

Towards an integrated curriculum: Squaring the circle

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‘The word "curriculum" is defined here in its broadest sense, to include all the relevant decision making processes of all the participants. The products of these decision making processes generally exist in some concrete form and can be observed and described: for example policy documents, syllabuses, teacher training programmes, teaching materials and resources, and teaching and learning acts.’

Johnson, R. K. (1989). A decision-making framework for the coherent language curriculum. In Johnson, R.K. (ed.) *The second language curriculum*. Cambridge University Press. p. 1.

With regard to educational systems, coherence requires that there is a harmonious relation among their components:

- the identification of needs;
- the determination of objectives;
- the definition of content;
- the selection or creation of material;
- the establishment of teaching /learning programmes;
- the teaching and learning methods employed;
- evaluation, testing and assessment.

Council of Europe (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge, p. 7.

‘Internal contradictions’ manifest themselves as tensions, e.g.

- between policy-makers and teachers:



plurilingualism!



English only!

Develop 'plurilingual competence'

Plurilingual competence as explained in the CEFR (Section 1.3) involves the ability to call flexibly upon an inter-related, uneven, plurilinguistic repertoire to:

- ▶ switch from one language or dialect (or variety) to another;
- ▶ express oneself in one language (or dialect, or variety) and understand a person speaking another;
- ▶ call upon the knowledge of a number of languages (or dialects, or varieties) to make sense of a text;...

CEFR Companion Volume with New Descriptors (Provisional Edition), p. 28

‘Wherever possible the languages offered in educational institutions should be diversified and curricula should allow them to be combined in a variety of ways.’

Language Policy Division, Strasbourg Ministry of National Education, Poland 2005
– 2007

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'I felt guilty because in Egypt we didn't allow the students to use Arabic at all and that was actually a challenge ... I actually caught myself a couple of times telling them, "Guys, please, here at the EAP programme, please English only, English only"'

Teacher quoted in Galante, A. (2020). "English-only is not the way to go": teachers' perceptions of plurilingual instruction in an English programme at a Canadian University.' *TESOL Quarterly*, 54 (4), p. 1001.

'Internal contradictions' manifest themselves as tensions, e.g.

- between owner/administrators and teachers



clients!



students!

‘Soon after arriving in my current directorship position, I referred to an incoming group of students as “clients” during a faculty meeting. Almost immediately, an instructor retorted, “They’re students not clients!”’

Litzenberg, J. (2020) “‘If I don't do it somebody else will’: covert neoliberal policy discourses in the decision-making processes of an intensive English programme .’ *TESOL Quarterly*, 54/4, p. 832.

‘The shift in higher education to market-based values has been accompanied by a similar shift in educational philosophies in which cooperative social ethics have been replaced by individualist, competitive business models.’

Litzenberg, J. (2020) “‘If I don't do it somebody else will’”: covert neoliberal policy discourses in the decision-making processes of an intensive English programme .’ *TESOL Quarterly*, 54/4, p. 832

‘Language teaching is increasingly prepackaged and delivered as if it were a standardised, marketable product [...] This commodifying ideology of language teaching and learning has gradually penetrated into school practices, turning teachers into “service providers”’.

Lin, A. (2013). ‘Toward paradigmatic change in TESOL methodologies: building plurilingual pedagogies from the ground up.’ *TESOL Quarterly*, 47/3, p. 525.

'Internal contradictions' manifest themselves as tensions, e.g.

- between policy-makers and exam boards:



fluency!



accuracy!

‘This new curriculum not only specifies the content for Japanese language instruction it also states that, in principle, English should be taught through the medium of English. [...] ...This policy creates a conflict for many English teachers as the curriculum is predicated on a communicative approach to language teaching that emphasises fluency, while the assessment system privileges declarative knowledge about language and privileges accuracy in the application of grammatical rules.’

Kirkpatrick , A. & Liddicoat A.J. (2017). Language education policy and practise in East and South-East Asia. *Language teaching* 50/2. p. 166

'Internal contradictions' manifest themselves as tensions, e.g.

- between examination bodies and teachers



communication!



exam results!

‘In many education systems the key question for students, teachers, parents, school administrators, and even inspectors is not, ‘Are students gaining in communicative competence?’ but, ‘Are they on course for the examination?’

Johnson, R. K. (1989). A decision-making framework for the coherent language curriculum.’ In Johnson, R. K. (ed.) *The second language curriculum*. Cambridge , p. 6.

‘They’re so worried about their exam, so...the way that you give them language has to be related to the exam...When it comes to reading it has to be reading texts similar to the exam. You teach them reading skills as much as you can and try and use vocab from the text but it all has to be related to the exam for them to really engage.’

Anderson, J. (2020) ‘Buying in’ to communicative language teaching: the impact of ‘initial’ certification courses on the classroom practices of experienced teachers of English. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching* 14(1).

‘What one finds is the continuous deskilling of teachers as so much of what they have to do is decided well in advance by examinations boards and inspectors who come to inspections with a clear profile of what constitutes good teaching.’

Gray, J. & Block, D. (2012) ‘The marketization of language teacher education and neoliberalism: characteristics, consequences and future prospects.’ In Block, D., Gray, J. & Holborrow, M. (eds) *Neoliberalism and applied linguistics*. Routledge. (p. 128)

'Internal contradictions' manifest themselves as tensions, e.g.

- between textbook writers and teachers



grammar!



skills!

‘The emphasis throughout the CEF is on how languages are *used* and what learners/users can do with the language – on language being action-based, not knowledge-based.’

