Pilder, William Frank, 1938-
THE CONCEPT OF UTILITY IN CURRICULUM

The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1968
Education, general

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1968
THE CONCEPT OF UTILITY IN CURRICULUM
DISCOURSE: 1918-1967

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
William Frank Pilder, B.S. in Ed., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1968

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was possible because of the assistance and interest of many people. Among these, I wish to especially single out those who were most intimately involved in the sometimes burdensome process of research and writing. Dr. Alexander Frazier was not only of significant help conceptually, but spent many tedious hours with the text teaching a young writer about polishing form. I will always be grateful for the many efforts he made to make this project be as personally fruitful as possible. Dr. Paul Klohr provided me with valuable suggestions throughout the study, and as always added a personal warmth to what could have been mere routine. Dr. Elsie Alberty offered a number of important suggestions that helped to improve the entire text.

Louise Brown was, in every sense, a professional in her handling of a frequently difficult manuscript. I am grateful for the ease with which she accomplished her task and the many hours of personal time spent in the office. Verna Fullen made the reproduction job a smooth one and also spent hours of personal time.

More than anyone, my wife, Judy, experienced the ups and downs involved in this project. For her hours of listening, typing, and constant support mere thanks is insufficient, words break down.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. The problem

Much curriculum discourse necessarily concerns itself with notions about the purpose of knowledge. Deciding what knowledge is to constitute a specific curriculum calls for setting up criteria on which to base decisions. Historically such criteria have often centered on the concept of utility, that is, many curriculum development enterprises have based decisions about curriculum content on the assumed usefulness of a selected body of knowledge. The question in such cases becomes, "Knowledge for what?" The answer to the "for what" is arrived at in terms of some concept of utility.

When the concept is so employed, its definition in a particular domain of discourse obviously becomes crucial. Definition can best be explicited by specifying the particular set of criteria which guide the application of the concept. These criteria are the qualities and properties which go to make up the concept and are logically referred to as the intension of the concept. Intension is then distinguished from extension, the latter consisting of those concepts (subclasses) which are
subsumed under a particular concept (general class). In this study the extension of the concept of utility is that general class of concepts which have to do with the usefulness of knowledge. It is the class of concepts which are employed in response to the question "Knowledge for what?"

If there is to be clarity in any field of discourse, participants in that discourse need to be as lucid as possible about how particular concepts are employed. Both the extension and intension of concepts must be explicated. The importance of such explication has become increasingly evident with the work of the language analysts in both philosophy and linguistics. Language is an historical phenomenon; sophistication in its use demands study of how language has been and is being used.

Wittgenstein's famous "look and see" dictum is apropos:

Consider for example the proceedings that we call "games." I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all? --Don't say: "There must be something common, or they would not be called 'games'." --But look and see whether there is anything common to all. --For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to all, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that.¹

Applying this dictum to the curriculum discourse which deals with the concept of utility could provide clearer understanding among people involved in current professional discourse. Nietzsche's idea that only what has no history can be defined points up well the need to clarify concepts that have been important in the development of any body of knowledge. The intension of the concept of utility has a history that needs to be understood for the sake of lucidity in contemporary curriculum discourse.

A number of developments on the current educational scene have highlighted the domain of curriculum discourse that deals with purpose, the function of knowledge, and specifically with the application of the concept of utility. First of all, increasing attention is being given to the problem of overall curriculum design. The emphasis on subject matter during the last decade has been a two-edged sword; the quality of the material to be presented in classrooms has improved, but the curriculum has emerged as a kind of "crazy quilt." The 1963 Conference on Curriculum Content sponsored by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development commented at length on the subject matter emphases emanating from national curriculum projects as they affect the integrity of the curriculum as a whole.²

This concern for the integrity of the curriculum produces the necessity of increasing attention to issues of design. In the design enterprise, statements of purpose provide the criteria for deciding on both the scope and sequence of any specific body of content. Thus, to talk meaningfully about the problem of designing curricula requires that such concepts as that of utility, which have become so much a part of the conventional wisdom of the curriculum field, be clearly explicated. A logical analysis of the concept as it is employed in the literature of the field over the last fifty years will serve to provide the needed explication.

The recent emphasis on the disciplines of knowledge has caused many informed people to be wary of the problem of fragmentation. Fred M. Hechinger,^3 John Goodlad,^4 Theodore Sizer,^5 and the National Education Association^6 have all called attention to the danger of


fragmenting the curriculum, and thus are intimately involved in using language dealing with purpose. In most of these statements, there is a call for a specific set of criteria which would define how a particular body of knowledge would be useful in relation to the declared purposes of a school. Here again, in the context of all these discussions, just what the criteria for applying the concept of utility are or should be is an important question.

With concern about design comes an additional focus on questions of purpose and the utility of knowledge in the discourse from the newly established policy research centers. The United States Office of Education established five such centers on a temporary basis; two of these--Stanford Research Institute and Syracuse University--are to be funded over a long period of time. In general, these centers have addressed themselves to four major questions:

1. What will the social functions of the school be in the future and how might the school begin preparing for them now?

2. What ought the curricular objectives now and in the future be?

3. What technologies will be available to the school of the future and what are their implications for the school today?
4. What economic and political resources will the schools need in the future and how might that affect their planning at present?  

Questions one and two, the school in relation to society and the curriculum in the present as well as the future, are especially concerned with purpose. The output of the centers will thus deal directly with defining the knowledge they consider useful or important. Having been asked to invent alternative futures and to map out the paths necessary to reach them, the policy research centers will be defining utility in perhaps new ways. Whatever their output, the concern these centers have for broad policy statements is an important current focus on purposes or ends in the educational field. Here again, the usefulness of knowledge will be defined in terms of the ends or purposes the centers establish. Their work provides another contemporary example of curriculum discourse involving the concept of utility.

An example of this attention is found in the early statements from one of the policy research centers. At Stanford the statements have taken the direction of trying to map out alternative futures in terms of need-satisfaction patterns. Here they define the basic human needs and various styles of seeking satisfaction. Knowledge then becomes

useful as it enables people operating in one of the three styles to fulfill basic needs.®

The fact that there is a significant amount of current concern for the realm of purpose and purpose concepts should by now be evident. Need for over-all design and the attention being given to policy research have been presented as recent circumstances which give increasing importance to curriculum discourse which deals with purpose and purpose concepts. Specifically, the concept of utility has been pointed up as widespread within this domain. If clarity is to prevail in the curriculum field as conversation about curricular purpose is carried on, then a logical analysis of important purpose concepts would seem to be in order to provide an understanding of the history of these concepts. Such understanding should enhance the clearer use of language in the curriculum field.

2. Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is to analyze logically the concept of utility as it has been employed in the literature of the curriculum field. The literature chosen ranges over a span of fifty years--1918 to 1967.

Herbert Kliebard makes a convincing case that the professionalization of the curriculum field begins in 1918. It was then that Franklin Bobbitt's *The Curriculum* appeared, William H. Kilpatrick published the famous article, "The Project Method," and the *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* were issued.

The logical analysis will consist in explicating the criteria which constitute the meaning of the concept in some specific domain of discourse. As was mentioned previously, these criteria can be construed as deductions from statements of purpose that give a particular meaning to the concept of utility, which is then employed to make decisions about what knowledge will constitute the curriculum.

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The major intent of this study is to trace this logical relationship between successive statements about purpose and the particular meaning of the concept of utility derived from these statements.

3. Methodology

Growing attention in the field of education is being given to the methods of philosophical analysis. Works like The Language of Education\textsuperscript{13} by Israel Scheffler and Language and Concepts in Education\textsuperscript{14} by Smith and Ennis are illustrative of this interest. In philosophical circles much talk is concerned with "the linguistic turn," in which the stress is placed on logical and linguistic analysis as a method of doing philosophy.

Since Wittgenstein's work, there has been growing sensitivity to the need for clarifying the meaning of concepts before any significant discourse can occur which employs these concepts. The "classical" view of language, in which each concept had an "essence" or single definition, no longer holds sway. Concepts possess a logical multiplicity, which is to say, they have no one definition but rather a "family of meanings." In order to employ concepts, it is first necessary


to explicate this family of meanings by specifying the criteria that determine any single meaning.

The critical aspect of this study involves the explication of the set of criteria which determines the application of the concept of utility in a particular domain of discourse. Further, it is hypothesized that there is a family of definitions of the concept of utility within the literature that has influenced the curriculum field over a fifty-year period. The logical analysis aspect of this study will thus involve explicating the sets of criteria which constitute the family of definitions that have developed over time.

This time dimension brings in a second methodological aspect that is, in a limited sense, historical. Since education and educational concerns are much influenced by current social demands, the need for viewing educational issues in some historical perspective always exists. Here, tracing the concept of utility through a fifty-year period can provide that perspective in the sense of noting its development. As to the historical causes of this development, little attempt will be made to infer these as this kind of treatment is judged to lie outside the domain of a basically logical analysis. Other writings can shed light on the specifically historical forces at work during the fifty years of this study.
In fine, the history here is the history of a single concept over a fifty-year period. This period will be examined in units of decades: 1918-1927, 1928-1937, 1938-1947, 1948-1957, and 1958-1967. Each of these decades will constitute a chapter of the study. Attention will be paid to a representative sample in each of these decades of those original documents which have been influential in the curriculum field. The representativeness of the sample is an important aspect of the validity of this research and thus requires some discussion.

4. **Source of the data**

The vastness of the literature available in the fifty-year period proposed for this study obviously requires delimitation. Therefore, a set of four categories of documents relevant to the domain of discourse dealing with purpose and purpose concepts has been established. These categories are:

1. The relevant Yearbooks of the National Society for the Study of Education from 1918 to 1967.

2. The relevant statements of the Educational Policies Commission. (The recent decision to dissolve this commission may add to the value of an assessment of its statements.)

3. The writings of leading figures in the curriculum field during each of the five decades to be studied.

4. The special statements which were influential in the curriculum field, like those of the Eight-Year Study and its various commissions; the publications of the
Inter-Group Education Project of the American Council on Education; and selected books by individuals, of which *Excellence* by John Gardner may be cited as an example.

These four categories are judged to provide a representative sample of the literature significant to the discourse in the curriculum field on purpose and purpose concepts. Examining this literature in terms of the critical dimensions already described should lead to a clearer understanding of the concept of utility. Understanding of this concept in terms of the family of definitions which constitutes its intension, along with a perspective on the history of this intension, should serve to bring more lucidity into the current discussion of educational purpose.

Discourse in the curriculum field, currently perplexed with problems of design and policy and future planning to which purpose and purpose concepts are especially central, should benefit from the analytic research this study proposes to undertake. The concept of utility remains central in curriculum discourse; the greater the understanding of the concept, the more effective the dialogue should be. Hopefully, this study will be a step toward improving the quality of curriculum discourse on the fundamental question of purpose.

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5. **Limitations of the study**

The analysis here undertaken consists of close examination of the concept of utility in a sample of fifty years of curriculum discourse. No attempt to trace the particular use of the concept back to its sources has been made. This would be another enterprise and another study in which, for example, analysis of the writings of Dewey and other much older philosophers would obviously be required. However, the intent of this study is to "look and see" just how the concept of utility is employed in professional curriculum discourse over the last fifty years so as to clarify that discourse. As Kliebard points out, the formative years of the field are perhaps best expressed in the writings of the "first generation of curriculum specialists" rather than in the ideas of a genius like Dewey.¹⁶ This study concentrates on the discourse of the curriculum field, as such, rather than on that of philosophy; this is its limitation and, hopefully, its value.

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¹⁶Kliebard, 4.
CHAPTER II

1918-1927—THE CORNUCOPIA

Great revolutions which strike the eye at
a glance must have been preceded by a still
and secret revolution in the spirit of the age....

--Hegel,
On Christianity

World War I was an event that forced the United States to con­
front its responsibilities to the world. When the war ended, it left the
nation more self-conscious. A definite quest for national identity be­
came part of the decade which followed the war.

In the curriculum field, these ten years witnessed important
discussions about the fundamental purposes of education, making the
first decade of this study especially rich in relation to discourse deal­
ing with the utility of knowledge. A revolution occurred in this period,
effecting a significant expansion of the school's view of its responsi­
bilities, and this in turn created much theoretical tension in the
curriculum field.

The examination of this chapter will focus first on the nature of
this revolution, its background and expression. Then the theoretical
tensions which arise as utility is defined in different ways will be identi­
fied, and the alternative definitions will be related to varying sources
of purpose. The methods of defining knowledge as it relates to the concept of utility will also be attended to. Finally, the analysis of the discourse will be summarized in order to point up what happens to the concept of utility during the decade, as well as the effect of the concept on theoretical issues in general.

1. The revolution

As one examines the educational discourse which took place during the decade following the publication of the *Cardinal Principles*, the number of different ideas and the tension evident between them is striking. The year of publication for the *Cardinal Principles*, 1918, marks the beginning for this study for good reason. The statement itself initiated a revolution in American education on the whole notion of the utility of knowledge.

Cremin describes the historical aspects of this revolution well, illustrating how the statement "literally ushered in a whole new age" in American education. The novelty of the statement becomes especially

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evident when it is compared with the report of the famous Committee of Ten. The movement expressed in *Cardinal Principles* toward making the secondary school the pivotal institution in the American educational system had ramifications for the entire system. The high school here became concerned with the "progressive amelioration of every individual and social need." Thus, the revolution consisted in turning from the view of the school as concerned with the development of the intellect (cf. the report of the Committee of Ten), to that of the school as an agent of society, serving society's needs. The implications of such a shift for those concerned with defining what knowledge is most useful are obvious. In the analysis which follows, the impact of this revolution upon curriculum thought should become clear.

Like any revolutionary event, the publication of *Cardinal Principles* was possible because of a favorable climate which had developed over a period of time. Already in 1915 there had been talk about the utility of subject matter deriving from its contribution to "the

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4 Cremin, 307.
progressive evolution of our democratic society." In the *Fourteenth Yearbook* of the National Society for the Study of Education, two criteria for defining utility emerge. Both of these are important for understanding the *Cardinal Principles* as well as much of the discussion which is to follow in the curriculum field. The first of these criteria is embodied in language which speaks of determining "what the absolute essentials are in the equipment of our citizenship that they may discuss and confer on a sufficiently high level to insure the progressive evolution of our democratic society." Here, the content and emphasis in each subject area is determined by society's judgment in reference to its needs, which judgment rests on the aim of society to make the child "an efficient member of a progressive democratic society." Interestingly, the nature, ability, and interests of children are seen to be concerns dictating the organization of content and methods of instruction, but the criterion of content selection is solely that mentioned above.

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The second criterion emerges because "it is impossible to discover from educational theory the fundamental tests for exclusion or inclusion."⁸ Since it was believed impossible to decide on the basis of theory what knowledge best served society's needs as described above, it was agreed that surveys of current practice would be employed in order to set up standards. The result was essentially a method of determining minimum essentials. In specific subject areas like reading, handwriting, spelling, arithmetic, and geography, surveys were made, and statistical norms of content coverage and achievement level were established. Then statements like "the adoption of the median time in use throughout the country is recommended as an upper limit of time distribution"⁹ were possible for the various subject areas.

Utility is defined in terms of standard levels of achievement derived by way of ordinary statistical methods: that knowledge necessary to reach a standard level of achievement in a particular subject matter is obviously most useful.

Here utility depends on the adequacy of the norming sample, as well as on the status quo with regard to subjects in the curriculum. A

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⁸Ibid., 16.

⁹Ibid., 129.
third implicit criterion can therefore be seen to operate that identifies those subjects presently in the school curricula around the nation as ipso facto useful. The statement of the Cardinal Principles thus comes on a scene where utility is defined in terms of two criteria logically unrelated. The first deals with the demands of a "progressive democratic society"—what ought to be for the sake of that society. The second deals with what is. This logical hiatus between the ought and the is will be instructive to keep in mind throughout this first decade.

2. The Cardinal Principles

The direction of the revolution described by Cremin can be discerned early in the statement of Cardinal Principles. Here the value of any subject matter depends "on the application of knowledge to the activities of life rather than primarily in terms of the demands of any subject as a logically organized science."\(^{10}\) The "activities of life" are those which lead to the development of the individual, and this development is seen to be the result of acting for the "well-being of others and of society as a whole."\(^{11}\) Indeed, the entire scope of

\(^{10}\) United States Bureau of Education, *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education.*

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 9.
democracy is presented in these same terms with the purpose of education deriving from this definition. Subject matter should relate to three main areas of activity in a democracy: home, vocation, and citizenship. From these three areas of activity the now famous seven objectives are derived: health, command of fundamental processes, worthy home membership, vocation, citizenship, worthy use of leisure, and ethical character. One then decides upon content and its utility by moving logically from objectives to aims to method and finally to content.

Logically, the movement in this process is not a direct one from objectives to content. Aims derive from the nature of subject matter, which in effect makes subject matter the starting point of the process. The decision on utility is thus made within the confines of a particular subject matter: whatever contributes to the seven objectives in some way is useful. In this process subjects apparently are givens vested with value *per se*. Which aspects of a given subject field become part of a curriculum is decided in terms of what within the subject contributes most to the seven objectives.

The process so developed becomes much less revolutionary than at first it appears in the early paragraphs of the statement, which

\[12^{12}\text{Ibid.}, 16.\]
propose that all content value depends upon application to life's activities regardless of subject matter demands. If subject matter is made the starting point, then utility is defined by two criteria. Knowledge is useful which, first, is part of some given subject matter and, second, which contributes to one of the seven objectives. Were objectives to remain the starting point in the logic of the process as is declared at the outset of the statement, then subject matter boundaries could be transcended. The resulting curriculum could look quite different from one which has its incipience within given subject matter boundaries.

Thus, as the actual criteria of utility contained within the statement become explicated, the revolution is seen as greater in its intent than in its effect. A kind of ambiguity resides in the concept of utility employed in the statement of Cardinal Principles, resulting from an unquestioned commitment to conventional subject matters. Later in the statement, the problem of subject matter irrelevance and resulting student apathy and attrition is resolved by requesting that only the most applicable elements of a given subject become part of the curriculum.¹³ Once again, the relevance of the subject itself is not really questioned.

¹³Ibid., 17.
Analysis of the **Cardinal Principles**, at the very beginning of this study, already raises several central theoretical issues in the curriculum field. In the criteria so far identified as determining the application of the concept of utility, there is the logical hiatus between the *ought* and the *is*. There is also the apparently unquestioned commitment to given subject matters. Continued analysis of the literature selected as representative of the remainder of the decade should yield a number of other sets of related criteria. The "scientific movement" in education was in its heyday during this decade, and special meanings of the concept of utility can be sought in the methods employed by this approach. Another set of criteria should be derivable from the discourse primarily concerned with what ought to be. A third set of criteria may come from those who adhere to the inherent value of given subject fields.

3. **The criteria of utility established "scientifically"**

The scientific method of approaching society consisted essentially in finding techniques by which to measure or survey the characteristics of the social scene. There was a strong commitment present in the decade to these techniques as the final solution to the problem of what ought to become part of the curriculum. In this section, the
criteria for the concept of utility which resulted from this scientific approach to society or the individual will be explicated by analyzing a number of the National Society for the Study of Education (NSSE) Yearbooks related to curriculum. Because of the strength of their influence in this area, the writings of Bobbitt and Charters will also be studied at length here. As the various criteria are explicated, an attempt will be made to point up a number of theoretical issues germane to defining what knowledge is most useful in a curriculum.

The issue involved in the scientific methods of defining what knowledge is useful for the curriculum is well summarized by Krutch's recent contention that

normative is a word which many—perhaps most—scientists are more than merely suspicious of, for it implies a rejection of complete relativism and it accepts the distinction they refuse to make between the normal and the average, between what is and what ought to be.14

The statistical average derived from survey methods does indeed become important in the definition of utility formulated by early curriculum theorists committed to "scientific" methods. The various criteria for the concept of utility formulated by this group of participants in the

discourse will be discussed first. Each of these criteria will be stated and their sources documented and discussed.

The first criterion derived "scientifically" defines utility in terms of that knowledge which "experts" in life's activities deem most valuable. Already this criterion involves the ambiguity which stalks so much of the language employed by the disciples of the scientific movement of the decade, 1918-1927. The science aspect of the criterion is seen to reside in the method of carefully surveying the "experts" and quantifying their judgments. Little or nothing is said about the basis for the value judgment necessary to decide who is or is not an expert. Similarly, the fact that the experts proffer value judgments does not seem to interfere with the attempt to make scientific the criterion for deciding the meaning of the utility of knowledge for a curriculum. That the locus of decision or value judgment resides outside the surveyor and can be in some manner quantified or statistically averaged seems to lend credence to what is "discovered." For example, one study concerned with what knowledge is most useful for a course in civics, conducted by B. B. Bassett, used professional politicians as a source since they were judged to be "specialists in politics," able to determine "what problems are of most value for educational purposes."\(^\text{15}\)

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In the Twenty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (NSSE), Franklin Bobbitt devotes a chapter to this criterion of calling upon experts in life activities. He begins the chapter by making a distinction between general and occupational education. From here he derives the content of general education by analyzing life activities which "in general terms are much the same for all properly educated individuals." In performing this analysis of activities, Bobbitt looks for those persons who live on a "high" level in these activities and defines utility as that knowledge which will enable future generations to live at this same level. "We do not look forward to the future for the sake of preparing for it, but only for assistance in holding high the current living." Here, life activity is not occupational; Bobbitt calls for an analysis of human exemplars in every area of life and criticizes that "myopic" activity analysis which is only "utilitarian." He does not view education as a preparation for life, but asks that educators be concerned with the "moving present." Though he stresses the need to be scientific in analyzing


17 Ibid., 43.

18 Ibid., 45.
activities, Bobbitt's use of the exemplar notion in relation to what he calls "high grade living" involves more than mere survey techniques. There is a rich complexity to his criteria for utility which is obscured if only one considers his method of activity analysis. Perhaps the concern for quantitative methods so prevalent at the time Bobbitt was writing led to interpretation of his thought in almost a totally methodological vein, though he is frequently not clear on the issue himself.

Since the criterion under consideration involves the analysis of life activities, an enterprise so intimate to Bobbitt's thought, it seems apropos to consider his writings here at length. His book *The Curriculum* begins with a lack of clarity on an issue which may relate strongly to some of his theoretical difficulties. The issue has to do with the role of the school vis-à-vis society, the definition of which is crucial to one's criteria of utility. In one sentence he states, "Education must take a pace set, not by itself, but by social progress." A few pages later he says that education is responsible for the social reconstruction demanded by the years just ahead. The tension between these two statements may account for some of the later difficulties to be encountered in his thought.

