, and access to a range of activities which supported new projects or existing curriculum were some of the professional development activities the School Camp teachers mentioned. Whilst conceding that some of these were "very good," John was critical of many that "were not checked out before inflicting them on us, especially the ones delivered by classroom escapees. Some of them haven't taught in schools for ages. They might be in touch with the latest eduspeak, but not the practical realities." Modifications to the "surfing, bike ed., and environmental studies programmes resulted from expert interaction in P.D. [Professional Development] activities" Peter declared. "New projects," Margaret argued, "such as the nocturnal animal project, rock climbing, and the team challenge wouldn't have been possible without the development of high level knowledge within the Camp. We also established excellent professional networks and targeted very specific P.D."

5.5. Support of curriculum: an aspect of the teacher commonplace

In this aspect, I explore how the School Camp teachers understand the importance of support of curriculum, including the forms it takes.

The School Camp teachers thought they were the most influential group as it was they who stood in front of students and enacted the curriculum. Karen's opinion was that curriculum "might be there but it won't be being achieved if teachers aren't doing it." That view reflected the thoughts of all the teachers who were interviewed and demonstrated the control they believed was exerted by the person standing in front of the class.

An example of the support required for successful implementation of new curriculum was rock climbing. To get the support of teachers to support the curriculum and the administration to finance the facility, "rigorous research was done," Margaret remembered. "Facilities were visited by a project team. A mobile climbing wall was hired to judge student interest and age appropriateness. There was targeted whole staff P.D." In the end, Margaret emphasised, "it was a combination of the quality of the process, the fact that the proposal would support the programme aims, and the standing of the committee that resulted in it going ahead." Over her time at the School Camp, Karen had noticed "a move away from physical education style lessons to adventure activities." It also reflected what Margaret described as "inflation of adventure," as camps competed to provide bigger and scarier activities in an effort to maintain what they perceived as relevance to their clientele. Introduction of new subject-matter to the curriculum required deletion of existing elements.

> The process of elimination is done by the staff. Whatever activity has the least support makes way for the new curriculum. I have never seen it work the other way where the staff want to get rid of something and have to find something else to replace it. Occasionally something might be seen as a bit outdated, but staff are always on the lookout for new ideas. Sometimes there is an overlay like adding the reflective tools. Nothing was dropped, but the activities got richer. (Peter)

Whilst it is clear that teachers were the drivers of change at the School Camp, they were also the critical element of support if change was to be effected as Peter noted. External support has also helped. An example was the Teacher Professional Leave initiative in the early 2000's which provided "30 days of time release for four teachers to complete the action research project, which lead to the introduction of the reflective tools to the curriculum," Margaret remembered, adding that "it was an existing school charter priority, but it sped up considerably with the blocks of time that leave gave us." The plaque on the new flying fox indicated that it opened on 2008 and acknowledged funding from the "Investing in our Schools" program, a federal government funding initiative which provided money for infrastructure. Commenting that "curriculum needs the support of funds," Fiona highlighted the fact that government funding meant that it did happen.

5.6. Control of curriculum: an aspect of the teacher commonplace

In this aspect, I investigate who controls curriculum in the estimation of the School Camp teachers and the effect this has on their work. The investigation includes the control the School Camp teachers believe they have over their own work.

Control of the statewide curriculum is nominally by the Victorian government as the commissioner of the curriculum. Margaret, who had been involved in writing part of the national curriculum, pointed out that "educators who put their hand up to contribute to the design of the national curriculum have a lot of control over what gets in it. The Minister isn't capable of writing it." Even though the state government puts its name to the curriculum, Margaret's point was that "those teachers, academics, and others who contribute to the design process exercised a lot of real control over its content. The statewide curriculum as presented to teachers is still a document. It stops with the teacher." Peter expanded:

> In a practical sense, the people who are in control of the curriculum in the end are the practitioners. If the curriculum is inappropriate or it's too narrow, or too broad, it will be the practitioner who sharpens that down to an engagement level that is appropriate for their recipients.

When presented with the curriculum-as-guide, it still had to be translated into an appropriate form to enable it to be enacted by the teacher for the students in their class, illustrating the role of teacher as curriculum-maker. It was Margaret's belief that the reason educators were taking control of curriculum at the local level was because bodies outside of the school environment were "trying to reduce curriculum which is a living, social, personal, academic, creative, physical involvement. They're trying to corral it into a very simple bean counter outcome." This represented a notion of curriculum not as a document gathering dust on a shelf but as a vibrant entity, mapping out the territory to be traversed by teachers and students, responding to local milieu, indicating the path they must navigate and the means by which they would travel to arrive at the agreed destination.

"I think in terms of the School Camp, because we're a unique setting," Karen suggested, "we have more control over our individual curriculum than a school would have. We don't have external assessment controlling us. We are a lot freer than schools." The teachers demonstrated control over the local curriculum on two levels. First, it was they who had either

designed it or approved its introduction into the programme. As Margaret noted, “my observation as to who controlled it really in the past is it has been the teaching body per se,” adding that “we use the adage, if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” Observing a recent trend in control of curriculum, Margaret added “more and more it's becoming the principal and the leadership team. I'm seeing changes happening that aren't consultative with the teaching body.” Ultimately, control of curriculum for John came down to “who’s delivering it. They can interpret it to suit their cohort,” an astute observation reflecting the reality of the School Camp situation.

5.7. Assessment: an aspect of the teacher commonplace

In this aspect, I explore the ways the School Camp teachers understand assessment as an aspect of curriculum, and the way it appears in the School Camp setting.

Wondering about assessment of student achievement, Liz asked whether “it matters if we know what they get out of a lesson, out of camp, out of school, out of life and will assessment tell us if it was camp, school, family, the community that caused it?” focussing her attention on the experience itself. Karen, conversely, argued assessment was important, “otherwise you don't know whether you're achieving your learning outcomes.” Considering curriculum, assessment, and method, Peter proposed that “without blinking, I would say that assessment is part of curriculum,” but included the qualification that “I don't think it is a good thing that the evaluation should drive it specifically, because to me education is about the development of the child.” Curriculum for Liz was a “guideline of what you should be teaching and assessment is accountability. Have you taught it? Did the kids learn anything? What can you learn from that? It's self-assessment and peer assessment and assessing the kids.” Rather than monitoring student achievement, Liz saw the role of assessment as checking on whether the curriculum was being implemented, if there was any missed curriculum, and how effectively it was being delivered. When she asked “was the curriculum effective and does it need modification?” Liz noted that assessment of the effectiveness of curriculum was necessary to determine if there was a need for revision, a matter to which the teachers were attentive, emphasised by Karen’s comment that “we’re constantly tweaking the curriculum. People try things, they notice things, they import ideas they’ve seen somewhere else. It’s always evolving and improving.”

The advantage of the reflective activities in the student booklet was that they also served as a tool to assess both individual student achievement and programme effectiveness as there was a written record to analyse. It was Liz's observation that "assessment is something we're building on and developing more ways of assessing." The last few minutes in the high ropes course where Karen used a written reflective tool was "probably the most important few minutes of the whole session in going through and checking to see how they have gone, whether they believe they've met the aims of that lesson." In another written reflection, the students left a postcard for the next occupant of their bunk. The postcards tended to capture the fears students remembered from the start of their camp. They were attempting to allay the fears of the new campers by sharing their own success and assuring the unmet student of the same outcomes. Through the process they benchmarked their own performances and recorded their successes. In the same way, the student's journal entries were revealing. Sampling of the diaries of the School Camp student cohort by a review team was used to evaluate the quality of written work. In contrast to these forms of assessment, John questioned whether a student "could be given a mark out of 10 for surfing, rather than being told "you've done it. Awesome. Surely it isn't always appropriate to grade things. Can't they just enjoy the experience?" As Liz indicated, "just doing an abseil is its own reward. How well you did it is completely irrelevant, although if you were petrified the first time and do it easily the next time, that's significant."

5.8. Reporting of student achievement: an aspect of the teacher commonplace

In this aspect, the place the School Camp teachers believe reporting occupies at the School Camp is examined, its significance in their understanding of curriculum, and the forms it takes.

Reporting happens on a number of different levels at the School Camp. The first of these, aligned closely with constant observation by the teachers especially early in their interaction with the students, was "feedback from a teacher to a student. That's reporting," Karen exclaimed. Examining the process in more detail, Liz remarked:

> Do we report back to the schools on how the kids went? No. Do we report to the kids how they are going? Yes. I like to give them updates on how they are doing. Are they doing well or could they be improving on this skill. Come back together, let's refocus.

Capturing a significant dimension of the process as it played out at the School Camp, Peter described reporting as “very much a one way stream,” whereas “feedback to me is more dynamic. And if it's involving the child in question it’s more valid.” A contribution from Karen added that feedback “allows kids to think about what they have done and get an idea about how that might influence what they do in the future.” Half of the feedback loop mentioned above was feedback to teachers, a point emphasised by Peter.

> The next part of that as practitioners as we deliver the curriculum is the feedback we constantly receive. So if we find the curriculum is not performing or not engaging as we want then we have to start to realise that it might not be the children's fault. It might be the way it is being delivered and we need to address that.

What Peter highlighted was the constant process of self-assessment and analysis which was involved in monitoring the effectiveness of the curriculum.

Although Liz was “comfortable with verbal assessment,” it posed the question of what to do “when you need to report on those findings?” A comment that “I don't think we do a lot of reporting, like school reports,” was followed by an observation that their diaries are “a child's report of their own selves. Some visiting teachers will put assessments of the kids which can be looked at when they get home. The diary could be a good reflection of their learning and their camp experience.” Disagreeing with Liz, Karen voiced the opinion that “unless I'm giving verbal feedback or writing in the book, I'm not reporting. What the student writes in the book isn't a report to me,” articulating a more traditional view of reporting.

At schools “they do a lot of portfolios where the kids can put their work in, then they would comment on their own work and it's all done electronically” John reported. It allowed the students to display that this is “my story, this is what I wrote about. I think that's a really good thing, self-reporting, reflection.” One way of understanding reporting put forward by Peter was that its purpose “is simply informing to a different audience what has occurred.” Voicing concern that “kids aren't always in control of their own learning,” John argued for reporting as vital communication necessary if the education of the student was to be a team effort between teachers and parents:

> The students don't always understand the importance of learning and what it brings about. If you can report, I do think parents are a critical link in the education chain. If

> you have reported back to parents, not reporting by NAPLAN results to the government but that the kids have got it, the parents can supplement what you are trying to achieve. At the end of the camp you could report back that little Johnny can stand up on a surf board. A parent might say wow, I want to see that, let's go surfing.

The question could be asked: "does all learning require a teacher?" The answer to that is certainly no. Learning is happening all over the place, all of the time. It is not restricted to schools between the hours of nine and three thirty or a camp between days one and nine. Curricula exist away from the confines of schools and school camps. When talking about school or school camp curriculum, I agree with Liz who stated firmly that "school curriculum requires a teacher. There must be someone who understands what has to be done, how to do it, if it has been achieved, and then be able to communicate that to others. That requires a fair amount of training and experience."

5.9. Summary of the teacher commonplace

What Liz described was much of the way in which the teachers at School Camp understood their work. They understood what had to be done as they have been involved in curriculum design, which is revealed in discussion of the curriculum-making commonplace. To enact curriculum, they employed a variety of approaches in response to student learning needs, mindful of caring for students as part of that work. Although formal assessment and reporting are important features of the curriculum landscape in schools, they did not feature prominently in the way teachers understood curriculum at the School Camp. Finally, the teachers, whilst acknowledging the Victorian Curriculum, demonstrated control over the School Camp curriculum as they were responsible for its design, the final topic of discussion in this chapter.

6. The curriculum-making commonplace at the School Camp

6.1. Introduction

In this commonplace, I investigate the aspects which constitute the curriculum-making commonplace from the perspective of the School Camp teachers, and the impact that has on the scope of their work.

Whilst the School Camp teachers acknowledged the existence of the Victorian Curriculum and recorded some coincidental alignment with it, they did not deliver it. Other than Margaret, they had no part in its development and so exhibited neither ownership of nor commitment to it. As they did not teach it, they did not have to assess it or report against it. The curriculum they enacted was of their own design, as archived curriculum documents indicated it has been for the life of the School Camp. Through constant involvement with designing and refining the School Camp curriculum, the teachers communicated and displayed ownership of and commitment to it, and as a consequence listed curriculum-making as an important dimension of their work.

6.2. Remotely made curriculum: an aspect of the curriculum-making commonplace

In this aspect, I examine the School Camp teachers' relationship to remotely developed curriculum and the impact it has on their work.

When asked "who makes curriculum," Liz's first thoughts passed to the statewide curriculum as she replied "DET and whoever gets back there. There's stakeholders, experts, people who are well educated in their field would be contributing I imagine," indicating a guess rather than knowledge of the situation. All of the teachers acknowledged the federal government and state governments as the responsible authorities for commissioning and developing the national and statewide curricula respectively. Only one teacher expressed any more specific understanding of who might be involved in the process than that voiced by Liz. Margaret, who was involved with the writing of the sustainability cross-curriculum priority of the Australian Curriculum, was the only one who mentioned the involvement of teachers in the process.

I could not find any evidence of external control of curriculum-making at the School Camp, although it was Peter's contention that "we have to a certain extent, to acquiesce to the edicts from above." When asked to furnish examples Peter admitted that he "couldn't think of any." He conceded that there were policies, often with "mandated online P.D., which we have to do, but not content. Things like ladder handling and mandatory reporting. You do it, forget it, and go about your business using common sense. Hasn't changed our curriculum." Whilst they were aware of the Victorian Curriculum, the teachers did not exhibit accurate knowledge of it. This was to be expected as they did not use it. Capturing the relationship between the Victorian Curriculum and that of the School Camp curriculum succinctly, John noted that "we're lucky. We are conveniently aligned with the Victorian Curriculum. We backload it into our curriculum documents. No way does it drive what we do." The point was emphasised by Peter when he admitted "I haven't read it." In Margaret's experience, as the statewide curriculum was not used, it had "always been the collective responsibility of the teachers to develop the curriculum used at camp."

6.3. The School Camp teachers as curriculum-makers: an aspect of the curriculum-making commonplace

In this aspect, I explore two levels of involvement in curriculum-making which the School Camp teachers understood as aspects of curriculum and their part in it. One, making curriculum from first principles, and the other, interpreting curriculum in the moment of enactment.

Making new curriculum or revising existing curriculum was the first level mentioned. By the School Camp teachers. Karen felt it "should be influenced by all teachers at camp but led by the leading teachers and principals." Adding to Karen's comment, other teachers reflected that previously teachers had controlled curriculum-making. The view was that the leadership group were making changes which involved less consultation with those charged with enacting the curriculum. The changes were not so much the subject-matter, method, and context of curriculum. Rather, Margaret reported, they were "organisational aspects such as controlling the membership and focus of professional learning teams and allocation of responsibilities without consultation. Sometimes it was lack of support for projects like

sustainability, so they wither on the vine." All of the points mentioned by Margaret are important aspects of curriculum in themselves.

The reality of the organisation of the School Camp is that not everyone can or wants to be involved in the detail of every curriculum-making process. Referring to the Curriculum Resources Booklet, John pointed out that "our curriculum is set out as detailed lesson plans for each session and that is how you are supposed to deliver it." That was not an issue for him. "I am aligning myself with what has been prescribed because I want to, because it's been refined by better people than me to the point where it's a great way to deliver it and I want to align with that" was John's personal reflection but it came with a qualification. "If there was something at camp which didn't align with my philosophy of teaching, I would be the rebel for that lesson. That doesn't tend to happen because we all check it out during the process and give feedback at key points" demonstrating a curriculum-making process which developed a sense of ownership of and commitment to the curriculum by those who had to enact it. The key words which Peter used to describe the process used at the School Camp were "forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning [Tuckman, 1965]." This process worked equally well for curriculum revision, with Peter recalling that "we had to revise the surfing programme due to changes in the safety guidelines. Due to our experience, the new lesson worked perfectly straight up," emphasising the value of practical teaching experience and context when making curriculum.

Testing of the curriculum in the development phase allowed "everyone to be involved at an important stage of the process," Fiona remarked. It was also a chance, Margaret considered, "for the student voice to be heard on what they thought of the curriculum. We really need to listen to them." The aim of the School Camp design process explained by Margaret was that "every child will have a high quality experience from day one. That's part of the ethos of the Camp."

The second level of curriculum-making was at the point of enactment. At this level, curriculum-making was a role for "all of the teaching staff" according to Karen. "Even though it's heavily prescribed, you still have to interpret it for the kids you are teaching because they differ so much," pointing out that even the local curriculum required interpretation to improve its appropriateness for individual students. Revealing another dimension of curriculum-making, Liz argued that "you should be able to broaden out from it" identifying

her preference for curriculum as a guide rather than as a how-to-do-it manual, allowing plenty of scope for the teacher to respond to teachable moments. When enacting the curriculum, the reality for Karen was that “in some areas like the adventure activities, I don’t have much control. Something like art I have much more freedom to make my own personal curriculum.”

When it came to making curriculum, the teachers observed certain characteristics displayed by those involved. What Margaret had noticed were people who “aren’t afraid to say something isn't working. People who are prepared to constantly ask why. People who can step outside of activity and see it as a tool.” She had also noticed that it required “an understanding of education, a preparedness to research educational philosophy, educational history, to be prepared to look at and experience different educational practices inside and outside the Camp.” Suggesting that experimentation often provided the impetus for new curriculum, John declared that it required “risk taking” but that this could only happen when it was supported by a culture of “collegiality and sharing.” In Peter’s experience, curriculum-makers “operated on another level of professional engagement” and it was their “vision, knowledge, wisdom, research, and passion” for the task which had led to “successful innovations like the kitchen garden, surfing, and the nocturnal programme.” What excited Peter more than the activities was “challenging the idea of when, where, and how we deliver curriculum.” John added “perseverance and resilience” as qualities necessary for the successful curriculum-maker, explaining that the nocturnal programme had taken 10 years from conception to introduction, with “approvals and multiple re-approvals and lack of finance holding it up,” In a reflection on the impact of execution of the curriculum-making commonplace at School Camp, Margaret opined that the efforts the teachers made “outside of work time were often beyond the reach of recognition and reward, but it’s always a matter of professional pride.”

To research and design new curriculum, teachers required time free of their immediate responsibilities such as instruction and supervision of students. It also required intellectual space unencumbered by too many other responsibilities to allow imagination to develop the vision mentioned by Peter and Margaret. Using indoor rock climbing and surfing as examples, Peter noted that “they weren’t really part of primary school camps at the time we introduced them. They were bold moves when you think about it. Professionally, it’s great to be at the cutting edge.” Sometimes, John recalled, “someone saw an activity at another camp and

thought it would work here," highlighting another avenue of curriculum development. Translating an experience from one context into another, where it was not part of the lexicon, was often all it takes to create an innovation and in the process add a new phrase to the operation of the enterprise.

6.4. Aims: an aspect of the curriculum-making commonplace

In this aspect, the important role the School Camp teachers allocate to aims is examined, and the guidance they believed they gave to curriculum-making.

A document recording the aims of the environmental studies programme finished with the by-line "Common focus - Individual approach," indicating that aims have a guiding role but allow for individual expression, interpretation, and response to milieu and context, as teachers find their own way to enact the curricular intention of the programme. This point found agreement with Karen when she maintained that "commonality is important. It can be achieved with variations among staff but we need to have this common focus**"** emphasising that aims were the essential curriculum tool to focus educational activity on a sharper point. It was John's contention that "aims are definitely a characteristic of curriculum. They were ever since I started at teachers college." For Peter, aims were there to "make us all even more conscious about what we are doing". Commenting on the content of aims, Margaret believed that "if we have the same aims as schools, why send kids here. We need to be offering different opportunities but still contributing to their educational growth. We need some professional autonomy to decide what that might be."

Looking at the purpose of aims and their value to the operation of the School Camp, Fiona felt that the "aims need to be voiced to the students. They shouldn't be hidden away. Some people see that as front loading it, but it is a way of ensuring that kids are more focussed on what should be achieved," a valuable contribution aims made to learning. Presenting the aims to the students Karen thought was important, particularly on the first day which she thought was "a really valuable day where I can guide them into what the purpose of the School Camp is. Why we think you are here." For Margaret, application of aims to curriculum enactment was "the difference between education and simple activity." Capturing the same thought, Liz labelled activity without aims "something I would do with my nephew on the weekend" or

what Fiona called “play time.” Activities became, for the teachers, a vehicle for achievement of the aims. For Karen, that was not only in the formal lessons, but also in “all the other experiences at camp, the whole community living part.” This indicated that aims also guided the hidden curriculum.

Students were also reported as having aims, with Karen noting that they “can end up having a different aim within themselves and between themselves from our aims.” Liz also reported that “kids set their own aims and outcomes, what they want to get out of a lesson. I try to get an idea of that.” That level of understanding is important if the student is to have success, because the success is only real to them if it emerges from their personal belief system.

Another use of aims according to Karen, led to “a determination of what particular lessons we might teach to students when we are revising the curriculum or thinking about introducing a new activity.” Aims provided the most significant justification of the School Camp curriculum in her opinion. In the “early days of school camps when they were run by P.E. staff,” Margaret recalled of her early experience in the field, “the first thing you were given was a timetable. There were never any clear aims or what are we hoping to achieve in this five days. It was let’s go out and do a, b, c. It’s different now.” Aims gave purpose to curriculum, which in turn guided the work of teachers. With such an important part to play, it was essential that aims provided a starting point in any deliberations on curriculum.

6.5. Opportunity: an aspect of the curriculum-making commonplace

In this section, opportunity is examined as an aspect of curriculum-making and its role in the School Camp teachers understanding of curriculum and the student experience.

In terms of its prominence in the interviews with the School Camp teachers, it must be considered a minor theme. Nevertheless, all of the teachers considered it an important dimension of the purpose of the School Camp curriculum, if not by strength of interview volume, then certainly by strength of conviction in what was said and the passion with which the points were articulated. Fiona considered it was “our responsibility to provide the kids with opportunities. I know some of them will have done some things we offer here, but generally we should be trying to offer stuff they haven’t done before.” An aim of the School Camp curriculum was that students are “presented with opportunities.”

The point of the School Camp for them was not to offer experiences at or develop them to an expert level. Rather, they understood its purpose was to provide the students with the opportunity to participate in a smorgasbord of new experiences, in the process adding to their sense of self. As Liz explained, “it might be their first experience of being away from home, their first experience of meeting a kid they don't know, their first experience of heights, their first experience of the beach,” in which case operating at a beginner level was entirely appropriate. Capturing the attitude of the teachers, Peter surmised that “we don’t want to be giving them a whole lot of stuff they’ve already done. We want them to explore new areas. It’s more about learning to explore than the activities we introduce them to,” adding broadening of horizons and exploration to the understanding of opportunity, and to the purpose of the School Camp curriculum.

Capturing the feeling of the interviewed teachers, Liz believed that “we have to maintain a point of difference to what they do at home and other camps if we are going to stay relevant.” Adding to Liz’s comment, Peter elaborated that “we offer a smorgasbord of opportunities.” He went on to list “surfing and rock climbing, singing. Even the guinea pigs. Some of the kids don’t have pets at home.” Karen was proud of the “effort that’s made to do new things that no one else is doing, but it’s hard because if it’s good you get copied. You can’t stand still.” Commenting on the level of achievement of the opportunities, Fiona thought it was appropriate that the School Camp curriculum provided “tasters of a range of things they hopefully haven’t done before. We don’t claim to get to expert level in nine days. Beginners level is fine, but some kids do progress really quickly and we cater for them.”

As soon as an opportunity is offered, it presents the possibility of choice. Reminiscing on first working at the School Camp, Margaret recalled “watching a child being forced around the high ropes course and being horrified. Not everyone understood the importance of choice in outdoor education back then. It’s different now.” In Karen’s practice, “choice is important, but we all want them to have a go. My challenge is to support and encourage the kids so they can take advantage of these wonderful opportunities and not have any regrets.”

6.6. Summary of the curriculum-making commonplace

Considering themselves to operate outside the sphere of curricular influence of the DET's Victorian Curriculum, the School Camp teachers understood curriculum-making to be an integral part of their work. As curriculum was not presented to them as a complete and certain instrument by a remote authority, they believed that it was their responsibility, not only to enact curriculum, as is the remit of all teachers, but also to make their own curriculum. What was not contained in the curriculum made at the School Camp was deliberation on teaching method, nor any illumination of the reasons for inclusion or exclusion of material from the curriculum, regardless of the fact that this was not a feature of the Australian or Victorian curricula either. This would be assisted by an understanding of the null curriculum as an aspect of curriculum and its significance in curriculum deliberation. The presence of aims at the School Camp and their use in guiding the development of curriculum gives the resultant curriculum strength and furnishes it with the core of its reason for being.

7. Summary: how the School Camp teachers understand curriculum

In developing the commonplaces, Schwab (1973) established a durable framework for curriculum deliberation. Whilst he did not explore the commonplaces in great detail, they have provided an effective means of organising the ways the teachers described their understanding of curriculum, without which I would have found it difficult to reveal its detail cohesively and outline its impact on the enactment of their work. The 24 aspects revealed by the School Camp teachers added complexity to the commonplaces, an achievement in line with Schwab's vision for their use. Although beginning with a subject-matter heavy notion of curriculum, the teachers revealed that they harboured deep and broad understandings of the topic which were encouraged to the surface, demonstrating the value of the long semi-structured interview format. Official subject-matter was perceived as a written guide, providing structure to the programme. It was used as a vehicle to achieve some elements of the School Camp aims, although the School Camp teachers believed most achievements happened in the hidden curriculum. They declared that the most effective subject-matter was based on the interests of students and teachers. While having a general understanding of the student was considered useful, specific knowledge of students was seen as more valuable, especially in the moment of curriculum enactment. Success in the programme emanated from

engagement of the students and their ability to self-assess achievement, supported by meaningful feedback from others. Providing experiences which would deliver opportunities beyond those available at school, hoping that they would be of benefit to students in the future, was in the School Camp teachers' minds. At the same time they were conscious of avoiding unintended, mis-educative episodes. Responding to their understanding of the effects of socio-economic disadvantage on students, the School Camp teachers worked to provide an equitable curriculum. Educative context was seen as the most significant advantage of the School Camp over mainstream schools. For the teachers at the School Camp, the variety of approaches they employed in their curricular work was considered important, which was one of their outcomes of the training, induction, and professional development. Assessment and reporting, while areas of increasing interest, were not front of mind concerns. They were also aware of the powerful position they held in curriculum, as they were responsible for its enactment. A strong sense of ownership and control over curriculum was articulated by the School Camp teachers, as they were responsible for making and developing the School Camp curriculum. For curriculum to be effective, they considered, it needed to reflect the School Camp aims. The contents of the School Camp's null curriculum were there because they were assessed as having a lesser capacity to deliver success in achievement of the aims.

Although Chapter 4 reveals the work of the School Camp teachers as detailed and comprised of many aspects, its purpose in this study is to investigate whether or not it can be considered to be curriculum. To examine that proposition, it is necessary to compare it with a mainstream school. To that end, five teachers at a primary school were recruited to describe the ways they understood curriculum.