An important notion in Bobbitt's definition of what knowledge is useful is his separation of experience into basically two levels. He describes a play level, which relates to the subjective, humanistic side of experience, and a work level, which is objective and utilitarian. As he deals with educational experience on the play level, he remarks that mental play is a natural process during which one pays no attention to the "use or uselessness of the information" gathered. Yet, such information will be useful in the future. Thus, education should aim at giving experience at the play level, not information. "The more unsophisticated, the less they are conscious of the serious values, the more they simply follow interest, probably the better will be the experience for education."\(^{21}\)

When Bobbitt treats experience on the work-level, he uses the term work to refer not only to occupation but to "all of one's responsible activities."\(^{22}\) The criterion for work-type experience is felt responsibility for serious results. Bobbitt states that schools currently emphasize leisure activities to the point of excluding work activities.

\(^{20}\)Ibid., 9.

\(^{21}\)Ibid., 13.

\(^{22}\)Ibid., 18.
From this context, he finds that that knowledge is most useful which is "really antecedent to intended action...an organic portion of a total act of which outward performance is but the culminating portion." 23

Now since the school is concerned with "serious training," in Bobbitt's thinking, it ought to concentrate on work situations. Knowledge, to be useful in school settings, ought to be part of "normal responsibility" in the world of work. Utility for a curriculum consists in that "series of things which children and youth must do and experience by way of developing abilities to do the things well that make up the affairs of adult life, and to be in all respects what adults should be." 24 The curriculum discoverer here needs to be an analyst of human nature and human affairs, which makes activity analysis much broader an enterprise than a narrowly utilitarian occupational analysis. "It will be as wide as life itself." 25

Bobbitt sees the responsibility of the curriculum to rest on what is not taken care of by "undirected experience." In terms of the play level of experience, he seems to imply that the necessary educational experiences take place outside the school, and the school thus

23 Ibid., 28.
24 Ibid., 42.
25 Ibid., 43.
concentrates on the work level. Objectives are to be derived from analysis of the best activity going on in a specific area. Analysis of activities, therefore, does not abdicate the responsibility of deciding what ought to be by simply measuring what is. The source of ought standards is apparently left to judgment, though this difficulty is stated explicitly. Since activities are not being carried out at the level they should be, education is seen as the "primary agent of social progress," able to raise new generations to a superior level. After statements like this, Bobbitt still clearly implies that knowledge of what ought to be will come from "scientific investigations." In practical terms, he says that the ought derives from what "a majority of citizens" agree are the deficiencies in a particular realm of activity. Here the school is the agent of that knowledge which will overcome the weaknesses of the status quo, and utility is finally defined in these terms.

That Bobbitt brings the student of his thought to this strange definition of utility is disappointing, especially in the light of his earlier, more imaginative soarings. Through the remainder of the book, one finds an unusual interplay of contrasting ideas. At one time he


uses industry as a controlling metaphor when speaking of child development; at another time he pleads for a humanism centered on play experience. He states that he is more interested in a method of curriculum discovery, than in details of curriculum content.28 This may account for what appears to be a somewhat narrow definition of utility for the curriculum.

When one considers the scope of Bobbitt's definition of life activities and his use of a kind of human exemplar in his method of discovering the curriculum, the real contribution would indeed seem methodological. However, when he finally gets to his criterion of utility, he seems to fail to maintain this scope of vision. His commitment to a measurement procedure seems to have left no alternative to his defining utility in terms of measurable weaknesses. He reiterates his conviction that the source of the criteria for utility will be a type of scientific measurement in his How to Make a Curriculum.29 Also, it must be kept in mind that he never neglects to speak about the play level which he refers to as "foundational" or general education. Then,

28Ibid., 285.

when speaking of "functional" education he says, "It is not really more functional than what we called the foundational, but it is consciously so; and the functions are specific and are held before one as the goals of training."\textsuperscript{30}

As Bobbitt continued developing his thinking, the focus became the scientific, procedural aspects of curriculum making; less is subsequently said about the play level of experience which is apparently assumed as he concentrates upon the methodological elements of his enterprise. In \textit{Curriculum Making in Los Angeles},\textsuperscript{31} he compiles a list of objectives in ten areas of human activity, using the initial "empirical judgment" of his graduate students at Chicago. This list is then given to 1200 high school teachers in Los Angeles for further validation. Bobbitt complains that the technique is insufficient since it is not "scientific," but realizes that action problems demand solution now with the best techniques available. However, he states emphatically that "analysis of activities can be made final, only as it is made quantitatively exact."\textsuperscript{32} The struggle between scientific measurement

\textsuperscript{30}\textit{Ibid.}, 65.

\textsuperscript{31}Franklin Bobbitt, \textit{Curriculum Making in Los Angeles}, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 20 (Chicago: University of Chicago, June, 1922).

\textsuperscript{32}\textit{Ibid.}, 4.
techniques and necessary value judgments is evident here also.

Bobbitt is never quite at ease theoretically when he is forced by the demands of the practical to take a value stance. Such a stance is always described as a kind of unfortunate necessity due to inadequate scientific expertise. He implies that eventually science will obviate the necessity for taking such value positions, yet is driven to dealing with value as he describes his method of curriculum construction. He begins *Curriculum Investigations*\(^3\) with a presentation of educational theory based on the notion of "observing and performing the activities which constitute the highest level of civilization."\(^4\) He is immediately confronted with the problem of finding what activities are the "highest." The issue is solved in this manner: "Let us find, therefore, if possible, those persons who come nearest to living life as it ought to be lived."\(^5\) These people are said to manifest "in the concrete" the ultimate objectives of education. He once more defines utility in terms of those activities performed by the exemplars of civilization. This is clearly a value position but one taken out of

\(^3\)Franklin Bobbitt, *Curriculum Investigations*, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 31 (Chicago: University of Chicago, June, 1926).

\(^4\)Ibid., 1.

\(^5\)Ibid., 2.
necessity rather than on the basis of a clearly explicated philosophical position. From here he begins to move into more scientific areas of the method. He divides human activity into its major categories, referring to the *Cardinal Principles*, a set of six compiled by an educational sociologist, and his own list of ten categories as alternative divisions. Each of these categories is then further divided into "levels" determined by ability. The top level constitutes the leadership group—"the upper two, five, or ten per cent." Since it is not possible as yet for Bobbitt to determine the activities unique to each ability level, he decides that the activities of the leadership group should constitute the objectives of the curriculum. These are said to be subject to modification for lower ability levels. Again he states that education should not be mere preparation; examination of adult activities should merely lead to knowledge of what earlier activities are the necessary prelude to the adult form of action. A great deal of developmental psychology is seemingly taken for granted—"a questionable assumption in the light of the state of the art. Once all the dividing and subdividing is accomplished, research problems are established for each level of each action area, giving the possibility of some 5,000 research problems. The remainder of the book deals with extensive analysis of periodicals, newspapers, literary

\[\text{36 Ibid., 6.}\]
digests, etc., in order to determine what activities should constitute the curriculum. Though he often admits that frequency of mention in the writings analyzed says nothing about an activity's importance to human existence, he concludes that:

On the basis of positive evidence, he can discern at last that, in actual human life, government in this country functions a hundred times more than do the foreign languages. This is a good thing for the curriculum maker to know. It will fortify him in his attempt to get actual—not pretended—training for citizenship into the curriculum and to make it vital.\(^{37}\)

The criterion for utility here becomes frequency of mention in periodicals chosen for analysis. Once more Bobbitt's theoretical struggle between value judgment and measurement procedures remains unresolved, resulting in the blatantly narrow definition of what knowledge is most useful to the curriculum maker. This unresolved issue of the is and the ought seems to have wrought havoc with a curriculum theory laudably concerned with relevance and meaning in curriculum content. In addition to this difficulty, there is a singular lack of concern on Bobbitt's part for the relation of knowledge as contained in the disciplines with the activity of his exemplars. Little is said about just how knowledge is productive of that activity which will lead to the desired adult activity.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., 20.
Closely related to Bobbitt's thinking is that of W. W. Charters, who likewise stressed the idea of activity, de-emphasizing the role of knowledge in the form of disciplines. In his approach to curriculum construction, activity becomes the central notion, rather than any kind of formal knowledge. He defines knowledge in terms of overt behavior.

"The standards of our day demand that our courses of study be derived from objectives which include both ideals and activities." 38 Activities are the new dimension for Charters; and he sees usefulness as the ultimate aim, not comprehensive knowledge. There is no value in "formal discipline." "Information has no value considered apart from its function." 39 Charters complains that curriculum theory in the past has leaped from aim to subject matter, giving no basis for selection. This resulted in isolating "ideals" from "activities." Spencer was the first to be concerned with both ideals and activities in his famous statement on "What Knowledge is of Most Worth," but he failed to keep ideals as modifications for activities. 40 At this point, there is real confusion in Charters' thought on the science-value issue which plagued


39 Ibid., 6.

40 Ibid., 11.
Bobbitt. Charters, however, writes without any seeming uneasiness about the problem. Yet he fails to relate clearly the two poles of the argument and seems to settle into a scientific analysis of the "problems" evident in contemporary society, making solution of these "problems" the objective of a curriculum. He talks about how ideals relate to activities as standards, but the relationship remains vague. By following a sample of his thought, this difficulty may be illustrated.

Like Bobbitt, he talks of social exemplars. "Practical life consists in the dealings and activities embraced in the conduct of well-rounded members of society." Knowledge, to be useful, must contribute to this practical life, to solving its "problems." Here utility is clearly defined in terms of that knowledge which will overcome the problems of present society. This position relates strongly to Bobbitt's criterion at the end of his thinking in The Curriculum, which concentrated on the weaknesses of the status quo. Most of Charters' analysis operates on the basis of this criterion, though he deals with the value dimension in his discussion of ideals. He sees these as functioning as standards by which to judge activities, the latter being derived scientifically. Ideals are seen as matters of belief and, therefore, pluralistic.

\[41\text{Ibid.}, 17.\]
Thus, Charters takes no responsibility for any value theory or for stating any value position himself. He simply states that these should be decided on by a faculty and then related to activity analysis. He presents three alternative ways to determine ideals which involve radically different positions, but the difference is not made important in Charters' thought. In the last analysis, the importance of any ideal is determined by use, where use is defined as providing social efficiency vis-à-vis the activities of contemporary society.

Social efficiency thus operates as the controlling criterion for Charters' thought, but he is never clear about this himself. In fact, he denies there is any ultimate criterion which stands out as the criterion for all others. "What we really have is a great nexus of values bound together, each serving both as means and as ends to the others." However, when an ideal leads to measurable social efficiency, superiority can be "indisputably demonstrated." Here judgment on the hierarchy of values rests on successful behavior in the activities of current society. Charters sees all knowledge as a method for achieving some action objective derived from the activities of the present society. He accepts functional psychology's notion that all achievement is the

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42 Ibid., 32.

43 Ibid., 65.
result of an effort to overcome some difficulty. Thus, analysis of problems—grammatical errors, in one of his studies—leads to what the content of a curriculum will be. Throughout his writings, Charters is much more concerned with techniques of quantitative analysis than with value issues, and ends by taking a value position solely on the criterion of social efficiency in those activities which can be measured in current society.

This position lends itself to study of and reaction to present social problems. "Special claims" on the curriculum are a logical extension of this definition of utility. The curriculum is thus vulnerable to whatever pressures society can bring to bear in its demand for "efficient activity" on the part of its citizens. An early example of such a special claim was the case of safety education, whose advocates employed the rationale that the only way to prevent accidents was to instruct specifically in prevention.\textsuperscript{44} Involved in this rationale was the evidence from Thorndike and his disciples which denied any notion of automatic transfer of training as well as extensive statistical summaries of accidents on the national scene. Usually the special claim

was met by adding a new course or new material to the present curriculum organization, a practice which was to cause a good deal of criticism by the end of the decade.

It is important to look at the variety of manifestations of concern for quantitative methods and social efficiency which are present in this first decade in order to understand the role these concerns played in defining utility. Of the ten chapters in the Sixteen Yearbook of the NSSE on "Minimal Essentials in Elementary School Subjects," five make direct use of information derived from measurement of children's attainments. The other five are based on measurements of the content of books and other published material. A symposium on "the purposes of historical instruction in the seventh and eighth grades" is recorded in Part II of the Seventeenth Yearbook of the NSSE. Its concerns were addressed to the problem of defining what knowledge is most useful from "the point of view of realizing national ideals." The solution to the problem of defining utility can only be derived by way of scientific procedures, according to the position taken in this Yearbook:

It is sufficient to note that the determination of the content of the course of study must follow two fundamental principles suggested by the following

questions: 1) What should children know and do as children and adults? 2) What can children at any age learn with profit? The final answer to both of these questions must be obtained by measurement.46

Here knowledge which should be had derives from measuring what knowledge is possessed by functioning adults in society's activities. Utility then is defined by way of that knowledge now being used in society.

Closely related to this thinking was the attention being directed to testing procedures. Thorndike's views are especially important here as he begins to explain education as "one form of human engineering." He sets the task for educators as one of producing measurable change in human beings, seeking knowledge of educational purposes and products in quantitative terms.47 Though one can voice no objection to this aspiration, it led to difficulties as people began to extend its logic to extremes. In some discourse, there is such strong emphasis on accurate measurement that one could almost conclude that whatever knowledge is quantifiable and able to be accurately measured is ipso facto useful.

46 Ibid., 33.
In effect, this is the only type of knowledge often considered. One lengthy statement dealing with the aims and methods of English composition decided that evaluation of any composition is best accomplished via a scale. Such a quantitative measure would then offer uniformity of evaluation. Immediately the question must be raised, whether uniformity of evaluation on the basis of a scale created by someone's personal judgment enables one to decide that what is best according to the scale is therefore the most useful knowledge. Failure to pose such a question leads to the definition of utility perhaps most employed by students in a particular institutional setting: knowledge is useful, if it results in a large score on a standardized test. Then tests dictate the criteria for utility and everything is measurable.48

Another technique for establishing the criteria for the concept of utility prevalent during the decade was the survey of both printed materials and social practices. Two frequent procedures dealt with analysis of library withdrawals and books published in a given period. Such analysis led to decisions about what amount of history should constitute a curriculum as well as the uses of history in life activities.

outside the school. Newspaper, magazines, and political platforms were likewise analyzed. A number of people were providing rationales for this activity, most of them much influenced by the writings of Bobbitt and Charters. Thus, statements like "the aim of education is to help the person to do well those things which he most likely will need to do" lead directly to survey activity. Yet, in most of this discourse, there persists the lack of clarity between philosophical and scientific aspects of curriculum theory. Surveys will be conducted on the basis of different but overlapping taxonomies of "life activities," with no explanation of the philosophical basis for a particular taxonomy.

4. Criteria established philosophically

A definite reaction to the scientism so evident in the discourse that has just been studied also occurs during the decade. The need to relate scientific and philosophical approaches to society was explicitly recognized by some, but the relationship is never fully clarified in theoretical terms. In this section, discourse that deals with a philosophical approach to society will be examined. Special attention will

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51 Ibid., 20-21.
be given to the thinking of Harold Rugg, who was deeply concerned with axiological issues in his approach to society for the sake of defining utility.

The lack of clarity between philosophical and scientific pursuits in curriculum theory created a body of discourse which departs from much of the "scientific movement" in the field. Rugg agreed that "scientific methods" were more effective than "committee procedures," but found an additional need to look beyond the present condition of society to its future. Rugg became interested then in the "insistent and permanent problems" which could form a transcendent base for a curriculum in social studies. A course could then be built of these permanent problems, which are discovered by studying contemporary problems. The best source for discovering these insistent problems is found by Rugg to reside in "frontier thinkers," who are, by and large, scholars in political science, economics, and other social sciences. Thus, there is consensus on the notion that the source of criteria for establishing the definition of utility resides in society; but Rugg discovers society in

52NSSE, Twenty-Second Yearbook, Part II, 260.

53Ibid., 261.

54Ibid., 266.
his discourse in terms of the thinking of scholars. Another set of discourse finds society to manifest itself in newspapers, library withdrawals, etc. These are logically different pursuits; but this difference is never fully acknowledged.

There is a sentence by W. C. Bagley at the close of a report on a symposium on teaching history which reflects this unacknowledged tension.

Concerning the objectives of historical teaching there seems to be little disagreement; upon the materials, too, there is substantial harmony; but between the objectives and the materials there is a veritable terra incognita. Bagley recognizes here that utility is not defined sufficiently to allow for selection of content that would bring objectives and materials together. The survey method of setting up standards is not in itself a solution. Related to this realization was the concern of many subject matter specialists who objected to the use of historical knowledge for the achievement of some social need, especially when a kind of indoctrination becomes involved. What happens in all of these objections is that the criterion of social need or social efficiency begins to be questioned philosophically from an axiological position. Most of the discourse presented

55NSSE, Seventeenth Yearbook, 122.

56Ibid., 107.
above under the heading of "scientifically derived criteria" does not raise this kind of questions.

Part II of the Twenty-Second Yearbook of the NSSE deals with social studies in the elementary and secondary school, with Rugg as editor. His thinking in this area is relevant to the attempt to define utility with axiological considerations in mind. Along with these philosophical concerns which are usually more implicit than explicit in Rugg's theorizing, there is always an emphasis on scientific methods of curriculum making. In the foreword, Rugg calls for more scientific curriculum making so that a curriculum can indeed prepare students for society. The "hiatus between curriculum and society" results from unscientific methods of curriculum change.57 Rugg defines utility in terms of that knowledge which prepares the young to meet the problems of society. Knowledge of these problems comes from two hundred "authoritative" books written by frontier thinkers.58 Social studies are responsible for bringing youth into contact with the "insistent problems of today" so they may come to know technological society and its spiritual as well as cultural "retardation."59

57 NSSE, Twenty-Second Yearbook, Part II, vii.
58 Ibid., 11.
59 Ibid., 2.
Obviously, much more is involved in this analysis than a mere listing of the activities which make up society. Surveys show what is and Rugg concludes this is must be changed. Thus, the student is viewed as beyond society while Rugg pleads for a curriculum which will allow the rank and file of the population to develop the intellectual capacity to achieve their collective will. "This results from being taught how to think, being exposed to nine or ten years of rigorous practice in thinking." Here the criterion for utility moves from that of social need to one concerned with intellectual development as an end—a rather radical departure. Social needs are then met because of the established intellectual competence.

Judd concurs with Rugg's thinking and calls for knowledge to be structured in order for students to know social problems; he asks for real social science in the curriculum. He states that children need guidance in "systematic thinking," not just miscellaneous thinking by hunting "projects." Material should be prepared "with the largest possible cooperation of trained specialists and a few selected teachers." 

60 Ibid., 3.
61 Ibid., 32.
62 Ibid., 35.
Judd here reacts to both the purely "scientific methods" of curriculum as well as to the concern for the psychology of the child and child purposes. This latter concern deserves treatment in its own right. Rugg also reacted to the "child-centered" approach to curriculum-making in terms of his own emphasis on content which has more scholarly sources:

One of the most baffling problems which we face in organizing curricula and methods of instruction is that of taking advantage of the driving purposes of children. I am convinced that at least it is not necessary to turn the whole curriculum into one continuing series of "life projects" in order to engage that whole-hearted interest of pupils in school work.63

As he develops this position, Rugg presents the individual as beyond society and needing to protect himself from its deficiencies. Thus, because society is overly "mechanical," there must be real contribution from "appreciational" subject areas to child development.64 Clearly, there has been a shift from defining utility purely in terms of criteria derived by way of "scientific" analysis of current society to a definition involving both scientific and philosophical considerations. Also


64Ibid., 120-121.
knowledge is defined more in terms of "thinking" or the disciplines, rather than in terms of ability to perform an activity.

5. **Criteria derived from study of child**

In the discourse sampled for this first decade, the locus of most criteria for utility has been society. However, the individual also emerges as a competing source for definitional criteria, and this approach merits some attention. Related in some ways to the philosophical concerns of people like Rugg were the efforts of theorists like William H. Kilpatrick who stressed the psychology of the learner in their definitions of utility for a curriculum.

For example, Kilpatrick's article on "The Project Method" exerted enormous influence, providing a definition of utility which rests on a criterion dealing with the interests and purposes of the learner rather than conditions outside that learner. In appraising a series of statements on individualizing instruction, which were strongly influenced by the current enterprise of deriving the curriculum from analysis of society and its activities, Kilpatrick clearly shows his shift of attention from society to the individual. The locus of attention becomes the very personal elan of the individual, not any kind of

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social need or demand. Kilpatrick severely criticizes projects like the Dalton plan and what he refers to as the "common notion" for reducing education to "mere preparation." This is the "fatal flaw" of most of the theory contemporaneous to that developed by Kilpatrick. In opposition, Kilpatrick offers Dewey's notions about education as the continuous remaking of the "child life" to ever higher and richer levels. Here the child establishes his own ends; now is where the child lives. Excessive attention to the future ignores the requirements of real learning. Subject matter ought to be conceived as "ways of behaving here and now." Utility rests on what enables one to act toward self-established purposes in the present.

Interestingly, Bobbitt responds to the problem of individualizing instruction in a manner not so far from the position taken by Kilpatrick. Seeing his thinking on this issue serves to stress the point that there is sufficient richness and complexity in his thought to make any label a mere caricature. Thus, when he speaks about training individuals to do things he emphasizes the fact that doing should be eminently

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67 Ibid., 278.
individual. He rejects the application of uniform standards to any truly individualized instruction, finding such application not to be "rational."\footnote{Ibid., 229.}

Within this same stream of emphasis on the individual, the notion of "functional" subject matter was prevalent. Knowledge is seen to be functional if it leads to the creation of the self-active individual. "The student must build his knowledge. He must exercise his mind. Subject matter has meaning for him only in terms of using it, by building it or constructing it."\footnote{Ibid., 225.} Knowledge here is defined in terms of mental acts or concepts of the learner. Subject matter thus is useful if it can aid the knower in his activity of building his own knowledge. This definition is to grow in importance later, but its roots are in this decade primarily concerned with factors outside the individual.

6. **Criteria derived for vocational education**

To obtain a complete picture of all the criteria for utility prevalent in this first decade, it is necessary to consider the concerns about

occupational training expressed at this time. In this instance, the tension between individual and social need may be seen to reach an apex. The work of David Snedden can be regarded significant for the way he resolves the tension. The perennial struggles between vocational and general education can be better understood by considering the criteria for utility which emerge here also.

Snedden states clearly his view on the relation of general to vocational education:

For any given man a first class cultural education can contribute a trifle to vocational proficiency, but usually that is all. A first class vocational education can contribute a trifle to cultural mastery, but usually that is all. Each type has its own major objectives—and it is very doubtful if these can be realized synchronously.\(^7\)

Based on this position, Snedden develops two criteria of utility, logically discrete. In the first, knowledge is useful if it is "specific, definite, and instantly usable in active life." The second criterion finds utility in what results in "appreciation, taste, modified sentiment, ideal, and undifferentiated background of knowledge."\(^2\) Thus, he calls for two


types of schools and two types of curricula—general and vocational.

Activity analysis is important in determining objectives in Snedden's thought, and he operates much as would a Charters with a more sociological orientation. However, the most salient aspects of his thought are the dichotomy he sets up between vocational and general education and the resulting criteria of utility. Snedden appears to call for two types of education for two types of knowledge. Curricula for the purpose of training someone to act in a certain manner are radically different than those concerned with mental development.

Summary

By the end of the decade, general agreement had been reached by the major thinkers in the curriculum field that the two sources for purpose considerations should be the society and the individual.\(^7^3\) The real revolution in the "spirit of the age" seems to stem from the new sense of responsibility to society felt by the school and subsequently by those concerned with the curriculum. The Cardinal Principles, presenting this new vision of responsibility strongly, calls for the curriculum to be much concerned with serving society's needs. Early in the statement utility is defined on the basis of criteria derived from

\(^7^3\)NSSE, Twenty-Sixth Yearbook, Part II, Chapter I.
statements of purpose dealing with social need. On the basis of this definition, the knowledge selected for a curriculum would directly relate to the social purposes established for the school. However, as the statement continues, the logic of the process of selecting knowledge does not proceed directly from purpose considerations. The process really begins with acceptance of traditional subject matter categories, so that utility actually is defined in terms of the inherent value of given subject matters. Therefore, two definitions of utility, one based on an analysis of society's needs and the other resting on an assumed value of given subject matters, can be discerned in the Cardinal Principles. The tension between these two definitions creates one set of discourse that deals with purpose considerations about society, seen as determining what knowledge is useful for the curriculum, and another set in which utility is based on the inherent value of subject fields.

Though there was agreement in the field about the fact that society and the individual should be consulted in the determination of curricular purposes, disagreement existed about the relationship between the individual and society.74 Proponents of the "child-centered" school were interested in "activity" or "experience" curricula established on the basis of purpose statements about the individual. Subject

74Ibid., 132.
matter frequently appears much less important to the definitions of utility employed by the proponents of the child-centered curriculum. The writings of William H. Kilpatrick during the decade are especially illustrative on this point. A different approach to the individual can be found in the writings of thinkers like Thorndike. Here behavior is approached scientifically by way of a basically stimulus-response psychology, which influenced learning theory considerably. Kilpatrick's approach to learning is more philosophical in orientation.

For the most part, the decade is dominated by analysis of society and the concept of utility reflects this domination. The scientific method of approaching society is the commanding source of definitions for the concept, with measurement being its focal concern. The statistical mean and frequency distributions are employed as definitional criteria for the concept of utility, which makes the selection of knowledge for the curriculum rest on measurement of the status quo. This may be one reason for the inability to get beyond the view of curriculum development as a process of accretion or elimination of elements in the traditional structure. If utility is defined only on the basis of measuring the current scene so as to determine statistical norms or averages, the basic structure of the curriculum cannot be fundamentally influenced by purpose statements.
In most of the discourse dealing with the scientific method for approaching society, there is no consideration of axiological matters. Value judgments are seldom made explicit, nor are they considered an essential aspect of determining what knowledge is useful for the curriculum. A lack of clarity results in the definitions of utility which emerge where value issues are ignored. A case in point is the use of "experts" in the activities of society as a means of defining utility. These experts were surveyed and their activities quantified in order to determine what knowledge was necessary to produce such a person. The value judgment necessary to decide what constitutes an "expert" is not discussed; in general, axiological matters such as this are ignored. Bobbitt is one who employs the expert notion by frequently referring to the use of human exemplars for the purpose of determining what is useful to the school's curriculum. However, he never explicates the axiological factors involved in the exemplar selection, and further hopes to eliminate any necessity for value judgments in the curriculum process; he sees science as eventually obviating the necessity for making such judgments, since the method for curriculum making will rest solely on measurable data.

There is a rich complexity in Bobbitt's thought, especially as he deals with his two levels of experience where utility is defined in terms of a kind of psychology of play. He never defines education as mere
preparation, but the unresolved theoretical issues resting primarily on the scientific-axiological struggle, leave him vulnerable to misinterpretation. He also fails to define the relationship between the concept of utility and his view of the nature of knowledge. Whether knowledge is considered as solely overt behavior or subject matters is not clarified by Bobbitt. When he makes the school focus on the work level of experience, knowledge seems to be approached in terms of behavior, but his discussion of play experience deals with knowledge in a much more mental context. Charters, who relates closely to Bobbitt's methodological position on curriculum making, deals with knowledge almost solely in the form of behavior. Because of this he finds no inherent value in subject matter. His focus is on eliminating the problems and weaknesses evident in the current activities of society. Charters likewise does not deal with axiological issues.

By considering knowledge solely in terms of behavior, Charters—and to some extent Bobbitt—paves the way for what can be termed special claims on the curriculum. If certain behaviors are needed by society, the curriculum can be created merely to produce these behaviors. Curricula in vocational education situations were sometimes construed in these terms. Snedden's resolution of the vocational-general education issue was to completely divorce the two, since they were concerned with distinct types of knowledge. His resolution brings into sharper
view the differences which begin to emerge during the decade that have to do with methods of approaching knowledge, as one determines what is useful. For some, knowledge is considered only in subject matter terms. Charters considers it in terms of behavior. A third viewpoint deals with knowledge in more mental terms.

Although the decade is dominated by the scientific method of analyzing society, Harold Rugg emerges as one of the leading thinkers whose approach to society contained more axiological elements. Rugg saw the central problem of curriculum making to be the fact that curriculum makers were biased toward either "academic formulae, child interests, or the scientific study of society." There was need to consider the total situation which involves all three sources of information, according to Rugg. He criticizes the "scientific study" proponents for tending to extremes in applying the criterion of social utility which leads to a "mechanistic curriculum of the rankest sort." Instead of social analysis performed on the basis of a scientific method, Rugg asks that purposes be derived by "thought and feeling" articulated

75 NSSE, Twenty-Sixth Yearbook, Part I, xi.

76 Ibid., 81.
by the best minds in society. He describes these persons as the "deepest seers of human life" most competent to interpret the social order. Utility for the curriculum rests on the judgments of these thinkers. The axiological elements are evident in Rugg's position, but his writing, like Bobbitt's, is mostly methodological in the sense that he never fully explicates his own value position. George S. Counts likewise defines utility for the curriculum by way of a value orientation, rather than in terms of a scientific analysis.77 Related to this axiological approach to society is the issue dealing with the relation of the individual to society, an issue that fails to receive much explicit attention though men like Kilpatrick do take a position on it.78

After examining the meaning of the concept of utility in curriculum discourse during the first decade, the following statements can be made:

1. Two sources for definitional criteria are agreed upon: the society and the individual.

2. A third source operates in a kind of tacit manner, that is, the given categories of subject matter. This occurs when definitions of

77 NSSE, Twenty-Sixth Yearbook, Part II, 85.
78 Ibid., 132.
utility based on purpose derived from society or the individual are applied within extant subject matter boundaries. A case in point is the statement on the Cardinal Principles.

3. Basically, two methods for approaching society emerge during this decade—the scientific and the axiological. The relationship between these two is not clarified.

4. There is also a lack of clarity about the relationship which ought to accrue between society and the individual.

5. Knowledge is considered in three different ways as the concept of utility is related to it: as overt behavior, as mental activity, and as subject matter.

6. When utility is related to knowledge considered only in terms of overt behavior, the curriculum becomes a means of producing those behaviors demanded by special claims usually originating from society.

Without doubt, the years 1918 to 1927 constitute a decade which is in every sense a cornucopia for the curriculum field. Just how much the issues that originate during these years continue to affect the discourse of the field will be seen in the chapters to follow.
CHAPTER III

1928-1937--FROM SOCIAL ANALYSIS
TO THE WHOLE CHILD

For eternally and always there is only now, one and the same now; the present is the only thing that has no end.

--Erwin Schrodinger,
My View of the World

The Depression and troubled political situation served to create uncertainty about curriculum objectives during the decade, 1928-1937. Widespread unemployment, economic turmoil triggered by bank failures, and a growing malaise about totalitarian threats to the democratic system all combined to make a stormy social scene. As the state of society became more and more uncertain, the idea of deriving purpose from analysis of the current social system proved untenable. Little direction could be discerned in the chaotic national scene. Even the fundamental unifying elements of American society seemed uncertain as witnessed by the use of loyalty oaths.

Perhaps this uncertainty accounts for the shift in focus later in the decade from society to the individual as primary source of definitional criteria for utility. Once again the necessity to clarify the

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relation between individual and society in curriculum discourse becomes evident.

To look at what continues to be said during this decade about the role society and society's activities play in the curriculum enterprise becomes, of course, the first demand in analysis of the curriculum literature, maintaining continuity with the literature of the previous decade, so much of which was focused on social analysis. Then the role that subject matter categories continue to play in the definition of utility needs to be examined. The shift of focus to the individual will next be studied at length. General aspects of the shift will be analyzed first, after which the Eight-Year Study, closely related to the change of focus, will be looked at from the viewpoint of how the concept of utility is treated during the shift from social analysis to individual need. Finally, an important contribution to the issues of the decade, an attempt by Hilda Taba to impose order on the emerging field of curriculum theory, will be examined as it provides a kind of summary statement based on, or at least relevant to, twenty years of very live curriculum discourse.

1. Social analysis

Society continues to be a substantive source of purpose considerations throughout this decade. The technique of social analysis as
a means of establishing definitional criteria for utility became widely accepted because of the influence exerted by curriculum thinkers in the previous decade. As the curriculum field became increasingly specialized, a body of textbook literature began to grow, and highlighted the technique of social analysis during the decade. This literature will be represented here by examining two such textbooks in terms of their use of the concept of utility. In addition two basic statements appearing at the end of the decade, one from the Educational Policies Commission and the other from a committee of professional workers concerned with curriculum design and development, will be studied. Scrutiny of these four documents will serve to trace the perplexities of applying the technique of social analysis as the method of determining the utility of curriculum content.

In the first of the two related textbooks, *Curriculum Principles and Practices*, Hopkins reiterates the now accepted premise that curriculum in a dynamic society should consist of those activities that enable one to live in that society. Specific criteria for what constitutes utility in such a context are then provided.¹ Knowledge is useful for the curriculum if:

1. a large number of occasions will arise for its use in social activity.

2. a large number of individuals now use this knowledge,
3. the manner of use is that of a consumer rather than that of a producer,
4. occasions are immediately present for its use,
5. it is useful for further learning of content.

Hopkins begins the process of curriculum making by way of an analysis of society's activities, employing the above criteria to use the analysis for deciding on curriculum content. Since there are a number of viewpoints about what activities of society are relevant to the curriculum, conflicts are resolved by way of an organizational technique. All points of view should be represented on the formulating committee, according to Hopkins; and such a technique would insure that the relevant activities found a place in the curriculum. Thus, one of his criteria for utility becomes what a curriculum committee is able to agree upon. No theoretical resolution of the axiological questions, sought so widely in the 1917-1928 decade, is here proposed. Hopkins remains unclear on this issue throughout his treatment of principles and practices, although he states that he looks forward to the time when all content can be chosen "scientifically" by way of experimental studies of the relation of aims to content.² Similar theoretical difficulties plague the second textbook selected for examination.

²Ibid., 150.
The most influential curriculum textbook of the decade, that of Caswell and Campbell, begins by stressing the hiatus between schools and society. In the view of these authors, society is ahead of the school as an institution designed to meet social needs. For this reason social problems loom as central in the concerns of any curriculum maker, since the school in a democracy is responsible for defining and analyzing social ideals. It is likewise responsible for contribution to the "direction of social development" for all members of the society. The development of any individual is seen to take place in the milieu created by society. Since a democratic society seeks the development of the individual, "the nature of the individual does not provide an initial point of orientation for curriculum development." This constitutes a specific interpretation of the relation of the individual to society in the context of democracy, but the interpretation is never presented as such. Thus, in the theory being presented, this definite philosophical position is a kind of assumption—but one which greatly impinges on the definition of utility.

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4 Ibid., 35.
Against this background Caswell and Campbell define the curriculum in terms of experience, where experience is seen as a process of living through actual situations. In setting up the curricular experiences, it is stated that one's aims should control the development of the entire curriculum. However, aims must "be such that something can be and is done about them." Two types of aims are presented: adult and child. The former are referred to as "educational aims" while the latter are termed "pupil purposes." These purposes of the child must be guided so as to become compatible with the aims of education. This is seen to be an avoidance of any imposition of adult aims on children, since the children's aims serve as "centers" around which curriculum activities are organized. Although the aims of the children are not those of education but can be achieved in the process of performing curriculum activities, adult aims are not imposed, according to Caswell and Campbell. The logic here seems strained, as the contention appears to be that as long as children are not aware of the aim which ultimately guides their activity, they are not imposed upon. Aims derive from society, which maintains the educational system to operate directly on teachers and indirectly on children.

5 Ibid., 81.

6 Ibid., 122.
Here the democratic ideal is specifically held to characterize American education. The "aims of education for American schools must be defined in terms of certain generalized controls of conduct which, if developed, will lead to the realization of the democratic ideal." Utility is defined as that knowledge which develops the controls of conduct necessary to democracy. Such controls are to be derived by analytical studies of conduct to determine what activities people actually engage in. These studies are said to produce "desirable and undesirable" types of conduct, but Caswell and Campbell provide no indication of what criteria are to be employed in making the value judgment. They do provide additional sources of information for deciding on the necessary controls of conduct in a democracy. The consensus of opinion derived from groups of competent persons is most stressed; but, once again, criteria for competence are not presented.

A good deal of attention is given to the notion of pupil purposes, but the only such purposes deemed educationally valuable are those compatible with the aims derived above. All curriculum activities are also evaluated on this basis. Subject matter is then defined as "facts, generalizations, information, or objects an individual uses in activities to promote a purpose which he is endeavoring to realize."  

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7Ibid., 125.
8Ibid., 250.
Criteria for the selection of subject matter are explicated to allow the following categories of knowledge to become part of a curriculum:

1. what is part of an organized field of knowledge,
2. what is significant to the understanding of contemporary life,
3. what is used by adults,
4. what interests children and can be used by them.

The first two of these criteria are said to be matters of judgment, while the last two are determined scientifically. It is interesting to note that no clear logical relation exists between these selection criteria and the criterion established above on the basis of a theory about society, democracy, and the curriculum. Almost every theoretical concern—social analysis, child purposes, value of subject matter, etc.—is evident in Caswell and Campbell's presentation; yet, all remain for the most part independent, without being related in a single theoretical construction. Much of their thinking seems victimized by the overwhelming scope of responsibility to which they must address themselves. They initiate their presentation by expressing the school's commitment to alleviate the problems of society and then seem to get caught up in the extensiveness of such a commitment. However, such a view of the school's responsibility was part of the educational creed of the decade.

\[9\text{Ibid.}, 255.\]
The vastness of the school's responsibility to society is one of the significant factors to emerge out of the discourse of the decade. The Educational Policies Commission stated that the school was the one institution which had overall responsibility for all human needs.\(^{10}\) In this view, the school acts as coordinator working in concert with other agencies to meet society's needs. The increasing commitment to universal education was at the heart of much of this widening of responsibility for the school as an institution. Such a commitment was viewed as essential to American democracy, and the needs of the democratic system were given increasing attention.

This concern for the needs of American democracy pervades the report of the Joint Committee on Curriculum. The report and committee resulted from a project undertaken jointly by the Department of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction and the Society for Curriculum Study. Surveys were conducted on questions of theory and practice addressed to superintendents, supervisors, and curriculum directors in some 303 school systems. "Democratic living in all of its aspects" is presented

as the goal of the school. 11 "Practically all elementary, junior-high
school, and senior-high school teachers subscribe to the view that the
curriculum should afford experiences in all of the major social func-
tions." 12 Some three-fourths of the staff surveyed by the Committee
agreed that the major emphasis of the curriculum should be on social
education rather than mental development. As the report describes the
good life, it sees the school as primarily "social-centered rather than
child-centered." 13 The curriculum is described as best organized
around areas of living rather than bodies of knowledge.

2. The asserted value of subject matter

In spite of the continuing attention given to social analysis in
determining the definition of utility for the curriculum, the criteria de-
erived from such analysis were frequently applied within traditional sub-
ject matter categories. Thus, definitional criteria for the concept of
utility that were established on the basis of social analysis often failed
to penetrate extant subject matter categories. This failure causes
utility to be defined in terms of the inherent value of subject matter

11 Joint Committee on Curriculum, The Changing Curriculum

12 Ibid., 5.

13 Ibid., 54.
rather than purpose considerations emanating from society. The difficulties which result from these competing definitions, the one based on social analysis and the other on an inherent value of subject matter, will be traced in this section. Two statements that deal specifically with subject matter will be analyzed. A third document concerned with international understanding will be studied because of the manner in which this concern for the international scene is related to subject matter categories. Finally, the strength of the subject matter claims on the definition of utility will be illustrated by examining the way it affected even organizational matters like that of grouping.

The position of the Joint Committee's report on the role of subject matter in the development of curriculum was not shared by most educators. Though there was often widespread agreement on stated aims of education, disagreement frequently stemmed from the role subject matter was to play in the attainment of these aims. A lengthy statement on science education began by expressing the aim of education as "life enrichment through participation in a democratic social order." The statement proceeds to develop a set of objectives for science education consisting of "functional understandings of the major generalizations of science and the development of associated scientific

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attitudes." In stating these objectives, there is no logical relation between social problems or the practical utility of the knowledge and the process of establishing the objectives. It is flatly assumed that in a "scientific age" scientific knowledge enriches life in a democracy. Therefore, objectives flow from subject matter demands, and a logical gap between the "aim of education" and the "objectives of science education" is created. In effect, there is no logical relation between aim and objective so that subject matter takes on inherent value; utility is defined with two unrelated criteria.

Similarly, the Thirty-Second Yearbook of the NSSE, which treated "The Teaching of Geography," states early in the text its strong belief in the value of subject matter per se. Geography is said to be useful because it is a well-organized and established body of knowledge. It may contribute to citizenship; but this is not in any sense its raison d'etre. Likewise, the subject matter is later related to the Cardinal Principles as a kind of secondary criterion of value. The controlling criterion remains the dictates of the subject itself.

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15 Ibid., 57.


17 Ibid., 39.
Another interesting example of the domination of a particular subject matter in defining utility, and the subsequent logical dichotomy between criteria derived from aims and those derived from subject matter, can be seen in the concern for "international understanding" in curriculum development. Part II of the Thirty-Sixth Yearbook of the NSSE is devoted to "International Understanding Through the Public School Curriculum." Here commitment to the preparation of good citizens is upheld as the "only way" to create international understanding. It is further stated that all subjects should be organized to contribute to this aim. After this opening expression of aim, the remainder of the text goes to subject matter specialists who attempt to show how the study of their subject can contribute to international understanding. The aim here has no controlling influence over the content of the curriculum, but becomes instead a kind of result, flowing from a given and unquestioned subject matter. Utility is defined within subject matters, with the elements of each referred to the stated aim. In such a process, special aims like international understanding arise out of discourse completely unrelated to what goes into the curriculum. The theoretical dilemma of such a situation is evident.

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Even in the strong concern for grouping during this decade, much of the discourse defines utility in terms of the inherent value of subject matter. Here knowledge is useful because it is a traditional part of the curriculum, and grouping is the most efficient way to have it learned.\(^{19}\) It is in this same discussion on grouping that some strong voices of dissent are evident, objecting to grouping which ignores the demands of the individual and his personal needs. Alberty and Brim stress what they term the insights of "newer" philosophies. Harap calls for grouping on the basis of "activities," asking that the curriculum be humanized by way of such grouping.\(^{20}\) This brings the analysis to the discourse which embodies the shift of attention to the individual and in some sense away from society as well as subject matter.

3. **The present needs of the individual**

The extent to which uncertainty about curriculum objectives dominated the decade is best seen by examining two statements from the Educational Policies Commission which appeared toward the end of the period. One deals specifically with the problem of objectives in a


\(^{20}\)Ibid., 172.
chaotic society and the other presents a view of the school as it ought to relate to such a society. After analysis of these documents to represent the background of social unrest, attention may turn to literature presenting the individual as the locus of criteria for utility. This literature is represented here by the statement on the activity movement. Some of the theoretical difficulties of this movement will be pointed up along with a consideration of its influence on the period.

At its first meeting in January, 1936, the Educational Policies Commission compiled a checklist of the crucial issues then facing American education. The list was distributed to the educational community with the intent of getting judgments on which issues were in the most immediate need of attention. The first category of issues dealt with objectives of education. If one examines these, the basic conflict which emerges is between those who see the school as controlled by society versus those who see it free of and over against society. Viewed in terms of utility as a concept, two sets of definitional criteria become apparent. If society is seen as over against the school, then utility is defined as what serves vocational purposes, helps students adjust to life conditions, deals with specific items of

information, and is derived from scientific inquiry. On the other hand, if the school is seen to transcend society, then utility means what serves cultural purposes, helps students improve life conditions, deals with ideals and attitudes, and derives from a process of social-philosophical criticism.

Without doubt, the depression and troubled political situation created much of the uncertainty about objectives evident in the polarity above. Another important publication of the Educational Policies Commission reflects the troubled educational scene and helps to explain the shift to the individual here being considered. Prepared under the leadership of Charles A. Beard, the report was entitled, *The Unique Function of Education in American Democracy.* Because of the profound social changes then occurring, the report said new responsibilities were seen to be impinging on the school. It was believed necessary that the profession consult the "center of society" as well as its own perceptions of the task. The movement of history is interpreted as necessitating that "all educational philosophy and activities take account of the real world and cope with its thrusts and

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23 Ibid., 5.
demands." Yet society is seen as primarily chaotic, so that education has "creative as well as conservative responsibilities."\(^{24}\) Here education is seen as free of and, in a real sense, over against society. In terms of its responsibility to society, society is defined as "more than politics. It embraces all culture." "In a literal sense, education is rooted in eternity, despite its proper affiliation with temporal events."\(^{25}\)

At the time this statement was written, there was considerable unrest about communism, loyalty oaths, and the like. Radio programs were created for discussing such specific issues, along with the general issue of the school's relation to society.\(^{26}\) In most of this discourse, utility is defined in terms of knowledge rooted in the wisdom of the race, the cultural heritage, etc. What is most significant about these statements is that they manifest a shift toward defining utility more in terms of educational needs which transcend any social situation. The unrest of the current social scene undoubtedly accounts for much of this shift. However, besides the current social malaise, an important body of discourse was being developed which centered more directly

\(^{24}\)Ibid., 66.