CHAPTER 5

HOW TEACHERS AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL UNDERSTAND CURRICULUM

1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to develop an understanding of the ways in which the five teachers at the Primary School participating in this study understood the notion of curriculum, by analysing and interpreting data gathered from participant observation, artefacts, and by interviewing five of their number. I will develop aspects from analysis and interpretation of the data to create a map which assists in exploring the territory of the ways in which the primary school teachers understand curriculum and how that understanding effects their enactment of curriculum at school.

17 aspects emerged from the interviews with the Primary School teachers. Adding enactment of curriculum to the discussion of the commonplaces, increased the range of aspects which emerged from the data when compared with Schwab's (1973) discussion, focussed as it was on curriculum-making. Teaching method, assessment, and reporting are obvious examples of aspects which fell into this category. Analysis and interpretation of the 17 aspects found that they could all be subsumed within the scope of Schwab's commonplaces: subject-matter; student; the milieus; teachers; and curriculum-making. They constitute the five sections of this chapter. To assist in the process of understanding the commonplaces, aspects were allocated within a particular commonplace as displayed in Figure 9. Allocation was on the basis of the strongest alignment, not perfect alignment. A feature of the way curriculum was understood by the Primary School teachers was the degree of integration of aspects and commonplaces which emerged from interpretation of the interviews. This point was emphasised by Schwab (1973), when he insisted that there should be a "coalescence" (p. 501) of the commonplaces.

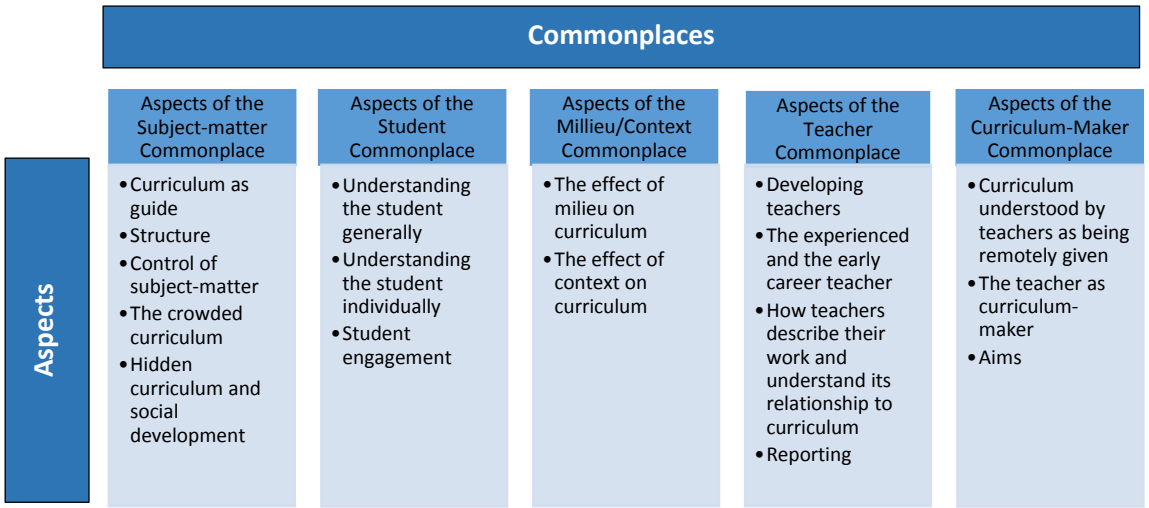

Figure 9. How teachers at the Primary School understand curriculum

2. Curriculum understood as subject-matter by teachers at the Primary School

2.1. Introduction.

In this commonplace, I describe how the Primary School teachers understand the subject-matter commonplace and the impact it has on their work.

When interviewing the Primary School teachers, I started with a straightforward question. "What is curriculum?" Their initial responses coalesced around the same notion, with Jenny providing a typical example: "It's the content. It's what you teach," focussing her response on the teacher. Robyn added "it's what the children are learning" to the perspective. Whilst still perceiving curriculum as subject-matter, this inverted the focus from the teacher to the student. In the process Robyn demonstrated that the commonplaces were not silos. Illustrating the point, these first two quotes integrate the subject-matter commonplace with those of the teacher and the student. As the interviews progressed, the notion of curriculum revealed by the teachers did expand, but was still dominated by an understanding of curriculum as subject-matter. The Primary School teachers described subject-matter as possessing a number of aspects, including: curriculum understood as a written guide; sequence and structure; control; crowding; the hidden curriculum; and extra-curricular activity. The aspects provided detail to illuminate the teachers understanding of the subject-matter commonplace.

2.2. Curriculum understood as a written guide: an aspect of the subject-matter commonplace

In this aspect, I investigate the Primary School teachers understanding of subject-matter as a written guide, including the way early career and experienced teachers relate to it.

Although Jenny's perception that "curriculum is a guide to the understandings you need to teach our children, given to us by DET" is consistent with the views of all the interviewed teachers, there is some deviation in the expectation of exactly how comprehensive the guidance should be, divided along the lines of teaching experience. Dianne was candid when recollecting her "greatest fear as a beginning teacher" which was "worrying about what I would teach. It was really overwhelming at the time." Outlining her criticism of the Victorian Curriculum, Dianne opined that "I think it's too broad at times. It doesn't give enough guidance." What Dianne wanted was a prescriptive guide to subject-matter, relieving her of the responsibility of developing a syllabus, with more time remaining to focus on aspects of curriculum practice, such as teaching method and student management. Picking up on Dianne's point, Robyn remembered what it was like when she first started at teachers college:

> When I started out at teachers college in 1970, what we had was, for example, in maths we had these fantastic coloured books from A to H. A was the lowest level, H was the highest. A was how to count and H was year 10 [age 15]. If you followed that curriculum, you would be covering everything that those children needed. Now I hear the graduates say we don't know what we have to teach. I don't know how they do it, how they come out of university and don't know.

It was Robyn's expectation, as an experienced teacher, that new entrants to the teaching service would have become familiar with the subject-matter of the curriculum during their training. An explanation for this situation was provided by Neil, another early career teacher, who remembered a lecturer at university advising that "there isn't much use teaching you the curriculum as it changes so often." On the other hand, Jenny felt that "it shouldn't be too prescriptive. I've got a lot of experience to draw on. I don't need to be told exactly what to do. It needs to be flexible." With her experience and a clear idea of the purpose of education, Jenny sought the freedom to be able to explore a broader notion of curriculum than that prescribed in the Victorian Curriculum. She perceived curriculum-making as part of her work, not an impost.

2.3. Structure as an aspect of the subject-matter commonplace

In this aspect, I describe the ways Primary School teachers understand the importance of structure as an aspect of subject-matter. It includes timetabling and sequence. Sequence itself is understood as providing developmentally appropriate starting points, indicators of progression of learning, and it guards against repetition

Dianne expressed appreciation for the way in which the Victorian Curriculum (VCAA, 2015) sequenced subject-matter as it assisted her yearly planning, "knowing exactly where you should be up to," and the sequence of the work by directing "the planning of it in terms of what should you run first and what is the next thing." Once again in Dianne's case, the sequence provided by the Victorian Curriculum removed a layer of decision making. For Jenny, following a prescribed sequence meant that "all of the content is covered over the kids' school life." In a school with classes combined across two year levels, some subjects such as the humanities rotated on a two year cycle. Appropriate sequencing, Dianne pointed out, "makes sure that we don't do the same thing each year." For Robyn, sequence was really about structure because the curriculum "needs to be organised. It has to follow a logical sequence. Then it provides you with organisation." Robyn had always worked in combined grades. In one instance it was a combined grade five/six. "I had a child working at prep level [age 5] and I had a child working at year 10 [age 15] level. So the curriculum is vital, because I had to know the sequence of what needed to be done for each child."

Appropriateness of the subject-matter to the developmental stage of the student was a point Neil made when he mentioned providing "what they're ready for." The sequence of the subject-matter needed to accord with the "the child's development," Robyn agreed, adding that "they're all different, so you have to recognise where those children are so you can take them forward with the appropriate level of the curriculum." What Robyn recognised was that every sequence needed an appropriate starting point, structured around student capacity rather than years of schooling. When it came to Information and Communications Technology [ICT], Joan had strong opinions on age appropriateness:

> I think ICT at primary school level needs to be basic computer skills and grade three is a good time to start. I don't think we need to be designing and having things printed on 3D printers. I think the money that's spent in this school, and I'm talking about tens of thousands of dollars, is way beyond a primary aged child. They get plenty of time

> sitting in front of a computer at home. It doesn't improve their social skills and I believe they need plenty of that.

Joan, a very experienced classroom teacher who had taught across all the primary grades, believed that because we live in a text based society, reading is an important foundational skill for students to acquire. "My number one thing is to get the children to be able to read in prep [first year of primary school] year," Joan explained, adding that "the girls should be able to read by June and the boys by August. After that I start to worry and use intervention strategies." By stating that the students needed to "crawl before they walk," Joan emphasised the importance of getting the sequencing right for effective learning. It included consideration of age appropriateness which, in Joan's experience, created a compounding effect where learning not only built upon itself within a discipline, but also facilitated learning across disciplines through integration. In the case of reading, Joan considered it "so important. Once they can read they can become independent learners and I can spend a bit more time with the strugglers," facilitating some uncrowding of the curriculum.

Timetables were mentioned as a beneficial element of structure. "In the senior unit we run a timetable where three classes work together," Dianne pointed out. "Our timetables coincide sometimes and work a little bit different at other times. It means we can group our children according to their needs in a big group of 80 and reduce the variations of ability in each group," she expanded. It was interesting to note that teachers took opportunities to reduce the variation of ability within their classes when they could, but the multi-year grade structure of the school was working against this. Another advantage of timetabling was that one teacher could occasionally do a whole senior unit presentation or supervise the viewing of an appropriate television programme, releasing two teachers from teaching duties, a benefit to their workload. Considering the benefits of structure from the students' perspective, Jenny thought that "the kids like structure and routine. Some of them struggle when they come back after the holidays. They're the ones who struggle without the structure and take a while to settle back into the routine." In Jenny's opinion, her work was "easier when the kids know what's going on, what to expect, especially the ones with learning difficulties. That applies to discipline as well. We're all creatures of habit." Observing Jenny's classroom, the students always knew what was coming next and what they needed to be doing.

2.4. Control of curriculum: an aspect of the subject-matter commonplace

In this aspect, I investigate who the Primary School teachers believe controls curriculum, how much control they believe they have, and how this influences their work. They identified testing, written curriculum, consultants, the bureaucratic hierarchy, and ultimately teachers as controlling curriculum.

Teachers at the Primary School identified a "hierarchy of control," Dianne noted, identifying the "government," first and then presenting a more nuanced understanding, adding "the principal at our school, then it's our unit coordinator, then it's ourselves." Robyn noted that "we have to have Maths, English, and LOTE [Languages Other Than English]. They're the mandated subjects and then there's NAPLAN, it's all government mandated." Even the time allocated to subjects was mentioned, with Robyn explaining that "it's mandated that you have five hours of Maths per week." In Jenny's view, curriculum was controlled by the "Victorian Government" represented by "people in an office up there in Melbourne," indicating very little understanding of who made statewide curriculum and exhibiting no relationship with them. Mandated statewide curriculum effectively controlled teachers, by controlling the subject-matter, its quantum, and finally, by testing. Another layer of control was the teachers' individual Performance and Development Plans which Dianne noted had "the school goals in them and you have to demonstrate how you've achieved them." Those goals, according to Jenny, were not the product of consultation. "They were given to us by the school reviewers after discussion with the principal," pointing towards a lack of ownership of the direction of the school by the teachers.

None of the school teachers questioned the right of the government to make and mandate curriculum, with Jenny indicating that "for me, it's important to follow the written curriculum that's given to us, you know, the Vic[torian] Curriculum. That's what they pay me to do." They also did not expect to have any input into its design. Only Dianne had criticism, annoyed at the constant change to new statewide curricula, questioning what the motivation for these changes might be:

> When anyone comes new into a position they want to make their mark. It may be unintentional, the workload that they're pushing down on others, but I think they are wanting to leave their own mark. That's just me thinking about other businesses where people want to leave their legacy on the job. Whether that legacy is changing

the curriculum or it is one of their own performance goals and it's just something they have to do.

External testing constituted a serious form of control of curriculum. Explaining the pressure, Joan, an experienced teacher, related that "I was teaching to the test because I was told to make sure their scores are better in December than June. The principal sits in the staff meeting and says 'make sure their scores are better.'" Although focussed on mathematics and English, testing applied a lot of pressure to teachers, particularly early career teachers. By contrast, Neil enjoyed teaching physical education because of the "flexibility. I can choose what balls we use in ball handling skills. I can teach the skills the kids need for the district sports we play." That no external testing was administered in physical education underpinned the autonomy Neil had enjoyed in that role.

Doing unnecessary "busy" work to satisfy the key performance indicator of someone further up the chain of command was not how Dianne wanted to spend her time at school. Control of time also controlled teachers, as Joan commented. "The crowded curriculum. We just get this directive from the principal like we have to do this now. It's not discussed. There's no P.D. support. I P.D. myself on the internet at home," emphasising that the volume of subject-matter was also invading more of her non-work time, effectively controlling more of Joan's personal life as well.

A local controlling factor was the school curriculum planner which demanded progression by topic and time rather than by student achievement. As Dianne pointed out, "you might need to do something for another week with a student to get an acceptable level of competence before moving on. Trouble is we can't because of the planner. Next week we're doing something else."

Another factor exerting external control over curriculum came to light when Neil mentioned district school sporting competitions. Neil organised his physical education syllabus to coordinate with the sports scheduled for inter-school competition. "You want the kids to be competitive. I would link P.E. [Physical Education] to the sport they were doing at district level." When asked if the Victorian Curriculum or district sport controlled the school physical education programme, Neil replied that it was "good to work as a team with the local physical education teachers. There's good consistency between sport and P.E. and it's quite broad. They need to be able to kick a ball and play in a team," adding that "I enjoyed how flexible

the P.E. curriculum was and the fact that you could manipulate it to suit your context." The fact that physical education was not tested externally like mathematics and English, Neil indicated, gave him more control over the subject-matter he enacted.

Having mentioned that English, Maths, and LOTE were mandated subjects, Robyn then indicated that at "the school level, we can decide what additional subjects we have like science to engage and challenge all the children" indicating some control over subject-matter at the local level. It was interesting that Robyn perceived the other five learning areas, the capabilities, and the cross-curriculum priorities as options the school could add into their programme if they wished, when in fact they were all parts of the official state mandated curriculum.

A student in Joan's previous grade three class had performed poorly in a maths test which was conducted online.

> I had book work evidence. I had competition writing in the classroom. He was in grade three and he was better than most of the grade fours. There were only two that could beat him in the times tables challenges I ran. And yet when he did his maths on VCAA[9] he just couldn't do it. He was at low prep level. I spoke to the principal about that but he said it's the data. I don't know the children, I just look at the data.

At home, the parents had decided on a no screen policy. The student would have done well on a pencil and paper test but this was not an option. The test had a time limit on each question and the student, due to an inability to manipulate the keyboard, was constantly timed out. The galling point for Joan was the lack of control she had in the face of test scores and the lack of professional respect for her assessment of the students. What mattered to her was "my students are happy and my parents are happy. That's because they are achieving." The flip side of testing was captured by Jenny's comment that "we have much more flexibility with the subjects which aren't tested by NAPLAN."

Robyn was definite in her opinion of who ultimately controlled subject-matter. "It's the teacher who's delivering it controls it because they're delivering it. They're standing in front

[9] The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) was responsible for creating the Victorian Curriculum out of the Australian Curriculum. It was also responsible for a number of other functions including developing the curriculum for VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education – the curriculum of the final two years of secondary schooling), assessment including VCE and NAPLAN, and reporting on assessment.

of the class and they have them to themselves. There's rarely anyone watching and they don't test much of it." In Jenny's work, control of enactment included "control of the how and a little bit of the when. In a two year rotation with a combined grade we decide when it will be delivered." What Jenny noted was that she did have control over some elements of curriculum: teaching method - her how; some decisions about sequence - her when; with Robyn adding those parts of the syllabus which were not tested.

2.5. The crowded curriculum: an aspect of the subject-matter commonplace

In this aspect, the effect the Primary School teachers believed the crowded curriculum had on their work is examined. It includes teacher frustration with subject-matter, additions being made with no equivalent deletions, and the imposition of testing on limited class time.

Weighing heavily on the Primary School teachers was the sheer volume of subject-matter they had to deal with. Noticing the change over the span of a career, Joan remembered that:

> When I first started teaching it was simpler. Now there is so much more that we have to provide. There's all the I.T. issues, there's so many more mental health, gender, and anxiety issues that we've seen coming through. We've got to manage and support our kid's mental health issues. Our focus on wellbeing has really had to grow. I actually think we're expecting our teachers to do the impossible.

Dianne believed that there "should be wriggle room, more space to do things you think are worthwhile. Within the curriculum you have to justify that you are doing a certain amount of English, a certain amount of maths." Agreeing with Dianne's sentiment Jenny added that "you still have to teach Science, Humanities, Art, Drama, P.E. You still have to fit all those things in as well. So it's certainly an over-stacked system." Crowding was an issue noted by Neil, who corroborated that "they're just squashing as much stuff as they can into our curriculum," and wondered how schools would fit James Merlino's [Victorian Minister of Education] initiative of each student being able to swim 50 metres by the end of grade six. "You're going to be out for half the day, once a week for a term. When you take out bus travel there's a maximum of 10 short sessions to develop competent swimmers. I don't think so." Then the question for Neil was "where do you fit everything else in?"

External testing was viewed as another impost on the time available to enact what Dianne thought was important.

> I don't think NAPLAN is part of the curriculum. What it's doing is eating into curriculum time. Our planners[10] fall behind because we have to teach to the test. We haven't in the past, but we've had a school review where our NAPLAN scores have been targeted. There was evidence to support that the students were above standard, but they hadn't made significant progress from grade three to grade five. I just think it is eating into curriculum time, the time that we have with the kids.

I was in the Primary School leading up to and during the NAPLAN testing and for the students and teachers involved, it consumed much of their time and occupied a lot of their thoughts as I listened to them. Very little class time was spent on teaching and learning activities relating to the Victorian Curriculum. The students appeared to be under no illusion as to the purpose of school at that time. I felt a sense of tension amongst teachers and students, particularly at the grade five level. Improving the grade five results was a recommendation of the recent school review and had been taken up as a strategic goal by the Primary School administration. As well as teaching to the test, mentioned by Dianne, I observed coaching for the test, which involved many practice sessions replicating test conditions. This included using tea candles on the tables, playing specific music which the school had been told improved test results, and grade five students participating in a number of whole of year level lectures about the test, presented by one of the teachers. Other class activities fitted in around the test preparation. No new work was presented at this time, as that was considered an unnecessary distraction. I felt a sense of relief amongst teachers and students in the grades three and five, once the process finally reached its conclusion. All this for an activity which all the teachers, like Dianne, considered was not curriculum. Worse still, it was considered to interfere with curriculum. Although NAPLAN preparation occupied a block of space in the teachers' planners, it was not recorded in formal curriculum documents either inside or outside of the school and illuminated another aspect of curriculum - the hidden curriculum.

[10] Planners refers to the written work programme prepared by each of the Primary School teachers, outlining the subject-matter to be enacted in their classrooms and its sequence.

2.6. The hidden curriculum and social development: an aspect of the subject-matter commonplace

In this aspect, I describe how the Primary School teachers' understood the hidden curriculum and the role it played in the social development of students.

All of the school teachers initially responded to the notion of curriculum as a formal written document, by which the government controlled subject-matter in schools. At the same time there were unwritten curricula at play. A comment by Neil captured what all the teachers perceived as the primary purpose of their work, representing an example of the hidden curriculum.

> I think it's to teach the kids how to be good citizens and be valued members in the community really. Obviously we want to educate them along the way and we want to make sure they are checking certain boxes off as they go, but I think we want to make model citizens really.

Here Neil differentiated between official curriculum and the hidden curriculum, a curriculum which was not recorded in official school documentation, but was central to achieving the personal and social development Neil and his colleagues prized so highly. The hidden curriculum could be considered to be covered by the capabilities section of the Victorian Curriculum, but the Primary School teachers used contexts which arose randomly as their motivation, rather than formal curriculum guidance. Admitting that dealing with social issues demanded a lot of the school teachers' attention, Joan provided an instance which illustrated the hidden curriculum and its importance perfectly.

> I think you can have a positive effect on someone. Last year I taught a boy not to lie. Worked with his parents. Worked with him. I've sat and cried with him when he let me down. This year he's still a problem but he doesn't lie and I know his parents appreciate that. I would like to think in future years it'll come back to him. We had a student teacher at the time and she said, 'I've never seen a boy just lie so quickly and so easily about so much.' He'd knock something off the table and he'd stand there and say I didn't do it. I've got a reputation in this school that you tell Mrs. Smith the truth, because if you lie you'll be in double trouble, and I'll never trust them again.

This may have been considered to be an issue which should have been dealt with at home, but working in partnership with the parents, Joan's classroom became the context, because she believed she had a responsibility for the personal development of her students and a belief in her ability to make a difference. Alongside the formal curriculum, Robyn identified "aspects that aren't written down. For example the horizons [free choice] programme. I'm doing singing. I see that as part of the curriculum." When I described the programme as extra-curricular, Robyn disagreed:

> We used to call camps extra-curricular. I don't see them as extra at all. It's just wasting the children's time if it isn't curriculum. I've had parents come up to me and say 'isn't it a waste of time to be taking these children away on camp.' And I say definitely not. I'd sit them down and say what the children are getting out of it is maths, English, science and most of all, personal and social development.

With a final word on subject-matter, Robyn advised that "there's more to the curriculum than just the academic subjects," a point which I will illuminate through the other commonplaces.

2.7. Summary of the subject-matter commonplace

As a commonplace, subject-matter was described by the Primary School teachers as a written guide to their work, providing structure as they enact curriculum. They understand externally developed curriculum to be controlling of their work, and are frustrated by the quantum of subject-matter that is thrust upon them. Finally, they articulated an understanding of the hidden curriculum as the prime location of student social development.

The way students are understood in curriculum is the next commonplace discussed.

3. The student commonplace at the Primary School

3.1. Introduction

In this commonplace, I examine how the Primary School teachers understand the place of students in the curriculum. It includes a general understanding of the age group they teach as well as a specific understanding of their students, observation, testing, reporting, learning

styles, learning and behavioural difficulties, mastery, engagement, and readiness as well as integrating aspects of the milieu/context commonplace into their discussions.

When asked what curriculum meant to them, invariably the school teachers responded "content." But when asked about their work, they all responded similarly to Neil who insisted that the "student's got to be the pivotal focus," indicating a degree of disconnection between their understanding of curriculum and how they described the focus of their work. For Jenny, the focus of the Primary School was "the individual and educating the individual in the best way we can." Talk in the staff room was "mostly about the children" according to Robyn, emphasising the teachers' focus on the student. Commenting that "you can't talk about curriculum without talking about the students," Dianne was in no doubt that the student was deserving of its status as a commonplace of curriculum.

3.2. Understanding the student generally: an aspect of the student commonplace

In this aspect, I outline the importance the Primary School teachers place on having a general understanding of students, and the benefit that delivers to their work, including the ability to calibrate their expectations according to age appropriateness and manage student behaviour. They also discuss the issue of mastery of skills and concepts.

Having a picture of the average child around which to structure their expectations of learning achievement and behaviour, was an important starting point for the Primary School teachers, in their work enacting curriculum with individual students. Joan had already mentioned the importance of her general understanding of reading and computer readiness, introducing the concepts of age appropriateness and maturity, as considerations for selection of subject-matter and expectations of achievement. Trying to introduce knowledge and skills and develop understanding in students, who are not at an appropriate stage of maturity, impacted on success, which then had an impact on engagement and achievement. It also had the effect of crowding the curriculum when progress was unnecessarily slow for a student, because the material presented was not grasped due to its inappropriateness for that individual. This led to repeat of subject-matter, a problematic use of already limited time, as the material not mastered accumulates ahead of the student.

Behaviour management was also based on years of experience of the teachers observing students. Confronted with a genuinely sick child who was “actually coughing stuff up,” Jenny rang home for the boy to be picked up from school. “As soon as I got on the phone lots of other kids started coughing because they wanted to go home. I said ‘I'm not ringing any other parents. I don't care,’ and they all stopped coughing.” A graduate teacher from Joan’s unit was taking a class to their art lesson. Knowing there was a boy in the class with separation anxiety issues with both his mother and his class teacher Joan, who had “seen it all before,” kept a watchful eye from her window. “He wouldn’t let go of the teacher so I went down and told her to ‘just go.’ Of course there was a performance. It lasted for five seconds. And that’s what it was. A performance. It always is.”

Lack of flexibility of curriculum was a problem identified by the school teachers. Inherent in both the Victorian Curriculum and the local curriculum, referred to as “the planner,” was the inability for teachers to respond to the “needs of individual students, particularly those with learning difficulties” according to Joan. It also impacted on the development of mastery. It was Jenny’s opinion that “it isn’t good enough to just tick things off in the planner and say it’s done. If they don’t achieve a reasonable level of competency, there’s not the foundation for the next levels.” Taking the argument a step further, Jenny wondered, “what happens with automatic promotion, or even a 50% pass mark? What happens to the stuff they don’t know? It’s not in the next level and there’s no time anyway. The problems just compound.” Hand-writing was a skill allocated 15 minutes every day in Joan’s class. I was shown a range of hand-writing work books. The one belonging to the least able student was the most impressive. At the start of the year the hand-writing was almost illegible. By May, the student was producing work which was easy to read and was better than some writing I had seen in the senior grades. Joan was rightly proud of the level of achievement of the students, particularly the standard of the weakest group, and was disappointed when told by the principal that she was spending too much time on hand-writing. For Joan, hand-writing was “a skill we all still need, but it’s no use if it’s illegible. The sooner they develop the skill the sooner it frees up space in the curriculum,” emphasising the ongoing benefits of mastery underpinning learning and uncrowding the curriculum.

3.3. Understanding students individually: an aspect of the student commonplace

In this aspect, I examine the emphasis the Primary School teachers place on understanding the individual student as the mandated curriculum is enacted in practice. It included using testing and observation, applying teaching and learning methods which suited individual students learning styles, and coping with the range of abilities within a class.

Using their experience of the connection between achievement and maturity to indicate readiness, and incorporating this with consideration of the context of the children's lives, assisted the teachers in the task of understanding the multi-faceted nature of each of their students. Understanding each student as an individual was essential in the process of enacting curriculum. Awareness of "what's happening with my kids' lives" was important to Jenny, who related the effect of home life on the performance of "a student from a dysfunctional family, so for me to expect him to do his homework at home is not fair, because for him, it's much more of a challenge. So I need to negotiate that with him." For Jenny, it required a differentiated approach.

Testing provided an understanding of the academic progress of students for the teachers, but they identified shortcomings of external testing. "Timely reporting of assessment is important if it is going to be meaningful for the kids and for us for that matter," Jenny noted, complaining that "NAPLAN results come back four months later. The cycle for the kids needs to be immediate. They can't remember what they did back then. And that's just one day. We see them for the whole year." A source of indignation for Joan was the weekly tests mandated by the school. Administering the tests was not the problem. Placing more significance on the test results than the "daily interaction, pen to paper, or when they come out and show me how they've set out their maths. I can see that they can do it. I like to know I have spoken to every child, every day." An example was the weekly spelling test.