\(^{25}\)Ibid., 118-119.

on the individual and his psychological needs as these relate to the
curriculum enterprise.

The "activity movement" and "activity curricula" were labels
used to describe many of the theories which dealt with the individual's
needs as the controlling criteria for the curriculum. Part II of the
Thirty-Third Yearbook of the NSSE deals with the "Activity Movement."
Kilpatrick tries to define the movement by surveying some forty-two
experts, twenty-five published curricula, and fifteen books. He comes
to define "activity" as a "unitary sample of actual child living as
nearly complete and natural as school conditions will permit."²⁷ The
movement is then described as divided on the issue of the role that
fact, skill, knowledge, and traditional subject matter play. The ques-
tion becomes, "Is an activity a means to teach traditional subject
matter, or is an activity an end in itself since it contributes to child
growth?"

Again, the power of traditional subject matter categories is
evident. In general, there is ambiguity in the definition of utility with-
in the "movement," depending on one's answer to the question just
raised. Utility is thus defined as what promotes the prosecution of an

²⁷National Society for the Study of Education, Thirty-Third
Yearbook, Part II, The Activity Movement (Bloomington, Illinois: Public
"activity" or as what derives from traditional subject categories as a record of the cultural experience of the race. Despite this ambiguity, the activity movement created a great deal of discussion and many new curriculum documents. A good illustration of its effect can be seen in Paul Hanna's *Youth Serves the Community*. In the introduction by Kilpatrick, there is a call for a new conception of education formulated in terms of activity which will supplant older forms. Utility here means whatever promotes the completion of meaningful activity. Related to this approach was the concern about "integration" and the "experience curriculum" also discussed during the decade. Utility was in these instances defined in terms of what creates the integrated individual; the curriculum became a kind of spontaneous creation stimulated by individual needs and purposes. The concern for fulfillment of the student's own purposes, along with stress on meaningful school experiences, led to one of the most ambitious curriculum studies ever undertaken. A look at the publications resulting from this study will provide more insight into the shift toward the individual, characteristic of the curriculum discourse of this decade.


29 Ibid., 12.

4. The Eight-Year Study

Although the key publications that resulted from the Eight-Year Study were not available until 1942, the project was conceptualized within and belongs to this decade. Therefore, the publications will be closely examined in this section for their emphasis on the individual as source of definitional criteria for utility. Some of the theoretical difficulties of the Study will be analyzed, especially as they relate to the tension between the individual as source of purpose considerations and the needs of society construed as this source. The similar tension between the individual as locus of definitional criteria for utility and the assumed value of subject matters will also be studied.

In April, 1930, the Progressive Education Association established the Commission on the Relation of School and College to determine whether the domination of college entrance requirements over the curriculum could be overcome. Essentially, the Commission desired freedom for fundamental reconstruction of the curriculum. In its initial statement, the inadequacies of the American high school were specified by the Commission. The primary weakness was perceived as the lack of a "clear-cut, definite, central purpose." If the list of inadequacies

\[^{31}\text{Wilford M. Aiken, The Story of the Eight-Year Study (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), 1-2.}\]

\[^{32}\text{Ibid., 4.}\]
which were pointed up are analyzed from the viewpoint of the concept of utility which they imply, the following definitional criteria emerge:

1. what prepares for citizen ship,
2. what develops intellectual powers to the utmost,
3. what releases the "creative energies of students,"
4. what deals with the "real concerns of youth,"
5. what is significant and vital.  

The last three of these criteria clearly reflect the influence of the "activity movement" and "progressive education" in general. Focus here is definitely on the individual student and his unique personal psychological needs rather than on external social demands.

The reconstruction involved thirty schools whose programs were to be pluralistic relative to each other, but guided by two major principles--a common learning theory and an effort to rediscover the raison d'être of the American high school.  

Crucial here is the commonality of "learning theory" which is defined in terms of three major principles; it involves student purposes, leads to the growth of the whole person, and is meaningful in the activity it entails. All these principles can be summarized by defining utility in terms of that

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33 Ibid., 4, 5, 7.
34 Ibid., 17-18.
knowledge which relates directly to the life-purposes of the student. 35

In such a definition, the demands of society and the concerns of the student must be united. This necessity causes a certain tension within the literature of the Study that flows from the commitment all of the thirty schools made to a specific interpretation of society and its needs. The primary purpose of education is defined as leading "our young people to understand, to appreciate, and to live the kind of life for which we as a people have been striving throughout history." 36 Such a definition of purpose causes utility to be further defined in terms of a criterion concerned with knowledge that maintains and promotes the "American way of life." What is an obvious tension between these two criteria is never discussed; it is seemingly resolved in the conception of democracy which the schools evolved. As the reports of the individual schools are examined, they are seen to differ in their programs in the manner in which they emphasize one or the other of these criteria. 37

Another restriction comes to play a role in the definition of utility employed by the schools in the Study--the inherent value of

35Ibid., 17.

36Ibid., 18.

traditional subject matter categories. For the most part, the two criteria mentioned above are applied within the limits of established subject matter though subjects are frequently organized differently. The schools involved in a real commitment to core programs appear to be the only ones which do not apply a kind of third criterion for utility dealing with some inherent value of subject matter. Thus, it is possible to describe the Eight-Year Study in terms of two sets of participating schools, a conservative set and an innovative set. In the conservative set, the criteria for utility dealing with student purposes and the fostering of the American way of life were employed within traditional subject matters. Essentially, therefore, these schools were involved in experimenting with a method of enriching traditional content by relating it to life problems. There was certainly no "radical reconstruction."

With regard to the more innovative set of schools, subject matter divisions were actually broken down. Social and student concerns were central and were met in a kind of inter-disciplinary manner. These social and student problems became the starting point for curriculum reconstruction, helping the innovative group become involved in more

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38 Aiken, The Story of the Eight-Year Study, 47.
than a mere methodological experiment. The innovative schools were no longer considering subject matter useful per se. Yet, ironically— if one examines the specific curriculum revisions which took place—even the innovators were constantly haunted by the demands of traditional subject matters. For example, attempts at "fusion" in a "broad fields" approach were frequently criticized because a certain subject matter began to receive less attention. Subject matter allegiance never really died throughout the history of the experiment. The closest approximation to complete reconstruction was made via anthropological type studies of cultures used as a basis of fusion and the use of problems in the core organization. In general, one can conclude that the commitment of the Eight-Year Study to student purposes and needs was constantly vitiated by an equal but covert attachment to traditional subject matter boundaries or conditions.

5. A more radical proposal

Closely related to the theoretical commitment of the Eight-Year Study is Hilda Taba's book, The Dynamics of Education. This

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statement seems to capture the real spirit of the commitment to individual purposes and needs already described as a major characteristic of the literature here reviewed. Therefore, it deserves close analysis.

In his foreword to Taba's study, Kilpatrick stresses the notion of "becoming" as the end of education. Becoming is not described as a mere unfolding but as something which can be conditional. The way to study becoming is via the human act partly directed by purposiveness. Scientific atomism is seen as an inappropriate method for studying such human phenomena, since it denies the possibility of considering any "mentalistic" terms like purpose and value. Taba begins by saying that the greatest weakness of the educational thought then prevalent was in the realm of "methodological study." Method had been divorced from its ideally intimate connection with its subject matter (phenomena) and had instead been made a law unto itself. Therefore, the study of learning in psychology was not perceived as fruitful because its unit of study was too narrowly conceived: "...it is wrong to assume that the last elements in analysis are the first ones in experience." The proper unit for the study of human experience is the

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41 Ibid., xii.
42 Ibid., 2.
43 Ibid., 12.
"behavior act," in Taba's terms. Only this retains the experiential character of the phenomena under study. In such a context, knowledge becomes a very different thing than what it is ordinarily considered to be in educational discourse. It is not an S-R bond or a product of any kind. Instead it is a process.

The criteria of utility will thus be quite different in such a context. Here whatever creates the process of knowing, thinking, reflecting, etc. would become in some sense useful. The utility is not for something beyond the process itself, because what is employed is not really a defined commodity or product. Taba requests that a pluralism of aims be established, based on a functional approach.44

There is no attempt to fix a final content as an ultimate educational aim. Aims are not perceived as "end-states" but as "organizing agents."45 Aims are seen not as limiting activity but as liberating it. Education is then responsible for creative reconstruction, not for "survival values" which are found in scientific analyses of society. Taba specifically criticizes Bobbitt and Charters on this score.46

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44 Ibid., 192.
46 Ibid., 197-198.
Learning is then defined as a relational process which takes place between an individual and objective values of his environment—physical, cultural, and social. For learning to accrue, conditions must provide that values immanent in both these poles be "preserved and at the same time re-created." Taba here stands neither on the side of subject matter nor on that of the "needs of the learner." Aims derive from an analysis of experience which involves two poles: the individual and objective values. Taba sees the then current method of deriving aims as favoring "static" values of a social heritage and incidentally those of various subject matters. In this method, values of subject matter are seen to predominate because of their established nature and concreteness. This analysis applied to the problems of this decade is insightful. For the most part, the criteria for utility deriving from certain aims of education are consistently applied within subject matter boundaries. Such application severely alters and weakens the controlling function of aims.

Objection is then made to the notion of curriculum "making" as being too mechanistic; preference is stated for the idea of curriculum

48 Ibid., 211.
"thinking." The aim of such thinking should be the continuous reconstruction of individual and social experience. Utility becomes defined in terms of whatever has functional value for an individual. Functional means conducive of experience in the knower leading to growth and the concomitant enrichment of his environment. Taba would, therefore, emphasize informal activities as well as the formal aspects of any curriculum. 49 Whatever contributes to the growth of experience, properly defined, is useful. It must be kept in mind that Taba is strongly critical of the activity movement as she stresses looking at the individual and objective values. 50

In this context, she distinguishes between the logic of experience and the logic of subject matters. 51 The criteria of utility ought to be based on the logic of experience, not that of subject matter. "Principles of thought acquire a real significance only when the learners discover them, after they themselves have fought their way through the entanglement of familiar experiences to the clarity of fundamental principles involved." 52 Here the capacity of the individual is perceived

49 Ibid., 223.
50 Ibid., 225.
51 Ibid., 226.
52 Ibid., 227-228.
as a force rather than a limiting principle. One must follow the inherent consistency of the continuity of experience directed by this force as a basis for selecting subject matter in a curriculum. The criteria of utility derive then from the internal demands of individual experience, not any external criteria. In the past, curriculum makers have applied external criteria of utility which caused the phenomenon of expansion. \(^5^3\) Taba calls for an emphasis on process values. \(^5^4\) "It is quite conceivable that the objective of a mathematical way of looking at the world can be achieved by different individuals in quite different ways and through quite different subject matter." \(^5^5\) There is thus a radical breakdown of subject matter boundaries, with a theoretical justification for such a breakdown.

Taba creates, by this theory, an emerging curriculum where objectives are directives, attitudinal in nature, not ends which have specified content. She eliminates the prescription idea to avoid the planning dilemma of all plans or no plans. \(^5^6\) Curricula are responsible for combining the progressive method of employing concrete activities with the value of the abstract generalization.


\(^5^5\) *Ibid.* , 240.

\(^5^6\) *Ibid.* , 249.
It is the task of progressive curriculum planning to extract from our heritage of knowledge, ideas, and thought, those elements that are fundamental in various types of experience and which can serve as consistent guides for learning without delimiting its results in advance. 57

More than any of the discourse analyzed for this decade, Taba's statement seems to distill the real aspiration of the time. Her criteria for utility rest firmly on the present needs of the individual—for these present needs, in Schrodinger's words, have no end.

Summary

The years from 1928 to 1937 are scarred by the trauma of the Depression and a chaotic international scene. As the curriculum thinker turned to society in order to formulate statements of purpose, he found there increasing confusion about the needs of society. Because of the disturbed state the nation was struggling through, utility is frequently defined by criteria based on statements about the preservation of American democracy. Thus, society as a source of purpose statements comes to be interpreted from a political viewpoint.

Utility is then defined by way of a political method of examining the social scene. The responsibility of the curriculum was to produce those activities or behaviors needed for the preservation and continuance

of the threatened American way of life. Here the meaning of utility derives from a reaction to political and social crisis, while knowledge is considered in terms of needed behaviors or attitudes. Some concern about this reaction was expressed by Charles A. Beard in *The Unique Function of Education in American Democracy*. He tries to balance the concern for society's needs with a set of professional values seen as atemporal. Society is defined as embracing all culture, not merely the political scene.

Throughout the decade, there are repeated emphases about the inherent value of subject matter, with utility continuing to be defined in these terms. This is especially true of statements dealing with science education. Even the concerns which derived from the troubled international scene were often embodied in a definition of utility applied within subject matter categories. Notions like international understanding were thus related to on the basis of material being offered in current subject areas of the curriculum. In this case, purpose considerations exercised no control over what knowledge became part of the curriculum. Utility is defined by two criteria logically unrelated: one derives from the demands of a subject field, the other from an analysis of society or sometimes the individual.

As the social unrest appears to increase, the discourse of the decade turns more and more to the individual as locus of definitional
criteria for the concept of utility. The problem of the relation of individual to society in the process of determining what knowledge is useful in a curriculum grows in intensity. Central to the shift of focus to the individual was the activity movement, which placed much emphasis on an experience approach to the curriculum. Special attention was given to the unique interests and purposes of the individual in defining utility. The demands of subject matter assert themselves here also as the movement was divided on this question: "Is an activity a means to teach traditional subject matter, or is an activity an end in itself, since it contributes to child growth?"

Within the activity movement, utility was defined either in terms of whatever would promote the prosecution of an activity or as what derives from subject matter categories as records of cultural experience. In general, the competing definitions of knowledge present within the activity movement vitiated the strength of the movement considerably.

The Eight-Year Study was a significant project undertaken in order to effect fundamental reconstruction of the curriculum in the nation's schools. The thinking behind the project was greatly influenced by the activity movement and the ideas of progressive educators generally. A lack of clarity in the relationship which exists between the purposes of students and the needs of American democracy remain unresolved in
the study, so that utility is employed with two definitional criteria not clearly related. Subject matter demands split the project schools into two categories: conservative and innovative. The former related to project objectives by using the material already extant in the curriculum to achieve an objective, while the latter defined knowledge in terms other than subject matter and thus used project goals as controlling criteria.

The clearest statement about the individual as a source for purpose statements which could serve as definitional criteria for the concept of utility is found in Hilda Taba's *The Dynamics of Education*. Published in the middle of the decade, the book resolves many of the issues already raised by examining the definitions of utility present in the period. The key to Taba's theoretical contribution appears in her method of defining knowledge. She severely criticizes the atomistic approach of behavioristic psychology, as well as the equating of knowledge with subject matter. Her own treatment of knowledge is in process terms, where knowing is intimately related to the becoming of the human personality. The meaning of utility rests on the process as the end of whatever knowledge is put into a curriculum. Utility is here not for something beyond the process itself; knowledge is not a product. Taba also resolves the problem of relating subject matter to the individual, calling for a radical breakdown of subject matter boundaries without delimiting the value of subject fields.
The meaning of the concept of utility is influenced during the second decade of this study in these ways:

1. Because of the social unrest prevalent in the decade, the definitional criteria for the concept of utility frequently derive from reactions to perceived threats to American democracy.

2. Defining utility on the basis of such reactions causes the political perspective on society to assume a commanding position in the discourse dealing with matters of purpose for the curriculum.

3. Society therefore is frequently defined in solely political terms during the decade.

4. Utility continues to be defined in terms of the inherent value of extant subject matter categories, which are in no way influenced by other purpose considerations.

5. As the social unrest created increasing confusion about the needs of society, the discourse of the decade turned to the individual as the locus of definitional criteria for the concept of utility.

6. The activity movement grew out of this shift of focus to the individual, giving special attention to the unique interests and purposes of the individual in defining utility.

7. This movement was divided on the basis of two competing definitions of knowledge: knowledge as mental processes or activity and knowledge as subject matter.
8. There is a lack of clarity in the discourse of the decade about the relationship which ought to accrue between the needs of American democracy and the purposes of the individual; the Eight-Year Study exemplifies this difficulty that causes utility to be defined by two criteria not clearly related.

9. The clearest theoretical presentation of the individual as locus of the definitional criteria for utility comes from a statement that emphasizes the process of knowing as the basis of meaning.

The political perspective on society begins to compete during these years with the scientific and axiological issues prevalent in the previous decade. In the decade that follows, the tensions between these three perspectives continue to grow.
CHAPTER IV

1938-1947--THE WAR AND CURRICULUM THEMES

In peace, children inter their parents; war violates the order of nature, and causes parents to inter their children.

--Herodotus

In June, 1940, Public Law 668 made fifteen million dollars of government funds immediately available for defense training. These funds were allocated to public school administrations for the purpose of developing vocational programs. Further appropriations quickly followed, setting the stage for the drama which seems to dominate the decade. War makes infinite demands upon the institutions of the nations involved, and the school and its curriculum are not exempted from these demands. This fact of life was especially relevant to efforts toward the development of comprehensive concern for curriculum design or theory during World War II.

For the most part during this decade, the concept of utility comes to be defined in terms of reactions to highly specific and critical needs of society. These reactions will be examined in this chapter as curriculum themes which had much influence on the definitions of
utility employed during the period. Concern for instructional efficiency also increases during the decade, taking the form of methods for evaluation of curricular objectives. This concern will be discussed here in terms of its effect on the meaning of utility. The Harvard Report on general education will be examined as it relates to the major thrusts of these war years. Finally, the persistent concern for the individual, which runs throughout the discourse sampled for the period, will also be studied.

1. **Utility and curriculum themes**

The definition of utility during this decade is strongly influenced by a perspective on society that was especially vulnerable to apparent social crises. Reaction to these crises constitutes the major orientation of the discourse sampled for this section. These reactions are called curriculum "themes," and a number of themes will be analyzed here. First, the manpower shortage will be examined as it affected the definition of utility, then a series of statements from the Educational Policies Commission will be analyzed. A variety of curriculum themes which influenced the definition of utility can be discerned in these Commission documents, each of which will be studied in terms of its influence on the concept of utility.
In 1939, the concern for increased attention to vocational training is already evident, even in the midst of discussion on general education responsibilities at the college level.¹ The need to integrate the occupational and non-occupational needs of youth seems of paramount interest. Knowledge can be considered useful only if it meets both the present and future needs of the young.² Later, utility is defined in terms of whatever prepares a student for the "world of work," while a request is made for the development of a "functional program of general education."³ In most of this discussion, the source of the criteria employed in defining utility for the curriculum resides in the manpower needs of the government. Great emphasis is placed on training to meet known manpower shortages; the curriculum becomes an instrument for responding to what appear to be crises within the American society.

The political threat to democracy posed by the growth of totalitarianism had ramifications for the curriculum. At the request of the National Committee on Education and Defense, the Educational Policies Commission prepared a series of statements on democracy.


² Ibid., 277.

The primary thrust of the series is to stress the assets of American democracy and the "American way." In an influential statement on The Purposes of Education in American Democracy, utility is defined as "whatever preserves or develops the American democracy." No attempt is made to define democracy in any speculative manner; instead, it is described in a series of activities that can be variously classified. Specifically, the document offers four classifications: self-realization, strong human relationships, economic efficiency, and civic responsibility. These four categories become in effect a framework for restatement of the seven Cardinal Principles. In each category, the ideal man is described to help identify the knowledge needed to achieve satisfactory behavior.

This specification of certain types of behavior seemed part of the reaction to the current political pressures on the American democratic system. The "central problem" of education was at times seen to be the "development of an active and intelligent loyalty to democracy." Utility was defined simply as whatever leads to democratic efficiency.  

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The disciplines of democracy in a technological society were listed: respect for others, cooperative effort, appreciation of different values, fair play, science and rational thinking, self-reliance, individual freedom, and responsibility.⁶

The economy also produced some demand on the definition of utility, with its stress on greater productivity, employability, and efficient consumer activity.⁷ Such demands caused a certain amount of criticism to be leveled against curricular practices on the basis of the failure of the curriculum to have "practical significance or value."⁸

Too little relation was believed to exist between school life and work life. General education should ideally be specifically related to vocational preparation.

To generalize on all of these demands, it can be said that they make quite specific requests of the curriculum based on perceived social needs. These needs are narrow in scope yet important to the overall requirements of a democratic society. Whether the curriculum


ought to be vulnerable to such pressures in the manner in which it appears to have been during these war years is a question worth debate. Apropos this examination, it can be said that utility becomes defined by special social demands and, subsequently, various curriculum themes are developed.

Besides these specific demands, more general statements were also published. Three separate discussions by Charles A. Beard, George S. Counts, and William G. Carr were published under a single cover, *Policies for Education in American Democracy*. Bead continues to resist too much political pressure on the basis of wanting to balance these via professional obligations. He thus defines utility in terms of two criteria--what creates the "good life" and what maintains as well as improves American society. He insists that utility be defined by way of enduring, apolitical values, since society is more than politics. Counts extends this notion in his statement on "The Education of Free Men in American Democracy." Here he defines utility as that knowledge which is relevant to the defense and strengthening of the values,

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purposes, and loyalties of a society of free men. Reflecting the influence of the political situation, he explicates the types of knowledge needed—the nature of man in society, the history of mankind, the struggle which has transpired to liberate the mind and civilize the heart, the present political crisis, totalitarian movements, and the weakness of democracy. Carr finally offers again the newly conventionalized four objectives of education in a democracy (self-realization, human relationships, economic efficiency, and civic responsibility), developed into sets of objectives generally paralleling as usual the Cardinal Principles but with the noteworthy addition of world citizenship. Throughout these statements, there is a general attempt to broaden the scope of educational aims and subsequent criteria for utility in the curriculum in spite of the wartime demands. However, even after the conflict was formally over, the social situation still restricted much free-moving curriculum thought.

The post-war situation brought additional concern for the occupational needs of young people. These individual needs in relationship to the social situation began to be stressed as the primary

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11 Ibid.,121.