> They have a weekly spelling test score to go in their report. What's that going to tell you as a parent? Are you interested to see that they got 46% of their words right in the first half of the year in their Friday spelling tests? Or do you know we did it every night at home and they got them right, but they got eight out of 10 in the test. Yes, I'm doing that because it's the system here. That's not telling me anything. What tells me something is them reading me stories, reading their sentences that use the words

> we’re doing. Hearing and seeing them use those words. That sort of assessment is important. A test occasionally. (Joan)

Observational assessment for Joan and the parents gave a far more accurate picture of what the students were achieving individually, bearing witness to their new knowledge, understanding, and skills, applied in practice. To allocate the positions for the reading recovery programme, Robyn described the use of a blend of test and observation. “At the end of prep all the children are tested by the teachers who determine the weakest in their ability. I then use an observational survey and rank them in order.” Throughout the programme though, Robyn, like Joan, would base her assessment of student achievement and readiness for advancement on observation of practical tasks completed by individual students. One exercise was to “write the sentence down on a slip of paper and cut it up and they have to go home and paste the words in to make a sentence and then read it and write it again to their parents.” Enlisting the assistance of the parents, in the teachers opinion, was crucial to achieve the one on one support and levels of repetition needed for success. A book was read to Robyn every day. “On Thursday's I get the children to read at least 100 words of a book that they haven't seen at their level. I can see patterns in their mistakes very quickly and work on that weakness,” emphasising the importance of assessment of individuals by observation. The importance of parent engagement was obvious. One on one attention was essential as the teachers contact hours divided by the number of students in the class equalled 10 minutes per day if no other teaching tasks were performed.

Highlighting the range of differences students present, Neil commented that “I don't feel like you can teach a group of 30 students the exact same content.” At the Primary School, this was even more pertinent due to the number of students Jenny reported who had “serious behaviour problems and learning difficulties,” with Joan adding that “we’re becoming known around the traps as almost a special school, taking on students that other schools won't.” There were so many students with learning disabilities that the school employed twice as many teacher aides as teachers. This policy was subtly introduced by the principal without consultation with those who had to deal with its implications, which were as Joan pointed out, “managing those kids and the extra workload and still trying to do the right thing by the others. I have spoken my mind and been very quickly put back in my place.” Having a teacher aide in the class had its benefits for Joan, but what she had not accounted for was that “I now

have to manage another person and do all their preparation and check that they're following the programme. All this adds a lot to your workload. You're not paid for it but it increases the workload." One effect of the attractiveness of the Primary School to some families, Dianne noticed, was a student coming from so far away that "on Fridays she didn't come to school because she was too tired. These students already have problems and the absences just make it worse."

An impact of the cohort of students attracted to the school from outside its catchment, was the number of students within each class with learning difficulties. One example amongst many was a student in Jenny's class for whom the Victorian Curriculum was manifestly inappropriate.

> He's my one with every learning difficulty under the sun. I ask myself every time I do something with Adam [pseudonym], is this going to help him in real life? Life is really tough for him. Learning is really tough. He needs life skills. The Victorian Curriculum is really unimportant. It's a waste of his time. He has his own programme which I've made.

Teaching these types of students, Jenny exclaimed, was "not what I signed on for when I decided to be a teacher. You need special ed. [special education] training to deal with these students which I don't have and I still have the rest of the class to teach." It is interesting to note that the students with special needs caused the teachers a degree of stress, due mainly to the sheer numbers.

Social, emotional, cognitive, and physical maturity were seen to be other factors influencing student academic performance as measured against the Victorian Curriculum. Regardless of the fact that the Victorian Curriculum sets out a sequence which outlines expected achievement standards at each level in all the learning areas, individual students do not necessarily conform. This was especially true of many of the student cohort from outside the local area, who exhibited a range of learning difficulties and behavioural problems. Illustrating the point Robyn, a reading recovery specialist, referred to a boy who was "quite autistic. He just cannot concentrate. He can do all these hands on activities but he still can't concentrate very well. But he came in at level zero in his reading and he's up to level three," adding the observation that "we see that as a significant improvement due to his background but it's very, very slow." Two points emerge from Robyn's example. Firstly, as Neil declared from the

reality of professional practice, “I'm not going to sit there and get angry if a child isn’t where the VC [Victorian Curriculum] says they should be. Kids learn at their own pace.” Although the Victorian Curriculum claims to represent levels of achievement, not years of schooling, which was Neil’s point, both NAPLAN testing and the school planner reinforce the opposite. This had the effect of applying pressure on the school teachers to promote all students, regardless of their readiness or capacity, to the next year level. Secondly, significant progress was being achieved by Robyn with difficult students in one on one teaching situations, a luxury not afforded Joan who had a “class of 25 and it makes it tough when you have three or four kids who have real problems. They get so much of my time. I don’t think it’s fair on the others,” indicating a desire for smaller classes, particularly considering the percentage of students in her class with learning difficulties. One of the ways the teachers in the senior unit (two grades five/six and one grade four/five) dealt with the situation was to reorganise students according to ability for some lessons. This was possible because, as Dianne explained, “we are in one building and our timetables coincide for English and maths.” The result was to reduce variation of student ability which they believed increased teaching and learning efficiency.

Part of Neil’s understanding of students was “catering for the way they learn.” In his class, “a large majority are naturalists, meaning they like to be outside when they learn. A lot are body-kinaesthetic, obviously hands on, which makes it really interesting that they are couped up in here for six hours a day.” Underpinning the embrace of learning styles by Neil were two principles. “The kids are enjoying their learning and I believe that equates to engagement. At the same time they’re picking things up quicker and develop a better understanding. The whole thing becomes less of a grind which is great for me.” Although passing an honest but critical comment on school life generally, Neil demonstrated a determination to respond to the learning styles of the students by conducting practical lessons outdoors where he could. I also observed Neil’s class outside playing games on a more regular basis than other classes. This was one of the most powerful pieces of data to emerge from the interviews. Neil had observed, judged, and then acted as best he could within the structures surrounding him, applying methods appropriate to his students as part of curriculum. He reported and I observed, benefits flowing to the students in terms of engagement and achievement. Expressing a different perspective to Neil, Dianne acknowledged that “the type of delivery might be hands on kinaesthetic, some schools really like that. Others might be a lot of visual,

a lot of work sheets. It depends on the schools approach," which was certainly an interesting interpretation and application of learning styles, by institutional inclination rather than individual need.

3.4. Student engagement: an aspect of the student commonplace

In this aspect, I outline the ways the Primary School teachers engage the students and the importance they place on it. It includes developing relationships with students, engaging with their interests, and developing new interests with them.

Unless the students were engaged, the school teachers perceived their work as being as pointless as that of Sisyphus, pushing a rock up a hill, only to have it roll back over them - present at school but not achieving. Although the interests of the students were important, relationships with their teachers and class mates were described as the foundation of student engagement, and consequently of greater importance.

Engagement "was the number one thing. No-one's going to listen if they're not engaged," Joan proposed. For Robyn, engagement meant developing relationships so the students "see school as a positive place to be, a positive learning environment so the curriculum being enacted has a better chance of being accepted by the child. Otherwise that child won't take too much notice of you." Building relationships with students across the whole school was Neil's mission.

> I much prefer to build a solid relationship with the broad group of students rather than just with my class. Obviously I've got a greater responsibility with my students specifically, but I like being able to walk around the school knowing who I am talking to. I like being able to have a chat to them. I try and get to know their interests and not be seen as scary or anything.

Another strategy Joan employed to strengthen her relationships with students was to engage authentically with their interests, particularly those outside of the school context and use them in class. This strategy translated into greater student engagement with, and success in, the formal learning areas.

> I had a boy who couldn't succeed with the VCAA test but goes out surfing with his dad and would tell you anything about that. He did a presentation on surfing. He was very quiet and shy, but the stuff that came out of his mouth, it just flowed. The only things he reads are surf magazines. I don't care. It's all language and he reads it because he's interested. I'll guarantee his reading will broaden when he develops new interests. I don't read stuff I'm not interested in. (Joan)

Developing personal interests outside of the formal learning areas was another way Joan observed students engaging with school, remembering fondly when she was at primary school "we did woodwork and sewing. The Reach [extra-curricular] programme is good like that but we could provide more opportunities to take up new interests. Things they mightn't get otherwise. They love it and they thrive in it." It was interesting to note that an aspect of Joan's understanding of curriculum was that it provided opportunities beyond the mandated subject-matter, effectively broadening the curriculum. Basing the Reach programme on student interest increased student engagement and their positive connection to school.

3.5. Summary of the student commonplace

The Primary School teachers articulated a clear focus on students in their work. Even when discussing the other commonplaces, their interest was in how they related to and impacted on their students. Having a general understanding of students, mainly through experience, helped the teachers to calibrate their expectations of learning, personal and social development, and behaviour. Knowing and understanding their students as individuals and assisting each one to realise their unique potential was the mission the school teachers pursued, as was engaging them with curriculum. The first point they raised in relation to achievement of that goal was the impact on the students of milieu, albeit at the local level. The impact of milieu, Schwab's (1973) next commonplace, deserves further exploration.

4. Milieu/Context

4.1. Introduction

In this commonplace, I examine the place milieu/context occupies in the Primary School teachers understanding curriculum. Milieu and context will be allocated separate parts of this commonplace, due to the differences they embody in the minds of the Primary School teachers. It includes the effect milieu has on both remotely and locally made curriculum. It also reveals the classroom as the main educative context, with the outdoors and excursions playing a minor role. Context is also described as part of teaching and learning method.

In the curriculum-making group, Schwab (1973) argued, there should be representation from those who have "experience of the milieus in which the child's learning will take place and in which its fruits will be brought to bear" and these would be "manifold"(p. 503). They ranged from the micro level of the school and the family to the macro level of the state and the nation. As a deliberative curricularist, Schwab believed that those invested with the responsibility of designing curriculum must consider milieu as it effected the child's learning. The Primary School teachers shared this belief with Schwab, as evidence from the interviews and my observations affirm. Where the situation differed was that the curriculum they used was presented to them as complete and certain from the DET, in concert with the federal Ministry of Education. In this case the curriculum reflects milieu at the macro (state, national, and global) level, rather than responding to the effects on an individual student of milieu at the micro (family, school, and community) level.

4.2. The effect of milieu on curriculum: an aspect of the milieu/context commonplace

In this aspect, I explore the effect milieu has on the Primary School teachers understanding of curriculum. It includes discussion of milieu on the macro (state and national) and micro (local community) levels, and the impact on the Primary School when it attracts students from outside of the local community.

Not much thought was given by the Primary School teachers to the interplay between milieu and curriculum at the national or even the state level. At the time of the interviews there had been a series on SBS television (SBS, 2017) called "Testing Teachers" which had investigated

the work of teachers in different locations, including Katherine in the Northern Territory, Melton in Melbourne, and Gosnells in Perth. When asked if one curriculum could work across the whole of Australia, Neil responded that “I don't feel like that can work and different cultures will have different ideas on how it would be run as well. ‘Testing Teachers’ showed it’s not completely appropriate for Katherine. It should be respectful of the differences.” Reflecting on her observations, Dianne claimed that “when I think about it, schools that are 10 minutes apart have big differences too. I think it’s very difficult to make one curriculum equitable across the whole country.” After commenting that the “curriculum as it stands disadvantages many kids,” Jenny added that “I think how we do it we can be more inclusive,” expressing the idea that enactment of curriculum, an aspect teachers believed they had more control over, could generate outcomes more appropriate to their students.

It was at the local level that the teachers displayed more awareness of, and response to, milieu. Having considered that teaching method might provide at least part of the solution to the disadvantage some students experienced as they grappled with the Victorian Curriculum, Jenny wondered if method might coalesce with more appropriate subject-matter to deliver improved equity of outcomes.

> The ‘what's’ really important. If we don't talk about indigenous history in our content then we’re disadvantaging our indigenous kids. If we aren't looking at multi-cultural diversity in the curriculum, then we’re disadvantaging our kids. So it's vital that we have an inclusive curriculum. But also in our ‘how,’ we need to be very aware of the differences. I've got a boy here who has two gay fathers. I need to consider that in my celebratory days of mother’s day and father’s day. I need to be inclusive of him and consider what it's going to be like if he's got two fathers. Or children who don't have a father. How can I be inclusive of those children in my ‘how’?

Experience informed Dianne that even when curriculum was “locally generated, from year to year it's going to be different depending on the cohort of students.” Bringing curriculum to an individual level, she asked “how do you give work to one child and not to another because they can't reach the grade two level when they're in grade five?” The difficulty for teachers was reconciling the Victorian Curriculum which claims to reflect levels of achievement rather than year levels, with an external assessment process which measures achievement against year levels.

A contentious issue raised in the interviews, but not evident in conversation around the Primary School, was that of the role of the school in the community, the role of the community in the school, and whether the school should reflect and serve the milieu of the community. Joan outlined her opinion:

> I believe the school is the hub of small communities. They've usually got the hall and the facilities and things like that. So I don't think we are currently serving the needs of the local residents as such. And you could probably follow up with the principal. He could give you a list of how many children live locally and how many live in surrounding towns and even further afield.

Under the direction of the principal, the Primary School had opened its doors to any students, regardless of where they resided. Explaining the profile of the Primary School, Joan reported that "we're becoming known as a special school. We hear that from other teachers, that a lot of children get referred here. So there is a very big emphasis at this school of taking on students that other schools won't." The Primary School was attracting students with learning and behavioural issues who had not found success in their local schools and whose parents still wanted their children to participate in a mainstream setting. "That's the culture here at the moment, and I don't think we're serving the needs of the community," Joan noted. "We've got this name as, and even the principal will say it, even though he's encouraged it, we're known as the school of last resort."

Within the Primary School, the situation appeared in a number of ways. Staffing was one, which Dianne indicated did not represent the average ratio of teachers to teacher aides in schools around the area. "That's why we've currently got 20 integration aides as opposed to 12 classroom teachers. So that's how I'm seeing it and I'm not really enjoying the current environment here." An impact which flowed on to the teachers, detailed by Joan, was that the students take "a lot of my time which means I have to put time into the integration aide so that they are following the programme. That's reality." As well as observing that "the local community isn't happy with the change in the student profile," Neil reported that some parents were not happy that the Primary School had "doubled in size over the last three and a half years. What they wanted was a small country school. Some of the locals are voting with their feet and pulling their kids out and taking them to neighbouring schools." In another consequence, Jenny noted that "this was a real hub of the community. We are having a lot of

difficulty getting people to run the Arts Fair. It's a big deal. It's our big fund raiser." That led to a perception that disturbed Jenny. "Families from outside the town don't see themselves as part of the community, so they don't contribute. To them it's just an institution, a service they need that happens to be here." In Joan's opinion, "the school should be a reflection of the community. Not exactly, but something like it." Commenting on the effect the changes had wrought on her work, Jenny revealed that it "wasn't the job I applied for before the changes, but it's the way of the world," expressing a degree of resignation to the situation. When I asked if she had expressed her concerns, she replied in the negative, concluding that "we aren't involved in those decisions," alluding to a lack of consultation over the situation and having no ownership of the decision.

A topic Jenny raised which crossed from the broader societal milieu into the home and then influenced children at school, was the influence of media and computer use at home on children.

> I see mental health as a big issue. Kids seeing full on stuff on the TV and on computers way too early. Porn and violence is a significant factor because we know young kids are seeing that sort of stuff way to early. Kids' childhood is being taken away from them because they are seeing inappropriate and really full on stuff way too early.

For Jenny, "counselling has become a big part of my work. It wasn't like that when I started teaching. I'm not trained for it and I don't see it as part of curriculum. It's a specialist job. But you have to do it. No-one else will." Remembering that "I wasn't exposed to that stuff when I was their age," Jenny observed changes in milieu and the powerful effect it had on the individuals who constitute society, and who also populate classrooms. Home was also an influence Joan commented on, mentioning that "they definitely learn from what's going on at home, so they reflect that. They just end up sponging that up." Corroborating Jenny's observation, Joan underlined changing roles in teaching "because we do have dysfunctional families, and we do have families with significant drug issues, we have to take on a support role for those kids because they're not getting it at home." The teachers did not feel it was in their power to change situations outside of the school. Their response to do the best they could for their students was captured by Jenny.

> You can't change the socio-economic background of where you teach. Families that don't have consistency, and aren't supporting their children, it's vital that we show

> them that things can be consistent and fair. If they don't have that they won't know any different and they won't be fed, they will not be good in society, they will cause problems. It makes it a lot harder, but it is possible that we can give these kids that good grounding.

These comments indicated that the teachers at the Primary School cared about the destinies of their students. Where they felt they could have the most influence was in the context of their own classrooms.

4.3. The effect of context on curriculum: an aspect of the milieu/context commonplace

In this aspect, I examine the how the educative context influences the way the Primary School teachers understand curriculum. Although the classroom is identified as their most significant context, places outside the classrooms and excursions are included in the discussion, as was consideration of context as part of teaching and learning method.

For the Primary School teachers, although their educative contexts were largely a given, they still believed the spaces in which teaching and learning took place were a significant dimension of curriculum. Typical of their deliberations was an insightful response from Neil, approaching the subject from a number of perspectives.

> The learning space is really important. I think it needs to be safe, exciting, organised if kids are going to take ownership of it. That's if you're looking at a classroom space. Sometimes, to be honest, I think we've done it all wrong by taking the real world and trying to put it in a classroom and teach kids about the real world when it's out there. But that's like talking about a radical change. Do I think kids can learn in better spaces? Yes I do, particularly if that space is closer to the content that you are trying to teach the children. If you're trying to teach them about sustainability, being outside looking at worm farms is far more powerful than talking about it in a classroom. But we don't have the freedom and flexibility. We're a little bit limited in the learning spaces we have.

Like Neil, Jenny accepted that the classroom was the main educative context, but her response to achieve "efficient delivery of the programme" unlike Neil's, was to incorporate technology. "If you haven't taken the situation into account, you don't know what equipment

you have, you don't have an interactive white board for a power point presentation, there's a problem with the context." A comment which emerged from Jenny's familiarity with a particular private school was that "they create really great learning spaces for their students. You can learn a lot from that. We limit ourselves in state school settings, but a lot of that is to do with the money that's available." Regardless of the fact that the teachers had visions of what might be, as Jenny remarked, "nothing's going to change. There's never going to be the financial support in state schools to make a difference to things that matter," indicating a degree of resignation to the status quo.

Despite taking the effort to describe how a classroom should work optimally for teaching and learning, Neil's deeper belief was that other contexts were more appropriate to the task. Matching the subject-matter and the context sat at the centre of his teaching philosophy, which was based on kinaesthetic and naturalistic learning styles, because "that's the way most of my kids learn and it suits my teaching style." The mathematics example Neil went on to describe, applied subject-matter in an appropriate context and integrated other subject areas into a project.

> So if we're doing trigonometry, putting it in the perspective of a builder. I definitely like to put things into a real context as much as I can. Today we had a group of grade fours looking at a new building design and we were working out how to use the protractor and a tape measure, and why we need to be able to know that. Starting to put it into practice as well, how we use the protractor to plan our site and how we then draw it to scale. Then we are going to put forward a persuasive piece linking in to literacy and saying why the building should change to that, the design they have created. They've loved it so far.

One of the strengths of Neil's trigonometry unit was that it had a purpose based in reality, a point Joan supported, suggesting that "I think kids need to know why they are doing something."

Having an appropriate space or sometimes just having space was an important consideration. There was an old school house on the property which served as the art and craft centre. Dianne liked the space because "we could make a mess, noise, and not have a worry really." Another benefit of using an appropriate context was to put students "in that mood. If they're doing art in their own classrooms they might not switch off from the work that they've just

been doing and get into their art. Being outside puts them in a different perspective for P.E." The art classes would also "go outside for drawing from observation," because Dianne liked the idea of "making the most of where we live. We live in this really special environment. We should make the most of it." Although the teachers were aware of the difference context could make to student achievement and enjoyment of learning, they were resigned to working in traditional classrooms which Neil described as "mind numbing."

Excursions were a worthwhile part of the context of curriculum, Jenny considered, "as long as they are targeted at a particular topic being studied. You have to have a reason why you are doing it." Robyn reminisced about "the old days when we used to be able to take them out of the school grounds on a whim."

> I can remember when I could take the whole school for an excursion. Not just for no reason. We would be able to walk around the community without even getting parental permission notes or anything like that. We would just drop what we were doing and go. Then we would come back and do some work on it. Then you would be able to sit them down amongst the ants and everything else. I think the spontaneity was great for the kids. Back then I was in charge. We were given responsibility and I took that very seriously.

According to Robyn, it had become much harder to organise excursions than in the past. "Now you have to have permission notes. You have to be logged on to an Education Department [DET] system that tells them where the children are every moment they are off site" she pointed out. This meant that in Robyn's observation, "we don't use them because it's difficult. It's a lot of extra work and we've got a lot of work already," adding the administrative burden into her notion of curriculum.

Method constituted a concluding and significant point relating to context made by Jenny, who insisted that "context is part of the 'how.' The 'how' is hugely important because if you do that wrong you don't get the understanding. Where they learn is really important. You need to vary the 'where' as much as you can." It was Jenny's belief that when subject-matter was enacted in a purposefully crafted context, which integrated with teaching method, the best student learning outcomes would result. The difficulty for the teachers was translating that philosophy into practice considering the constraints under which they plied their craft - working in the confines of a traditional classroom.

4.4. Summary of the milieu/context commonplace

Although the teachers did not admit any control over their educative context at any level, they were aware of the impact it had on their work and the achievements of their students. The teachers were aware that curriculum at the state and national level is not and cannot be responsive to the considerable variations of milieu evident across Australian society and represented a fraught concept, however they did believe that they could be responsive at the local level. The lesser range of variations of milieu evident at the community level than those found across the nation, and the much smaller range of variations present in the individuals in one classroom, afforded teachers at the Primary School the opportunity to enact curriculum appropriate to their students. Whilst aspiring to be able to enact curriculum in places other than their classrooms, they were resigned to the fact that this was not going to happen within the system of state education as it stood.

This leads to asking teachers how they understood their role in curriculum.

5. The teacher commonplace at the Primary School

5.1. Introduction

In this commonplace, I describe how teachers understand their place in curriculum.

Developing teachers was the first aspect discussed by the Primary School teachers relating to the teacher commonplace. It included commentary on teacher training, induction, mentoring, professional development, leadership, and moderation. As responses to some points of discussion were divided along the line of length of service, experience emerged as another aspect of the teacher commonplace. How they perceived their work was the final aspect of the teacher commonplace they discussed. What the teachers understood as the purpose of their work, the scope of their work beyond delivering subject-matter, the methods they employed, and how they felt they were controlled were elements of their work which arose from the interviews.

5.2. Developing teachers and professional development: an aspect of the teacher commonplace

In this aspect, I outline the place the Primary School teachers believe teacher training and professional development has in curriculum. It includes discussion of teacher training, graduate teachers, induction, mentoring, moderation, and the teacher as a life-long learner.

With a reasonable complement of graduate teachers (3), teachers with less than 10 years of experience (4), and a constant cohort of education undergraduates on placement, the topic of teacher training generated lively discussion in the interviews, with both experienced and early career teachers alike. Reflecting on her own teacher training and her role as a supervisor of student teachers drew comment from Joan.

> I believe teaching is a calling. You can't just go into it. I saw it at teachers college. A whole lot left after the first teaching round. Now we've got all these masters of education coming through, who have already got a degree and they're not happy. Don't want to do that job. I'll do teaching. It's interesting when they start seeing what you do and they say 'I haven't got time,' when you ask them to prepare lessons at home for the next day.

Student teacher expectations about workload did not match the reality of the job they confronted every day in Joan's classroom. Another to notice a difference between teacher training at the start of her teaching career (1970) and today was Robyn, who remarked that "I was taught how to teach. Method was really, really important. We went through why we were doing this, how, when, where, why." After listing some of the subjects in the 1970 teachers college curriculum as "educational philosophy, child psychology, the psychology of learning," Robyn revealed that "I'm having graduate teachers say can we just watch what you're doing, because we've never seen this done before. And I think that's very sad because they come out and they've got to try and catch up." As a result, Joan had to "work with people who weren't taught to teach," elaborating specific short comings. "They can't even write on the board. They can't organise groups. They can't organise different levels. They can't look at something and think this is what they need to be able to do, this is how I'm going to do it." Remembering recent participation in teacher training, Dianne, a mature aged graduate added "the planning part and adding that to curriculum is what you don't learn in your post grad. In none of your subjects do they talk about the curriculum that goes with planning because they say it's is changing so often." A point which concerned Jenny was **"**if someone's not confident

in putting forward the curriculum that they should, they just push it under the table," describing the situation as "dangerous for the kids," and claiming to have "seen it happen." For a final comment on teacher training I turned to Robyn who, when asked if teacher training was a part of curriculum, answered "absolutely."

As the Primary School recruited graduate teachers, there was an "induction and mentoring programme to support them," according to Robyn, who went on to describe how it operated. "New teachers are supported by the more experienced. A new teacher will have an experienced teacher next door and that teacher will make sure the new teacher is well supported with whatever that teacher might be doing." As an experienced teacher, Jenny was responsible for induction of new teachers and was the one responsible for assisting the graduate teachers to achieve full Victorian Institute of Teaching registration, an arduous process required to be completed in the first years of teaching. Having observed the trials and tribulations of many graduates entering the profession, Joan was also an avid supporter of induction and mentoring.

> We do need to work with those young people and even more mature age students who come in. They're often left to their own devices because they're more mature, but they still don't know what they're doing as far as planning, following the curriculum, presenting the curriculum, assessing, and reflecting on what they've done. It's just a matter of crowd control most of the time and they can struggle with that. They need the support.

Being a new teacher to the profession and the school, Neil was well placed to comment on the importance of mentoring. Acutely aware of his own learning style, Neil was "not one who'll sit there and read texts. That's just not the way I would understand it." University was "more theoretical. Here I can watch what Jenny does and see the impact on the kids. Then I can try things myself. I've learned more in six months here than I did in four years at uni." It was interesting to note that both experienced teachers and recent graduates were critical of current teacher training, as they believed deficiencies in training increased the workload for both groups. Regardless of this, their response was to take induction and mentoring very seriously. One of the changes Jenny had noticed at the Primary School in recent years was the loss of many senior experienced teachers to retirement. A flow on effect was "the way that very junior staff have been put into leadership positions. I just cringe at what they say and do

sometimes," Joan reported. "I think that has caused a big drop in our results compared to previously. I know that's why we've had the school review. They haven't had any mentored experience in small leadership roles." These comments acknowledged the importance of leadership in curriculum and the need for a blend of experience within a school to develop leadership potential.

Once teachers were embedded in the system, it was necessary to consider ongoing development. This was especially pertinent when new material was being introduced into the curriculum at the behest of the school administration. Coding was one new initiative Joan mentioned as an example, emphasising that "there's been no P.D. provided by the school. I've P.D. ed myself at home on the internet. If they're going to introduce a new programme they should at least support it."

The changing nature of the enrolment of the Primary School has already been discussed. It had a significant impact on Jenny's work life from a number of perspectives.

> Initially I got a little bit frustrated to be honest because I'm not special ed. [special education] trained. We've got kids in the school now and all of a sudden I'm meant to be an expert on how to deal with dyslexia, Asperger's, autism, ADHD and then all the emotional stuff. I haven't been trained to deal with those things. So that's been a frustration. I really had to skill myself up in my own time just to survive. We were never consulted about this direction and there's been precious little support.

A change in the nature and scope of the job had occurred, over which Jenny had no control and little professional support. Conversely, one of the teachers in this study believed that formal workplace professional development was not necessary. Robyn, alone in her belief amongst the interviewed Primary School teachers, thought that "if they have to study it before they present it, I can't see anything wrong with doing that. Even if they haven't been trained, just read a little bit about it beforehand and they'll get through." Like Jenny, all of the other teachers acknowledged that this was the state of affairs. Unlike Robyn they did not consider it acceptable practice.

Moderation was another aspect of the development of teachers mentioned in the interviews. When asked if it was important, Jenny replied "absolutely. Yes, I think its part of curriculum as well. Mainly to make sure you're all on the same page. It's not a structured thing but we

use it when it's required." Moderation was not used across all of the work produced by the students as Dianne explained. "Only our writing pieces have moderation. The other stuff is explicit, there's no interpretation, there's no subjectiveness in our other testing, but there is in our big write pieces," providing a reason why she thought it was not needed across the board.

5.3. How teachers describe and understand their work: an aspect of the teacher commonplace

In this aspect, I explore how teachers understand their role in curriculum. It includes placing personal and social development of students ahead of academic achievement, the problems of teaching a large cohort of students with learning difficulties and behavioural problem, and the range of responsibilities they undertook beyond their classroom duties.

When asked about the purpose of their work, the teachers I interviewed were in complete agreement on the importance of focussing on the social development of their students. For Neil, as previously reported, it was to "teach the kids how to be good citizens and be valued members in the community. I think we want to make model citizens really." In the same vein, Jenny's aim was "to teach them our school values." Robyn's contribution added more dimensions to the social development of the students so keenly sought by the school teachers.

> I think the purpose of the school and my work is to provide a safe and stimulating environment for the continuing improvement of the children's welfare, their wellbeing, their socialisation, and to prepare them for their educational, emotional, societal, and occupational future. So the children can be the best they can possibly be in all aspects of their lives.

Using the word "education," the school teachers meant achievement within the learning areas of the Victorian Curriculum. Academic achievement was a second order issue for all of them. For Robyn it was one element in a list of social imperatives. For Neil it was "checking certain boxes off in the curriculum as we go," with Joan's offering that "it's not all about academia" capturing the spirit of the responses to a revealing question. Although they accepted that curriculum was most of their work and the school teachers' formal notion of

curriculum leant towards subject-matter, the reality of the guiding intention of their work and their aspiration for its outcomes were quite different.

The more experienced teachers interviewed for the study remembered curriculum as a written document enacted for a willing and receptive audience of what they labelled “normal students.” “Normal” they described as operating without management issues, at an age appropriate level, and progressing at a pace matching the sequence described in the official curriculum. Where this summary fell short was captured in a quote on the wall of the Primary School staffroom. It read, “The problem with normal is that no-one is.” Regardless of experience and self-training, Jenny still found it “hard to deal with the special needs kids.” Even Dianne, a more recent entrant to the teaching profession, recalled that “when I first started teaching a few years ago it was simpler. Now there is so much more that we have to provide.” After listing the same issues as those mentioned already, Jenny commented that, “I actually think we're almost at capacity if not expecting our teachers to do the impossible.” Thinking back over a long career, Robyn claimed that “when I started I hadn’t even heard of half these things let alone come across any,” referring to learning difficulties and behaviour problems. A contributing factor to the difficulty of the work was that “they fund kids only when they're severe, and there are kids that really need that support but aren’t funded. There’s a bit of remediation, but it’s nowhere near enough. It’s tough work.” Government support fell way short of what was needed in practice, relying on the goodwill of teachers to pick up the slack.

It was not just the need to become a special education teacher at the Primary School which was changing the nature of the role of the teachers. Other demands existed: becoming proficient with technology as a tool, and a subject, and providing options for the activities programme were noted by Joan; leading the sustainability programme, mentoring and inducting graduate teachers, and participating on school council committees were a few in Jenny’s portfolio; grant writing was noted by Robyn; fund raising and participation in action research by Dianne; and coaching sporting teams by Neil. Within the memory of some of the teachers, many of these responsibilities had not existed. No extra time had been found within the school day to support these new demands on the teachers. My observation was that they were very busy before school, at recess, and lunch time with students, and after school with a variety of staff meetings, parent interviews, and preparing for the next day. Adding to the

workload was the regular change of statewide curriculum which Dianne described as “busy work. We just get our heads around one and they bring in a new one. Our documents have to be updated. It changes reporting formats. I’m looking forward to the day when they leave us alone for five minutes.” The sheer volume of subject-matter in the Victorian Curriculum elicited the comment from Jenny that “they are just squashing as much stuff as they can into the curriculum and that’s before you consider all the other things we are told to do locally. Somethings going to bust one day.” Reminiscing, Joan commented that “I miss the times when we were able to slow down at lunch time and have a chat with our colleagues. That was valuable.”

5.4. Reporting as an aspect of curriculum: an aspect of the teacher commonplace

In this aspect, the role reporting plays in the Primary School teachers understanding of curriculum is examined.

Through reporting, teachers are able to make student achievement visible. A variety of stakeholders were interested in the progress of the students. First amongst these, according to Joan, were the parents who were not interested in the test results because “the majority of your parents who are interested don't bother to read that stuff because they knew it any way. They know that when they practise their spelling and reading and maths with them.” As a parent, Joan was “most interested in the comments the teachers wrote about my child. I don’t think they’re any different now.” A quite different observation was related by Robyn who claimed that “a lot of the parents don't do the homework with the children, don't insist that they do it. Reporting is very important for these parents so they know how their children are going.” It was through the reporting mechanism that “the principal knows what’s happening in the classrooms” according to Jenny. The final word on reporting came from Joan who thought the NAPLAN tests were “like a report to the government and to the parents, but the things that are most important to me and the parents as well, I’m sure, aren’t mentioned.” What Joan was referring to was the social development of the students, which all of the interviewed teachers held as the highest priority outcome for their students.

5.5. Summary of the teacher commonplace

The Primary School teachers had a clear vision of their role in curriculum. While critical of the contribution of initial training to their work, they all believed in the importance of career long professional learning in its various forms in their working lives. They saw their purpose fundamentally lying outside the learning areas of the Victorian Curriculum and in the realm of personal and social development - helping the students to become worthwhile members of their communities and society. In pursuit of this purpose, they would have liked less mandated subject-matter and increased time to enact aspects of curriculum which were more appropriate to the students in their care. Regardless of that situation, they believed they had significant control because they were the ones actually standing in front of the students. Finally, they considered reporting student achievement to be one of their curriculum responsibilities.

Although they had no part in making the Victorian Curriculum, the Primary School teachers still considered curriculum-making part of their work. They articulate how they understand that role in Schwab's fifth and final commonplace.

6. Understanding the curriculum-making commonplace at the Primary School

6.1. Introduction

In this commonplace, I examine how the Primary School teachers understand curriculum-making as part of curriculum.

While Schwab's (1973) focus for the use of the curriculum commonplaces was curriculum-making, his commonplaces are used in this chapter to assist in the process of discovering how a group of Primary School teachers understand and enact curriculum. Although the practical process of curriculum enactment sat at its core, the teachers still described curriculum-making as part of their work. In this way they understood curriculum as made on two levels. Initially curriculum was made by others remote from the school. Then it had to be interpreted and made into a form which could be enacted for their students. If they were to enact any curriculum from outside the mandated statewide curriculum, they were responsible for making it from first principles. Aims were not considered a necessary part of curriculum or a

precursor to making it. Integration amongst the commonplaces was evident, with milieu, control of curriculum, student engagement, and student experience discussed as parts of the aspects of curriculum-making.

6.2. Curriculum understood by teachers as being remotely made: an aspect of the curriculum-making commonplace

In this aspect, I investigate how the Primary School teachers accepted remotely made curriculum as part of their understanding of curriculum. The discussion includes the problems of general curriculum dealing with individual students in real classrooms, especially when there are significant numbers of students with special learning needs.

Although the Primary School teachers accepted remotely made and bureaucratically administered curriculum as part of the education landscape, it was not without some reservations. It has already been described that in the first instance, the teachers understood curriculum as subject-matter, made remotely and given, complete and certain, for them to deliver without question, in the tradition of systematic curriculum.

When asked "who made curriculum?" Dianne's was a typical initial response believing that it was designed externally by "the Victorian Government. People in an office up in Melbourne." Beyond guessing that "the principal might have been asked to write something for the science curriculum," as he taught science, Dianne was not aware of anyone who had participated in writing statewide curriculum. Casting his thoughts back to university days, Neil recalled that "my lecturers would say curriculum is written by people that may not even have taught before and they try and tell you what kids should know, what they need to know by a certain age, and that sort of thing," indicating his lack of knowledge of the people and processes involved in making the national and statewide curriculum.

In Dianne's opinion, statewide curriculum had an inherent problem in that it assumed all students were much the same.

> It disadvantages people with special needs. There is no way that we could give it to some of our kids with an intellectual disability or a learning difficulty here. Some of them will never achieve what's expected in the Victorian Curriculum. It's totally unrealistic and the Education Department doesn't provide an alternative for them. It's

> one size fits all. On top of that these kids still have to sit NAPLAN and we get assessed on that.

After noting that what the special needs children required "isn't covered in the Victorian Curriculum," Joan outlined what she considered were appropriate priorities for them.

> They need to be socially acceptable, especially if they don't look right. Straight away there's going to be a barrier. If they get angry really easily, or they dribble, or they can't wait their turn. All those sorts of things. I'm looking at a 15 year old going to a year 10 [age 15] party, their first entrance into the social world as such and they need to be socially acceptable. If they're going to survive in the real world that's what's important, not the other.

A related problem, highlighted by Jenny, was that "the Victorian Curriculum's focussed on academic content. Even though lots of kids go on to tertiary, heaps don't. A lot of the Victorian Curriculum they'll never use. They should be doing stuff that'll be relevant to their lives." It was not just the subject-matter that was an issue. It was, as Jenny observed, "because it isn't tested. What little other stuff there is in the curriculum is the first to get dropped when you can't fit everything in," highlighting the subtle control over curriculum exerted by mandated, systematic testing.

Expressing some sympathy for those responsible for designing the national curriculum, Robyn wondered **"**how can they make it so that it is equitable nationally, because it can't even be equal across the whole state for every child?" There was no easy solution to the problem of the great variability of milieu and the impact it had on statewide curriculum as far as Jenny could see. "It is the way of the world, and I would argue that the socio-economic background has always been a part of teaching, depending on where you teach." What Jenny alluded to was that locally generated curriculum could respond to the needs of individual students in a way that systematic curriculum never could.

6.3. Teachers as curriculum-makers: an aspect of the curriculum-making commonplace

In this aspect, I explore the role teachers at the Primary School perceive for themselves as curriculum-makers. It includes: discussion of their role of interpreting remotely made curriculum, relevant to local milieu, for use in their classrooms; making curriculum in the

moment in the classroom as a response to situations as they arise; and the frustration of trying to fit a stream of new curriculum directives into an already overcrowded curricular space.

In Victoria, it was left to teachers, as Jenny emphasised, to attempt "to make sense of the Victorian Curriculum which our planning document does," a consistent point emerging from all the studies of teacher understanding of curriculum discussed in Chapter 2. To deliver the Victorian Curriculum without "adding to that curriculum would be difficult," Dianne pointed out, insisting "it's a lot of work. I don't really want another change. I thought the Australian Curriculum was to be the end of all curriculums." What the teachers did not admit, but emerged from observation of their work, was that they had no licence to design their own curriculum from first principles. Discussing the work generated by constantly changing curriculum, Robyn recalled an experienced teacher who worked in the school at an earlier time advising that "if you stay where you are and ignore the changes, curriculum comes around to you. In the mean time you've saved a lot of busy work. You can put that time into the children." With the benefit of experience, Robyn was able to agree with the sentiment, suggesting that "I think you do that more than you realise."

Robyn reported, that "the teachers work together at unit levels to make a consistent approach and standards across their programmes in the classrooms. It's important with combined year levels so as the children change grades, they don't miss out." An observation Jenny made about the statewide curriculum was that it did not deal with the depth which was required for effective learning. "We work on the process and that's more important than content, especially with concepts. If they only know it's right or wrong and don't know why, they haven't really learned anything. They won't be able to apply it," with Joan adding that "the curriculum documents aren't that deep."

Teaching and learning was another "part of curriculum but it's not provided through those big curriculum documents," Jenny noted, adding that "our documents are more user friendly. We include the 'how.' It helps us to not have to reinvent what works well in an area each time. It helps the graduates with their delivery and it looks professional in our reviews."

It was interesting to note from these teachers' voices that even the local curriculum was not specific enough to respond to the needs of some individuals. Development of Individual Learning Plans (ILP's) required yet another layer of curriculum-making for the school teachers.

They were important documents for Jenny “because in the ILP you are saying what you want the individual child to know, which Neil described as a “personal curriculum.” In Joan’s opinion, the statewide curriculum “wasn’t always fair or equitable, and it's not for all. That's where as a classroom teacher you have to tailor the curriculum to each and every child in your classroom. That makes it meaningful to them.”

Despite its crowded nature, the school teachers still had to deal with the local milieu in their enactment of curriculum. This was necessary because, as Joan elaborated, “we spend a lot of time dealing with social issues, the human development side of things because they’re not getting it from home.” In Jenny’s class “we do a lot of work on social skills, because we have girls who don't know how to play together. They need to be getting on in the playground and in the classroom.” The reason for Jenny was fairly pragmatic. “We can't teach if they are really disruptive.” All the teachers felt, as did Neil, that the students “definitely reflect what’s going on at home.” If the students come from a stable home Dianne asserted, “they have the values and background of experiences and the Victorian Curriculum works for them. It makes assumptions about where they’re at. Managing their behaviour isn’t usually an issue.” The blend of backgrounds and student types at the Primary School have already been well documented in this chapter. Making up for deficiencies in the home life of students added another dimension to the work of teachers. Taking on aspects of the parenting role was certainly not covered in the Victorian Curriculum, but as Jenny stated, “we are more aware of what they need in their lives than some board. We're preparing our kids for everything that they are going to face and for plenty of them, it’s a lot more than the academic curriculum.” Revealing shortcomings in the statewide curriculum, Robyn asked “how do you put all these things we have to deal with in a curriculum document?” Experiences students brought to their school life also varied. From her professional reading, Jenny reported studies that showed students from low socio- economic backgrounds were disadvantaged.

> They don't have as many books in the house, they're not read to at home, they haven’t been to the beach, or the snow, or camping. Those kids don’t get swimming lessons and they have lower participation in community sport. Are we expected to fill in all those gaps as well? There’s a limit to what we can do. We don’t have the time or the money, unless you cut out other things and make it a priority. We do our best. I don’t think the government understands the problems let alone provide us with solutions.

What Jenny was referring to was the impact the lack of a rich and diverse range of opportunities had on student achievement. As much as Jenny and her colleagues would like to have made a difference, the practical reality resided elsewhere. “Some of these kids didn’t go on camp because the parents said they couldn’t afford it,” Neil lamented, “but I noticed that some of the same kids are wearing expensive sneakers. I think the real problem might be the parents don’t value it and I don’t know how you overcome that mindset.” One example of a problem identified by the government was the number of youth drownings in Victoria. An issue Neil identified was the government’s response with its pronouncement on swimming. It highlighted, in stark relief, the difference Schwab identified between theoretical and practical curriculum. In this instance, the government had identified a problem, and proposed a solution. The issue I detected, as I listened to these teachers from the Primary School throughout the interviews, was that swimming did not emerge as a higher order educational problem. They identified it as a social problem. Many other issues were mentioned which required attention on a daily basis, indicating to these teachers a significant difference between what they and the government deemed important curricular priorities. Another issue was the perceived logistical problems associated with executing the programme which, according to the teachers, indicated a lack of practical understanding on the part of those proposing the initiative. A final point on this was made by Neil who asked “whose responsibility is swimming anyway. Where do you draw the line between parental responsibility and school? We can’t do everything.” I could detect a sense of frustration in the Primary School teachers’ voices, as they discussed a general lack of appreciation for the practical reality of enacting curriculum initiatives. Before curriculum could be enacted, it required them to be curriculum-makers, both adapting existing and designing new iterations fit for the needs of the individual students to whom it would be presented.

6.4. Aims: an aspect of the curriculum-making commonplace

In this aspect, the role aims play in curriculum-making as understood by the Primary School teachers is examined.

No unprompted discussion of aims emerged from the interviews. When asked if the Victorian Curriculum had aims, the Primary School teachers replied that there were none that they were aware of. Despite not being able to produce any detail, Neil thought they were

"implied." Like Neil, Dianne was "not aware of an aim" but assumed it was "to help teachers teach students." Adding more flesh to the bones of Dianne's statement, Jenny guessed that "the aim is you cover the content over a period of time and in a sequence. I guess the aim is to have consistency of content," implying control as an aim of the statewide curriculum. An insightful comment came from Dianne who asked "would anybody read it anyway when you've got all that other reading to do. It's like a vision and mission statement. Do you need them? You probably do. How many people read it? Probably none."

At the local level, Joan was ambivalent to the notion of curriculum having aims as "it limits us too much," perceiving aims as yet another controlling mechanism. Goals incorporated in the school strategic plan were mentioned by Jenny, but they focussed on teacher performance rather than what the curriculum aimed to achieve. For Dianne, the aim of curriculum was "educating the children that we have in the school," placing the focus on work, but without a guiding purpose. Local and teacher aims intersected in the hidden curriculum, hidden only because they were not recorded in a written document, but visible in practice. They all revolved around personal and social development with Joan's contribution to "prepare them for their future," and Dianne to assist children to "thrive and advance in whatever strengths they have." Only Neil provided a thoughtful insight into the necessity of aims, proposing that "without an aim, you're not going to achieve and then progress and then create a new one. You need aims to direct you." Commenting that "the students can create their own aims as to what they intend to do. You should encourage them to have aims as well," Neil was singular amongst these teachers from the Primary School in acknowledging the importance of students also having aims to guide their endeavours in education.

6.5. Summary of the curriculum-making commonplace

Like the other commonplaces, the Primary School teachers understood curriculum-making as constituted of a number of aspects which in turn contained various parts. Curriculum-making was understood as a responsibility delegated by the DET in Victoria to another authority – the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, largely invisible to the school teachers in both membership and process, and raising the issue of control of curriculum. In that sense, they did not perceive it as part of their work. Regardless of that situation, the Primary School teachers understood that they had a role as curriculum-makers to translate the Victorian

Curriculum into an entity which could be digested by their students, in their school, and from the local community. At this point, the commonplace of milieu entered the discussion as the teachers assessed the appropriateness of statewide curriculum as a response to milieu at the local level, and student engagement at the individual level. Finally, while not being aware of aims in the Victorian Curriculum, the school teachers had informal aims, and used them to guide their work.

7. Summary: how the Primary School teachers understand curriculum

Schwab's commonplaces provided an effective structure to assist in the process of exploring and clarifying the Primary School teachers understanding of curriculum. Although all the teachers started their discussion of curriculum from the narrow base of subject-matter, throughout the course of the interviews a broader notion emerged.

The Primary School teachers were able to describe, in detail, how they understood subject-matter and the impact it had on their work. Subject-matter was seen primarily as a useful guide, providing structure and coordinating sequence as they enacted curriculum, but also as a means of controlling their enactment of curriculum. For the experienced Primary School teachers, that was as much control as they wanted imposed on their professional efforts. The early career teachers at the Primary School wanted more prescription as they established their classroom practice. Crowding of the curriculum applied pressure to all of the participating Primary School teachers. Their remedy was to treat the subject-matter of those disciplines which was not externally assessed as optional. They bemoaned a reduction in extra-curricular activity as another consequence of the crowded curriculum. Formation of the character of their students was a priority, which they indicated happened in the hidden curriculum.

In the opinion of the Primary School teachers, curriculum could not be discussed without consideration of the students they taught. That started with developing experience of the general capabilities of students over time, which they described as important, but only in as much as it supported their deeper purpose of understanding and assisting individual students to achieve their potential. Student engagement was central to achieving this goal, which they believed was founded on developing strong relationships with their students.

Commenting on the impact of milieu, the Primary School teachers expressed the belief that the concept of a national curriculum was inappropriate for many students and communities, and in fact was a source of disadvantage. Their response to this situation was to pay attention to milieu as it was manifest locally. Educative context was the other part of Schwab's milieu commonplace, an element over which they expressed having little control, although they appreciated the benefits which could flow from contexts beyond the restrictions imposed by the traditional classroom.

Reflecting on their work, the Primary School teachers mentioned the significance of initial training, induction, mentoring, and ongoing professional development. Some differences were evident in the way experienced and early career teachers at the Primary School understood curriculum and their relationship to it. Reporting attracted a small amount of attention in the interviews for such a significant aspect of their work.

While remotely made curriculum was accepted by the Primary School teachers as part of the way the education system worked, in their understanding of curriculum they afforded themselves an important role interpreting and modifying it to be appropriate in their classrooms, but that was not directed by official local or system-wide aims.

The findings from Chapters 4 and 5 have revealed a much deeper and broader understanding of the notion of curriculum than was initially apparent, understandings which are discussed alongside the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, to investigate how closely curriculum at the School Camp resembles that at the Primary School.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION:

HOW TEACHERS UNDERSTAND CURRICULUM

1. Introduction

The purpose of this research is to investigate whether or not school camping is curriculum. Exploring how teachers at the School Camp understand curriculum is central to the question. I examine these understandings in light of the sub-questions, which are:

1. How is curriculum described in the literature?
2. How do teachers at a school camp perceive curriculum in comparison to teachers at a school?
3. How does the understanding of curriculum by teachers at a school camp and at a school influence their enactment of curriculum?

In this chapter, I respond to these questions by bringing the theoretical and practical considerations concerning curriculum discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2) into discourse with the data collected at the School Camp and the Primary School (Chapters 4 and 5). Schwab's (1971) five commonplaces offer an effective conceptual framework through which to develop a cohesive understanding of curriculum from a complex range of aspects (see *Figure 10*), while also being alert to divergence of understanding where it is present. Schwab's writing does not explore the curriculum territory in great detail. I have used these aspects to infuse the commonplaces with detail, facilitating finer levels of nuance when comparing the understandings of curriculum held by the teachers at the School Camp, with those found in the literature and by the teachers at the Primary School.

Subject-matter is the first commonplace discussed. The written guide, control and ownership, scope and crowding, structure, and the hidden curriculum are the aspects which reveal how the teachers understand subject-matter. Discussion of students follows as the second commonplace, starting with developing a general and individual understanding of students. Student experience, engagement, self-assessment, feedback, reporting, and the role of curriculum as preparation for their futures complete the aspects discussed. Schwab's milieu

commonplace is divided into a discussion of the aspects of milieu and educative context in the third part, bifurcating a complex concept to assist in the achievement of clarity. Teachers themselves are the fourth commonplace, which includes the aspects of teaching and learning method, teacher experience, care of students, support of curriculum, and professional learning as the aspects in which teachers reveal how they understand their own role in curriculum. The final commonplace is curriculum-making which includes discussion of curriculum made remotely from where it is enacted and teachers as curriculum-makers as aspects. The role of aims and opportunity are the final aspects contributing to an understanding of some of the ways the teachers perceive curriculum-making as a commonplace of curriculum. To conclude the chapter, the discussion of the commonplaces is brought together to present a unified picture of the way the teachers in the study understand curriculum.

Five curriculum traditions, or what Reid (1992) described as "well documented ways we think about curriculum" (p. 17), were discussed in Chapter 2 and used as perspectives from which to view curriculum in the literature review and in which to view the findings from the School Camp and the Primary School. In this discussion, I apply two particular curriculum traditions in my further analysis due to their relevance to the two research settings, to assist in understanding the system in which the teachers work, the way teachers think about curriculum, and the impact this has on their work in curriculum. First, the systematic tradition, as it reflects the perspective of curriculum holding sway over the administration of education in Australia and Victoria (Ditchburn, 2012; Sahlberg, 2016), the jurisdictions in which the School Camp and the Primary School operate. It also represents, to a large extent, the way the Primary School operates, while not painting a complete picture of the way these teachers understand and enact curriculum. Secondly, I also draw on the deliberative tradition, as it reflects, closer than any of the others, the perspectives and operation of the School Camp and the way these teachers understand and enact curriculum. It also represents much of the way the Primary School teachers aspire to enact curriculum, and some of the way they do enact it.

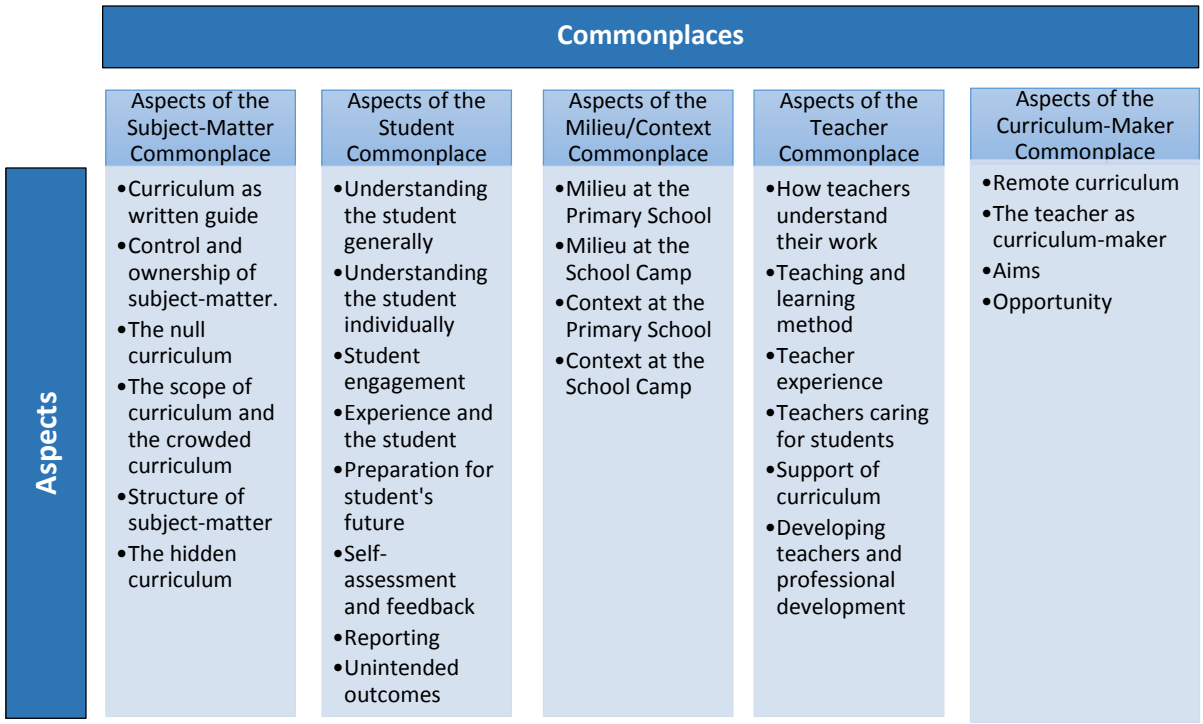

Figure 10. How teachers at the School Camp and at the Primary School understand curriculum

2. The subject-matter commonplace: how subject-matter features in teachers understanding of curriculum

2.1. Introduction to the subject-matter commonplace

By way of this commonplace, I discuss how subject-matter adds to the picture of the work of the School Camp, offering a position on the question of the School Camp and curriculum, through comparison with the ways curriculum is understood at the Primary School and in the literature. The discussion includes: curriculum as a written guide, control, ownership, scope and structure of curriculum, and the hidden curriculum, as these were the aspects which emerged from the data.