12 Ibid.,240.
criteria for any definition of utility. The phrase "common learnings," meaning those learnings essential to life preparation, gains prominence. Life preparation is described in terms of themes like understanding the economic system, intelligent action as consumers, good family relationships, and appreciation of beauty, and fundamentals like proficiency in language. Life preparation becomes then a strong motif in post-war policy statements that tried to project five or more years into the future to detect the peace-time needs of the young. In this context, not much is said explicitly about what knowledge was to be taught or which subject areas were to be stressed.

Another Policy Commission statement presented the current educational needs in primarily vocational terms. This statement requests that vocational education be returned to the schools and cease being under the control of the federal government. The school is seen as responsible for preparing and placing youth in occupations with "reasonable possibilities for personal satisfaction and social usefulness."


15 Ibid., 5.
Government is said to have responsibility to production, not training. There is need, according to the statement, for reconstruction of the vocational education program, formerly concerned with defense needs, to focus now on preparing students for full-time employment.\textsuperscript{16} This employment focus seems to dominate the document even when it addresses the need for general education. Reference is made to the four major purposes already discussed in previous documents, particularly to economic efficiency, which is interpreted here as involving occupational training for all; the call is made for blurring the distinction between vocational and general education. Similar views can be discerned in Commission statements on educating returning veterans\textsuperscript{17} and education in rural areas.\textsuperscript{18} In the latter, the theme of conservation of resources forms a motif, while the former stresses occupational training.

It should be clear from these examples how much the decade’s curriculum thinking was concerned with crisis-type issues, which became what has been termed here curriculum themes. The concept of

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., 56.

\textsuperscript{17}Educational Policies Commission, \textit{A Program for the Education of Returning Veterans} (Washington, D.C.: Educational Policies Commission, 1944).

utility is then defined in terms of these themes, causing the curriculum maker to become a kind of fireman beating out a number of critical brush fires, without time to think beyond the crises at hand.

2. **Utility and the evaluation concern**

Evaluation and its relation to efficiency are an important concern in the discourse of the decade. This concern will be studied here by examining the method of evaluation developed during the decade, primarily under the influence of Ralph W. Tyler. Problems that result from defining utility in an evaluation context will be discussed, especially in relation to the manner in which knowledge comes to be defined.

One of the outgrowths of the war experience was the increasing attention to curricular objectives stated in an evaluation context. War-time instruction and its need for efficiency provided clear indication of the value specific objectives have in any evaluation context. Ralph W. Tyler makes reference to this experience in the introduction to the *Forty-Fourth Yearbook* of the NSSE which deals with curriculum reconstruction. Taba also writes a chapter on "General Techniques

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of Curriculum Planning" that places great emphasis on the notion of objectives and the sources from which they are to be taken. She stresses the role of evaluation, while maintaining her previous concerns for utility defined in terms of individual growth via meaningful and relevant activity.20

The evaluation volume for the Eight-Year Study presents a precise picture of the use of objectives for the curriculum with evaluation as the intent.21 This method of analyzing and classifying objectives is based on the assumption that education is responsible for changing behavior in the direction of a set of objectives established in behavioral terms. Smith and Tyler create a kind of taxonomy of ten types of behavior which describe the general areas to be evaluated. Specific objectives are then created for each area. What is interesting to note here is that utility in this context is defined entirely by someone other than the person experiencing the curriculum created by the definition. Although the psychology of the learner is usually made a source of the objectives, it is merely a limiting source, besides still being interpreted by an outside observer. Such a position comes into basic

20Ibid., 98.

21Eugene R. Smith and Ralph W. Tyler and Evaluation Staff, Appraising and Recording Student Progress (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942).
conflict with notions central to the "activity movement" or to the approach to learning taken by Taba in the statement analyzed in the previous chapter.

With the concern for measurement at the heart of this evaluation enterprise, curriculum objectives and the resulting definition of what is useful within that curriculum take on a meaning necessarily expressed in essentially static, quantifiable terms. The result of the curriculum is a kind of product, usually a specific behavior. There is no distinction between the meaning of an act or behavior for the actor and the meaning of the act for an observer, when utility is defined solely for evaluation purposes. Here utility becomes defined in terms of that set of stimuli which will create the set of needed responses. The experience of the stimuli and the public description of the same are seen as synonymous. Therefore, the process dimension of the curriculum becomes much less important than its content, and all the criteria of utility will be in content terms.

3. General education and the meaning of utility

Following the war with its emphasis on immediately relevant curriculum themes and accompanying the growing concern for efficiency and evaluation analyzed above, there developed a greater interest in
general education. Much of the discourse dealing with this interest reflects an awareness of the narrowing which occurred in the definition of utility because of defense demands on the school's curriculum. One of the more influential statements on this issue was the report of the Harvard Committee entitled *General Education in a Free Society*.\(^{22}\) This section will focus on the definition of utility which is found in the Harvard Committee document because of its later influence.

In this report, the entire concept of education as preparation for adult life is interpreted in terms of completeness as a human being.\(^{23}\) Utility is defined by what is referred to as the two sides of the same truth: the good of man in society and the nature of knowledge itself. The latter is then defined as the dictates of those specific methodologies characteristic of a discipline or subject matter area. These subjects should be presented so as to make the student aware of the method peculiar to the subject. There then follows a description of the traits of mind which ought to be developed by the school, listed as effective thinking, the ability to communicate thought, the competence to make necessary judgments, and the ability to discriminate


\(^{23}\)Ibid., 4.
among values. Interestingly, three phases of effective thinking are described which correspond to three categories of subject matter—natural science, social studies, and the humanities.24

Thus, utility in this report finally rests on the dictates of subject matter; traits of mind are to be developed via these subject areas. The cultivation of the mind is the chief function of the school.25

Reason is the means to mastery of life's demands. There is a real return here to the view of the school prominent before the "revolution" of 1918. Social demands are much less considered by the person defining utility than are the demands of the disciplines.

In the educational literature that immediately followed, the report came to be interpreted and used in a milder form. The prevailing concern for "adjustment" and desirable social behavior modified considerably the acceptance of the position of the Harvard Committee, although the demands of subject matter boundaries were newly recognized. The Cardinal Principles still continue to be mentioned, even in connection with the Harvard statement.26

24Ibid., 67.

25Ibid., 176.

4. Psychology and the persistent concern

In spite of the many pressures exerted upon the curriculum by the war years, primarily demands originating in society, there is a definite body of discourse in the era that looks to the individual as the source of criteria for the concept of utility. The discourse that focused on the individual will be represented in this section by a set of publications which were influential in the portion of the Eight-Year Study carried on during this period, as well as a sampling of the literature which turned to the science of psychology and the data it made available about the individual.

Early in the decade the Commission on the Secondary School Curriculum published a set of books related to the Eight-Year Study: Reorganizing Secondary Education, Science in General Education, Mathematics in General Education, and Language in General Education. In the Commission's position, the basis for the


definition of utility for the curriculum is adolescent needs. These are defined as personal and social in reference.\textsuperscript{31} For curricular purposes, these needs are described in four areas: immediate social relationships, wider social relationships, economic relationships, and personal living. All content is described in relation to these four areas of personal and social need, along with a concern for democracy. However, content is selected within traditional subject matter areas of science, mathematics, social studies, literature, and the fine and practical arts.\textsuperscript{32} Request is made that subject areas be maintained, but distinctions within these areas are said to be of no value.\textsuperscript{33} It is contended that if the student becomes the real organizing center of the curriculum in each area, entirely new forms of the total curriculum will result. The core and broad fields curricula are mentioned as incipient stages of this approach.\textsuperscript{34} In all of these statements, utility is defined by whatever list of personal-social needs is devised by a local school or school system. It is, in fact, recommended that each locale devise its own list of needs and select its curriculum accordingly.

\textsuperscript{31}Thayer, Zachry, and Kotinsky, \textit{Reorganizing Secondary Education}, 37.
\textsuperscript{32}\textit{Ibid.}, 422.
\textsuperscript{33}\textit{Ibid.}, 425.
\textsuperscript{34}\textit{Ibid.}, 434.
The scientific aspects of psychology also exert an influence on the concept of utility during these years. Child development data on growth, readiness, and the like, emerge as being increasingly important. In terms of the criteria for utility, this information seems to become a kind of limiting criterion, further defining utility from the viewpoint of what is compatible, for example, with the child's readiness. Thus, the psychological data is usually applied in relation to the then accepted curricular content. Similarly, studies on intelligence and its measurement occur, for the most part, within curricular patterns already extant. Organization and sequence in the curriculum become points of discussion for psychologists concerned with learning theory.

Within this discourse, utility is defined in a manner similar to its definition in evaluation contexts where knowledge is seen as a product described in stimulus-response categories. Meeting adolescent

35NSSE, Thirty-Eighth Yearbook, Part I, 53.


38Ibid., 457.
and childhood needs as defined by available psychological research differs in this context from the same concern as met by more general descriptions seen above in the Commission on the Secondary School Curriculum. Adolescence is viewed as a psychological stage dictating special requirements to the curriculum maker. 39 Early childhood education has special requirements which flow from the particular psychological needs of young children. 40 Some concern is expressed about the desirability of measuring things like understanding, 41 but most of this discourse remains concerned with curriculum content as it relates to psychological data.

Summary

A subset of the discourse of this decade that deals with the concept of utility and has been analyzed in this chapter is best characterized by the metaphor of the fireman already employed. The various curriculum themes discussed in the chapter are, for the most part, responses to some immediate need flowing from the social situation.


40 NSSE, Forty-Sixth Yearbook, Part II.

Major expenditures for defense training were allocated to public schools for vocational programs, causing manpower demands to emerge as one of the salient themes of the period. The world threat to America's democratic system posed by the war gave rise to another meaning of utility based on that knowledge necessary to preserve democracy.

Difficulties occur with such a definition, since the behaviors and attitudes necessary to democratic government are never fully explicated. These difficulties are germane to the entire area of citizenship education and the problem of how such a responsibility can be fulfilled. Because citizenship is usually defined in terms of a specific set of values, the source from which these values are to be established becomes crucial. However, the issue is seldom handled when utility is defined in terms of citizenship or the preservation of democracy. The concept is merely defined on the basis of a reaction to a crisis in the society. Here the society is viewed solely from a political perspective, and no comprehensive value theory on which to base action decisions relative to what knowledge is useful to the curriculum is worked out. As a result the individual is made subservient to current social pressures, being construed as a servant of society's immediate needs. The school as an institution becomes, as it were, an agent of the government in regard to the manpower crisis.
This situation raises again the issue of how society is to be defined in discourse dealing with utility. That the creation of the meaning of utility in this context lies almost wholly outside the hands of the profession is a related difficulty. It would, of course, be naive to say the definition of utility should be unconcerned with manpower demands in time of war, but a solely political posture toward society does not provide sufficient basis for justifying the inclusion of knowledge into a curriculum. Unfortunately, much of the literature of this period assumes an excessively political approach to society as well as the individual. Thus, much of the discourse is basically a reaction to crisis needs rather than a coherent and theoretically based action providing new direction or thrust. This same observation can be applied to discourse concerned with international understanding, economic pressures on the consumer, and the like. These are other themes present in the literature of the decade which create difficulties for the definition of utility similar to those raised by manpower needs and the threat to democracy.

The demand for measurable objectives in an evaluation context gets clear expression during these years. This demand is, in one sense, a reaction to the demand for efficiency which grew out of the war-time experience in military instructional programs. Within such
a context, knowledge is viewed essentially as a product. The curriculum can be thought of as a set of inputs that produces a set of desired outputs describable in behavioral terms. Such a model lends itself well to any evaluation task, since the set of outputs can be measured and subsequently analyzed in relation to the inputs so as to form the feedback mechanism which completes the cybernetic model. The advantages of describing the curriculum in these terms are primarily those deriving from evaluation concerns. Efficiency is enhanced and objectives can be better achieved. In areas where it is possible to determine objectives in an \textit{a priori} manner, as well as to express these objectives in quantifiable terms, the cybernetic model is both apropos and effective.

The outstanding limitation present in this kind of curriculum thinking is one which flows from the cybernetic model itself. Here knowledge is only considered in its behavioral aspects; as such, it is viewed as a product. Utility then comes to be defined on the basis of content criteria, while process notions are ignored. Graphically, the limitation can be shown by way of the black box frequently employed in explaining this approach to knowledge. What takes place inside the "black box" is not considered; the box is indeed black. Thus, the whole area of knowledge as a process, viewed in terms of mental acts or concepts, is not considered by the model. It would therefore be impossible to consider the usefulness of knowledge in terms of ways
of thinking, as Taba is described in the previous chapter as having
done. She referred to the possibility of achieving the objective of
teaching a student to become skillful in thinking about experience in a
mathematical way, without necessarily employing mathematics as the
means to reach this objective. Here process is central and what takes
place in the black box must be considered. Of course, measurement
is not possible in the behavioristic sense of that term, but this does
not obviate the possibility of talking about mental processes.

A truly inter-subjective knowledge about mental processes is
not necessarily impossible because it cannot be mathematically
quantified. Curriculum thinking would be greatly simplified if what­
ever exists did so in quantity that was statistically measurable. De­
fining what knowledge was most useful for a curriculum could be con­
cerned solely with that set of stimuli that will produce the behavior
desired. Just who is to determine what set of behaviors is desirable
is a problem which, unfortunately, throws one into the confines of the
black box. Thus, the curriculum thinker seems inextricably involved
in process issues when he is faced with the need to define what is
useful for a curriculum. Though there is unquestionable value to be de­
erived from the cybernetic model in curriculum thinking, it is essential
that the limitations of this model be recognized. If there is no one-to­
one correspondence between a stimulus and the experience of it, then
one must find methods for examining experience. For this reason alone, the domain of the black box will always be important to the curriculum thinker in defining what is useful for his purposes.

The report of the Harvard Committee on general education is a significant event in the decade here examined. It states quite forcefully a position which asserts that the disciplines of knowledge should be the source of general educational development. The school is described as being primarily concerned with intellectual development. In taking this stance, the report defines the concept of utility in a different manner from those definitions generally in operation during the decade. In reaction against the definitions already described as influential in determining what knowledge is useful in the curriculum, here subject matter is plainly accepted as the source of the criteria for utility and any purpose considerations about the individual or society are applied within subject matter categories. The fact that the mastery of subject matter does not automatically entail the achievement of purposes related to the individual or society does not appear as a difficulty in the report. In view of what happens to the definition of utility in subject matter terms in the years to follow, the report of the Harvard Committee must be regarded as a kind of prophecy.

Finally, concern for the individual has been discussed as a separate, parallel development of the period. Most of this discourse
places the locus for the definitional criteria of utility within the individual. Basically, two approaches to the individual can be discerned. One approach looks at the individual and his needs from a perspective that involves a definite set of values relating the person to society, as well as critically viewing society. The publications of the Commission on the Secondary School Curriculum are illustrative of this approach. In addition, a great deal of psychological research on readiness, adolescence, early childhood, etc., provides another perspective on the individual. Here research data are frequently employed as limiting criteria for the definition of utility. For the most part, utility is defined in terms of extant curriculum content; the psychological criteria simply influence scope or sequence of this content.

The remark of Herodotus about parents interring children in time of war says something about the effect of these years, 1938-1947, upon the definition of utility in curriculum discourse. In the face of war's demands, it is possible to be buried in many different ways. Defining utility on the basis of reactions to immediate crises frequently made the individual subservient to government or national demands. Though undoubtedly important, these pressures were usually not life-giving for the individual. Likewise, the concern for efficiency and evaluation began to view the child as a kind of black box emitting sets
of desired behavior, without sufficiently dealing with the limitations of its conceptual model.

The following generalizations about the concept of utility can be made in relation to the discourse studied for this decade:

1. Utility is defined on the basis of a number of curriculum themes that arise in response to immediate needs of society. The Second World War was influential in the establishment of many of these themes.

2. When such themes were formulated, society is usually viewed from only a political perspective; this political stance is not complemented by any comprehensive value theory in establishing a definition of utility for the curriculum.

3. Demand for measurable objectives in an evaluation context causes utility to be defined by way of a cybernetic model, which ignores criteria based on process notions.

4. In this context, knowledge is considered only in terms of its behavioral manifestations, and as such as seen as a product that results from a set of inputs.

5. The case for subject matter categories as the source of the definitional criteria for utility is strongly asserted by the Harvard Report on general education. Purpose considerations about society or the
individual have no controlling influence over subject matters in this re-
port.

6. Primarily two approaches to the individual as locus of
definitional criteria for utility are discernible during the decade: an
axiological perspective, which took a definite value position in relating
the individual to society as well as critically viewing society, and a
scientific perspective which employed psychological research data to
formulate limiting criteria for the definition of utility.

In this chapter the World War's impact on American society and
its subsequent influence upon the curriculum is evident. The social
unrest that followed in the wake of this War becomes a significant
feature of the following period.
CHAPTER V

1948-1957--A DECADE OF QUESTIONING

Things fall apart; the center cannot hold....
--W. B. Yeats,
"The Second Coming"

The year 1957 which closes the decade examined in this chapter, witnessed the shock of Sputnik, an event frequently used to mark the beginning of a time of profound turmoil and questioning about the nation's schools, especially their curriculum. Examination of the curriculum discourse of the preceding decade indicates, however, that Sputnik was a "last straw" that released a flood of unrest plainly discernible through the ten years ending in 1957.

This unrest will be documented as the changing definition of utility is traced in representative literature. First, the growing tension between the school and a restless society will be examined. Then the reaction to this tension will be studied in terms of the increased concern for value education that it produced. The concurrent demand for more rational methods of establishing and achieving objectives will also be studied. Finally, a special project on inter-group
education will be analyzed because of its focus on value education and the uniqueness of its approach to the problem involved.

1. The increasing tension between school and society

In order to understand the tensions of this decade and the effect they had on the definition of utility, this section will first examine one of the most influential curriculum textbooks of the period and a number of relevant NSSE Yearbooks. These documents provide a clear picture of the social unrest and growing concern with the necessity to strengthen the values essential to the American way of life by means of the curriculum. The yearbooks especially indicate a number of new directions emerging during the decade. Then the extent to which value education became a dominant interest during these years will be tested through analysis of two statements from the Educational Policies Commission, one dealing with the future of American education and the other with moral and spiritual values.

One of the widely used texts for curriculum study in this period was *Fundamentals of Curriculum Development* by Smith, Stanley and Shores,\(^1\) a book that begins by stressing that society is in a period of

profound upheaval and change which necessitates that any curriculum enterprise be based on a sensitive, sophisticated sociological analysis. Although "common education" or general education is seen as primarily responsible for transmitting those universal cultural values that are relatively stable, the values must always be consistent with social realities.² Science and technology are presented as the dominant forces shaping contemporary society with such extensive impact that the basic value system of American democracy is being tested. Therefore, it becomes essential that curricular content be presented in the context of a specific value system, that which characterizes American democracy. It is no longer possible to present content in a *laissez-faire* manner.³ Utility thus comes to be defined as the knowledge which will "embrace the reconstruction of the channels of behavior through which the mass of people now move." This reconstruction is based on the intellectual and moral commitments of the democratic tradition as interpreted by the national community.

What emerges in this definition of which knowledge is most useful for the curriculum is the increasing tension between the school with


its concern for the individual and a society that is technologically shaped. Personality is viewed by Smith, Stanley, and Shores as a "social product," while "individualization and socialization are complementary aspects of the same process."4 Here society becomes the criterion for individual development, a criterion that leads to the demand for a kind of "activity" curriculum within which students develop by becoming involved in the major problems of their society. Solving community problems in a community school thus constitutes a major portion of curriculum activity. But technology and science cause a crucial gap between individual interest and social need in certain areas of society and tend toward a schizoid condition.5 In such a time, the continuity of the democratic tradition demands that education take a reconstructive position; this is the only position tenable in a period of profound change.6

Anthropology and social psychology strongly influence the learning theory employed in this analysis. Here the school begins to view its responsibility as deriving from sources other than mere social

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4Ibid., 161.
5Ibid., 166.
6Ibid., 187.
need and takes on the task of remaking a chaotic society.⁷ Awareness of social upheaval and a subsequent threat to established value systems is a kind of motif which sounds through the decade. More and more attention is given in curriculum discourse to the tension growing between the school and society.

A number of new directions related to this growing tension are evident in the NSSE Yearbooks of the period. Many calls for new orientation influence the definition of utility. The notion of the community school, for example, receives a good deal of attention, putting forward the attempt to expand the role of the school from one of service to that of improvement.⁸ Community needs are seen as becoming a crucial part of the curriculum as problems to be acted on rather than studied about. Thus, a type of project or activity curriculum is frequently proposed in this context.⁹ Increasing attention is directed to the future because of the many forces causing change in the present

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⁷Ibid., 243.
⁹Ibid., 73.
society. In one lengthy treatment of modern philosophies of interest to educators, the current anxieties plaguing education were listed as:

1. a lack of purpose
2. vagueness of aims
3. lack of standards
4. uncertainty about the democratic conception
5. excessive freedom
6. overly secular atmosphere.

This list illustrates well the depth of the malaise and the questioning characteristic of the period. The most fundamental ideologies are here being challenged, while social analyses often lead to the conclusion that contemporary society is pathological.

The discourse on change in the schools also becomes more prolific at this time. In the great quantity of talk about change, little is usually said concerning the direction of change. Dealing

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with in-service education, John Goodlad and Vergil Herrick both stress change, but most of their talk is purely methodological.\textsuperscript{13} Little is also said about what specifically should be changed.

However, one emphasis does begin to gain strength in this discussion—the emphasis on teaching subject matter. The belief that subject matter has been neglected by the excessive emphasis on the child finds expression in a number of places. There are requests to return to the rigor and training of the mind in the mode of inquiry peculiar to a subject area.\textsuperscript{14} Hanna defines utility in terms of what "produces effective participation in social, economic, and political affairs." Yet, he proceeds to define the source of subject matter in terms of the scholarly generalizations in social science literature.\textsuperscript{15} Content is said to be the same for all; method varies, depending on the specific psychological needs of children. Utility thus actually rests upon the demands of a particular discipline with the necessary generalizations becoming most useful. Close collaboration with


\textsuperscript{14}NSSE, \textit{Fifty-Sixth Yearbook}, Part II, 17.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, 29.
scholars and scholarly literature is called for by Hanna. In general, there is emphasis on bringing real content into the elementary school social studies.  

Along with these various demands for new emphases, there was a strong call for strengthening the values of American youth. Two statements of the Educational Policies Commission manifest this attention to value education and its influence on the concept of utility. Throughout the decade concern seems to continue and even increase about the threats to the value system characteristic of America's "way of life." Education is seen as responsible for preserving this way of life at a time when America's people are at the crossroads of their history.  