Subject-matter defines the understanding many people have of curriculum, including those represented in the literature reviewed for this study. This notion of curriculum is reinforced by the pre-eminent place the VCAA apportions subject-matter when it mandates that all "government and Catholic sector schools must provide access to the content set out in the Victorian Curriculum" (VCAA, 2015), reflecting a major focus of the systematic approach to curriculum. Schwab (1973) described subject-matter as "bodies of knowledge, of

competences, of attitudes, propensities, and values," and that they "constitute the most inclusive and most telling checklist of possible desirables and possible human interests which mankind possesses" (p. 510). This pointed to his belief that subject-matter should be possessed of a broader scope than simply the academic focus of the systematic curricularists. Schwab believed it was these characteristics which made subject-matter one of the commonplaces of curriculum. He also argued that subject-matter should not be an end in itself, as it was often understood at the Primary School, due to it being situated in a systematic curricular structure. Rather, it should constitute a means "to be used in the service of the student" (p. 515), the way Margaret described subject-matter at the School Camp as "a vehicle to achieve educational aims."

Although their views broadened throughout the interviews, in the first instance curriculum was perceived by the interviewed teachers from the Primary School and the School Camp as subject-matter, highlighting its significance as an element in their understanding of the notion of curriculum. In broad terms, this places the teachers in this study in the mainstream in the ways they understand curriculum.

2.2. Curriculum as a written guide: an aspect of the subject-matter commonplace

In this section, I discuss how the written guide adds detail to the understanding of the subject-matter commonplace. It discusses two levels of guide and differences in expectation of the place of curriculum guides for early career and experienced teachers. Curriculum, English (2000) considers, "is a *document* of some sort, and its purpose is to *focus* and *connect* the work of classroom teachers in schools" (p. 2). Teachers from the Primary School and the School Camp who participated in this study agreed with English. The first way they described their understanding of curriculum was as a written guide to subject-matter.

Teachers at both locations identified two guides. First was the Victorian Curriculum, the overarching curriculum document for Victorian schools. It describes "what is to be taught" and "what students should learn in the first 11 years of schooling," and what they "are able to understand and do" (VCAA, 2015) through engagement with this course of instruction. What differed was how the Victorian Curriculum was used in each location. At the Primary School, the Victorian Curriculum entered their planners by "frontloading" (English, 2000, p.

19). At the School Camp, most of the teachers I interviewed admitted they had not read the Victorian Curriculum, a situation reflective of the Greek pre-school teachers in the Sofou and Tsafos (2010) study who did not see the need to change what they believed already worked. Some parts of the Victorian Curriculum considered relevant to the School Camp were "backloaded" (English, 2010, p. 29) into a rubric by a team tasked with that responsibility, an exercise John described as "convenient alignment."

Second, and most important to both groups of teachers, were their local curriculum guides - known as the planner at the Primary School (personal document) and the Curriculum Resource Booklet (School Camp document) at the School Camp. Both documents guided the teachers in their day to day enactment of Curriculum. There was an expectation amongst teachers and administration at both the Primary School and the School Camp that these guides would be followed, and when followed, would deliver the agreed quantum of subject-matter to the students. Use of guides at both places was very similar, differentiated along the lines of experience. Early career teachers sought a curriculum-as-manual (Westbury, 2010). Experienced teachers were happy to follow a guide, but then wanted to exercise their professional capacity in the process of enactment, interpreting and giving life to subject-matter which then responded to the needs and interests of their particular students, a point emphasised constantly by Schwab. English (2010) predicted curricular "anarchy" (p. 10) without the standardising effect of written curriculum, as a written guide. Deliberative curricularists do not dismiss the need for a guide, but they draw a distinction between a curriculum which effects a guiding role and one which narrows the scope of teaching and learning conducted under its authority by telling practitioners precisely what they must do, regardless of the milieu/context, student, or teacher involved.

2.3. Control and ownership of curriculum: an aspect of the subject-matter commonplace

Continuing my focus on subject-matter, in this section I discuss the role of subject-matter in controlling curriculum. It includes some points of convergence and some which differ. Control by external testing is also discussed, as it an accountability measure used to affirm delivery of system-wide curriculum.

Control is an important aspect in deliberations on curriculum. At the Primary School, control of curriculum to a large extent rests with the DET. The Victorian Curriculum presents subject-matter to teachers as complete and certain, a feature of the systematic approach. In this system, Westbury (2010) argued, curriculum is prescribed as "an authoritative and directive manual of teaching tasks to be undertaken" exerting "strong and overt formal control over teachers as employees of the system" (p. 28). Dianne at the Primary School considered it was the right of their employer (DET) to "tell us what to teach," conforming to a cornerstone of systematic curriculum, which understands that controlling subject-matter affords a high degree of control over curriculum. Teachers are expected to deliver the subject-matter, as Clarke and Erickson (2004) observed, with little or no licence to adapt it to suit the uniqueness of the local milieu and little sense of ownership. Ownership of and pride in the curriculum, North et al. (2018) argued, improved teacher effectiveness and student outcomes, as it did in the deliberative tradition. Owning the subject-matter, rather than being controlled by it, elevated teachers, as Keiny (1993) pointed out, from the bottom of the professional hierarchy to one usually occupied by curriculum planners and researchers, because they were fulfilling those higher status roles. With the proliferation of neo-liberalism internationally, Biesta (2013) noticed a concomitant increase in political interference in matters relating to curriculum. In Victoria, the level of interference has moved beyond subject-matter and into teaching method with the introduction of the Victorian Teaching and Learning Model (State Government of Victoria, 2019).

Providing the written curriculum alone is no guarantee of control. What I observed was subject-matter, combined with mandated NAPLAN tests, allowed government to exert a high degree of control over the Primary School. External testing was mentioned by the teachers in O'Donoghue's (1994) study as a means of controlling the delivery of subject-matter. Subjects which were not tested externally, the Primary School teachers confided, gifted them flexibility to enact curriculum as they saw fit. Supporting that position, one of the art teachers in the Kuster et al. (2015) study insisted that "the main reason I have total control is they [administration] don't know what curriculum is" (p. 375).

With no mandated testing, a significant external control was removed from the School Camp curriculum. Curriculum at the School Camp was designed locally, from first principles, by the teachers who then owned it. Although the curriculum controls their enactment, it is because,

according to Peter, that “this is what we agree to do together,” the same feeling the Primary School teachers articulated about their extra-curricular offerings. A consequence of this approach for the Primary School was described by Sahlberg (2016) as “reducing the focus on whole-child development” (p. 189), mentioned by the teachers at the Primary School and the School Camp as their prime focus and a feature of deliberative curriculum.

Control of curriculum cannot be discussed without consideration of the scope of curriculum and crowding of the curriculum.

2.4. The scope of subject-matter and the crowded curriculum: an aspect of the subject-matter commonplace

In this aspect, I discuss the scope of subject-matter at the Primary School and the School camp. It includes discussion of the quantum of subject-matter and its relevance in the curriculum.

Curricular scope can be viewed from a number of vantage points. From the systematic perspective of the academically weighted Victorian Curriculum, the Primary School offers a fairly full range of subjects from the learning areas. When scope is viewed from a wider perspective, the Primary School curriculum narrows in a relative sense. The capabilities and the cross-curriculum priorities were only dealt with incidentally. I did not see evidence of subjects other than art in the planners. Technical subjects occupy little space at the Primary School. It brings to mind Tyler’s (1949/1969) demand of subject specialists to explain what their subject would contribute to a student’s education, if they were not going to pursue that field in the future. Crowding of subject-matter was reported by the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government, 2014) to be a major contributor to the narrowing of curriculum to a purely academic focus, a situation affirmed by Jenny’s description of the Victorian Curriculum as an “over-stacked system.” That this situation occurred indicated subject-matter territorialism was of greater import to the makers of the Australian and Victorian curricula than development of the whole child, a danger Schwab (1973) was alert to.

By contrast, the scope of the School Camp curriculum could not be considered broad. It incorporated few of the learning areas and then only a smattering of material. It only dealt

with two of the three cross-curriculum priorities and one of four capabilities in a substantive way. The scope of the School Camp curriculum was clearly defined by its relevance to the curricular aims and its context, not conformity to the Victorian Curriculum. For Sahlberg (2016), relevance rather than breadth, was the central issue with curricular scope. As the curriculum was developed locally, the quantum of the subject-matter was structured to occupy the time available, mindful of not causing crowding which would lead to a diminution of student achievement.

The aspiration of both groups of teachers for the curriculum they enacted was that it achieved development of the whole child. In practice, both groups were successful, but each with a slightly different emphasis. At the Primary School, the systematic tradition in which the teachers worked placed the emphasis on academic development, at the School Camp the emphasis was on personal and social development encouraged by the deliberative approach, demonstrating the impact of the curriculum tradition on enactment.

After scope, the structure of subject-matter emerged as an aspect of curriculum noted by the teachers.

2.5. Structure of subject-matter in the curriculum: an aspect of the subject-matter commonplace

In this section, the role of structure as an aspect of curriculum is discussed, including the part timetables and sequence have to play. Schwab's (1969b) entreaty that curriculum theory was out of touch with the realities of classroom practice was consistent with the curriculum literature I investigated. As curriculum theory is focused on curriculum-making rather than enactment, it does not have a strong focus on the structure of subject-matter, a more practical imperative.

Structure was an underpinning element of curriculum for both groups of teachers. Dianne noted that the Primary School students performed better in a structured environment, exemplified by the difficulties she witnessed post-holiday periods, getting the students back into a productive routine. At the Primary School, structure was an important tool in an effort to increase efficiency. Life in the community of the School Camp was described by the teachers as highly structured, a situation anathema to Margaret when she first arrived from

a school camp which was unstructured. It's programme, she pointed out, had "clear aims which were achieved in an outdoor context rather than the structure of timetabled adventure activities." Over time she became a firm advocate of the structure at the School Camp, particularly for the senior primary age cohort. Believing the students found security in a structured community, Margaret thought that the School Camp could "almost run itself towards the end of the nine days," reflecting a growing sense of independence amongst the students as they "became familiar with the timetable and the routines."

One aspect of structure was timetables. At the School Camp, students quickly fell into the routine set out in the daily timetable which covered the whole 24 hours, and the activity timetable covering the equivalent of the school day, all marked out by the ringing of a bell.

At the Primary School, some activities, such as whole unit lessons, watching a T.V. programme or a video could be supervised by one teacher while the others caught up on preparation or correction. Ability groups could be organised across the three senior grades, all amenities facilitated by the structure of timetabling.

Another aspect of structure, important to teachers at the School Camp and the Primary School, was sequencing, which was not just repetition, according to Tyler (1949/1969, p. 85). It was important that "each successive experience build upon the preceding one but go more broadly and deeply into the matters involved" (p. 85). Sequence is an aspect of curriculum at the forefront of the Victorian Curriculum (VCAA, 2015). The levels are described as representing successive levels of achievement, not years of schooling. In the Fisher-Ari and Lynch (2015) study, a teacher described sequence as a road map which, when followed in correct order, led to the specified destination. Schwab (1973) and Dewey (1916/2004) described this as organisation, where each piece of subject-matter was an important precursor to the next.

The Primary School teachers agreed. For Dianne, an early career teacher, the sequence provided by the Victorian Curriculum helped her organise her teaching over the year. Her trust in the sequence provided by the Victorian Curriculum eliminated a layer of decision making. Jenny saw the upside of the Victorian Curriculum as reducing the chance of students being presented with "content they had already covered." Joan was firm in her opinion that "each sequence needs an ability appropriate starting point," agreeing with the intention of the Victorian Curriculum that it is based on levels of achievement, not age.

Sequence was no less important to the teachers at the School Camp. Curriculum-as-guide to the sequence of enactment of subject-matter was important to John, whose view reflected that of the other teachers at the School Camp. As the teachers at the School Camp do not work exclusively with one group, he believed the written curriculum kept everyone "on the same page," neither repeating nor overlooking subject-matter. When progressively more difficult challenges could be presented to the students in sequence, Karen noted, more success flowed as a consequence. "Sequence," Margaret insisted, "is how we develop experience." Dewey's (1934/1980, p. 36) agreed, pointing out that, "in an experience, flow is from something to something. As one part leads into another and as one part carries on what went before, each gains distinctness in itself," a distinctness it would not gain as a disconnected entity, emphasising the importance of the flow through and between the activities provided by aims. Highlighting the significance of sequence, Dewey (1916/2004, p. 24) warned that "those engaged in directing the actions of others are always in danger of overlooking the importance of the sequential development of those they direct." As Margaret pointed out, "we don't take sequence for granted. We test it and reflect on its veracity from time to time."

It is fairly clear from the discussion that much of what happens at the Primary School and the School Camp is not recorded in the official curriculum. This highlights the importance of being conscious of the hidden curriculum and the role it plays in practical curriculum.

2.6. The hidden curriculum: an aspect of the subject-matter commonplace

In this aspect, I discuss the place hidden curriculum has in the teachers understanding of curriculum. I suggest that due to the value placed on it by the teachers, it should be written as official curriculum.

Jackson (1968) is credited with identifying the hidden curriculum. Although it is unwritten curriculum (Blumberg & Blumberg, 1994; Dreeben, 1976), it is an intentional aspect of the School Camp programme. It represents, according to Jackson (1968), the culture and structures embedded in schools. While not widely discussed, its influence was noted by teachers at the Primary School and the School Camp. This curriculum is not designed by curriculum-makers. Rather, it evolves in communities over time. According to Null (2011), the

hidden curriculum includes those "attitudes, values, and beliefs that are conveyed to students as part of the overall school culture but are not explicitly stated in curriculum documents" (p. 93). It develops in culture sharing groups like the School Camp and the Primary School, and although new teachers "inherit" (Jackson, 1992 p. 17) it, as they do the formal curriculum, they can and do contribute to its evolution over time, as they too become part of the culture.

Developing good citizens, students who could take their place in and contribute to their communities and society, was nominated by the teachers at the School Camp, the Primary School, and the teachers in the five studies in Chapter 2, as their highest priority for student achievement. Neil described it as manifest in "the culture of his classroom, the playground, and the Primary School." It was also discussed among the staff but importantly, it was not documented as official curriculum.

The hidden curriculum is vital in the process of "enculturation" (Gardner, 1993, p. 240) of students and teachers into the School Camp community and is central to the success of its programme. It starts right from the first assembly and continues through induction on the first day of camp. In a residential context, the hidden curriculum assumes more importance as it pervades all aspects of community life, a 24 hour a day experience unlike the life at the Primary School or at the School Camp students' home schools. Life in dormitories, in dining rooms, even in the places occupied in free time, are guided by the culture alive in the hidden curriculum. That it is reproduced camp after camp is no accident as Karen illustrated. According to Reid (1992), subject-matter in a deliberative curriculum should be culturally significant. It is the hidden curriculum at the School Camp which represents its culture, more so than the official curriculum. As such, Karen argued, "we should value it by writing curriculum for it, by saying that this is what we aim to happen within that experience, and it should be documented."

These aspects of the subject-matter commonplace, central to the outcomes, sought, valued, and achieved at both the School Camp and the Primary School, should be recorded as official curriculum. Documentation would anoint the hidden curriculum with a formal declaration of intent, supporting Dewey's (1916/2004) claim that education should not be random. These parts of the curriculum could then be subject to scrutiny, revision, and development, just as other aspects are.

2.7. Summary and conclusion

When deconstructed into its component aspects, the subject-matter commonplace was understood by the teachers at the School Camp and at the Primary School in very similar ways, differing only in how some aspects were emphasised. Curriculum as written guide was understood by both groups as important, with the School Camp teachers freer to develop curriculum from first principles and the Primary School teachers tracing a closer path through the Victorian Curriculum. Although both groups of teachers enacted curriculum under levels of control, at the School Camp the control was local, imposed by a curriculum of which they had ownership. At the Primary School, as the teachers were DET employees, the curriculum was externally imposed DET, effected by a combination of the mandated Victorian Curriculum, mandated external testing, and to an extent by crowding of the curriculum. Teachers at the Primary School and the School Camp appreciated the benefits of working within defined structures, of which sequence of learning was an integral part, noting benefits for their students.

Although the subject-matter of the School Camp curriculum did not cover the academic scope of the Victorian Curriculum, the School Camp teachers believed its alignment to their local curricular aims made it relevant to the context of a school camp, a more important consideration to them. While the hidden curriculum was not a term used by the teachers for the informal parts of the curriculum, they identified its presence in detail, observation revealing it to be evident in their practice, more so at the School Camp than the Primary School. As the learning outcomes of the hidden curriculum were valued in each location, they would benefit by recording the hidden curriculum and moving it into the official curriculum. Finally, where the Primary School teachers saw subject-matter as something to be enacted as an end in itself, the School Camp teachers expressed the view that the prime purpose of subject-matter was as a means to achieve the curricular aims of their programme.

In the light of the subject-matter commonplace, the School Camp is very similar to the Primary School in its understanding of curriculum, with variations in perspective accounting for what differences there were. Using statewide curriculum as a guide and allowing space for locally developed curriculum would appeal to the Primary School teachers, gifting them ownership, and potentially addressing the issue of the crowded curriculum. Curriculum in both locations could benefit from making the hidden curriculum official, as it achieves so much of the

teachers' aspirations for curriculum. Students, the beneficiaries of subject-matter, are the next commonplace discussed.

3. The student commonplace: the place of students in teachers understanding of curriculum

3.1. Introduction to the student commonplace

In this commonplace, I discuss how the place of students contributes to the way curriculum is understood by teachers at the School Camp and at the Primary School, searching also for convergence and divergence of perception. It includes discussion of the aspects of understanding the student generally and individually, engaging the student, learning as experience, self-assessment, feedback, and reporting of student experience. Unintended consequences of curriculum and the place curriculum has in preparing students for their future is also be discussed.

Any deliberation of curriculum which does not include the student, lacks a fundamental element in Reid's (2010) opinion. By stating that the Victorian Curriculum sets out what "every student should learn during their first 11 years of schooling" (VCAA, 2017), VCAA indicates its focus is on subject-matter, with students, as Freire (1970/2010) points out, merely vessels to be filled. On the other hand, existential curricularists like Greene (1988) and Eisner (1994) insist that it is children, not subjects, teachers teach, a point of agreement with those participating in my research. By allocating a commonplace to the student and describing them as the "beneficiaries of curricular outcomes", Schwab (1973, p. 502) indicated the significance he placed on students in discussions of curriculum. He insisted that curriculum-makers must understand both the general nature of the age group of students for whom the curriculum was intended, and a specific understanding of the individuals to be taught. Through this declaration, Schwab indicated a belief that curriculum should not be made too far removed from where it was to be enacted. Also implicit in this belief was the inappropriateness of system wide curriculum, which Sahlberg (2016) observed, has become a hallmark of the approach to education of the current rash of neo-liberal governments, as it is not predicated on personal pedagogical relationships. By the time of *The Practical 4,* Schwab's (1983) perspective had evolved to the point where he recommended the inclusion of students as

members of the curriculum-making team, providing a different and no less important perspective, and giving the students a sense of ownership of the finished curriculum. In the curricular worlds of both groups of teachers, students loom as more important than in the literature surveyed and vastly more important than in the Victorian Curriculum, or, in Sahlberg's observations, that of the U.K., the U.S.A., or Germany. In the case of the Primary School teachers, the student commonplace elicited slightly less comment than the predominant subject-matter commonplace. With the teachers at the School Camp, the student commonplace was predominant, slightly ahead of subject-matter.

3.2. Understanding the student generally: an aspect of the student commonplace

In this aspect, the place of a general understanding of students is discussed, including the role curriculum-as-guide plays in this understanding.

Schwab (1973) believed that having a "general knowledge of the age group under consideration" (p. 502) - what they already knew, understood, and could do - was important in the process of developing a written curriculum but it must be remembered that it represented "abstract or idealized representations of real things" (Schwab, 1970, p. 611). Peter agreed, arguing that it would not be plausible to "write a course of study for each student at Camp." The curriculum which had evolved, Margaret noted, was informed by "observation of student achievement generally in the Camp programme." At the Primary School, this same understanding, based on experience, provided Joan with a benchmark against which to calibrate the performance of individuals, allowing her to find "appropriate starting points for students" and knowing when "I need to intervene."

Although the systematic approach to curriculum provides a general framework, that is all it offers. As far as possible, Grundy (1987) observed, the systematic curriculum has been designed to be "teacher proof" (p. 31), with no changes or interpretation possible. To ensure compliance, the learning is assessed with NAPLAN, testing years of schooling against a standard rather than levels of achievement by an individual. This situation is contrary to the stated intention of the Victorian Curriculum and has testing and subject-matter out of alignment, a serious flaw in curriculum according to English (2000). It is in the practical context of curriculum enactment where the student is treated as an individual, reflecting the

approach of the deliberative tradition, that the problem is reconciled for the teachers at the School Camp and the Primary School.

3.3. Understanding the student individually: an aspect of the student commonplace

In this aspect, I examine the way teachers at the School Camp and the Primary School understand individual students, and the importance place on this knowledge. It includes setting of expectations and mastery of subject-matter.

In the systematic tradition of curriculum, Freire (1970/2010) points out, students are seen as repositories into which deposits of knowledge are made. There is no sense of the individual - just one course of study which treats all students the same. Schwab (1973), as a deliberative curricularist, acknowledged the need for a practical approach which demanded that the "curricular operation must include intimate knowledge of the children under consideration - knowledge achieved by direct involvement with them" (p. 502). This was because Schwab (1970) believed that "curriculum in action treats real things: real acts, real teachers, real children, things richer than their theoretical representations" (p. 611). Integrating observation, evaluation, and interaction with the students, the Primary School and the School Camp teachers were able to make decisions appropriate to individual students. They also discussed the importance of readiness, engagement, learning styles, mastery, and an understanding of learning and behavioural difficulties as they applied to individuals. Understanding the student as an individual was one of the most important aspects of the student commonplace for teachers at the School Camp, the Primary School, and those in the five studies explored in Chapter 2.

Setting high expectations, relevant to each individual, worked for Joan who insisted that students needed to be "pushed to achieve their potential," a point graphically illustrated by observing the progress in the quality of handwriting of all of her students between February and May. While also setting high expectations, Liz at the School Camp also believed that in some circumstances students needed to understand the "minimum standards which I accept."

Responding in the moment as her lessons unfolded, was listed by Karen as a constant aspect of her work at the School Camp, as did the Primary School teachers and the teachers in the

studies reviewed in Chapter 2. It demanded of Karen that she be nimble in her responses to situations as they unfolded. In-built flexibility, a key feature of the School Camp curriculum, as Peter emphasised, allowed the programme to be differentiated in numerous ways appropriate to the particular stage of development and ability of individual students. This, Karen reported, was a developing aspect of the School Camp curriculum. Schwab (1973) agreed when he stated that curriculum appropriate to the individual could only be "achieved by direct contact" (p. 502) with students, reflecting his criticism of theoretical curriculum.

Mastery of subject-matter by individual students was not mentioned in the curriculum literature. It was the aim of the School Camp to offer a range of opportunities at the beginner level, "tasters" as Fiona described them, rather than development of mastery in any particular discipline, due to the constraints of the length of the programme and what the teachers considered age appropriate. Mastery was an issue identified by Jenny at the Primary School, worried about the impact of automatic promotion between grades preventing the achievement of competence. She realised that lower levels of competence would compound as students moved through the system, had they not "developed a solid foundation," once again highlighting, that for curriculum to be successful, it needed the flexibility to respond to individuals, a point reiterated by Schwab in his *Practical* essays and a feature of deliberative curriculum.

How students engaged with the teaching and learning process was considered by the teachers to be an important part of practical curriculum, which as Gardner (1993) explained, varied from one student to the next.

3.4. Engaging the student: an aspect of the student commonplace

In this aspect, I outline the importance teachers place on engaging students with curriculum to achieve successful learning outcomes. It includes student relationships with teachers and other students, engagement with the learning community, and homesickness.

Having a theoretical focus and concentrating on development rather than enactment of curriculum, the curriculum literature does not concern itself with the practical task confronting teachers of engaging students. The Victorian Curriculum (VCAA, 2015) barely mentions student engagement, consistent with the narrow, subject-matter focus of a

systematic perspective. When it is mentioned, the word engage could be substituted with participate, not the enthusiastic and deep relationship with learning teachers seek to achieve with their students.

Differences between the theoretical and the practical, which consumed so much of Schwab's attention on matters of curriculum, are nowhere more evident in the interviews than in the aspect of student engagement. Mentioned by the teachers in both locations, its importance was emphasised by the strength of conviction with which it was espoused.

Engaging students, Joan emphasised, was a primary focus of her work as a primary school teacher. Her view was shared with both groups of teachers and appeared in two forms. First was responding to student interest through what Quay (2015) called "occupation" (p. 19), a core focus of both the pragmatic and existential curricularists. As an example at the Primary School, Joan engaged with one of her students as a surfer, reporting excellent results. The second way was developing relationships with students, which Neil believed was the starting point for success in the classroom. Liz made the point that while students engaging with teachers was important at the School Camp, engagement with their new group of peers initially, and then expanding to membership of the community was fundamentally more important. Margaret saw this as "a reflection of a successful outcome for each camp," especially as measured against the School Camp aims. Both Dewey (1916/2004) and Gardner (1993) described learning as fundamentally a social activity, an aspect if ignored, potentially compromising the quality of outcomes for students. In Shulman's (1984) estimation, "the experience of working with others as an activity . . . permits the individual to accomplish far more than he or she could hope to accomplish alone. Moreover the group activity provides a setting within which important individual growth is fostered" (p. 186).

For Karen at the School Camp, an important tool in assessing her efficacy as a teacher was through "monitoring the levels of engagement of my students, something I do constantly." As Fiona indicated, "if students were not engaged, they were probably not learning."

Homesickness, in Liz's estimation, usually meant students were "still emotionally attached to home, but physically separated from it and not yet engaged with the camp community." Engagement with the new community, particularly their peers, eventually provided not just the solution, but a measure of student success and the success of the School Camp programme. According to Liz, a "very small number of students weren't emotionally mature

enough to cope with the experience and went home on visitors day [day six].” The parents and teachers involved in the decision aimed to avoid what Dewey (1916/2004) labelled a **“**mis-educative” experience, mindful of not “arresting or distorting the growth of further experience” (p. 20) by forcing them to stay. Homesickness was not restricted to the School Camp. Joan pointed out a small number of students in the infant section of the Primary School with the same issue, reporting that “they all grow out of it eventually.”