Reappraisal should not lead to a rejection of any of the "basic values of the American heritage." When these values were fully operative, utility was defined in terms of what produces behavior consonant with the American way, and what keeps the current economy productive. 

16 Ibid., 32.


18 Ibid., 82.

19 Ibid., 88.
communism is evident in much of this discourse. Part of the aftermath of the war was perceived to be a weakening of the sense of values.\textsuperscript{20} In reaction to current ideological threats, the school is asked to stress a common set of values that should become the stated aims of the entire educational process.\textsuperscript{21} What is needed to promote personal and social growth in these common values defines what is useful for the curriculum.\textsuperscript{22}

In summary, the great social unrest and self-questioning that pervades the curriculum discourse of this decade lead into an extensive reaction that takes the form of stress on creating behavior that would conserve the values of American society. The reaction thus strongly influences the meaning of the concept of utility in the selection of content.

2. Reactions to social unrest

Faced with the unrest so far documented, curriculum thinking took two major orientations: utility comes to be defined in terms of


\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Ibid.}, 55.

\textsuperscript{22}\textit{Ibid.}, 63.
behaviors necessary to democracy and the method of producing these behaviors was given more and more attention. The NSSE Yearbooks of the era are analyzed in this section to yield evidence of the first orientation. The effect that methodological discourse had on the definition of utility will be studied chiefly by analysis of Tyler's influential syllabus used at Chicago for his curriculum classes. The definition of need that is used by Tyler will then be compared with other uses; here need is considered to represent curriculum objectives relative to the individual. These are, of course, important for the definition of utility. A series of publications of the Educational Policies Commission will also be analyzed to discern how individual need is interpreted in the various definitions of utility that emerge from the statements.

Essentially, the reaction to the threat imposed upon the American way of life by the social unrest of these years consisted in seeking effective means of creating the behavior that would insure the preservation of democracy. In many statements relating to the curriculum field, utility comes to be defined in terms of that knowledge which will insure "effective living in American democracy." 23 Content is organized so as to cause children to behave in desirable

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ways. From one point of view, a definite manipulation is implied in this discourse toward the specific kind of democracy as well as patterns of behavior envisioned as desirable by a school. Allied to this position is the stress upon optimum adaptation to one's environment. Here all of experience is viewed as a reaction to external sets of stimuli. Knowledge is useful if it provides us the means to react in an "adjusting" manner. In this context, Thorndike speaks of giving children that set of purposes which adult society decides upon. There is an almost complete rationality in this process of establishing behaviors desired for the purpose of democracy's preservation and, subsequently, defining utility in terms of what knowledge will help create these behaviors.

Strongly related to this process, though usually working in a different context, are statements by curriculum influential like Ralph W. Tyler and W. W. Charters. The latter, up-dating the language but not the methods of his earlier years, summarizes the logic of the process succinctly:

The educational engineer who undertakes to build a curricular structure of training for any position must obviously analyze the position to discover

\[24^{*}\text{ibid.}, 25.\]
\[25^{*}\text{ibid.}, 195.\]
the activities that are inherent in the function and the traits of personality that are needed to guarantee efficiency.26

Tyler's syllabus for his curriculum course at Chicago is a further example of this rational process which seems to result from a desire to create certain "necessary" behaviors in students. Tyler begins by stating that the scientific study of the curriculum provides the basis for selecting its objectives, which are to be stated in behavioral fashion. There are basically three sources of data for deriving these objectives:

1. Study of the Learner
2. Studies of Contemporary Society
3. Demands of Subject Matter

In his treatment of the learner, Tyler states that education seeks to change behavior and that the direction of the change can be ascertained by studying the needs of the learner. Needs are defined as the gaps between present state and the norm. Though he speaks of philosophical and psychological screens to be employed in establishing norms, Tyler seems to stop at the methodological level when he defines utility. Thus, his definition comes to be stated in terms of

whatever will change student behavior in the direction of stated objectives.\textsuperscript{27}

Just what objectives should be established are not delineated by Tyler. He does specify that objectives should have two dimensions—behavior and content. The behavior aspect depends on philosophical and psychological screens, while the content aspect derives from the demands of subject matter. Most of the syllabus is methodological discourse; but since the method may imply a metaphysic in Burtt's terms, it is useful to look at the criteria for utility which can be discerned in the statement. Tyler's definition states that the knowledge useful for a curriculum is that which:

1. changes behavior in the direction of established objectives,
2. permits students to act in the direction of objectives,
3. gives students satisfaction in acting,
4. falls within the range of possibility for a student,
5. is consistent, continuous, and reinforcing in relation to other experience, and
6. is in the proper logical sequence with other experiences as well as integratable with these other experiences.

Though the syllabus is primarily methodological discourse, its definition of utility thus does imply a metaphysic which makes the curricular process a type of manipulation. Just how much the discourse on the threat to the value system of American democracy and its subsequent call to protect this value system via the educational process is actually related to the Tylerian rationale would be hard to say. In reality, both types of discourse—the complaints about threatened values and the movement toward rational establishment of sets of behavioral objectives—pervade the period.

The emphasis on behavioral objectives began to raise some discussion during the decade. When general education was the topic of discourse, a question frequently arose whether utility should be defined in terms of behaviors or in terms of understandings. Some analysts attributed the failure of general education to reside in the "fatal split between use and enjoyment" as related to curriculum content of experiences. This split caused a definite ambiguity in the use of the term need. Some employed the term in its strictly pragmatic meaning; Tyler's definition of need given above is an example of this usage. Others defined need in terms of its quality of experience meaning. It is the former usage that seems to predominate in the curriculum discourse of the decade.

When needs of the individual are interpreted solely on the basis of what makes for effective action in current society, the definition of utility takes on a strongly pragmatic tone. Here the individual is made subservient to the action demands of the democratic system as perceived by adults. The pragmatic definition of need then is formulated by adults and made synonymous with individual need. In a lengthy statement on the needs of youth as they relate to the secondary school curriculum, future needs are recognized to have their roots in the present.\textsuperscript{29} However, the curriculum is based upon the following assumptions, according to the same statement:

1. Youth should be inducted into the culture and ideology of American democracy.

2. The needs of youth derive from what makes for effective action in democracy, whether youth is yet aware of such or not.

3. Present feelings of need are not sufficient basis for curriculum construction.

Normative studies of the adolescent, the needs of society as expressed in statements by the Educational Policies Commission, and other such sources should be used to define the common needs on which to base the curriculum.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{29} NSSE, \textit{Fifty-Second Yearbook}, Part I, 3.

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Ibid.}, 31.
Some modification of the use of the term *need* in a purely pragmatic sense is found in the work of thinkers like Alberty. He defines needs by way of a process which intimately involves the experience of the student. Thus, although he, too, is concerned with effective citizenship in a democratic culture, the quality of student experience is an influence on the establishing of curricular objectives. Even Tyler goes beyond his syllabus in saying that the function of a curriculum is not to meet needs but to develop behavior which will enable youth to meet its needs.\(^{31}\)

The expressions of need issued by the Educational Policies Commission during this decade for the most part employ the term in a pragmatic sense. When discussing the values and goals which should develop in the elementary school, the Commission uses community problems as a point of departure for the curriculum and its content.\(^{32}\) The values to be created are specifically stated as independence and initiative, the humane and constructive talents, social responsibility, and cooperative skills. Curriculum experiences should lead to these

\(^{31}\)Ibid., 216.

values. Another Commission statement deals with the *Cardinal Principles*, declaring they have not yet been realized for all youth.\(^{33}\) This statement stresses the need to create youth loyal to democracy as well as providing them with occupational preparation. The notion of saleable skills is high on the list of important needs.\(^{34}\) Manpower demands also receive attention, especially as they relate to national security. Greater expansion of educational services is rationalized in this context on the basis of the demands of the economy.\(^{35}\) Career possibilities are used as sources of motivation, while both general and liberal education are instructed to focus more on the careers of students.\(^{36}\) Schools are said to be "instrumentalities for producing required manpower" and utility is defined in terms of whatever serves the economy.\(^{37}\) Concern over international tensions likewise creates special demands on the curriculum and its definition of utility. Technology, the need for international understanding, and the ideological

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\(^{34}\) *Ibid.*, 216.


\(^{36}\) *Ibid.*, 70.

challenge of totalitarianism all are recognized as determining utility
for a curriculum.\textsuperscript{38} National security continues to create demands
for new curricular content, according to a Commission publication.\textsuperscript{39}

This last statement was severely criticized by the American
Council of Learned Societies, a criticism that points up the basic
weakness of the Commission statements during the decade. For the
most part, the statements are reactions to current ideological or socio-
logical threats. Basing the content of a curriculum mainly on such
reactions can lead obviously to severe narrowing of its objectives.
For example, the demands for national security can become synonymous
with those voiced by the military establishment. The same could be
said about economic demands and the industrial establishment. In
general, the definition of utility in these statements is formulated in
a very restricted manner, with the curriculum consequently viewed as
responsive chiefly to service demands.

\textsuperscript{38}Educational Policies Commission, \textit{American Education and
International Tensions} (Washington, D.C.: Educational Policies

\textsuperscript{39}Educational Policies Commission, \textit{Education and National
Security} (Washington, D.C.: Educational Policies Commission,
1951).
Needs of the individual are made synonymous with the needs of society in this sample of the literature, frequently being stated from a severely narrow perspective. Once more political perspectives on both society and the individual fail to be balanced with wider value considerations. Reactions to social pressures thus produce an unsatisfactory relationship between society and the individual in the definitions of utility that have been examined.

3. Value education in a different context

Some of the complexities of attempting to educate for a specific set of values should be obvious from the above analysis. The problem of how to relate adult to student values, the unsolved mystery of the relation of value systems to behavior, and the equally unclear relationship between values and knowledge are all difficulties not handled by much of the discourse thus far sampled for the decade. One important experiment conducted during this period did begin to deal with the more subtle issues of educating for values.

Though concerned with the same value questions dealt with by the discourse already discussed, a project directed by Hilda Taba under the sponsorship of the American Council on Education employed a different approach to the problems. The project was a four-year study, which began in January, 1945 and ended in August, 1948. The
publications from this project were issued during the decade being examined. In the thinking developed during the study, the human relations problem is considered to be central to the nation's current malaise.40

The project focused primarily on attitudes related to this area of human relations. Thus, the educational task became one of changing the manner in which one thought about group relations.41 The entire program of the school was to be concerned with this problem, and the problem was to become part of the "common learnings" of the curriculum.42 Areas of objectives were established: (1) facts, ideas, concepts, (2) cultural sensitivity--feelings, values, attitudes, (3) rational thinking, and (4) skills. Problems in each area were identified through a variety of techniques.43 Teachers of the various subject areas were then asked to relate their particular subject to the problems


41Ibid., 29.

42Ibid., 33.

identified. The entire school program was to be related to those problems identified in the four areas, but this was to be accomplished within "the existing frameworks of curriculum required." 44

If one compares the thinking of Taba in 1932 as already discussed in Chapter III, this position becomes strikingly different in its approach to the extant curricular structure. Yet the rationale for the change is provided in these terms:

If the curriculum was to be affected beyond the duration of the project, it was necessary to integrate intergroup education into the current program and revise the curriculum to meet this need. 45

Here utility is defined as that content in those subject areas now constituting the curriculum which relates to identified problems of human relations. The program was conceived as primarily preventive in nature; that is, it aimed to prevent the formation of prejudices and misconceptions, tensions, and hostilities. It was stressed that the curriculum could support the simultaneous achievement of several objectives. Taba also stresses that learning activities were to be selected with objectives specifically in mind, because an objective

44 Taba, Brady, and Robinson, Intergroup Education in Public Schools, 53.

like sensitivity requires a different learning activity from one seeking only information.

This kind of distinction is what makes the project on Intergroup Education different from other undertakings in this decade in its treatment of values. Perhaps the clearest statement of this difference is in the final publication of the project, *School Culture*. 46 Here is a sensitive analysis of how a school's culture often reproduces those "divisive forces and traditions, which in its conscious teaching it bemoans and tries to correct." 47 Utility is defined in terms of those learnings that meet the needs created by "out-of-school learning" or student immersion in the school culture. Thus, an extra-curricular program should dictate one's definition of utility just as much as does the tradition of subject areas. Such a position necessarily moves beyond the restrictions of current curricular offerings established by the project, and provides an approach to the problems of value education broader in its scope than the reactionary curricula that seem to emerge out of much of the discourse of the decade. The whole problem


47 Ibid., vi.
of the relation of values to behavior is ignored in these latter curricular proposals, but Taba and the Intergroup Education Project at least begin to wrestle with the problem.

Whether one values his way into behavior or behaves his way into values is perhaps the crucial issue. Much of the discourse of the decade takes the first position and presents an educational process which is essentially manipulative. Some of the discourse fails to deal with the issue, merely asserting the need for affirming the values needed by democracy. Taba and the Project on Intergroup Education begin to touch the real problem that haunts so much of the decade's thinking.

Summary

The profound effect of technology upon contemporary society begins to create intense concerns in the consciousness of the curriculum field during these years. These concerns relate primarily to issues about value education and the preservation of American democracy. As social analyses became more and more sophisticated, the pathological elements of the contemporary social scene are made obvious. Tension between the individual and society becomes so intense that some writers in the field begin to speak of the schizoid condition that plagues contemporary man. As the needs of the
individual and the needs of current society become less and less congruent, important questions are raised about how utility is to be defined when its definitional criteria have both society and the individual as sources. The nature of the relationship which ought to obtain between these two sources must be clearly established before decisions can be adequately made about what knowledge is useful for a curriculum. Failure to explicate this relationship clearly makes it impossible to define the concept of utility in terms of adequate consideration of both sources of criteria.

Most of the attention during this period was focused on the needs of American democracy, with value education construed as producing those behaviors necessary to the functioning of democracy. Frequently, there is a definite implication that the individual ought to be subservient to democracy's needs. This implication arises possibly through failure to clarify the relationship between society and the individual as sources of purpose statements. The ideological unrest of the decade subsequently causes reactions that begin to define utility in terms of the knowledge needed to quell alien ideas or attitudes.

Related to this trend is the growing stress on viewing the curriculum as a means of producing necessary behaviors in children. These behaviors are decided upon by competent adults in an a priori
fashion, after which that knowledge which will produce the desired behavior is defined as useful for the curriculum. Essentially, a method of establishing curricula is what is involved here. Tyler's syllabus employed at Chicago is the clearest exposition of the method involved. The method is clearly developed in its process and highly rational. As one examines the definition of utility employed in this context, it becomes evident that the method implies a metaphysic.

Education is described as seeking to change behavior in the direction of a set of behaviors or norms established by an analysis of society, the learner, and the demands of subject matters. Only that knowledge which will change behavior in the desired direction is then useful. Behavior is thus construed as externally motivated, and the task of education is to manipulate or engineer behaviors toward socially desirable goals. The possibility of any novel emergence of goals seems obviated by the view implied in the method. Once again the process of knowing is in no way attended to by the method. Knowledge is considered in terms of overt behavior seen as the product of specific sets of stimuli. The mental aspects of knowing are not discussed by the method at all. Part of the issue here may have to do with the desire to measure what is known, thus confining the consideration of knowledge to overt behaviors. Since mind is not a scientific term, only overt behavior is considered when measurement is involved.
The problems created by this method become evident when it is related to the concern over ideological threats and value education already mentioned. In reacting to these threats, it is possible to set up a kind of opposing ideology justified on the basis of being essential to democracy, and then employ the method described above to produce only that behavior consonant with the ideology. Democracy so defined can then become a dogma formulated by a powerful few and imposed on children by means of a curriculum construed as a way of producing behavior congruent with the established doctrine. Such an analysis is obviously harsh, but the method being discussed does allow for such an application. Needs of the individual may be made synonymous with what society as defined by the curriculum maker can use or demands.

This prospect, so evident in the discourse of the decade, highlights the need to clarify the relationship of the curriculum to the definition of society. Because of the deep questioning present in these years, the manner in which society is defined in curriculum discourse is seen to become crucial. The myriad of social demands on the definition of utility for the curriculum makes it vulnerable to narrow views about what society means. At times the term is defined solely on the basis of various pressure groups in society. Thus, in a body of discourse dealing with what are termed society's needs,
society is defined on the basis of the military establishment. The same is true for discourse on occupational needs of society, where society means the industrial establishment. Of course, such definitions greatly impinge on the meaning of utility in curriculum discourse; there is real necessity for continuous analysis of the terms society and need in all curriculum literature. Also various perspectives on both society and individual need to be related so that utility is not defined solely on the basis of narrow reactions to social pressures.

The social unrest of this decade caused utility to be defined frequently in terms of the knowledge needed to affirm certain values. This kind of definition raises many difficulties about the nature of values, the manner in which knowledge relates to a value system, and the connection between behavior and values. There is no definitive evidence available as to whether man values his way into behaving, or whether his value system follows on behavior as a kind of rational explanation created by the self. If one views behavior as being completely rational, value education would consist in establishing a set of desired values which could function as behavioral guides for the young. However, a significant body of experience appears to contradict such a view. It is even problematic whether value can be described in cognitive terms. Much of the
discourse analyzed for this chapter takes a simplistic view of these issues, and falls as a result into an overly rational explanation of the problem.

An exception to this tendency can be found in the project on intergroup education conducted under the aegis of the American Council on Education. Its concern with school culture and related behavior patterns of young people provided a more subtle approach to the question of value education. Behavior as found in spontaneous situations was viewed as being just as crucial to questions of value as was knowledge in the form of curriculum content. Here the definition of utility comes to be influenced by extracurricular activities that can somehow be structured by the school. Thus, environment designed on the basis of value considerations becomes as important as more formal curriculum offerings. Here the definitional criteria for utility are based as much on experiential elements as on formal knowledge or subject matters. There are many implications for the concept of utility when its criteria are derived from considerations of the nature of experience as well as knowledge considered only in terms of subject matter or overt behavior. Curriculum thinking here becomes involved in designing environments as well as selecting and organizing formal content. Perhaps the demands of value education make such environmental concerns essential.
The definition of utility is affected in the following ways during this decade:

1. The needs of society and the needs of the individual become less and less congruent in these years, causing tensions to arise between definitional criteria for utility that stem from these two sources.

2. Concern with value education increases during the decade; ideological unrest causes reactions that begin to define utility in terms of knowledge necessary to quell alien ideas or attitudes.

3. The method of building the curriculum on the basis of behavioral objectives influences the definition of utility, by asserting that knowledge is useful if it changes behavior in a desired direction.

4. Stress on this method, in a context of concern over threatened values, causes utility to be defined within an essentially manipulative process of education.

5. The term society is frequently defined in an excessively narrow manner when it is consulted as a source for definitional criteria during the decade.

6. When utility is defined on the basis of knowledge found necessary to affirm a certain set of values, many problems arise
that deal with the relation of knowledge to values, the relation of behavior to a value system, and the relation of knowledge to behavior.

7. Sources of definitional criteria for the concept are expanded in the Project on Intergroup Education which begins to consider the entire school environment as it impinges on the curriculum. Concern for value education, the predominant feature of this decade begins to lose its intensity after the event of Sputnik. In the following chapter, development of the rational powers assumes priority over the value issues just examined.
CHAPTER VI

1958-1967--NEW KNOWLEDGE OF OLD THEMES

If humanity marched straight toward some result, there would be no history, only logic.
--Alexander Herzen,
From the Other Shore

Much in the sense of Herzen's statement about logic and history, T. S. Eliot writes that the end of exploration is to arrive where one started from, but to know the place for the first time. The decade covered by this chapter marks the end of the exploration projected by this study; it is characterized by a return to a view of the school, its curriculum, and subsequently the concept of utility which was prevalent before the "revolution" of 1918 already described. However, this "return" is no mere retrenchment reviving some hallowed tradition, but essentially a new assertion about what constitutes the meaning of utility in curriculum discourse.

Like the cornucopia of the first ten years covered in this study, these last ten years witness a great deal of ferment and theoretical tension. There is a significant amount of introspection that takes place during these years following Sputnik about the
quality of the nation's schools. The curriculum becomes a national concern, especially the manner in which it defines what knowledge is most useful.

The burden of the discourse sampled for the final chapter comes to define the concept of utility in terms of an intellectual imperative, which appears to be the central assertion of the decade. This assertion will be examined in the first section of the chapter, with special attention being given to the tensions which surrounded its development. Then the effect the intellectual imperative had on content aspects of the curriculum will be studied as it influences the definition of utility. In the final section, attention will be directed to the process aspects of the curriculum as these are influenced by the intellectual imperative.

1. The assertion of an intellectual imperative

The threat to national security imposed by the Sputnik event is visible early in the decade. The literature contains a variety of tensions that result from external, political pressures coming into conflict with traditional beliefs about universal education, the commitment to the common school, the need to serve the unique purposes of the individual, and so on. The nature of these various tensions can be seen in the NSSE Yearbook that opens the decade. Two
statements from the Educational Policies Commission that also appear during the first years of the period begin to respond to the political pressures by asserting the need for more emphasis on subject matter and intellectual rigor. At the same time, it will be seen that these documents seek to maintain traditional commitment to universal education, creating a certain amount of ambivalence in the face of society's demands. The extent of this ambivalence will be shown in the analysis of one of the most significant documents of the decade, a statement issued by the Educational Policies Commission on The Central Purpose of American Education. The impact of this statement will be traced in subsequent literature as the intellectual imperative comes to be discerned as the central assertion of the decade. From the viewpoint of the concept of utility, a revolution is effected by the assertion of this imperative.

First of all, the concern with value education, described in the last chapter, continues to receive attention in the discourse of these following years. At the same time, there is considerable discussion being waged about the demands of technology and a technological society. The obvious tension between these two sets of concerns is evident in the Fifty-Seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. Part I deals with "Basic Concepts in Music Education" and explicitly recognizes the danger to
education which technology imposes by requiring specialization.¹

In Part II of the same Yearbook, dealing with "Education for the
Gifted," the primary forces in the concern for the gifted are identified as economic: manpower needs and the scientific-technological demand for special skills. Yet, early in the text, John Hersey strongly criticizes the current drive for technological progress as debilitating in its relation to education.² Following this criticism, Havighurst "resolves" the tension between the needs of the individual and those of society by stating that what society values is synonymous with what serves the individual, because society will reward the individual by buying his talents.³ He states that "people are happiest when they develop and use those abilities which society finds valuable...."⁴ Utility becomes defined in terms of what serves to fill the manpower needs of the economy. There is really no effort here at resolution of the stated tension between the individual's needs and society's needs. All the evidence, sociological


²NSSE, Fifty-Seventh Yearbook, Part II, 6.