Regardless of the efforts of teachers at the Primary School, the levels of engagement I observed did not match those at the School Camp. Neil was able to pin point reasons. He described his students as kinaesthetic (doing), naturalistic (outdoors) learners. He tried to accommodate their learning style as much as possible, his hands on trigonometry lesson outdoors as an example, but was frustrated in not being able to do this more. Not being able to learn in the real world (outside the school) he cited as another restriction. At the School Camp, the students were constantly meaningfully engaged in real world occupation and activity, approached experientially. The only time I observed students disengaged, was when teachers talked for too long, reflected in shuffling feet, turning heads, and chatter. With such a contextual advantage, there appeared no reason for the students at the School Camp to be other than totally engaged. Without these advantages, the Primary School teachers did a very good job of holding the students’ interest.

Engagement is part of experience and experiencing, the next section of the student commonplace.

3.5. Experience and the student: an aspect of the student commonplace

In this aspect, student experience and the part it plays in the student commonplace is discussed. Experience features prominently in the curriculum literature. While experience is not one of Schwab’s commonplaces, he acknowledged its importance as an aspect of curriculum. Introducing “John Dewey” (Schwab, 1978, p. 272) into his deliberation and stating that “it is our past experience as well as present external events which determine our present experience,” Schwab (1978, p. 272) captured multiple meanings in the process. For curricularists in the pragmatic and existential traditions, learning was a process of developing meaning from participation in and reflection on experiences, a point of agreement with the

deliberative curricularists. Deliberators are involved in formation, particularly of the character of their students, as they contend with the consequences of choices they make when confronting what Reid (1992) describes as moral, practical problems. This was precisely what the teachers revealed confronts students at the School Camp. According to Pyle and Luce-Kapler (2014), development of "independence and social competency" (p. 1964) follows.

A point of difference emerged between the two groups of teachers and the academic literature when it came to the place of experience in how curriculum is understood. Experience featured prominently in the literature and in how the School Camp teachers understood curriculum, but was barely mentioned in discussions with the Primary School teachers. Whilst the Primary School teachers were aware of the benefits of real world contexts and experiences, the structures within which they worked mitigated against adoption of an experiential approach, especially those requiring contexts other than classrooms or school yards. Neil's practical design project using trigonometry was an exception he would like to have made the rule. He learned that way, and he was aware his students did as well. There were so many barriers to organising excursions that the Primary School teachers rarely used them.

So central is experience to the School Camp programme that it constitutes the core of the vision statement "Experience **FOR** a lifetime," a distillation of Dewey's (1938/1997) observation that what the student "has learned in the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing with the situations which follow" (p. 44). Bobbitt (1918/2012) insisted that to educate effectively, "there is not to be too much teaching. What the children crave and need is *experience*" (p. 15), capturing John's plea that "the kids just want to do stuff." In contrast to the Primary School teachers, experience featured prominently in the interviews with all of the School Camp teachers and was described as a complex construct in the learning process. Another quality of experience mentioned by Dewey (p. 136) was employment of the senses, stating that the "qualities of seen and touched things have a bearing on what is done, and are alertly perceived; they have a meaning" (p. 136), highlighting the importance of experiences beyond the classroom. In agreement, Peter considered school classrooms, textbooks, and videos could not provide engagement of the full suite of senses. By example, he related students' joy in the surf, experiencing the smell, taste, and feel of something they may only have seen and heard on a

screen. “You can’t beat immersion in the real thing. That really sticks with you - especially if it’s your first time,” Peter related. Experiences represented the foundation of the School Camp curriculum, something that was difficult for the Primary School to achieve as practical curriculum with any consistency due to the restraints imposed by its context.

Identification and management of risk was an area Fiona used to illustrate the importance of experience. Being confronted by the consequences of their actions in real world situations, she proposed, was vastly different to a scenario presented in a classroom. Sheltering students from the consequences of their actions was a trend Peter and John were critical of, pointing out that this was not the way the School Camp operated. When Young (2014) suggests that it is the responsibility of curriculum to take students “beyond the experiences they bring to school” (p. 8), he invokes John’s conviction that there is “no point to Camp if it simply repeats what happened at home or at school.” From Young (2014) and John’s insightful comments, it should be expected that there are some differences between school camp and school. Experiential education is one of those aspects. When Quay (2017) explained that “outdoor education draws culture and place together educationally,” not as something “to be studied,” and “assessed,” rather something to be experienced as a “living unity” (p. 464), he captured a deeply held belief of the School Camp teachers and a difference to the way the Primary School teachers approached curriculum. At its deepest level, Dewey (1934/1980) contends, “experience has a unity that gives it its name. The existence of this unity is constituted by a single quality that pervades the entire experience in spite of the variation of its constituent parts” (p. 37), a quality that was generally not apparent, via interview or observation, at the Primary School, where enactment was compartmentalised.

Margaret’s move out of mainstream education and into school camping was because of the disconnection between the type of learning experiences presented in the school context and the experience of life away from school. It was not going to prepare her students for life after school. What would achieve that, Margaret believed, was” building a new community involving the development of relationships based on shared experience.” To succeed, she observed, the students had to adapt. This mirrored Dewey’s (1916/2004) description of democracy, not politically, but as a “mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience” (p. 83), resulting in “change in social habit - its continuous readjustment through meeting the new situations produced by varied intercourse” (p. 83).

So important is experience that it could well be added to the simple description of curriculum offered by the VCAA at the start of the Victorian Curriculum, becoming what students will know, do, understand, and experience. A purpose for experience, captured in the School Camp vision statement (see Figure 6) - Experience **FOR** a lifetime - was to provide a foundation for what students might face in their post-camp lives.

3.6. Curriculum as preparation for the student's future: an aspect of the student commonplace

In this aspect, the role the teachers perceived for curriculum in preparing students for their future is outlined. Dewey (1916/2004) believed that education for the student should be more about the here and now, rather than "preparation for a remote future" (p. 77), a future so remote that it was difficult for them to imagine. Schwab (1973) on the other hand believed that an appropriate curriculum should consider their "probable destiny as adults" (p. 502) as he described education as a stage in the journey leading to that destination. Other than Schwab, preparing students for their future was not a strong theme articulated in the curriculum literature. In contrast, it was a significant purpose of curriculum for the teachers at the School Camp and the Primary School. While not described in any detail, for the teachers, preparing students for their futures revolved around developing social competency and personal interests. Null (2011) captured their ambition for the curriculum to have an impact on every aspect of the students' character when he stated that failure in this regard, "will ultimately fail to turn students into free citizens who can build and sustain community" (p. 177).

Having a stated vision to provide students with an experience which they hoped would underpin many of their achievements as they move through life, the teachers at the School Camp placed concern for the students' futures at the forefront of the purpose they apportioned to their curriculum. While not eliciting the same emphasis, it was important to the Primary School teachers also. A valuable skill students need as they learn, and for their futures, is to be able to self-assess, as well as receive feedback from others.

3.7. Self-assessment and feedback as curriculum: an aspect of the student commonplace

In this aspect, the important contribution self-assessment and feedback make as aspects of the student commonplace are examined. Self-assessment and feedback are not aspects of curriculum evident in the literature I reviewed. Gardner (1993) makes an oblique reference to self-assessment when he alludes to the importance of self-knowledge in the process of developing "sense of self" (p. 238), a process predicated on the ability of individuals to self-assess. None of the Primary School teachers mentioned self-assessment and only Jenny included a brief reference to feedback in her interview, commenting that NAPLAN results came back so long after the administration of the test, the students would have no recollection to allow connection of test with result, eliminating any relevance of the exercise for students, a criticism levelled at testing by English (2000). Observation of the Primary School classrooms demonstrated the importance the teachers placed on feedback, as there was a constant stream, both oral and written, in the moment of teaching, and quick responses to formal tests.

At the School Camp, because of the emphasis on the personal intelligences, self-assessment assumed an important, explicitly articulated role. Peter explained that the programme had inbuilt reference points which allowed students to progress from "I didn't think I could," to knowledge that "I have done," and then to understand of themselves that "I can do," based on self-assessment of personal achievement. By basing achievement on self-assessment completed prior to participation, Liz proposed, students were provided with a benchmark for subsequent development. Feedback from respected others such as teachers and peers was constant, as it was at the Primary School, and in Peter's opinion, elevated the achievements of the students to an even higher plane, a condition he described as "priceless". Making student achievement visible to those who could not observe the learning was considered an important part of curriculum by both groups of teachers and is discussed now.

3.8. Reporting of learning; an aspect of the student commonplace

In this aspect, I discuss the importance of reporting as a means of making student achievement visible. It indicates a difference in approach and emphasis between the Primary School and the School Camp, and between the systematic and deliberative traditions.

With the focus of the curriculum literature on curriculum-making rather than enactment, it was understandable that reporting might not be a topic of discussion. The Mintzes et al. (2005) study was the only instance mentioning reporting. They considered it important enough to propose its inclusion, in tandem with assessment, as a commonplace. As it is student achievement which is being reported, I believe it fits comfortably in the student commonplace.

While reporting was evident at both research sites, it assumed a much more prominent role at the Primary School. According to Jenny, reporting was the most important mechanism available for the principal to keep in touch with what was happening in classrooms and with individual students. Parents were the main audience for reporting in Joan's estimation, although her experience was that those who read them generally knew how their children were going because they were engaged with their education. Conversely she observed, those who needed to read them because they were not engaged, typically did not. Her final comment on reporting was that the numerical grades were not of prime interest to the parents. That was reserved for comments focused on social development.

Reporting in the traditional school sense was not a process employed at the School Camp. Education, as John envisaged it, was a "collaboration between teachers, students, and parents." To be effective, it required communication. Treating the student booklet as a portfolio style of report, he thought, was an excellent means of making the achievement of the students visible to others in a way a numerical grade could not. It included written reflective entries supported by photographs. This required that the student booklet provide a reasonably comprehensive picture of student achievement by being completed, not a universal practice in my observation. Effectiveness of the booklet as a reporting mechanism has not been investigated with parents or schools but would be a worthwhile project. Many students are observed proudly displaying booklets to their parents on visitors day, providing a glimpse of its effectiveness. Reporting methods like those employed at the Primary School could be trialled at the School Camp, but would need, like subject-matter, to be relevant to purpose. Unintended student outcomes, which Schwab (1983) and Dewey (1916/2004) mention, is the last aspect of the student commonplace.

3.9. Unintended learning outcomes: an aspect of the student commonplace

In this aspect, I examine the issue of unintended consequences as an aspect of curriculum, and the role choice plays, evident only in data from the School Camp. This does not indicate that there were no unintended outcomes at the Primary School, just that there was no data.

In *The Practical 4*, Schwab (1983) pointed to the existence of unintended consequences of curriculum, something which should emerge and be removed in the trial phase of new curriculum. It was only the interviews with the School Camp teachers which generated comment on unintended outcomes. Extensive trialling of new activities, as Schwab recommended, was effective in guarding against unintended outcomes. A number of the School Camp teachers related stories of watching students being forced to complete activities they found too challenging, resulting in some of them developing a negative attitude to the activity and to school camping. Dewey (1938/1997) described this as mis-educative experience. Physically challenging activities like abseiling and the high ropes course, and the emotional challenge of being away from home, were common examples. In recent times, the School Camp teachers related, student choice had become respected in line with changing attitudes in school camping and outdoor education generally, labelled challenge by choice. Homesickness was somewhat of an exception, where John attested that he could not remember an instance where a child was forced to stay by their parents and did not finish the camp glad that they had seen it through. In many cases, he commented, the students became emotional on leaving camp, indicating strong engagement and a reversal of the earlier state of affairs.

3.10. Summary and conclusion: the student commonplace

By the time of The Practical 4, Schwab (1983) had developed the student commonplace to include students on the curriculum-making committee, as he believed it would lead to enhanced student "proprietorship" (p. 248), and greater success in curricular endeavours.

Most of the aspects of the student commonplace understood by the teachers at the School Camp and the Primary School were convergent, as they were with the curriculum literature. Being in possession of general and specific knowledge of students was viewed by the two groups of teachers as essential for successful curricular interactions with students, as was

engaging them in the process, especially through developing relationships with both teachers and peers. Feedback was an obvious and important part of curriculum enactment in both places, but student self-assessment was only apparent in the data from the School Camp. Reporting, while evident and remarked on in both locations, was a larger presence at the Primary School, obvious as a reflection of its position in a systematic curricular landscape. At the School Camp, student achievement was reported portfolio style, its effectiveness unknown. Traditional forms of reporting could be trialled and introduced if proven effective. At both the locations, teachers considered that an important function of curriculum was preparing students for life beyond school, particularly as successful community members, while at the School Camp, the intention was to achieve this without unintended consequences or mis-educative experiences along the way. Although an aspiration of the Primary School teachers, experiential education and the notion of student experience as expounded by a range of authors such as Dewey (1916/2004), Nicol (2003), and Priest and Gass (1997), it represented a point of difference from the School Camp where it is a central aspect of curriculum.

The next topic of discussion is to understanding the influence of milieu on students and curriculum and the impact of the educative context on student learning.

4. The milieu/context commonplace: the place of milieu and context in teachers understanding of curriculum

4.1. Introduction: how milieu/context is understood as commonplace of curriculum

In this commonplace, I discuss the contribution milieu/context makes to the ways teachers understand curriculum, while also noting convergence and divergence of perception. Although educative context and milieu differ, they are complimentary. As such, they are discussed separately within this commonplace, to assist with developing clarity of understanding.

Schwab (1973) did not go to the same lengths when discussing milieu, as he did with subject-matter, but was still at pains to point out that none of the commonplaces should dominate the others, lest the lesser attention paid to milieu, for example, be interpreted as a diminution

of its importance. The importance of milieu for Schwab (1973) was in considering what impact these diverse influences might have on curriculum making, and in terms of this study, enactment.

4.2. Milieu understood as an aspect of the milieu/context commonplace

In this aspect, the impact on curriculum of milieu at the societal and local level is discussed, including how milieu influences the classroom, teachers and students alike.

Milieu, whilst not a front of mind aspect of curriculum for either group of teachers, did attract some comment. Like Schwab (1969b), they treated curriculum problems in the first instance as practical and local. For this reason, although they worked in a systematic tradition of curriculum which presented curriculum as a universal commodity, teachers at the Primary School and the School Camp did not believe it could achieve effective learning outcomes when there were differences in backgrounds, interests, and beliefs between schools 10 minutes apart, let alone across the nation. They agree with Quay's (2017, p. 470) belief that, "like nature there is always diversity within world culture - it is not homogeneous - for such diversity is contained within the total system" (p. 470). The teachers in the five studies examined in Chapter 2 agreed. Similarly, it was Primary School teacher Jenny's belief that the current Victorian Curriculum actually "disadvantaged many students." She agreed with Holt (1995) who argued that, just because curriculum was appropriate and worked in a specific location, did not mean it was appropriate and would work everywhere. As Gardner (1993) explained, if students do not understand the culture from which curriculum has been developed, they are not in possession of the symbolic code to interpret its embodied meanings, placing them at a curricular disadvantage.

Milieu indicates societal context but does not address how it exists. Hegemony, on the other hand, Apple (1993) described as the power structures controlled by the few which "organise and legitimate the activity of the many individuals whose interaction makes up a social order" (p. 86). It included often unspoken but sometimes spoken, often invisible but sometimes written, rules and laws, reflecting "what those in positions of power in society deem of worth" (Ditchburn, 2012, p. 348). School Camp teacher Peter argued that the national curriculum allowed "one segment of society to achieve a privileged position at the expense of others."

They achieved this in part, Peshkin (1992) argued, by making curriculum based on a particular "cultural commitment" (p. 250). According to the authors of the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government, 2014, p. 50), "intended curriculum documents implicitly or explicitly privilege particular views and assumptions about the nature of reality and the purpose of education and, as such, they are never neutral or values free." Curriculum, and the power to design and implement it, is an important element of the power structure which not only reflects, but also perpetuates, how milieu is manifest. Having an understanding of the perspectives of the curriculum traditions would help teachers deal with milieu in a thoughtful way. As Liz from the School Camp maintained, the teacher's world view "would probably be effected by where in society they have come from," which in turn has an "effect on the way they understand curriculum," a state of affairs she felt teachers needed to be alive to.

Commenting that a "school should be the centrepiece of a community," Joan at the Primary School felt the curriculum needed to "reflect its community." Reid (2001) agreed, noting that learning at a practical level is intricately woven into the fabric of a community. When students travelled from outside the community to attend the school, Joan observed a disconnection between the school as a local cultural institution and the segment of its student population who were not locals. This situation was underlined by local families who did not see their values and interests reflected in the Primary School, with Joan observing that they had "voted with their feet and moved their children to neighbouring schools." While working to provide an equitable curriculum locally, Jenny was confronted with the effects of social and cultural milieu in her classroom. She mentioned the difficulty of dealing with the negative impact of milieu on their students through their exposure to manifestly "inappropriate content on television and video, including electronic games, and the impact of social media."

When Bobbitt (1918/2012) stated that, as "teachers educate for the efficient performance of life's affairs, they must be a portion of the active world of affairs" (p. 39), he was insisting that teachers needed to understand milieu and help students overcome its impact. It followed, Fiona argued, that "if the curriculum doesn't support what's happening in the wider world, then what's the point in teaching it." Students need to perceive the curriculum as having relevance to their lives, supporting Fiona's point that regardless of the milieu from which it

emanates, curriculum must help to prepare every student to be able to function and prosper in the milieus in which they do and will live.

Karen related that the School Camp "treated all students equally." She reported that, "as the students bring very little with them, they all start on much the same footing." On the other hand, "cultural differences were acknowledged and seamlessly accommodated," John stated, by "staff modelling the attitude that every variation observed was so normal it was not deserving of attention."

Being aware of milieu and not letting its general nature interfere with the uniqueness of real situations, Schwab (1970) invoked his oft repeated mantra:

> Above all, the supposed beneficiary is not the generic child, not even a class or kind of child out of the psychological or sociological literature pertaining to the child. The beneficiary will consist of very local kinds of children and, within the local kinds, individual children. (p. 27)

Schwab's point is reflected in the approach taken by the teachers at the School Camp and the Primary School, where they responded to the individual needs of the students, irrespective of their backgrounds.

4.3. Context understood as an aspect of the milieu/context commonplace

In this aspect, the place of context in the teachers understanding of curriculum is examined. This aspect represents one of the few significant differences between the School Camp and the Primary School and highlights the benefit of separating milieu and context. Experiential learning, another point of difference, is strongly intertwined with context at the School Camp.

In Schwab's (1973) treatment of the milieu commonplace, the educative context occupies but one line, due to his focus on curriculum-making, rather than enactment. In mainstream schools, the educative context is commonly a traditional classroom. This was certainly the case at the Primary School, resulting in context occupying little time in the interviews with some of the teachers, and none with others. The teachers made every effort to make their classrooms as interesting and exciting as possible, while keeping them safe and organised, which they believed offered the best chance to engage the students and maximise their

learning. Ultimately, classrooms were simply "mind numbing" to Neil. Like Bobbitt (1918/2012) he felt that trying to simulate the real world worked against his sensibilities when it started "right outside the school gates." Neil's response was, where possible, to develop problems of a practical nature and execute them in the school yard, aware that aspects of the system he worked in were always going to limit what was possible. Robyn remembered early in her career "walking out of her school into the community as I liked. Administration makes excursions very difficult now." Ultimately the Primary School teachers were resigned to the fact that they had little control over the educative contexts in which they worked, while they dreamed of something better.

Inclusion of context adds "place" (Mannion, Ashley, & Lynch, 2013; Spillman, 2017; Tooth, 2018; Wattchow & Brown, 2011) as an equal partner in the milieu commonplace, a matter of significance for teachers at the School Camp. In his book *Curriculum*, Bobbitt (1918/2012) considered context an important enough topic to devote a chapter to "Where Education Can Be Accomplished" (p. 4). In the first line he states that "educational experiences must take place where they can be normal. Frequently that is not at the schools" (p. 34). The reason he gave was simply to "achieve a sense of reality" (p. 99). It was Fiona's belief that "student achievements at the School Camp would be difficult to achieve in traditional classrooms."

Concurring with Bobbitt, Dewey (1916/2004, p. 20) encouraged the use of situations which allowed students "to come into living contact with a broader environment." Teachers at the School Camp considered context a significant part of their understanding of effective curriculum, demonstrated by the amount and detail of the comment it inspired. Margaret described context as "the foundation of curriculum delivery." Learning through living (Bobbitt, 1918/2012) captured the way the School Camp teachers sought to educate their students, with the living happening in a community, the central project of life at the School Camp. Liz emphasised that this "joined subject-matter and context together to make learning relevant to the students." The teachers were well aware that the residential nature of the School Camp and the multi school cohort of students provided a huge contextual advantage, compared to a traditional school setting, in achieving their curricular aims.

Contexts at the School Camp, which Fiona described as "real life" and Karen as "authentic," allowed students to learn from their experiences. Supporting the view of the teachers, Dewey (1938/1997) explained that "education in order to accomplish its ends for both the individual

learner and for society must be based upon experience - which is always the actual life experience of some individual" (p. 89). The *Tbilisi Declaration* (UNESCO, 1977), resulting from the first intergovernmental conference on environmental education, recommended developing "closer links between educational processes and real life . . . with due stress on practical activities and first-hand experience," an approach supported by Louv (2008) and a direct reflection of the situation at the School Camp. In complete agreement, Gardner (1993) stated that "as societies become more complex . . . learning takes place increasingly in contexts remote from the actual site of practice - for example, in those special buildings called 'schools'" (p. 334).

One consequence Null (2011, p. 31) warned against, was that "over-emphasizing contexts leads to a curriculum that does not create new possibilities for students. Students become trained for what has been done in the community in the past, as opposed to being liberated so that they consider new paths." Schwab's (1969b) view was that curriculum must remain relevant to the student and deserving of the investment of their time. Dispelling these fears, John reported that "the way contexts have been used at Camp has evolved over time, so they stay relevant."

In most of the situations described in Chapter 4, the School Camp teachers had consciously created authentic situations to engage students, as Dewey (1916/2004) indicated, in "the intentional endeavor to discover *specific* connections between something we do and the consequences which result, so the two become continuous" (p. 140), a process for which he reserved high praise. Dewey also considered that working through a process was often a more valuable learning experience than simply achieving the outcome, a point on which Peter concurred when he stated that "the journey is often more important than the destination." Navigating the twists and turns of that journey through the social context was one of the three main planks of the School Camp aims (see Figure 6).

For students to understand each other, Bobbitt (1918/2012) believed, it required that they "enter sympathetically and vividly into the experience of others" (P. 99). Thus his declaration that "life must be lived in order to be known" (p. 99) can be understood in the residential context of the School Camp. This was exactly what the School Camp teachers aimed for the students to experience. Observing tearful farewells after just nine days was a measure of the impact of the experience. Dewey (1916/2004) insisted that the "very process of living

together educates. It enlarges and enlightens experience; it stimulates and enriches imagination; it creates responsibility for accuracy and vividness of statement and thought" (p. 9). Teachers at the School Camp could not have agreed more. Much of the social context was described by them as being present in the informal parts of the curriculum - places like the dormitories and the dining rooms – contexts which are not found in the mainstream school setting. When Dewey (1916/2004) postulated that "the social environment exercises an educative or formative influence unconsciously and apart from any set purpose" (p. 16) he captured the fact that much of the social development to which School Camp teachers referred happened in the hidden curriculum.

Dewey (1916/2004) believed developing contexts which encouraged particular behaviours above others was the starting point for creating a culture sharing group, a process John practised while adding that "you have to work on it constantly as a teacher. It doesn't just happen." The end point of the process was to ensure that the participants felt ownership of the venture, sharing its successes and failures. It was the social context, as much as any, which led to the development of congruity within the community, as Dewey (1916/2004) stated:

> As soon as he is possessed by the emotional attitude of the group, he will be alert to recognize the special ends at which it aims and the means employed to secure success. His beliefs and ideas, in other words, will take a form similar to those of the group. (p. 14)

Observing students joyfully living and learning in both the informal and formal social settings they encounter in the School Camp, developing new friendships, and ultimately forming a community as they went, I agree with Dewey (1916/2004) that "the things which most need to be done are things which involve one's relationships with others" (p. 115). He was critical of approaches to curriculum that isolate "subject matter from a social context," and accused it of being the "chief obstruction . . . to securing a general training of the mind" (p. 65). Gardner's (1993, p. 250) instruction that "children invest much effort into maintaining their friendship patterns" adds potency to Dewey's claim.

According to Dewey (1916/2004) the "educator's part in the enterprise of education is to furnish the environment which stimulates responses and directs the learners course" (p. 174). This role, John related, which involved "research, design, implementation, and sometimes construction," resulted in the development of the context of the School Camp over the years,

so that student outcomes sought by the teachers were no accident. It engaged their "immediate and direct concern," Dewey emphasised (1938, p. 38). He believed this was an important role for the teacher:

> We never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment. Whether we permit chance environments to do the work, or whether we design environments for the purpose makes a great difference. And any environment is a chance environment so far as its educative influence is concerned unless it has been deliberately regulated with reference to its educative effect. (Dewey, 1916/2004, p. 18)

In Dewey's (1938/1997) perception, the environment and the interactions with it were closely entwined. "An experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment"(p. 43) he declared. Moving curriculum from the page of a document and into a purposeful learning environment brought it to life for Margaret. If it "doesn't translate into context and reality, then it remains the written curriculum, but it's the transfer to context that delivers it. It's that energy I'm talking about, the manifestation of ideals, the best learning philosophies put into practice." The purpose of context for Dewey (1916/2004) was to direct student learning towards a preferred pre-determined outcome:

> The particular medium in which an individual exists leads him to see and feel one thing rather than another; it leads him to have certain plans in order that he may act successfully with others; it strengthens some beliefs and weakens others as a condition of winning the approval of others. (p. 11)

In that context, students at the School Camp experienced first-hand what was for them, acting in the real world and responding to social pressure. To appreciate a problem as real, Dewey (1972) argued, the child perceives it as having "arisen within and out of his own experience, as an obstacle which he has to overcome, in order to secure his own end, the integrity and fullness of his own experience" (p. 145), recalling Reid's (1992) practical, moral problems. In this case the students themselves become deliberators as they seek from amongst the alternatives, in Schwab's (1969b) words, not the right but the best solution to the problem the curriculum has presented to them.

4.4. Summary and conclusion: the milieu/context commonplace

To earn its distinction as one of Schwab's commonplaces, milieu is a topic which must be included when discussing curriculum, because as Reid (1993) comments, "it is called on to do a huge amount of work" (p. 508). It does not figure prominently in the discussions of curriculum with either group of teachers. Curriculum, following Schwab's guidance, should respond to changes in societal milieu at all levels, with an emphasis on reflecting community, developing shared purpose, and embracing differences. To be relevant to students, curriculum should articulate the role milieu does play in their lives, and will probably play, in their communities, and in society at large in the future. There is an opportunity for more discussion around the topic of milieu at the School Camp and the capture of those deliberations through documentation. Dealing with milieu for the Primary School is problematic, as it operates in a systematic curricular environment, a point about which they should be aware. It is worthy of further deliberation for the Primary School, due to its impact.

Context is acknowledged but barely discussed by Schwab. The purpose of this section of the study was to add detail to an important part of the milieu commonplace, one which finds excellence of expression at the School Camp. Investigation and documentation of the impact of social context on the School Camp would capture the learning outcomes which are already apparent and potentially yield ways of enhancing them further, as would recording the impact of other contexts. Maintaining relevance was highlighted as a question the School Camp constantly needs to ask of its contexts. Context, when seen as a force for achieving learning outcomes at the School Camp, has the potential to reconceptualise the approach to curriculum enactment in mainstream schools, which at the Primary School, was restricted mainly to traditional classrooms. The importance of the educative context constitutes one of the few differences in the way curriculum is understood and enacted at the School Camp, compared with the Primary School. As Dewey (1916/2004) pointed out, developing educative contexts is a vital role of teachers in his conception of education. It is they who form the next part of the discussion.

5. How teachers are understood and how they understand themselves as a commonplace of curriculum

5.1. Introduction: valuing the teacher in the commonplaces

In this commonplace, I discuss how teachers at the School Camp and the Primary School understand their work and their place in the way they understand curriculum, as well as the way their work is understood by others. Aspects they reveal which will illuminate the discussion are the place of teaching and learning method, and the role teacher experience plays. It will also include the ways teachers care for students, the importance of their support for curriculum, and how they view professional development and teacher training.

In his initial iteration of the commonplaces, Schwab (1973) included the teacher as one of the five. When it came to membership of the curriculum-making committee though, it was not teachers representing the commonplace. It was, in Schwab's words "those with knowledge of the teachers" (p. 504). Ten years later Schwab (1983) demanded that teachers be the first members of the curriculum planning group, adding emphasis by repeating his declaration and shouting it in capital letters. He gave two reasons. Firstly, the generalities of theory would be enhanced by the incorporation of the practical sensibilities of teachers if they were included in the planning stage. Schwab's (1983) second reason orbits around the notions of ownership, engagement, and professional status, challenging the idea of curriculum as something that is given to teachers. It is best described in his own words.

> There are a thousand ingenious ways in which commands on what and how to teach can, will, and must be modified or circumvented in the actual moments of teaching. Teachers practise an art. Moments of choice of what to do, how to do it, with whom and at what pace, arise hundreds of times a school day, and arise differently every day and with every group of students. No command or instruction can be so formulated as to control that kind of artistic judgment and behavior, with its demand for frequent, instant choices of ways to meet an ever varying situation . . . . Therefore, teachers must be involved in debate, deliberation, and decision about what and how to teach. Such involvement constitutes the only language in which knowledge adequate to an

> art can arise. Without such a language, teachers not only feel decisions as impositions, they find that intelligence cannot traverse the gap between the generalities of merely expounded instructions and the particularities of teaching moments. (Schwab, 1983, p. 245)

In one intense passage of insightful prose, Schwab not only articulates reasons for the inclusion of teachers in the process of curriculum planning which are difficult to refute, but also captures the complexities of teachers' work, reminding us that curriculum is meaningless if it does not resolve in practical application. For Schwab (1983), what teachers practice is not just an art, but a practical art.

5.2. How teachers understand their work: an aspect of the teacher commonplace

In this aspect, the ways teachers understand their work is discussed. Although substantively similar, it is in the emphasis of their curriculum work, controlled externally for the Primary School teachers, where differences emerge.

Teachers at the Primary School and the School Camp were of one mind, considering curriculum enactment to be the focus, but not all of their work. Even the emphasis of their work was in lock step. They insisted it was concerned primarily, as Null (2011) pointed out, with enhancing the "moral, intellectual, physical, civic, and spiritual" (p. 177) dimensions of the students character. Their aim - to develop individuals who become "free citizens who can build and sustain community" (p. 177), demonstrating the qualities of deliberative curricularists.

At the Primary School, the teachers felt as though they were acting a part in someone else's play, with little control of the script. This was considered their appointed place in the systematic tradition, according to Freire (1970/2010), and was captured in two themes – control and ownership of curriculum. At the Primary School, the teachers work was controlled by the mandated Victorian Curriculum, of which they had no ownership. It has already been described as overcrowded, leaving little opportunity for the teachers to explore their own curricular inclinations. Adding even more pressure to a situation described by Darling-Hammond (2000) as "nearly overwhelming" (p. 301), were issues I observed such as preparation for external testing, layers of bureaucratic busy work, and regular

implementation of new curriculum. All the while, as teachers in the O'Donoghue (1994) study explained, acting as "psychologist, nurse, mum and dad, social worker, and teacher" (p. 32) for their students. Dealing with the large cohort of students with special needs caused the Primary School teachers even more stress, worsened by Jenny having "no special ed. training."

By contrast, teachers at the School Camp had ownership of the curriculum, achieved by designing it themselves. By designing the curriculum to fit in the available time and context, the teachers were able to work with it rather than be controlled by it. Aligned with the focus of the curriculum - formation of character - work for teachers at the School Camp reflected a deliberative approach to curriculum. They were neither overwhelmed nor controlled by what inundated the Primary School teachers, simply because they did not do those things.

How teachers at the Primary School understood their work was convergent with the views of teachers in all of the studies in Chapter 2, except for two. It is instructive that the exceptions were the art teachers in the Kuster et al. (2015) study and the special education teachers who represented one group in the O'Donoghue (1994) study. With the freedom to design their own curricula and released from the control of external testing, their understanding of curriculum and their work was closely aligned with the deliberative approach of the School Camp teachers. It was interesting to note that no stress was reported by those three groups or Robyn, the reading recovery teacher at the Primary School. The common theme in each case was that they enacted specialist curriculum away from the academic focus of mandated curriculum.

5.3. Teaching and learning method: an aspect of the teacher commonplace

In this aspect, I examine how approaches to teaching and learning method varied between the School Camp and the Primary School. Teaching method was a strong aspect of curriculum in both locations. Even if not at interview, it was on display and observable constantly.

Teaching method was barely discussed by the Primary School teachers in the interviews. Mention was made by the experienced teachers of the emphasis on method in their training and its apparent demise in current teacher education courses. Context was mentioned as part of teaching method, an example of integration of aspect and commonplace. How the Primary

School Teachers enacted the curriculum was one aspect over which they felt a sense of control, consistent with the findings of the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government (2014). Observation of teachers and students at work in their classrooms revealed a preponderance of traditional teaching methods, reflecting the emphasis on academic learning and testing typical of the systematic curriculum tradition. Chalk and talk were popular, followed up with exercises on whiteboards in the junior part of the school or with worksheets in the middle and senior sections. Technology was in evidence with iPads, computers, television, and video. Kinaesthetic activity was evident in art, physical education, science, and sport. Neil was one teacher I observed combining hands on learning in the outdoors, but this was an exception in his class and at the school when it came to curriculum enactment.

Reading recovery was an area of the school which used a completely different approach. It employed an intensive, structured, one on one approach, yielding great results with the most challenging students. Regardless of the success of this approach, resources would never be available to introduce an approach like this to the classrooms. Homework was an area with potential for one on one assistance, but as Joan indicated "the parents of the students with the greatest need usually aren't involved."

Teachers at the School Camp cited curriculum enactment as a most important aspect of their work. An experiential approach dominated discussion in the interviews, as well as my observations and experience. Some variations were evident, as individual teachers adjusted their practice on the basis of experience, following Schwab's (1970) advice to apply "different competing theories *appropriately* to different practical problems" (p. 13). Early career teachers were not considered to be as focussed on teaching method as the experienced teachers, ignoring the entreaties of Schwab (1970) and Gardner (1993) who believed unique individuals required teaching and learning opportunities specific to their needs.

Experiential education (Dewey, 1938/1997; Kolb, 1984; Priest & Gass, 1997) is a cornerstone of school camping and outdoor and environmental education. It represented a difference in approach between the School Camp and the Primary School. According to the School Camp teachers, having an experience without reflecting on it was time filling, not education, supporting the point made by Priest and Gass (1997) that "reflection on experience is a necessary precursor to learning, for without reflection, learning loses much of its potential"

(p. 17). In Dewey's (1916/2004) opinion and that of the School Camp teachers, experience without thinking was not education, and reflection was an important form of thinking. Supporting the experiential approach alongside reflection were preflection, frontloading, and peer coaching, usually applied to problems the students needed to solve, arising, as Dewey (1916/2004) observed, from a "context of experience in which problems naturally suggest themselves" (p. 149). Imitation, especially as led by student demonstration and community culture, was a growing trend mentioned by the School Camp teachers. They believed it was successful because, as Dewey (1916/2004) stated, "the imitative instinct is so strong that the young devote themselves to conforming to the patterns set by others and reproducing them in their own scheme of behaviour" (p. 33).

A suite of written tools contained in the School Camp student booklet including: a journal; prediction, observation, and explanation; fortune lines; and relational diagrams gleaned from White & Gunstone's work (1993) as well as photo-elicitation (Harper, 1984), were all geared to stimulate reflection, record student achievement, facilitate assessment, and at the same time make individual student achievement visible.

Applying appropriate methods to particular situations called on the experience of the teachers.

5.4. Teacher experience: an aspect of the teacher commonplace

In this aspect, I outline how levels of experience influence how teachers understand curriculum.

Differences emerged between the attitudes of teachers at both the School Camp and the Primary School, divided along the lines of experience, not location. Experienced teachers at the Primary School worked diligently within the system, occasionally making cautious protests when they disagreed with school policy, usually to no avail, they reported. They executed their classroom duties with confidence and skill, left to their own devices, past performance earning them a level of trust from the administration. All the while the Primary School teachers were mindful of the control exercised over them by the Victorian Curriculum, statewide standards, and external testing. They understood and shared, to an extent, the view expressed by a teacher in Jackson's (1968) study who vowed to leave the profession if told

exactly how and what to teach. That was seen as an insult to their professionalism. At the School Camp, a similar air of assuredness accompanied the experienced teachers as they executed their curricular duties, finding confidence in the control they reported over their work and the trust invested in them by the administration. One difference was that, unlike their Primary School colleagues, they were on show almost all the time. This had no apparent effect on their performance.

Early career teachers at the Primary School, meanwhile, unquestioningly accepted the directives given to them, from the Victorian Curriculum down to locally derived decisions. By their own admission, they were happy to be told what to do and were reluctant to offer critical comment. Where the two groups intersected was in mentoring, with experienced and early career teachers paired in adjacent classrooms. The experienced teachers knew how important this role was to their new colleagues and took the task extremely seriously. The early career teachers wondered how they would have coped otherwise, appreciative of the effort, and respectful of the wealth of experience being made available to them. At the School Camp, the early career teachers had less subject-matter to grasp, and so adapted quite quickly. Induction into high risk activities took longer, as the consequences were greater. Mentoring was in the form of team teaching, with the early career teachers paired with experienced teachers. No pressure was exerted on the early career teachers to take control of the class. They were encouraged to take on more responsibility as they developed confidence. Eventually, they were formally accredited and able to lead the lessons. In this way, the early career teachers at the School Camp were quick to adopt the same confident air of their colleagues. Regardless of experience, care of students was an important role for all of the teachers.

5.5. Teachers caring for students: an aspect of the teacher commonplace

In this aspect, I discuss caring for students as an aspect of the teacher commonplace.

Care of students was mentioned by teachers at the Primary School and the School Camp and was obvious in their work. In both places, the most obvious example was caring for students in class and ensuring they were as successful as possible in the formal curriculum. With the pressure to perform in NAPLAN, the Primary School teachers did everything in their powers

to prepare the students. Joan had high expectations for her students, and encouraged them to achieve beyond what they thought possible. In this, she was no exception. The School Camp was exactly the same. Activities were designed for students to achieve success, regardless of ability.

Where care was less obvious, but more important, was in the informal/hidden curriculum. I have related many times throughout this study the importance teachers at both locations placed on the personal and social development and the wellbeing of their students. They cared about this above all else. At the Primary School, the tough part of this was caring for the large cohort of students with special needs. Unlike Dewey (1916/2004,) who did not believe in education as preparation for a distant future, both groups of teachers also cared about preparing their students to be good citizens and worthwhile contributors to their communities, so much so at the School Camp it constituted the vision statement – Experience **FOR** a lifetime.

5.6. Support of curriculum: an aspect of the teacher commonplace

In this aspect, I mention the importance of teachers supporting curriculum, as it is they who enact it.

While not a strong topic to emerge from the interviews, both groups of teachers were well aware that, being the ones who enacted curriculum, it needed their support. If teachers did not support curriculum it would not be taught, a point made by the pre-school teachers in the Sofou and Tsafos (2010) study. Schwab (1983) observed that teachers "will not and cannot be told what to do" (p. 245). Equally, when existing curriculum lost teacher support, its days were numbered. New curriculum needed not only the support of teachers, but the whole school community, before it could live, which at the least required permission and financial backing from school administration.

Having mentioned the lack of in-service training afforded the Primary School teachers to deal with their special needs students, teacher training and professional development are the next aspects I discuss.

5.7. Developing teachers and professional development: aspects of the teacher commonplace

In this aspect, foundation training and ongoing professional development are examined.

Although Clarke and Ericson (2004) argue that teacher self-study or research should be a fifth commonplace, I disagree, because curriculum can be investigated without reference to this topic. But it does represent a valuable aspect of the teacher commonplace, included in deliberations when relevant. Otherwise, teacher training did not emerge as an aspect in the curriculum literature I reviewed, nor at the School Camp where, due to competition for positions, teachers were expected to have fairly developed skills, from classroom experience, or through experience as casual relief teachers, a common pathway to a permanent job. At the Primary School it emerged as a topic of spirited discussion with both recent graduates and experienced teachers critical of the quality of teacher training. Largely, the criticisms aligned with those of Schwab (1969b) who railed against the focus of theory at the expense of a practical approach to all aspects of curriculum. As mentioned earlier, that made mentoring all the more important for new teachers, treating the process more like an apprenticeship.

With the pressure of the crowded curriculum, and the myriad other tasks and responsibilities the Primary School teachers listed as thrust upon them, there was little time left for ongoing professional learning within work hours. Eight days of professional learning mandated under the industrial award were welcomed. Much of the professional learning was self-directed and completed online, at home, on an as needs basis, as was mandated online professional development. Criticism was levelled at new programmes introduced without the investment in training of those whose job it was to implement them, a point which emerged from the O'Donoghue (1994) and Sofou and Tsafos (2010) studies. All the same, the Primary School teachers, like their School Camp colleagues, valued professional development and took pride in expanding their capabilities.

Like mentoring at the Primary School, induction was the first point of teacher development mentioned by the School Camp teachers, with a focus on risk management as an obvious reaction to the educative context. This was described as a thorough, documented process, but it was noted that it did not have a follow up to check in with those teachers to ensure they had processed the information correctly. Deeper levels of curriculum understanding

were not part of the process, a criticism levelled at the process by some of the School Camp teachers.

Self-reflection and informal peer observation were mentioned as components of professional growth. Access to professional learning was described in positive terms, but the quality criticised as variable. Schwab (1969b) argued that, "theory, by its very character, does not and cannot take account of all the matters which are crucial to questions of what, who, and how to teach" (p. 1). This captured the School Camp teachers' desire for a focus on the practical realities of teaching and learning in their professional learning activities, a point they felt was missing with some presenters who were too far removed from curricular practice to be relevant. Finally, the School Camp teachers placed value on professional learning, usually self-directed, which underpinned the research they considered essential in the process of making new, and enhancing existing curriculum.

5.8. Conclusion and summary: the teacher commonplace

In the teacher commonplace, all of the teachers interviewed had a similar understanding of their role in curriculum. They described curriculum delivery as the fundamental part of their responsibilities, although I use the word enactment, as their work demonstrates a great deal more than simple delivery of official curriculum. The role and impact of experience and the focus of care for students held a similar place in the perception of their work for both groups of teachers. All of the teachers were aware of the importance of their support for curriculum, as they were the ones standing in front of classes enacting it, as well as the support of others.

Teacher training did not elicit comment at the School Camp, while at the Primary School the teachers, graduate and experienced, were critical of its quality. Professional leaning was difficult at the Primary School due to the pressures of their work. Often access was online, outside of work hours, and self-generated. Amongst the School Camp teachers, professional learning was not a contentious issue as they were happy with their access, although there was comment on the relevance and quality of some offerings.

Both groups of teachers considered teaching and learning method a vital aspect of their curricular work, although the methods varied, appropriate to each context. The Primary School teachers generally took a traditional approach. At the School Camp, over time a range

of methods had been introduced by exploration, trialling, and even developing new teaching and learning methods, often combined with assessment. Being able to articulate why methods are used and how they work, could increase the effectiveness of the methods in action, and would add greater layers of meaning to the curriculum documentation.

Within the teacher commonplace, teachers at the School Camp and the Primary School articulated a similar understanding of curriculum, with only minor differences of relevance in the case of teacher training, or emphasis in the case of teaching and learning method.

Although curriculum-making is a task in which teachers are involved, Schwab allocates it a discrete commonplace, as curriculum-making is the focus of his Practical essays and the next section of the chapter.

6. The curriculum-making commonplace: the place of curriculum-making in teachers understanding of curriculum

6.1. Introduction: the curriculum-making commonplace

In this commonplace, I discuss the role of teachers as deliverers of the curriculum of others, and as curriculum-makers themselves. Although having similar perspectives on their curriculum-making role, the circumstances in which they work alters how this is manifest in practice. The role of aims in the process of curriculum-making, and of creating opportunities for students is also discussed.

6.2. Teachers as deliverers of externally made curriculum: an aspect of the curriculum-making commonplace

In this aspect, the place of remotely developed curriculum in the understanding and practice of the teachers at the School Camp and the Primary School is outlined.

Teachers at the Primary School and at the School Camp expressed a desire to be curriculum-makers and perceived it as part of their professional personas. Both groups were happy to have a framework which provided broad guidelines within which they could work. The Victorian Curriculum was developed remotely and given to the Primary School teachers as

complete and certain by their employer, the Victorian DET, which they identified as the employers right. They did not know who made it. They had no input into the process of its development, no ownership of its product, and as Clarke and Erickson (2004) observed, "little ability to negotiate or modify it" (p. 200). At the School Camp, by contrast, the teachers had complete autonomy to make curriculum from first principles, guided by scholarship in the outdoor and environmental education disciplines. The only acknowledgement of the Victorian Curriculum by the School Camp teachers was, as John pointed out, by "backloading points of convenient alignment."

None of the teachers at either the Primary School or the School Camp were aware that there were different ways of understanding curriculum, and the effect this had on curriculum-making and their work. Features of the systematic tradition, such as control of subject-matter, had a significant impact on the work of the Primary School teachers. Working in a specialised setting, which bore a close resemblance to the deliberative tradition, the School Camp teachers were largely immune from the influence of the systematic Victorian Curriculum. Knowledge of the traditions would serve to increase teachers understanding of curriculum and their role in it, an important state of affairs for actors central to the process of education.

In the opinion of teachers from both the Primary School and the School Camp, statewide curriculum did not cater for the needs of the individual student. This problem was confronted by Schwab (1969b) when he advised that those who benefit from curriculum are not the "generic child, not even a class or kind of child out of the psychological or sociological literature pertaining to the child. The beneficiaries will consist of very local kinds of children and, within the local kinds, individual children" (p. 12). A criticism raised by the Primary School teachers was the value of an academically focussed curriculum for students who would not proceed to university. As Tyler (1949/1969) remarked of subject specialists, "what can your subject contribute to the education of young people who are not going to be specialists in your field" (p. 26)? Jenny worried about the numbers of students at the Primary School who fitted this category and for whom the academic curriculum was "a waste of time."

Unlike their mainstream colleagues, teachers at the School Camp do not have to teach the Victorian Curriculum. Curriculum at the School Camp was still made locally, audited against the Victorian Curriculum, not designed from it. Subject-matter found to be convergent was described by more than one School Camp teacher as "convenient alignment." The auditing

process revealed that the personal and social capabilities represented the strongest area of convergence. According to Hardarson (2018), school work cannot be directed by mandate. He was critical of the systematic tradition which promoted this approach, believing it was "seriously misguided" (p. 546) to not involve teachers, a point finding strong support from Schwab (1983). The School Camp teachers described the atmosphere in which they executed their curriculum-making responsibilities as collegial, resembling the deliberative approach. They pointed to the quality of outcomes it produced as evidence of its efficacy.

Ditchburn (2012) and Schwab (1983) both noted the negative impact on the outcomes of curriculum of a top down model which excluded teachers from the process of making curriculum from first principles. Another outcome of remotely made curriculum noted by the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government, 2014) and Hargreaves (2000) was that it conspired to erode the curriculum-making skills of teachers, as it was not intended that they make curriculum from first principles. This was not an issue when teachers were involved as curriculum-makers.

6.3. Teachers as curriculum-makers: an aspect of the curriculum-making commonplace

In this aspect, I discuss how teachers are perceived and perceive themselves as curriculum-makers. It includes examination of their exclusion from curriculum-making, processes involved in making curriculum, the places it happens, and explaining curricular decisions.

Development and even interpretation of curriculum by teachers, Westbury (2010) remarked, has been a contentious issue in the major curriculum traditions, the systematic tradition being no exception. In that tradition, it is not intended that teachers make curriculum from first principles. Activities designed from first principles and offered at lunchtimes by the Primary School teachers were the only curricular activity mentioned outside the statewide curriculum, describing it themselves as extra-curricular.

According to Schwab's (1973) process of curriculum-making, an important step before implementation was the iterative process of trialling and revising curriculum. Schwab advocated for the enlistment of a group to operate between the curriculum-makers and teachers to construct the detailed "embodiments of the curriculum" (p. 506) required for its enactment. With the Victorian Curriculum, this was left to the teachers at the Primary School.

First they had to interpret the Victorian Curriculum into their planners to be suitable for enactment. Revision then happened as the curriculum was enacted. Employing a different approach at the School Camp, revision of curriculum was only ever partial, avoiding the problems of wholesale change. An element being changed could be trialled and revised in ways which resulted in "minimum tearing of the remaining fabric" (Schwab, 1969b, p. 16) of curriculum, a conscious intention of the teachers to ensure no compromise of student experience as a result of the process, an aspiration of deliberation.

Even after trialling, Schwab (1969b) pointed out that generic curriculum, like the Victorian Curriculum, must be translated by teachers to deal with the "concrete case" (p. 11) of real students in real classrooms, a process he described as "an art" (Schwab, 1983, p. 245). By producing the planners which guided their day to day teaching, the Primary School teachers were making curriculum. But the exquisite art to which I believe Schwab (1969b) referred, and I observed, was teachers at the Primary School and the School Camp making curriculum as a response to students and situations in the moment of teaching and learning interaction, promoting them, as Biesta (2013) claimed, to the status of essential curricular actors.

Making the official curriculum which would be used at the School Camp was the first way of making curriculum the teachers mentioned, and was described as a collective responsibility, aligning it with the deliberative tradition. They accepted and embraced this role as part of their curricular responsibilities. The key process was described as an iterative model, remarkably similar to the deliberative process outlined by Schwab (1973). Ultimately this process avoids the problem of producing curriculum which Schwab (1973) considers would only "invite rejection when it sees the light of day" (p. 508), because the teachers do not have "proprietorship" (Schwab, 1970, p. 10). This aspect of curriculum-making required a complex array of elements according to the School Camp teachers, if they were to participate fully in the process. It included: observation (Ornstein, 1987; Dewey, 1916/2004); intuition (Beauchamp, 1982; North et al., 2018; Schwab, 1973); imagination (Schwab, 1983); research (Schwab, 1983); professional engagement (Schwab, 1973); risk taking (Sahlberg, 2016); choice (Dewey, 1916/2005; Schwab, 1969b); experimentation (Dewey, 1916/2004; Sahlberg, 2016); and road testing (Schwab, 1973). Often these curriculum projects were reported to take an extended period of time to complete, in which case resilience and perseverance were presented as essential character traits by the teachers. In their opinion, like Dewey

(1916/2004), the curriculum they made also needed to be founded on the interests of students visiting the camp, particularly "mutual interests" (p. 83) they could share. The curriculum was also constantly checked for appropriateness to the stage of development of the students, and trends in outdoor and environmental education, both reported by the teachers to have changed over time. Both of these points found agreement with Tyler (1949/1969). Finally, time free of teaching responsibilities and a certain amount of clear headspace were listed as prerequisites, which the teachers indicated were supplied by the nature of the work and a supportive administration.

Another duty Schwab (1973) allocated to the curriculum-making group was to explain their deliberations. Presenting the reasons for the inclusion of material creates a "defensible curriculum," one which has some "likelihood of functioning effectively" (p. 504). Anticipating the null curriculum, he also argued that clarity of meaning of the curriculum developed would be enhanced as much by articulating the reasons for "what was decided against as in what was decided for" (p. 506). Taking curriculum and transforming it into defensible entity, by accompanying it with a reasoned explanatory document, is not evident in the interviews with the School Camp teachers, but would make it more professionally meaningful. As Schwab explained, it helps to interpret "nuances of expression" (p. 506), which otherwise might lead to 246; interpretations.

6.4. Aims in curriculum-making: an aspect of the curriculum-making commonplace

In this aspect, I outline the importance of aims in curriculum-making and enactment, one of the few points of difference between the School Camp and the Primary School. I also discuss how the null curriculum can be reconciled using aims.

As far as the Primary School teachers were aware, the Victorian Curriculum had no aims. It simply represented the subject-matter to be delivered to their students. There was no formal statement of aims for the Primary School either. An informal aim, they stated, was to deliver the Victorian Curriculum. Having development of the academic student as the only implicit aim of the Victorian Curriculum is a situation Quay (2015) described as "epistemic" (p. 159), based simply around depositing knowledge into an empty vessel (Freire, 1970/2010). Having aims, when making or enacting curriculum, would appear to be an essential consideration as

Dewey (1916/2004) explained, without which both tasks are rendered aimless, possessing no guiding purpose. Only Neil at the Primary School teacher mentioned the importance of aims, insightfully explaining that the achievement of one aim led to the establishment of another, corroborating Dewey's (1916/2004) advice that "every end becomes a means of carrying activity further as soon as it is achieved" (p. 102). A common aspiration expressed by the Primary School teachers for their students was that, first and foremost, they become good citizens. Elevating this aspiration from the hidden curriculum to the written curriculum as an aim would formalise for the Primary School, what was an important and valuable aspect of their teachers' work.