³Ibid., 9.

⁴Ibid.
and psychological, that points to this tension is thus ignored by Havighurst's "solution."

Part III of the same Yearbook then takes up the notion of the "integration of educational experiences," focusing on creating the integrating individual. Integration is said to be the "dominant center for organizing the entire educational program."\(^5\) Utility is defined in terms of that knowledge which produces the integrating individual.\(^6\) Within this same discussion, another important issue emerges about the value of knowledge—whether its utility is inherent or resides in its pragmatic assets. Bloom presents the issue as he writes of the logical aspects of integration. He states that in order for educational experiences to be useful, they must relate to past experience and lead to future experience. All experiences ought to be held together via "integrative threads."\(^7\) He then describes these threads as being either the "major ideas" of a subject field or "major problems" confronting society. In the first case, knowledge is presented as having inherent value, while in the second its value resides in its use for solving social problems.

\(^5\) *NSSE, Fifty-Seventh Yearbook*, Part III, 23.

\(^6\) *Ibid.*, 42.

\(^7\) *Ibid.*, 91.
This issue receives much attention throughout the decade.

For the most part, integration serves as a curriculum "theme" in this discussion, in the sense of "theme" as employed previously in relation to international education, consumer education, etc. Increasingly through the decade, the need for integration of the curriculum as a set of experiences as well as for creating the integrating individual becomes more crucial. The hiatus between school and society is frequently talked about in the context of much discussion on change in the schools. 8

Tensions seem to build in the discourse of the period to the point where purposes become the center of much of the discussion. Education is seen as challenged by the contemporary scene, especially as national welfare becomes a crucial question after Sputnik. The continuing stress on educating for the preservation of democracy begins to be operationally defined in terms of more rigorous presentation of subject matter. 9 However, there is a kind


of ambivalence in the discourse when emphasis on intellectual rigor is the focus. Usually, the fear of creating an elite incompatible with a commitment to democracy and universal education is mentioned. Policy statements thus emphasize both the need for higher standards as well as the commitment to universal education.10

The call for intellectual rigor reaches its apex in the literature sampled for this chapter in the statement of the Educational Policies Commission entitled, The Central Purpose of American Education.11 This highly significant document takes a basically revolutionary position which is, in a sense, a return to the pre-1918 stance, yet the Commission is at the same time apologetic about its position. The essential message of the statement is that the school must commit itself to the cultivation of the intellect. The phrase "rational powers" is employed to explain this commitment. Utility is defined largely in terms of that which develops one's rational powers.12


12 Ibid., 12.
The statement begins by defining central as in no way meaning exclusive. Other purposes are not to be construed as subordinate to the central purpose of developing rationality. Rational powers are a means rather than the end of education. Much of this part of the statement seems apologetic in tone, as if stressing rationality was a threat to traditional purposes. These purposes, in the form of the Cardinal Principles and a later related statement, are reviewed with the admission that the school does not have sufficient time or energy to achieve all these goals. Therefore, a principle of selection is required. Each of the seven Cardinal Principles is then reviewed and interpreted as resting on the development of one's rational powers. This is indeed a definite stand on what constitutes the meaning of utility in curriculum discourse, and one which is related to what is a real assertion in the discourse of the decade. Notions of interest and meaning are retained under the heading of "pre-requisites of rationality."\footnote{Ibid., 15-16.} It is admitted that in some situations, like those characterized by cultural deprivation, other purposes may require more emphasis than rationality.\footnote{Ibid., 16.} Rationality is not presented as depending on subject
matter, but subject matter is described as the raw material of thought.\textsuperscript{15}

Two criteria for the selection of subject matter are finally presented:

1. It develops rational powers.

2. It is useful to society.

Consultation with experts is mentioned in connection with application of these criteria.

In general, this statement of the Policies Commission makes a strong case for restricting the responsibility of the school to the development of rationality. All of the responsibilities listed by the \textit{Cardinal Principles} and taken on after the "revolution" which this study described in its first chapter are interpreted in terms of this responsibility. This subsumption is perhaps one of the most significant ideas of the period, especially as it influences the concept of utility. Its impact is evident in the discourse that follows during the decade.

Robert L. Ebel, writing on school testing programs, states that such programs should emphasize cognitive outcomes, since intellectual development is the school's primary goal.\textsuperscript{16} He cites

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, 18.
\end{itemize}
the Policies Commission statement on *Central Purpose* in taking this position. Perhaps one of the clearest indications of the shift which occurs in the discourse, following the emphasis on intellectual development as primary, can be seen in the discussion on vocational education. Proponents of vocational education respond strongly to attacks on the field that were seemingly stimulated by the decade's stress on intellectual development. They consistently decry the critique of "intellectualism" on vocational education. However, it is recognized that utility has come to be defined within vocational education by a number of incompatible definitions. There is, first, the meaning based on what leads to intellectual and personal development with vocational skills seen as a means to this end. Then there is utility defined in terms of the knowledge which leads to occupational sophistication. Finally, there is the definition which is based on whatever knowledge prepares for a specific job. Content would vary under all three of these definitions: the first would deal with the disciplines of knowledge, the second with a sociological description of occupations, and the third with skill training. It is concluded that "an

intellectual imperative confronts all curriculum components privileged to belong to the common school." There is thus a definite shift from education for work to education to work.

The struggle with this "intellectual imperative" is also evident in the specialized area which deals with the education of the "culturally disadvantaged." Some state that the curriculum for the "disadvantaged" should have the same goals as that of the middle class. Yet, there is evident tension between those who see intelligence as fixed and those who see it as more fluid. Little is said about objectives in this area because of a pervasive uncertainty as to what they should be. It is agreed that the ultimate goals should be the same for all; simply the means should vary.

"Intellectual development is of central importance, but some of the early steps along this road may not be directly concerned with it."

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18 Ibid., 81.

19 Ibid., 83.

20 NSSE, Sixtieth Yearbook, Part I, 36.

21 Ibid., 130.

Finally, the methodological discourse in the field, exemplified by Taba's extensive statement on *Curriculum Development*, also was influenced by the intellectual imperative. She places a good deal of emphasis on the distinction between content and learning experiences, with the latter being concerned with learning how to learn or think. Here also the development of rational powers becomes a definite concern. It should by now be evident that the "intellectual imperative" constitutes a kind of central assertion in the discourse of the decade. The assertion then gives rise to the "classical" distinction of content and process in much of the other literature characteristic of the decade. How the imperative is interpreted in terms of the content side of the issue will now be analyzed by viewing the definition of utility in this context.

2. **Content and the intellectual imperative**

Increased stress on subject matter or the content aspect of the curriculum becomes the salient characteristic of the decade. Science areas of the curriculum receive special attention, consistent with increasingly conscious political pressures. The influence of

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these pressures on science education will be closely examined in
this section, in analysis of the NSSE Yearbook dealing with science
education that appeared early in the decade. Further indications of
the stress on content will be sought in succeeding Yearbooks, along
with some of the growing criticism about the dangers of this emphasis.
Next, the concept of utility will be analyzed as it is defined in the
various "reforms" that placed new emphasis on subject matter.
Finally, an Educational Policies Commission document that appeared
at the end of the decade will be analyzed in terms of its definition
of utility, which relates closely to the whole concern with content,
especially with that of science.

Science education, perhaps more than any other content area,
reflects the impact of the intellectual imperative. A basic "re-
thinking" occurs in this area much influenced by the scholar or
specialist. A lengthy statement on science education begins by
defining science as "less concerned with the ways of man than with
his understanding of the ways of nature." There is also a great
deal of concern with the raising of standards in the area, as well

24National Society for the Study of Education, Fifty-Ninth
Yearbook, Part I, Rethinking Science Education (Chicago: The

25Ibid., 14.
as presenting science as a means to real intellectual development.\textsuperscript{26} Stress on having the student behave as a scientist behaves rather than learning a static body of content becomes evident. The specialist or scientist-scholar is recognized as a necessary and valuable component in the development of science curricula. Throughout the discourse, utility is defined essentially in terms of what is necessary for true mastery of the subject matter and what society demands by way of training for highly technical occupations, the new purpose for science education being to understand science both as a discipline and as an enterprise.

More than previously, the study of science as a discipline is stressed, with emphasis on identifying and learning its concepts.\textsuperscript{28} There is recognition that science is a way of experiencing reality and, therefore, important at the elementary school level as a well-defined domain.\textsuperscript{29} A discussion on the merits of correlation almost proposes the needs of science education as the basis of

\begin{scriptsize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26}\textit{Ibid.}, 17.
\item \textsuperscript{27}\textit{Ibid.}, 34.
\item \textsuperscript{28}\textit{Ibid.}, 39.
\item \textsuperscript{29}\textit{Ibid.}, 120.
\end{itemize}
\end{scriptsize}
content in other areas like English and social studies.\textsuperscript{30} It is quite evident that the secondary curriculum is dictated almost entirely by the demands of subject matter. Utility is defined by that knowledge which is necessary to the development of understanding a discipline.

Even in art education emphasis turns from what develops creativity in the student to what leads to the ability to appreciate the artistic enterprise, that is, aesthetic competence. Thus, content also receives new stress here.\textsuperscript{31}

Some of the liabilities that resulted from the stress on subject matters were pointed up during the period. The loss of purpose as a controlling criterion in the selection of subject matter and the considering of knowledge only in terms of behaviors related to a discipline are examples of these liabilities. Basically, what happened in this approach to subject matter is that "the identification of organizing elements frequently followed rather than preceded the selection of specific stimuli" for the curriculum.\textsuperscript{32} Thus, the

\textsuperscript{30}Ibid, 168.

\textsuperscript{31}NSSE, Sixty-Fourth Yearbook, Part II.

"beginning of the curriculum process is located in subject matter, not in any statement of purpose beyond it. Goodlad points this out clearly. 33 Relatedly, there is growing emphasis on the technology of instruction where utility is defined in terms of what produces a specific form of behavior. Usually the product is a basic concept identified by subject matter specialists as essential to a discipline and its logic or structure. 34 Much of the attention to instruction involves complex methodological concern for how to create in school the behavior thought to characterize the scholar in the milieu of his discipline. Utility is frequently defined in terms of behavioral objectives which derive from subject matter. The discourse on programmed instruction relates closely to this definition. 35 Dale relates the whole scientific approach to curriculum building begun by Bobbitt and Charters to the programming effort. 36

33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., 221.
36 Ibid., 34, 44.
All of the curriculum "reforms" in content areas are further illustrations of how the intellectual imperative was interpreted in terms of content. In most of the reforms, the curriculum is defined merely as a set of materials. The School Mathematics Study Group (SMSG) defines utility in terms of what remains faithful to the concepts of the discipline of mathematics and also meets the current mathematical needs of society. Here also the curriculum is equated with the textbook. Zacharias and White define utility in terms of the knowledge which contributes to the understanding of the two fundamental concepts of physics: the wave-particle duality and the modern conception of the atom. The method of inquiry is stressed in the biology materials, with utility resting on what develops the ability to employ the mode of inquiry characteristic of biology. Citizenship education is equated with intellectual competence in the social sciences. However, the value issue does receive some attention; and the problem of whether values are taught or "discovered" is considered.

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38 Ibid., 37.

39 Ibid., 39.

40 Ibid., 71.

41 Ibid., 97.

42 Ibid., 140.
The notion of discovery is important throughout the literature dealing with content, and it is important not to lose sight of its significance. The activity of the student in addressing himself to the new curriculum materials is viewed as crucial by the developers of these materials. Thus, the structure of a discipline is seen as a pattern on which to "reorganize raw experience." It is easy to relate this emphasis on discovery to much of the literature on the "activity curriculum." Much concern over notions like "meaning" and pupil interest illustrates this point. Though subject matter becomes central in this discourse, the classical concerns for the student are not completely lost, in theory at least.

Perhaps the ethos of the interpretation of the intellectual imperative in the content area is embodied most succinctly in the statement on *Education and the Spirit of Science* by the Educational Policies Commission. Here the spirit of science is equated with the spirit of rational inquiry already celebrated by the Commission. It is stated that the mode of inquiry characteristic of science is part

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43 Ibid., 156.

of all inquiry and therefore ought to have a "larger and more explicit place among the goals of education." The spirit of science is presented as a set of values transcending all cultures and capable of unifying these cultures. Utility is defined in terms of what produces rational thought, the latter being defined in essentially positivistic terms. Again the central purpose of education becomes the development of rational powers; but, in this statement, rationality is presented in a narrower vein.

Parallel to the emphasis on the content area in this statement and in other documents of the period, there is also an interpretation of the intellectual imperative in terms of process concerns, a development that provides a healthy expansion of the influence of this imperative. These two interpretations of the imperative taken together make the decade much more than a mere return to previous notions of the school as only a house of intellect.

3. Process and the intellectual imperative

Understanding and discovery on the part of the learner are two process notions that receive much attention during the decade. The criteria for utility that relate to these notions, as expressed in the

45Ibid., 2.
summary of the Woods Hole Conference, will be presented in this section. Concern with process aspects of instruction, germane to the focus on discovery learning, will also be examined, as well as the related interest in purposes other than those dictated by subject matters. A statement on compensatory education, a field that receives increasing attention during the decade, will be analyzed in terms of its definition of utility, which is also concerned with process ideas. A number of statements of the Educational Policies Commission continued to stress the process of thinking as an educational objective, and these will be examined here. Two definitions of utility that deal with notions related to the process of thinking, one by Taba and the other by John Gardner, will be explicated at the end of the section.

One of the most influential statements of the decade was the summary of the now famous Woods Hole Conference by Jerome Bruner entitled *The Process of Education.* Bruner is here concerned with a new emphasis on both content and process. However, he stresses content in terms of the structure of various disciplines and thus views knowledge from a wider perspective than is possible in a purely behavioristic psychology. Concepts and mental processes became

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very important as the Conference members, comprised mainly of psychologists and scholars from discipline areas, considered the educational situation as it related to the realm of knowledge. Intuitive thinking receives considerable attention, which begins to place emphasis on the activity of the learner in what comes to be called the discovery approach to learning. Knowledge is thus construed in primarily process terms, both from the viewpoint of how it is to be achieved by the learner, as well as in relation to subject matter fields. This process emphasis has a profound influence on the way instructional methods are subsequently considered. The concept of utility comes to be defined on the basis of that knowledge which is essential to real understanding of the structure of a discipline. Germaine to this criterion is the necessity for the learner to be active in the process of achieving understanding, which becomes a kind of further criterion relating to instruction.

The interest in instructional methods, already mentioned in the previous section, also created definite process concerns. In some discussions, group process becomes the locus of the goal of any educational experience. The source of real intellectual and personal growth in any ideologically confused or chaotic society is seen to reside in rich group experience. \(^{47}\) Olson states this position well

\(^{47}\text{NSSE, Fifty-Ninth Yearbook, Part II, 27-29.}\)
as it relates to content notions: "With the acceptance of a high degree of pupil participation, a somewhat different attitude toward the curriculum emerges, i.e., that the technical resources supplied by experts in the content of a field are an adjunct and resource for classroom use rather than a prescription."\(^{48}\)

The whole issue of purpose construed as originating outside the demands of any particular content also arises here. In discussing the individualization of instruction, Wilhelms states that "the essential common element in a curriculum is purposes."\(^{49}\) The fundamental error in curriculum-thinking, according to Wilhelms, was to equate content with goal, or worse, to redouble zeal for content simply because the goal was forgotten. Here utility is defined on the basis of a set of purposes derived apart from content demands. Goodlad likewise stresses that purpose ought to be the essential criterion for any organizational concern for individualizing instruction.

In the literature dealing with compensatory education, there is much stress on process elements relating to the "play school,"

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\(^{48}\)Ibid., 279.

"child-centered school," "life-adjustment education," and similar notions. However, utility is frequently defined in terms of what will bring the socially deviant or disadvantaged into middle class culture. Thus, a real tension between two different definitions of utility runs through most of this literature:

1. what is "meaningful" to the deviant and leads to his growth or

2. what creates the standard behavior of middle class society.

The struggle waged between these two definitional criteria for utility somewhat characterizes the literature on curricula for the disadvantaged. Some emphasis is placed on developing the student who is able to process modern complexity by his competence in handling symbols, which is more in accord with the imperative of the decade. However, not a great deal is said about this latter notion.

Three statements from the Educational Policies Commission keep the concern for process aspects of the curriculum in the forefront. During this decade, the elementary school experienced much

50 NSSE, Sixty-Fifth Yearbook, Part I, 221.
51 Ibid., 108.
pressure to emphasize content in a manner similar to the high school, Yet it struggled to maintain its uniqueness as "the nation's most widespread provision for learning the ways of democracy." Utility is still defined in this document in terms of the Cardinal Principles, but with much emphasis given to learning via the teaching of early reading, foreign languages, and departmentalization. Utility is still seen to rest primarily on the needs of the student rather than any body of content.

In two further statements, one on the role of teacher and the other on opportunity for education beyond high school, the Educational Policies Commission stresses the development of the ability to think as the end of education. Utility is defined in terms of what produces this ability. Thus, the process of thinking itself receives more attention than any specific body of content. In her

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last major work, Taba is similarly concerned with the thinking process. She defines utility here in terms of what forms the conceptual process or mode of inquiry characteristic of important disciplines. She complains that not enough work was being done in the area of the humanities on this problem.

A useful summary of the interpretation of the intellectual imperative in process terms is John Gardner's *Excellence*, influential during the decade. He strongly criticizes equalitarianism which denies the notion of varying individual capacities. Much concerned with self-fulfillment and self-discovery, he defines utility in terms of those educational experiences which will lead to real self-fulfillment and self-discovery. The commitment to excellence is seen to flow from such experiences and ultimately the great society which becomes later a slogan on the political scene. Standards of intellectual


57 Ibid., 15.
development are strongly stressed in a humanistic context where more than mere competence or expertise is desired.\textsuperscript{58}

The definitions of utility which result from the literature that deals with process aspects of the curriculum rest primarily on one objective outside those of subject matter: learning how to think. This becomes the central purpose notion not specifically concerned with subject matter which is influential on the definition of utility during the decade. Thus, the individual as a source of definitional criteria for utility is not lost during these years when stress on subject matter expertise is so strong. The approach in terms of mental process is another important factor in this continuing attention to purposes other than those related to subject matter mastery.

Summary

As the nation examined its educational conscience in the wake of Sputnik and other political pressures on the country's security, the definition of utility for the curriculum came to be increasingly influenced by the political perspective on society. The need for expertise in a technological society asserts itself with an intensity that begins to weaken all other claims on the curriculum. As a source for

\textsuperscript{58}Ibid., 136.
purpose statements during this decade, the individual is less influential than society viewed from a plainly political perspective. There is a substantial amount of concern with the necessity to preserve America's democratic system, and this too is frequently interpreted in terms of the technological expertise demanded by a strong defense. The manner in which these defense demands are to be met is often expressed in terms of increasing the emphasis on subject matter in the schools. Greater rigor in this area is seen to be the solution to the threats then impinging upon national security.

Because of the traditional commitment to universal education, this emphasis on the rigorous presentation of subject matter raised some fears about the creation of an intellectual elite incompatible with a democratic educational system. Here a different perspective on society, one more involved with value issues, created a certain amount of tension. The conflict between political importunity and commitment to traditional values in American education was not resolved theoretically, but the political pressures appear to have prevailed over most other considerations. Of course, this situation is not overtly or at least fully recognized in the discourse, but the tension between the political influence on the definition of utility and value considerations is evident.
A case in point is the Educational Policies Commission publication on *The Central Purpose of American Education*. In this statement, one of the most significant of the decade, the visible tensions are instructive. Rationality is asserted as the central purpose, but the use of the word *central* is conducted with care and an almost studied ambiguity. Because of the values long asserted in American education's commitment to the common school and universal education, there was a fear that stress on rationality would threaten this tradition. However, the fear is merely vocalized in terms of the extreme care that surrounds the statement on the role of rationality in the school's purposes; there is no real resolution of the political reaction with axiological issues. Similarly, few scientific data are marshalled to justify the assertion in any way.

The statement embodies a kind of revolution in American educational thought, since the concept of utility comes to be defined in terms of that knowledge which will develop the rational powers. All of the other purposes which influence the definitional criteria of utility are subsequently interpreted in terms of the central purpose construed as the development of rationality. Thus, there is a revolutionary turn from statements like that of the *Cardinal Principles*. In fact, all of the seven principles are seen as resting on the development of the rational powers. It is stated that the school cannot
realistically aspire to achieve these seven principles, so that selection is essential. The basis of selection is defined as the development of rationality viewed as the central purpose. Then each of the seven principles is dealt with solely in terms of this central purpose.

The importance of this position for the definition of utility cannot be over emphasized, because it calls into question most of the discourse on purpose and the resulting definitions of what knowledge is useful for the curriculum. Concern for purposes other than rationality is interpreted as unrealistic. This is the central assertion of the decade that confronts the curriculum field with an intellectual imperative.

For the most part, subject matter is taken to be the means for responding to the intellectual imperative, and knowledge comes to be thought of in terms of subject fields. These subject matter categories are viewed from primarily two perspectives: that of the scholar and that of their contribution to the demands of technology. The curriculum process increasingly begins with the disciplines of knowledge rather than with purpose considerations about society or the individual. Thus, the disciplines become, as it were, absolutes, invulnerable to any purpose considerations beyond their own inherent demands.
The curriculum is increasingly defined as a set or package of materials that embody the discipline. Here utility is defined solely in terms of the specific discipline. Study of the curriculum reform materials in the various subject areas substantiates this assertion. If the curriculum is defined as a set of materials, it is obvious that content must play an increasing role in the definition of utility. What prevents this method of defining utility in curriculum discourse from losing all concern for purposes outside those based on subject matter demands is the concurrent interest of the decade in process aspects of the curriculum.

Much of the discourse on instruction focuses on the creation of an efficient method of achieving competence in subject areas. Here process concerns really derive from the basic interest in content. However, there is a significant body of discourse which deals with the idea of discovery. Knowledge is considered in terms of mental acts or processes in this context. Much of the emphasis on the structure of the disciplines as well as their basic concepts would relate to this way of considering knowledge in the curriculum. The concern with discovery learning during the decade keeps alive a number of curriculum issues that relate to the individual as a source of purpose statements. Definitions of utility characteristic of the "activity movement" can be easily tied to this discourse.
At least two important questions are addressed to the curriculum field during the last ten years of this study. Whether purposes outside the disciplines of knowledge can function as controlling criteria and whether knowledge can be considered in terms other than that of subject matter are both challenges of the decade. The concept of utility has fewer meanings during this period, since its definitional criteria are primarily derived from the intellectual imperative. The axiological implications of this imperative, especially as they relate to political pressures, also present a challenge to the field. Therefore, the concept of utility is influenced during this final decade in the following ways:

1. The definition of utility is increasingly influenced by the political perspective on society.

2. As a source of definitional criteria, the individual is less influential than is society during these years.

3. The demands of society as construed from the political perspective are primarily met by calling for a greater stress on subject matter.