Aims and ownership of them were considered important in the development and enactment of curriculum by the School Camp teachers. As Dewey (1916/2004) exclaimed, a "truly general aim broadens the outlook: it stimulates one to take more consequences (connections) into account" (p. 105). In Dewey's (1916/2004) view, "it is the isolation of an act from a purpose which makes it mechanical" (p. 137). Within curriculum, the teachers considered it was aims which gave the programme its purpose, activities and context being the vehicles for their attainment, a situation which Dewey (1916/2004) pointed out does not happen when "bodily action is divorced from the perception of meaning" (p. 135). In the moment of teaching and learning, the aims gave teachers constant points of reference against which to assess student achievement. For the School Camp teachers, it was aims which made the difference between education and general play, informing rather than defining the activity as Holt (1994) proclaimed. What the teachers indicated was that they offered the opportunity, through experiences at the School Camp, for students to become as Schwab (1983) and McDonald (2018) proposed, not experts, but young people beginning to understanding the underpinnings of those experiences, whether personal, social, or environmental, and entering in to those occupations. Quay (2015) identified "occupations" (p. 15) ontologically as "ways of being" (p. 17) as distinct from the vocational notion of occupation. Guiding students into new ways of being represented the very core of the School Camp teachers understanding of curriculum. Propositional knowing was the name Nicol (2003) gave to the third level of his notion of "outdoor environmental education" (p. 24) which builds theories of "who we are" (Quay, 2015, p. 17) from reflection on experience. Entering into those occupations was the highest level of Nicol's (2003) model - that of practical knowing" (p. 21) It required taking

practical action when confronted by the moral, practical problems Reid (1978) identified as the essence of a deliberative approach to curriculum, with Nicol (2003) identifying "values as being at the heart of this educational endeavour" (p. 22). Following Quay's (2015) ontological contribution to the understanding of curriculum, a fifth element should be added making it: knowing; doing, understanding; experiencing; and being.

When discussing the student as a commonplace, Schwab (1973, p. 502) listed "aspirations" of students as part of what must be considered by the curriculum-making group, acknowledging the fact that students have aims. Not only did students have aims, as Schwab suggested, but teachers needed to heed Dewey's (1916/2004) call to take those aims as a guide when developing curricular aims, or court failure. Lack of interaction between curriculum-makers and students in the systematic tradition, when determining aims, Lau (2001) claimed, made it difficult for them to cater for the complexities of practical curriculum.

When Peter declared that "there's too much knowledge to teach people," Flinders, Noddings, and Thornton (1986) pointed out that, although "obvious, it is not trivial" that "all demands for curriculum inclusion cannot be met" (p. 34). The null curriculum is the repository of the excluded curricular material mentioned by Peter. Schwab (1973) and Yates (2009) argued that, when it is not possible to have everything represented in a particular curriculum, reasons should be advanced explaining the inclusions and the exclusions. Basing curriculum subject-matter choices on a carefully researched, clearly articulated, written set of aims, according to Flinders et al. (1986) goes a long way towards resolving the issue of the null curriculum. The null curriculum was not mentioned by the Primary School teachers. They described their job as implementing, not questioning or changing, the mandated curriculum.

At the School Camp, there was a clearly defined set of aims (see Figure 6) which were underpinned by research and student voice. These provided an anchor, about which all the other elements of curriculum swung, especially, as Liz attested, consideration of new inclusions to the programme. Researching the interests of students in the current milieu, the contextual appropriateness to the School Camp, current trends in outdoor and environmental education, and "rigorous trialling with students" John added, were other elements of successful curriculum development. Following the lead of both Dewey (1916/2004) and Schwab (1973), referencing subject-matter to the School Camp aims went a long way towards reconciling the issue of the null curriculum, emphasising the important role aims have in

providing a frame within which to paint a more detailed curricular picture. Development of a statement of aims and a less crowded mandated Victorian Curriculum, would provide an opportunity for the Primary School to develop a curriculum responsive to local milieu. At the School Camp, more attention could be paid to recording alternatives which have been rejected and articulating the reasons for those decisions. An explanatory document could accompany the statement of aims, explaining how they are understood by the teachers. These issues are predicated on the staff having ownership and control of the curriculum and its aims, a point of difference between the Primary School and the School Camp.

6.5. Curriculum as opportunity: an aspect of the curriculum-making commonplace

In this aspect, the role of curriculum to provide opportunity as an aspect of teachers understanding of curriculum is discussed.

Opportunity as an aspect of curriculum did not emerge from the interviews with the Primary School teachers, nor was it evident in the curriculum literature. It is recorded in the first line of the School Camp aims, elevating it to a position of significant meaning by those who developed the aims and those who acknowledge their authority. The first director of the School Camp recorded "an opportunity of sharing in the experiences of community living" (Bell, 1973, p. 478) as its central purpose. Although the focus was on community living, using the word opportunity indicated that the director also saw purpose in providing a different experience for the students. Five decades on, opportunity and all that it invites, is still a central tenet of the School Camp curriculum.

The School Camp teachers indicated that opportunity, as an aspect of the School Camp programme, has become a more important philosophy over time, now guiding new developments. In the first instance, the teachers could not see the point of repeating what happened at school. The School Camp curriculum was designed to offer opportunities which the teachers hoped would be new to as many students as possible. According to Bobbitt (1918/2012), "the school's main task is to supply opportunities that are so attractive that . . . pupils will want to plunge in and to enjoy the opportunities that are presented to them" (p. 10)**.** The experiences were intended to develop new skills and aptitudes which would allow the students to expand their "sense of self" (Gardner, 1993, p. 243), or as Reid (1992)

expressed it, form identity, particularly as citizens. Much of that opportunity was based around the context of community in the teachers' estimations, because they understood that it led to, in Dewey's (1916/2004) words, a "widening of the area of shared concerns, and the liberation of a greater diversity of personal capacities" (p. 83), aspects which he believed were characteristic of a democracy. Maintaining "points of difference," John argued, was essential if the School Camp was to remain relevant, an aspect he believed was provided by the particular opportunities offered.

Sitting alongside opportunity and inseparable from it in the eyes of the School Camp teachers was the notion of choice. Encouraging the students to make choices and empowering them to own those choices was a lesson they hoped the students would take with them from the experience of life at the School Camp. For the teachers, respecting student choice was understood as an important aspect of curriculum, one not evident in a substantial way at the Primary School.

6.6. Conclusion: the curriculum-making commonplace

Curriculum-making was a commonplace which was understood differently at the theoretical level in the two settings, and like other differences, reflected the different structures under which both groups practised what Schwab (1983) described as their art. Working in the systematic tradition, the Primary School teachers did not make official curriculum from first principles as was the case at the School Camp, having an impact on both ownership and control of curriculum. In both places, teachers made curriculum in a practical way, interpreting and presenting it to the best advantage of their students, in the tradition of deliberative curriculum. As curriculum was given to the Primary School teachers remotely, aims they may have had were irrelevant, unlike the School Camp curriculum, which was locally developed and guided by aims, over which they had ownership. Teachers at the School Camp were conscious of providing opportunities for the students as an integral aspect of curriculum, especially those which contributed to formation of character in their students. Meanwhile their colleagues at the Primary School were presented with the overwhelming task of enacting the academically focused and seriously overcrowded Victorian Curriculum, and were left questioning whether it was providing opportunities which would be relevant to each of their students, either now or in their future.

7. Conclusion to the discussion

The ways the teachers from the School Camp and the Primary School understood curriculum, while not always identical, exhibited a high degree of convergence. That convergence was based on similarity of their underlying perspectives, with subtle differences in emphasis and interpretation of commonplaces, and particularly the aspects, adding colour rather than contrast to the ways in which curriculum was understood, calling to mind Schwab's (1969) dictum that every curricular situation was unique. The notion of curriculum which emerged from the interviews with both groups of teachers was broader than that found in the curriculum literature. In essence, that is because the focus of the curriculum literature is on theory and curriculum-making, while the teachers added curriculum enactment to their practical understanding of curriculum.

A way teachers might conceptualise curriculum to their benefit as they reflect on, make, and enact it is displayed in Figure 11.

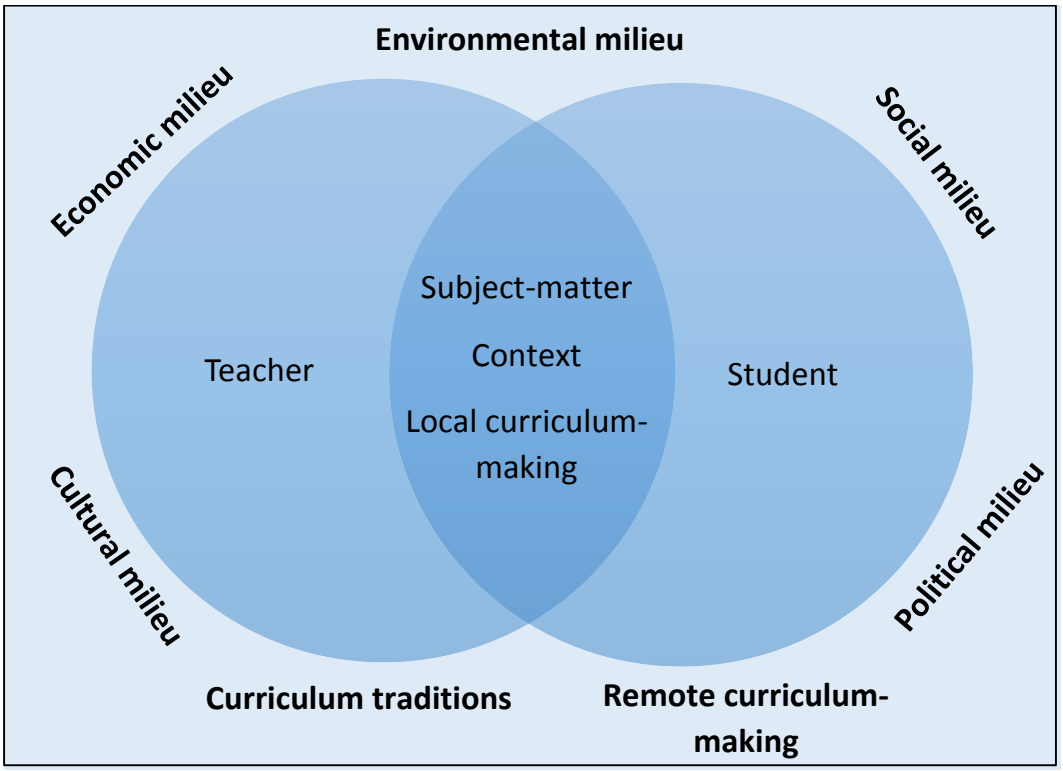

Figure 11. How teachers might understand curriculum using Schwab's (1973) deliberative perspective

Most of the differences in the way curriculum is understood can be explained by the way curriculum traditions influence the different operational structures at the two locations.

Teaching in a school which comes under the direction of the DET, the Primary School teachers find themselves working in an organisation following the precepts of the systematic curriculum tradition. This resulted from the rise of neo-liberalism, Biesta (2013) noted, leading to his observation of rising political interference in curriculum. This resulted, according to Sahlberg (2016,) in increased institutional control of curriculum, where teachers appeared satisfied, Quay (2015) believed, but were merely tolerating the situation and coping with it. While their personal professional aspirations leant towards the deliberative tradition, the conditions under which the Primary School teachers worked coloured their understanding of curriculum and its enactment. The School Camp, while also a DET school, did not come under the auspices of the Victorian Curriculum as it is a specialist facility, allowing them significant curricular freedom, more aligned with a deliberative perspective.

As curriculum is considered a "cultural construct" (Grundy, 1987, p. 5) and the two groups of teachers "culture-sharing groups" (Creswell, 1998, p. 60), ethnography presented itself as the most appropriate methodology. Ethnography focusses the type of data sought, providing the first level of containment of the scale of the research, a great benefit to this study. Ethnography suggests interviews, participant observation, and analysis of artefacts as data collection methods. These were accessible methods, appropriate to the settings and the research subjects, ultimately producing a rich stream of data. A limitation of ethnography was that some very good data was generated which would be appropriate to a phenomenological study or a biography but not an ethnography, indicating the potential of teachers, schools, and school camps as worthwhile settings for research with other focuses. Finally, working within one methodological tradition provided cohesion to the written response to the research question.

Schwab's (1973) commonplaces offered an effective framework to understand and compare the ways teachers at the School Camp and the Primary School understood curriculum, with the aspects providing detail relevant to their particular understanding.

Subject-matter was a dominant presence in the curriculum literature, as it is with the teachers at the School Camp and the Primary School, who understood and enacted it in similar ways. Both groups of teachers were controlled by written curriculum. What differed was the emphasis. At the Primary School, subject-matter was tightly controlled, as it was remotely developed, mandated, and externally tested in the systematic tradition. At the School Camp,

teachers made and revised their own curriculum, the subject-matter presented as a guide, not a prescription, which had the scope to be interpreted in appropriate ways for their individual students, demonstrating control over its making and enactment, reflecting the deliberative tradition. Although the scope of curriculum was broader at the Primary School in relation to academic subjects, the School Camp teachers considered relevance to purpose as outlined in the written aims more important than breadth, differences in emphasis born of perspective. Structure was considered an important component of written curriculum and enactment by both groups. Where subject-matter was seen as an end in its own right at the Primary School, its prime purpose at the School Camp was as a vehicle to deliver curricular aims.

Milieu was not a commonplace which figured prominently in teachers understanding of curriculum, even though it influenced their work. The Victorian Curriculum emerges from and is reflective of a particular milieu, influencing its character and its relevance to students and communities, exerting more influence over the Primary School. In that situation, the teachers found it difficult to respond, particularly to those students with learning difficulties, when the testing regime was universal. Schwab (1973) argued that curriculum should respond to differences in milieu. Being locally developed, the School Camp curriculum displayed the responsiveness to milieu suggested by Schwab.

Context, barely mentioned by Schwab (1973), was another of the few differences between the two locations. It is a huge part of curriculum enactment at the School Camp, with contexts purposefully crafted or modified to support targeted student learning outcomes, derived from the formal aims, credited with much of the success of the programme by its teachers. At the Primary School, in the main, the educative context was a traditional classroom. The teachers understood the difference and aspired to something which they admitted was unlikely to ever be provided. These differences should be expected due to the different context and expectations of a school and a school camp.

Students were the main focus of teachers work at both the School Camp and the Primary School, as evidenced by their interviews and observation of their curriculum enactment. Both groups of teachers shared a belief in understanding the general and individual nature of their students as a foundation to curricular success. Building relationships with and engaging students was seen as part of that process. Where feedback, formal assessment, and reporting

were understood as part of curriculum by the Primary School teachers, at the School Camp, feedback and self-assessment occupied an equivalent place. At the School Camp, due to the risk environment and the residential nature of the programme, the teachers were mindful of avoiding unintended and mis-educative experiences, an aspect the Primary School teachers did not mention.

Both groups of teachers understood curriculum enactment as their prime focus. Early career teachers at the Primary School understood their roles differently than their experienced colleagues. Similar variations in understanding were evident at the School Camp. Caring about students day to day and concern for their futures occupied a central place in the teachers' interpretation of their role in curriculum. As they were the ones standing in front of classes, the teachers understood the importance of their support of curriculum. A high value was placed on professional leaning by all the teachers, with the School Camp teachers reporting slightly more access than their colleagues at the Primary School.

Like other differences which emerged in the ways the teachers understood curriculum, the differences in curriculum-making reflected the systems they worked in and the curriculum traditions at play in those places – systematic at the Primary School and deliberative at the School Camp. Both groups made curriculum. At the School Camp it was made from first principles, based on their written aims. The Victorian Curriculum had little influence over curriculum developed at the School Camp, which was designed to offer opportunities to the students, beyond what was available at home or at school. At the Primary School curriculum is not made from first principles. They enact the Victorian Curriculum after adapting it into their planners for classroom use, at times questioning whether the opportunities it offered were relevant to the complete cohort of their students. Where their curriculum-making aligned at the School Camp and the Primary School was in making curriculum in the moment of enactment, interpreting, and modifying it to suit the unique individuals in their classes.

Teachers at the School Camp and the Primary School have a very similar understanding of curriculum. The few differences that do exist reflect the curriculum traditions under which the teachers practise their art, and even they would disappear if Schwab's (1969) dream was realised and all curriculum was practised within the deliberative tradition. A worthwhile extension of this research would be to investigate whether these findings are replicated in a variety of settings (school and camp) and sectors (public, private, and commercial).

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

7.1. Introduction

The research question underpinning this study asked whether school camping could be considered as curriculum. To assist the process, the sub-questions asked how teachers at school and at school camp understood curriculum and how that notion influenced enactment of their work. Comparatively, curriculum as described and enacted by teachers at the School Camp and the Primary School is possessed of remarkably similar aspects, not the "wildly varying conceptions" alluded to in the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government, 2014, p. 118), nor the narrow subject-matter focus of the Australian and Victorian curricula. Alignment with aspects of curriculum emergent from the curriculum literature, including the six studies referred to in Chapter 2, combine to strengthen the case for school camping to be considered as curriculum. The few differences that do exist in enactment of curriculum are largely those of emphasis and interpretation, reflecting minor differences in the way curriculum is understood. Two factors are responsible for this. One is the different curriculum traditions at play in the respective locations – the systematic tradition reflecting the curriculum perspective of governments in Victoria, and consequently the DET, for at least the last 25 years, and the deliberative tradition at the School Camp. Complicating the matter is the professional inclination of the Primary School teachers towards the deliberative tradition. The second factor is the expectation of how curriculum is enacted, its context, and the type of subject-matter in each setting, also effecting emphasis and interpretation of curriculum rather than matters of substance.

7.2. Conclusions to the subject-matter commonplace

Curriculum was perceived as a written guide by both the Primary School teachers and those at the School Camp. It was agreed by both groups of teachers that the written guide controls curriculum. At the Primary School, teachers did not have ownership of the Victorian Curriculum as it was given to them to deliver, complete and certain, with control imposed by

government mandate and external testing via NAPLAN. The School Camp teachers have designed their curriculum, and are controlled by a guide over which they have ownership, its authority vested locally. They are not expected by DET to deliver the academically focussed statewide curriculum. This difference in emphasis is reflective of the traditions in which the teachers work. Both curricula have scope as an aspect, with the subject-matter relevant to the societal expectations of a school – developing the academic student, and that relevant to a school camp – formation of character, representing in essence, a difference of emphasis. These emphases also reflect the difference between a systematic and a deliberative approach. Just as structure is a part of societal milieu, so it is considered an important aspect of subject-matter by both groups of teachers, who believe the organisation it provides increases efficiency and the quality of learning outcomes. Although recognised as an aspect of subject-matter in both locations, the hidden curriculum has a bigger impact at the School Camp due to the larger informal curriculum. The hidden curriculum is significant in both places due to its emphasis on personal and social development. Teachers at the School Camp are satisfied with the place the subject-matter commonplace occupies in their curriculum. Leaving 20 percent of the curriculum at the Primary School to be developed by its teachers to reflect local milieu, as mentioned in the *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government, 2014), would resolve some of their curricular concerns.

7.3. Conclusions to the student commonplace

Common to the understanding of curriculum by teachers in both locations was the importance of the student commonplace. The highest curricular ambition of the 11 teachers in the study was to serve the best interests of their students. Adapting the general curriculum to the needs of individuals, responding to their interests, and engaging students, especially through developing relationships with them, were the practical aspects they shared in this endeavour. How student interest was resolved differed as an aspect because of the way community was manifest in the curriculum. At the Primary School, the teachers considered their school as a small community within a larger community. It functions for seven hours a day while the students are at school. Then they return to other parts of the community. Whilst at school, the occupation of the students is generally centred on the notion of being-an-academic-student. Teachers at the School Camp also consider the camp to be a community,

interpreted in a different way, due to the total immersion experienced by the students over the nine days of the programme. Responses to the needs and interests of the students exhibited some differences to that evident at the Primary School. They are engaged in different ways and the relationships develop differently, all relative to the significant contextual divergence between school and school camp. Their occupations within the School Camp community represent a much broader variety than at the Primary School. A simple understanding of curriculum which emerges from the School Camp is knowing, doing, understanding, experiencing, and becoming.

7.4. Conclusions to the milieu and context commonplace

Neither group of teachers had milieu as a front of mind curricular issue, although they articulated awareness of the inability of a national, or even a statewide curriculum, to respond to local milieu. Those variations are reconciled at the School Camp by a curriculum which is designed locally to address the range of variations usually encountered. A percentage of locally developed curriculum could achieve the same outcome for the Primary School.

Educative context is an area of significant difference between the Primary School, operating mainly in traditional classrooms, and the School Camp, located on a large (nine hectares) site for its enrolment (160), well vegetated and endowed with a range of specialised facilities, as well as enjoying close access to a range of natural environments. Like subject-matter, these contextual differences are societal expectations of the genres. Teachers at the School Camp see context as a major curricular advantage. At the Primary School, the teachers believed that different contexts would be a curricular advantage. Looking at the structure and funding of education in Victoria, the Primary School teachers considered this to fall into the realm of aspiration.

7.5. Conclusions to the teacher commonplace

A central aspect to the teachers' understanding of their role in curriculum was care of students, both for their general well-being and development of the student as a whole person. Early in their careers, both groups of teachers wanted to be directed in their curricular enactment by a curriculum-as-manual. With experience, the Primary School teachers sought,

but were not granted, the freedom of a curriculum-as-guide, which would allow them to adapt the curriculum to suit the individuals in their classes, a central theme underpinning Schwab's writing. At the School Camp, the teachers enjoyed that freedom. Teachers at both locations believed that curriculum could not survive without the support of teachers. Schwab (1983) identified this as a powerful position for teachers, exercise of which was not mentioned in the interviews. Teaching method was a significant aspect of curriculum enactment the interviewed teachers all identified. Once again the difference was in emphasis relevant to contextual expectations. The Primary School teachers tended to use traditional teaching and learning methods, enhanced with occasional variations and the use of technology. At the School Camp, experiential approaches formed the backbone of the teachers approach to teaching and learning method, with variations appropriate to context built into the programme. Along with context, the School Camp teachers perceived the methods they employed as a significant aspect of their success in achieving the desired student learning outcomes. Teachers at the Primary School were aware of the benefits of an experiential approach, and while possible, would be difficult to achieve in the context of the traditional mainstream primary school, especially in regard to facilities, funding, and the constraints implicit in the structure of the systematic tradition.

External testing, criticised by the Primary School teachers for what they judged as its lack of value and its interference in their work, was foreign to the teachers at the School Camp. Both groups of teachers were dismissive of its worth, a convergence of opinion. The assessment which was most important to the teachers in both locations was constant monitoring of achievement by individual students as curriculum was enacted, an aspect which differentiates enactment from simple delivery of curriculum. To be more school-like in its approach to assessment, the School Camp could consider investigating the use of assessment approaches employed in mainstream settings, if they enhance the student experience beyond current practice. Reporting was another difference of emphasis. Once again, school-like reporting, which is not used at the moment, could be investigated. It would need to improve visibility of student achievement to stakeholders beyond the portfolio which is currently in use, with those reading the reports best placed to judge their fitness for purpose. The final aspect of their role the teachers mentioned was professional development, which in its various guises, they valued highly.

7.6. Conclusion to the curriculum-making commonplace

Both groups of teachers were observed making and interpreting curriculum in the moment of teaching as an aspect of the curriculum-making commonplace. An advantage for the School Camp teachers was that they were interpreting curriculum over which they had ownership, creating a greater sense of connectedness for them. Their belief in its relevance made the task easier. In both the Primary School and the School Camp, the hidden curriculum is the context for much of the formation of character which sits at the heart of deliberative curriculum, and is a central aspect of the aspirations both groups of teachers have for their students. At both places, benefits could accrue to the students if significant elements of the hidden curriculum were incorporated into the official curriculum. Locally developed curriculum could benefit from explanatory notes outlining the reasons for inclusions, more difficult at the Primary School where most curriculum is developed remotely. Awareness of the null curriculum falls into the same category, constantly prompting critical examination of what is in the official curriculum. The null curriculum should be acknowledged and considered when making curriculum in either location. Aims provide much of the rationale for curriculum at the School Camp, and should provide much of the explanation for the content of the null curriculum, a situation curriculum documentation could improve. Although more difficult than at the School Camp, a strong statement of aims at the Primary School could give local purpose to the Victorian Curriculum as it is enacted.

7.6. Contributions of the research to curriculum

Falling outside the scope of the research questions, but emerging from the research are five points, worthy of attention due to the influence they exerted on its execution and its eventual form. First is the teacher voice on the topic of curriculum. It is a small voice from the perspective of teachers at schools and even less so from the perspective those at school camps. This study attempts to redress that situation by revealing more of the teacher voice, a voice reflecting practical curriculum, central to Schwab's (1969) beliefs.

Second are Schwab's (1973) commonplaces. They have provided a coherent conceptual framework within which to structure the study, adding clarity to the investigation, beyond the possibilities offered by mere definition. They also have the potential to provide an

effective structure, within which to organise and focus teachers' curricular reflections and assist as they plan, revise, and enact curriculum, particularly as the nature of their work is practical. Using aspects selected by those involved in the process, allow curriculum deliberations the flexibility to reflect the uniqueness and nuances of each curricular problem, facilitating selection of Schwab's (1969b, p. 21) "best" alternative as a solution.

A third contribution of the study was to separate the milieu commonplace into two sub-parts, milieu and context. While they overlap in enough ways to justify their co-existence as milieu/context, there are enough differences to warrant treating them separately within the commonplace, allowing for the development of clarity around each part and reflecting the emphasis each deserves.

The fifth contribution and a significant influence on the way in which the study unfolded was the use of five curriculum traditions as lenses through which to understand curriculum. They assist in understanding the way we experience curriculum. Without this knowledge, it is difficult for teachers to critique the curricular environment in which they work. In Victoria, the dominant force is the systematic tradition. Many of the issues the Primary School teachers confront on a daily basis can be ascribed to the state of affairs accompanying systematic curriculum, and the state of mind from which it is derived.

If Schwab (1969) had his way, deliberation would be the curricular force de jour. He articulated a strong case in its advocacy. It does this by using the commonplaces, setting them all on an equal footing, as it also does with the people involved in the process. When curriculum is made according to its principles, it is not too far removed from where curriculum is enacted, making it a democratic process. It embraces the widest possible range of alternatives as it attempts to find creative solutions to moral, practical problems, which it does in a collaborative rather than adversary manner. Deliberation treats process and product with equal importance. Its purpose is to make decisions about action to be taken in real situations, trialling proposals before implementing them. As a perspective from which to approach curriculum, it blends the best aspects of other curriculum traditions into a form which sits comfortably with the teachers in this study, as they did not demonstrate a natural inclination to gravitate to ideological extremes. Deliberation is a close fit to the way the teachers understand and enact curriculum at the School Camp, and the way the Primary School teachers aspire to enact curriculum. Regardless, any change in mainstream schooling

will probably require a tectonic shift - globally. Deliberation and the commonplaces represent a significant contribution by Joseph Schwab to curriculum. Exposing this aspect of Schwab's work to more practitioners is an aspiration of this study.

The final contribution of this research is to add to the case for residential outdoor education to be considered as curriculum, not simply as a part of curriculum.

7.6. Is school camping curriculum?

If we accept that the work of teachers in a school, specifically the Primary School, is curriculum, then it is reasonable to lay claim to that status for the School Camp. Due to this study only researching one school camp and one primary school, assumptions cannot be made for the curricular status of all school camps. Although this study provides indications, a broader investigation would address the question of whether school camping can be considered curriculum in a general sense.

The central actors in this study have been teachers. Joseph Schwab describes the work of teachers as the practice of an art. The art of curriculum as understood by the teachers at the School Camp is, at its essence, about the formation of being in each of their students, enacted as a practical reality as they build and live in a community. Making and enacting curriculum deliberatively, typifying the practice at the School Camp, is a democratic foundation for good curriculum.

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