4. The central purpose of the school is declared to be the development of rational powers, and all other purposes begin to be interpreted on this basis.
5. Thus, utility comes to be defined in terms of that knowledge which develops rationality. Here knowledge is considered primarily in terms of subject matter, causing the curriculum process to begin with the disciplines of knowledge.

6. Concern with discovery learning during the decade keeps alive the attention to the individual as a source of definitional criteria for utility.

These generalizations conclude the formal examination of the concept of utility over fifty years of curriculum discourse. A final set of reflections on what happened to this concept during these years constitutes the last chapter of the study.
CHAPTER VI

REFLECTIONS ON THE CONCEPT OF UTILITY IN FIFTY YEARS OF CURRICULUM DISCOURSE

After examining the manner in which the concept of utility is employed during fifty years of curriculum discourse, it is appropriate to make some extrapolations from the data provided by this analysis. In general, this entire study has been a way of looking at the role that purpose plays in curriculum literature. By focusing on the concept of utility, as it is used to justify some set of knowledge for a curriculum, the actual relation of purpose to curriculum development can be discerned. To see the nature of this relation, it is first necessary to review the function of the concept of utility in curriculum thinking.

The process of creating a curriculum is one of making decisions. Any decision involves a cutting, as the etymology of the verb decide confirms. The decisions which must be made by anyone creating a curriculum relate to the world of knowledge. The basis for decisions in this process often takes the form of a specific definition of the concept of utility. This is to say that curriculum
construction necessitates cutting away certain knowledge and forming what remains on the basis of what knowledge is considered useful. The meaning of utility then becomes crucial, since it determines both the media employed and the shape the material takes on during the process of creation.

Confronted by the question of what knowledge is to go into a curriculum, the curriculum thinker begins the process of creating by answering the fundamental "Knowledge for what?" query. His response to for what can be viewed as resting upon his own definition of utility, created to embody a specific vision of purpose. The definition of utility therefore becomes a kind of Occam's razor for a curriculum thinker. Since the utility of anything depends upon notions of purpose, it is possible to examine the meaning of the concept of utility in terms of its definitional criteria, construed as deductions from statements about purpose. If the purpose of knowledge in a curriculum is to develop the rational powers, then that knowledge which best develops rationality is most useful. Here utility has a specific meaning that can be employed in the cutting process demanded for the creation of any curriculum.

Of course, this formulation is based on an assumption about the role of purpose in creating curricula, that purpose should act as the controlling criterion in the selection of content for the curriculum,
As a result of examining fifty years of discourse in the field, this assumption might appropriately be called an ideology. Actually, purpose frequently fails to act as a controlling criterion, as becomes clear when the criteria determining the meaning of utility are explicated over the fifty years. What emerges quite forcefully in this explication is the fact that competing with purpose are the given categories of subject matter acting as controlling criteria. Thus, two sets of discourse, logically discrete, can be discerned in this study. Each of these separate bodies of thinking involve definitions of utility that can be employed in deciding what knowledge should constitute a curriculum.

Another finding of this effort to explicate the criteria of the concept of utility which emerges is that knowledge is defined in at least three different ways through the discourse of the fifty years. This finding also affects the meaning of utility. Before examining these definitions of knowledge, it is necessary to summarize what happens to the meaning of utility during the fifty years in each of the two sets of discourse described above. Then the way in which the concept is employed in relation to the various definitions of knowledge can be illustrated.

The literature dealing with purpose as a controlling criterion will first be summarized in terms of what happens to the concept of
utility. Then the meaning of utility in the discourse where subject matter acts as the controlling criterion will be reviewed. Finally, the three definitions of knowledge will be explained, along with the manner in which they relate to the two sets of discourse previously described.

1. Utility in the discourse where purpose is the controlling criterion

As soon as the curriculum field was born, the process of creating any curriculum was seen to begin with considerations about purpose. The publication of the Cardinal Principles, examined at the start of this study, is one of the important events in the history of purpose statements and their relation to the curriculum process. Here the responsibilities of the curriculum are expanded in a revolutionary manner, locating the process of selecting knowledge for the curriculum in an initial consideration of the purpose to be achieved. More than mere accretion and elimination of courses was demanded by such a statement, and thus the curriculum thinkers who father the field complain early about the ineffectiveness of mere "tinkering."¹

In the literature of the fifty years examined in this study, two substantive sources for statements about curricular purpose can be discerned: the society and the individual. These sources are approached by way of three different methods or points of view: the scientific, the axiological, and the political.

The scientific method concerned itself with the measurement of the two sources employing statistical techniques. From the axiological perspective, society and the individual were examined on the basis of a set of value judgments dealing with the ought instead of the is. Political approaches focused on the various national or international pressures being exerted upon both society and the individual.

The relationship that exists between the two substantive sources for purpose statements and the three methodological approaches to these sources can be illustrated by way of a grid (Chart 1). As stated previously, the definitional criteria for the concept are here construed as deductions from purpose statements. In effect, the grid provides a kind of paradigm for looking at a purpose and its relation to the concept of utility in curriculum discourse. Each cell of the grid contains a number of definitions for the concept, but these meanings are derived in the same manner. Basically, then,
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<tr>
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Cells A through F represent six methods of defining the concept of utility discernible in fifty years of curriculum discourse.
there are six methods for justifying knowledge in a curriculum that have developed over the fifty years of curriculum discourse sampled by this study.

Cell A represents those meanings of utility which derive from the scientific study of society. All the survey techniques and statistical analyses which are prevalent in the literature of the decade from 1918 to 1927 typify this approach to defining utility. Bobbitt and Charters define the concept primarily in these terms. *Curriculum-Making in Los Angeles* is the salient example of this kind of enterprise. The difference between Bobbitt and Charters arises from their use of the concept of knowledge rather than from their method of defining utility. What emerges as a real problem in analyzing the writings of these two thinkers is the relation which exists between Cell A and Cell B. When Bobbitt speaks about surveying life activities as they are evidenced in "high grade living," he is immediately involved in axiological issues. However, the relationship between the scientific method of viewing society and axiological considerations is never really clarified. In general, this science-value problem needs much further examination if the curriculum creator is to deal meaningfully with purpose in the process of creating curricula. There is need for much study on this issue alone.

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2NSSE, *Twenty-Sixth Yearbook*, Part II, 43.
The writings of Harold Rugg also illustrate the theoretical tension which results from an unexplicated relationship between Cells A and B. Rugg tends to approach society more in terms of Cell B, as he works toward some vision of the future by concentrating on "frontier thinkers" who deal with social issues. Yet he consistently emphasizes the need for a more scientific method of creating curricula.

The political viewpoint on society, represented by Cell C, causes utility to be defined in terms of various curriculum themes like manpower needs, consumer education, international understanding, and the defense of democracy. Often the definitions arising in this category become narrow and crisis-oriented. The decade between 1928 and 1937 stresses this approach to purpose because of the unrest of the depression as well as an increasingly chaotic international scene. The decade from 1938 to 1947, embracing the war years, likewise witnesses numerous definitions of utility based on themes which are essentially reactions to political pressures derived from the current social scene. Here again the relationship which ought to accrue between the political, axiological, and scientific methods of viewing

society for purpose statements fails to be established. This failure results in curricula based on a series of reactions to changing conditions in the society rather than any well formed theoretical action. The future seems to demand serious study of the role political factors ought to play in curricular definitions of utility. Such research needs to consider how scientific and axiological considerations are to be related to and influence these political concerns.

A final word in these considerations of the first substantive source for purpose statements needs to point up another research demand. The definition of society in curriculum discourse also needs clarification. Careful scrutiny of how this term is used in the literature should help to begin relating the three methodological approaches employed in the paradigm.

Cell D indicates the scientific approach to the individual as a way of creating a definition for the concept of utility. During the first decade of the study, Thorndike articulates this approach most clearly. The subsequent interest in learning theories based on a behaviorist methodology for the most part rests on this view of the individual. Utility comes to be defined here in terms of what is efficient and effective in producing desired responses. Usually the desired responses are assumed to derive from given categories of subject matter.
A different approach to the individual, concerned with axiological considerations, emerges in Cell E. A good deal of curriculum discourse falls in this category. Here theory questions the value underpinnings of behaviorism. Taba's *The Dynamics of Education* is the outstanding example of such questioning. The "activity movement," influenced by Kilpatrick, is based on a specific value position relative to the individual and his growth as a personality. Utility is thus defined in terms of the view of the human personality so assumed. The stress on rationality, so evident in the last decade from 1958 to 1967, also involves definite axiological elements in examining the individual. As with Cells A and B, Cells D and E need to be clearly examined in terms of their relationship to each other. In order to establish a definition of utility, the curriculum creator must clarify his value approach to the human personality and reconcile it with evidence available from scientific studies of the individual. The discourse of the past fifty years has not clarified this relationship, so that there are competing definitions of what is useful in relationship to the individual.

Cell F, the political approach to the individual, is closely related to Cell C as might be expected. When the individual is viewed in terms of political pressures and needs, what society demands often
becomes the basis for that which is defined as useful for the individual. Much of the literature on vocational education employs this meaning of utility, with insufficient consideration of other issues. The war years create definitions of utility which make political needs synonymous with those of the individual. Just what the relationship between the individual and society ought to be here emerges as another issue in need of clarification. Utility cannot be clearly defined without this relationship's being made specific.

In summarizing this set of discourse, where purpose is seen to be the controlling criterion for the selection of content, six separate methods for defining utility by way of criteria related to purpose emerge. These six methods are represented by the cells of the grid formed by relating the two substantive sources for purpose statements, the society and the individual, with three ways of approaching these sources—the scientific, the axiological, and the political. The margins of the grid are derived, of course, from the analysis of the discourse which has developed from 1918 to 1967.

A number of important theoretical problems arise as one examines the various definitions of utility which are characteristic of the cells. These problems deal primarily with the unexplicated relationships which exist between the methodological approaches, the substantive
approaches, and the relation of method to substance. In terms of the grid, all the elements in the margins need to be carefully studied to determine how they relate to each other. Definitions of the substantive areas also need to be clarified.

Finally, it must be made clear that this grid represents how utility is defined when purpose is viewed as the controlling criterion for curriculum making. As was stated previously, this is a definite ideology in the field, but it often fails to influence practice. Given categories of subject matter are frequently the actual controlling criteria, and the definitions of utility derived above have no controlling influence on the knowledge that goes into a curriculum. What happens many times is that purpose-related definitions of utility are applied within subject matter categories, so that the controlling definitions of what is useful is confined to the boundaries of given subject matters assumed to possess inherent values. This creates then two sets of discourse which are logically discrete in their relationships to knowledge.

2. Subject matter categories as controlling criteria

Attachment to traditional subject matter boundaries is evident throughout the literature of the curriculum field. It is present in
each of the decades examined in this study, and becomes quite strong in the last ten years with their emphasis on defining utility in terms of the disciplines of knowledge. Because of this attachment, the real starting point in the process of creating a curriculum becomes the given subject fields. Utility within these fields might be further defined by using some of the criteria derived from purpose statements; but essentially its meaning is based on the inherent value of subject areas. Even in real experimental attempts to create curricula based on utility defined by criteria derived from purpose statements about the individual, such as were characteristic of the Eight-Year Study, subject matters still often prevail as controlling elements. The Harvard Report on General Education in 1945 placed major emphasis on the discipline of knowledge, with utility defined almost entirely in these terms. This report seems to prophesy the direction which is later taken in emphasizing subject matter mastery during the decade, 1958-1967.

Thorough familiarity with a set of subject matter does not necessarily enable one to relate it to purposes beyond that subject matter. This fact confronts the educator with a serious question. Is the school and its curriculum to be responsible for anything more than expertise in subject matters or specialized skills? Historically, a great many statements respond to this query in the affirmative. The
body of discourse which deals with purpose and has been sampled in this study is concerned with numerous considerations that are beyond expertise. However, when one examines how utility is actually defined in curriculum discourse, the traditional categories of subject matter emerge as almost tyrannical in subduing the attempts of purpose considerations to exercise real control over the process of deciding what knowledge is useful. Thus, the two sets of discourse described by this study present the curriculum field with a most serious challenge as to how the curriculum development process is to be conceptualized.

The really important aspect of this second set of discourse, that seems to make subject matter boundaries nearly impenetrable as far as other purpose considerations are concerned, is that in such a context the curriculum process can never be more than a tinkering with a set of absolutes. The whole ideology of defining utility in terms of purpose considerations about society and the individual is here called into question. The difficulty also raises the problem of how knowledge is to be defined in curriculum discourse, and how the two discrete sets of discourse relate to these definitions. Part of the assumption that purpose ought to be the controlling criterion in the selection of knowledge for a curriculum is that knowledge is not limited to organized bodies of discrete subject matter.
3. The definitions of knowledge and their relation to utility

One of the most crucial problems to emerge in examining utility during fifty years of curriculum discourse is the variety of definitions for the word knowledge. At least three separate ways of defining knowledge are evident in the literature: knowledge as measurable behavior, knowledge as mental acts or concepts, and knowledge as subject matters. If these three ways of defining knowledge are then related to the two sets of discourse which define utility, another grid can be set up to show how various definitions of utility actually relate to knowledge. Such a grid helps to show how various meanings of utility, related to certain definitions of knowledge, have led to unique approaches to curriculum organization (Chart 2).

Cells A and D contain curricula created on the basis of pre-established behavioral objectives that can be quantified for evaluation purposes. The Tylerian rationale for curriculum development fits in both these categories and can be employed by both sets of discourse defining utility. It can be seen by means of the grid that such curricula employ the concept of utility in a quite limited manner, since only that knowledge which can be expressed by way of quantifiable behavior is said to exist. The problem of being able to consider definitions of utility based on considerations of purpose dealing
### CHART 2

**THREE METHODS OF DEFINING KNOWLEDGE AS THEY RELATE TO THE CONCEPT OF UTILITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitions of Knowledge</th>
<th>Measurable Behavior</th>
<th>Mental Acts or Concepts</th>
<th>Subject Matters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>-A-</td>
<td>-B-</td>
<td>-C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose as a Controlling Criterion</td>
<td>Behavioral Objectives as Controlling Criterion</td>
<td>Activity Curricula or the Concern with Mental Processes</td>
<td>Correlation Attempts, Broad Fields Approach, Some Core Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>-D-</td>
<td>-E-</td>
<td>-F-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Matter as a Controlling Criterion</td>
<td>Behavioral Objectives Derived from Subject Matters</td>
<td>Structure of the Disciplines Approach</td>
<td>Demise of Curriculum Thinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cells A through F represent the methods of relating the concept of utility to the definitions of knowledge discernible in fifty years of curriculum discourse.
with the individual's own unique values is quite puzzling in this context. Frequently, education occurs as a manipulative process in which behavioral objectives, formulated with little if any consideration of individual values, are imposed from without. When knowledge is only defined by way of measurable behavior, efficiency is enhanced but the individual may be processed by a system which is not essentially designed in his interests. Given the experience of the political pressures on the definition of utility, the dangers of employing the concept solely in the context where knowledge is defined in behavioral terms should be obvious.

Cells B and E apply utility to the realm of knowledge defined in terms of mental acts or concepts. Taba's criticism of the atomistic approach to knowledge characteristic of the behaviorist is especially relevant to Cell B. Some of the experiments of the advocates of core approaches to the curriculum would fit here also. Recent concern with the structures of the disciplines apply to Cell E, where knowledge is considered in a different context than is possible if one only speaks about quantifiable behavior. The relationship between these two ways of looking at knowledge is another area needing much attention in the curriculum field. Here clarification of the complex relationship between thought and action, being given so much attention by
British philosophers, could be of much assistance. This material needs to be studied in the context of employing utility in selecting knowledge for any curriculum.

Within Cell C, where knowledge is defined as subject matter, utility is used to create curricula on the basis of correlation attempts, the broad-fields approach, and much of the actual implementation of core programs in such projects as the Eight-Year Study. Here purpose considerations do have some control over selecting knowledge defined in terms of subject matters. Cell F would represent the most pedestrian approach to curriculum development and would, in effect, indicate the demise of any curriculum thinking. If subject matters act as controlling criteria and knowledge is defined solely in terms of subject matters, the curriculum becomes a mere congeries of facts to be committed to memory by rote. The relation of subject matter to both thought and action is an unexplored realm when it comes to defining knowledge, and also needs attention if utility as a concept is to be fruitfully employed in the process of selecting knowledge for a curriculum.

Thus, as one examines how utility as a concept is employed vis-à-vis the world of knowledge, three separate avenues to that world are discernible. There is no real clarity in the discourse about how these methods of defining knowledge relate to each other,
or of how utility should be employed with regard to the various definitions. Because of the current emphasis on the disciplines, which is a product of the decade, 1958-1967, most curriculum activity seems to be taking place in Cells D and E of the grid. This has occasioned a number of criticisms by people like Goodlad and Wilhelms about the loss of purpose as a controlling criterion in the selection of knowledge for the curriculum. Such criticisms lead to some reflections on what this analysis of the concept of utility implies for the future.

4. **Purpose considerations in an age of rationality**

In fifty years of curriculum discourse samples for this study, six methods of defining utility have been discerned. These methods arise by way of three different perspectives on the two substantive sources for purpose considerations, the society and the individual, on which curriculum thinking has focused in seeking to justify knowledge for inclusion into any curricular structure. The three different approaches to these two sources have been the scientific, the axiological, and the political. If these three perspectives on society and the individual are assumed in 1968, it is possible to confront the fundamental problems that face the curriculum thinker
today. Armed with the awareness of how utility has been employed in the discourse of the past, it should be possible to achieve some insight into the basic issues of the present.

There is a great deal of activity currently taking place in the examination of society and the individual from a scientific perspective. Sophistication in this realm has increased immeasurably; one has only to compare the frequency counts of library withdrawals or topic occurrences in periodicals so important in the early 1900's with the cybernetic models and systems analyses of the present. Behavioral objectives are being stressed in cybernetic models of evaluation that enhance efficiency immeasurably, or better, measurably. Economic analyses are being used for future prediction and control purposes. Neurophysiological approaches to brain study are contributing to a new kind of learning theory. Of course, all of these data are essential to one concerned with the curriculum.

From the axiological viewpoint, the young of this nation are involved in a kind of value upheaval. Nothing seems to stay put as more and more emphasis is placed on the generation gap. Sexuality, the use of consciousness expanding drugs, the racial issue, and the Viet Nam war have also created sub-cultures rooted in axiological differences to such an extent that it becomes difficult to talk about the youth of the nation in monolithic terms.
Politically, the school and its curriculum have been facing great pressures since the start of the fifties. The recent emphasis on the development of rational powers as the central purpose of the curriculum and the concomitant focus on the disciplines are both partly the result of political forces.

Thus, as the curriculum person faces his task today, he is confronted by a myriad of problems that relate to how he will define the concept of utility so as to embody a vision of purpose. Unless he defines the concept in terms of all three perspectives on the individual and society which have emerged as important in the field, his vision will be myopic. The past has seen the concept defined too much in terms of reactions to external pressures or on the basis of a narrow point of view. What is essential is that the curriculum thinker become historically self-conscious by being aware of the theoretical struggles of the past. If curriculum development is to rest on real theoretical action, it is necessary to determine how each of the perspectives on the sources of purpose relates. Likewise, it is necessary to determine how knowledge itself is to be considered and subsequently related to the concept of utility. For example, the concept of rationality is currently high in its influence on the definition of utility. This definition is then being related to knowledge
considered in terms of subject matter perceived as a discipline. Scholars or experts in these disciplines are closely involved in determining what is useful.

In terms of the two paradigms developed as a result of examining the history of the concept of utility, two sets of issues can be raised. First, what is known scientifically about the notion of rationality? What axiological position is assumed in viewing the individual as a "rational animal?" How much of the stress on rationality is the result of reactions to political events like Sputnik, the space race, etc.?

Second, what is the relation of the disciplines of knowledge to rationality? Or, more generally, what is the relation of the disciplines to the development of human personality? Is there a way of considering knowledge in a manner that transcends disciplinary boundaries? Can the curriculum thinker consider knowledge in its personal dimension, or must he confine himself to behavioral manifestations and subject matters?

5. Implications for further research

A final word might summarize the research needs pointed up by this study. First, the relationship between scientific and axiological considerations in curriculum discourse must be clarified. If
purpose is to continue to be important to curriculum thinking, this relationship must be made clear. Also, the manner in which political considerations are to be related to scientific and axiological data must be clarified. Careful study of the real influence political matters have had on curriculum discourse would be a service.

An entire series of studies tracing the definition of crucial terms in the curriculum field would enhance the field's use of language. This study has specifically pointed up the necessity to determine what is meant by the term society. Related to this is the need to make clear the manner in which we consider knowledge. The present makes this especially crucial with its stress on the disciplines, as well as behavioral objectives. Whether it is possible to consider knowledge in terms of personal, mental processes is a definite challenge to curriculum thinking today. Given the historical role which subject matter categories have played in the definition of utility in curriculum discourse, serious study must be done on the possibility of actually employing purpose as a controlling criterion. The exact nature of the relationship of purpose to subject matter categories needs to be explicated in terms of what is theoretically possible.
In general, a great many value issues are raised by this examination of the concept of utility in curriculum discourse. Much research in value theory as it relates to curriculum decisions is necessary if curriculum thinking is to be more than a victim of reactions. Throughout the process of creating a curriculum, one is faced with questions that demand a value stance. It is essential that the field become sophisticated in assuming the value positions it deems apropos on the basis of a growing self-consciousness and autonomy.

All of these issues relate to how purpose considerations are to be met, and subsequently to the manner in which utility is to be defined for tomorrow's curriculum. Thorough familiarity with the definitions developed in the past may provide clarity to the curriculum discourse of the future. Goodlad has remarked that the curriculum field, although young, has some useful lore. Indeed, there is some wisdom available to the field through close examination of its literature, the statements that contain the thinking of those who have faced the issues of the past. Hopefully, this wisdom as it accumulates can provide the curriculum thinker with more consciousness of the concepts he uses and the choices and challenges he must face.
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