Heyworth, F. (2004) ‘Why the CEF is important.’ In Morrow, K. (ed.) *Insights from the common European framework*. Oxford, p. 14 (emphasis added).

Contents

	GRAMMAR	VOCABULARY	PRONUNCIATION
1			
6 A Eating in...and out	present simple and continuous, action and non-action verbs	food and cooking	short and long vowel sounds
10 B Modern families	future forms: present continuous, <i>be going to</i> , <i>will / won't</i>	family, adjectives of personality	sentence stress, word stress
14 Practical English Episode 1	reacting to what people say		
2			
16 A Spending money	present perfect and past simple	money	o and or
20 B Changing lives	present perfect + <i>for / since</i> , present perfect continuous	strong adjectives: <i>exhausted, amazed</i> , etc.	sentence stress
24 Revise and Check 1&2			
3			
26 A Survive the drive	choosing between comparatives and superlatives	transport	/ʃ/, /dʒ/, and /tʃ/, linking
30 B Men, women, and children	articles: <i>a / an, the</i> , no article	collocation: verbs / adjectives + prepositions	/ə/, two pronunciations of <i>the</i>
34 Practical English Episode 2	giving opinions		

Latham-Koenig, C., Oxenden, C. & Lambert, J. (2018) *English File Intermediate (4th edition)* Oxford University Press

‘Internal contradictions’ manifest themselves as tensions, e.g.

- between trainers and teachers



‘Training in the techniques and procedures of a specific method is probably essential for novice teachers entering teaching, because it provides them with the confidence they will need to face learners and it provides techniques and strategies for presenting lessons.’

Richards , J. C. & Rodgers, T.S. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching (2nd edn)*. Cambridge University Press , p. 250.

‘If teachers are trained to believe that their survival depends on their being in total control of everything, how will they ever dare to risk sharing that control? How will they ever find out just how much learners can contribute to lessons?’

Allwright, D. & Hanks, J. (2009). *The developing language learner: An introduction to exploratory practise*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 61.

‘When a supervisor comes to observe, many teachers will choose activities and formats that are most conducive to the appearance of control, even if they are not the most beneficial pedagogically.’

Osborn (2006) cited in Crookes , G. (2009). *Values, philosophies, and beliefs in TESOL: making a statement*. Cambridge University Press. p. 210.

'Internal contradictions' manifest themselves as tensions, e.g.

- between (minority-group) teachers/learners and the mandated curriculum



inclusion!



shhh!

‘No curriculum is neutral: Each reflects a particular view of the social order, whether implicitly or explicitly.’

Auerbach, E.A & Burgess, D. (1985) ‘The hidden curriculum of survival ESL’, *TESOL Quarterly*, 19(3): 475.

‘What is excluded from curricula is as important in shaping students' perceptions of reality as what is included.’

op. cit: 480

‘Another teacher noted that, at some educational institutions, discussing gay perspectives or issues in the classroom is completely forbidden under any circumstances.

“I have friends who teach at [a nearby educational institution], and their administrative dictate is This is not to be discussed in the classroom . So the teachers aren't allowed to bring it up as a topic, and they're ... [in] a gay neighbourhood. So the students walk outside the door and see men holding hands... They're a block from a gay bar! ... [But] they have a conservative administration They see it as promoting a lifestyle”.’

'Internal contradictions' manifest themselves as tensions, e.g.

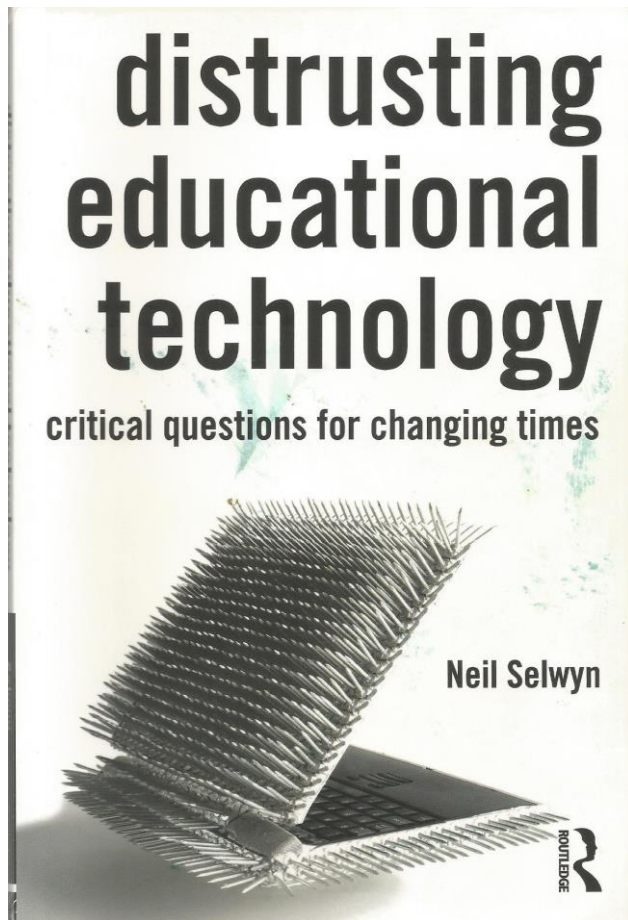
- between policy makers and everyone else!



innovation!



fad!



Techno-fundamentalism: 'a straightforward enchantment with technology and desire to benefit from continued technological progress.'

Selwyn, N. (2014) *Distrusting educational technology: Critical questions for changing times*, London: Routledge, p. 37.

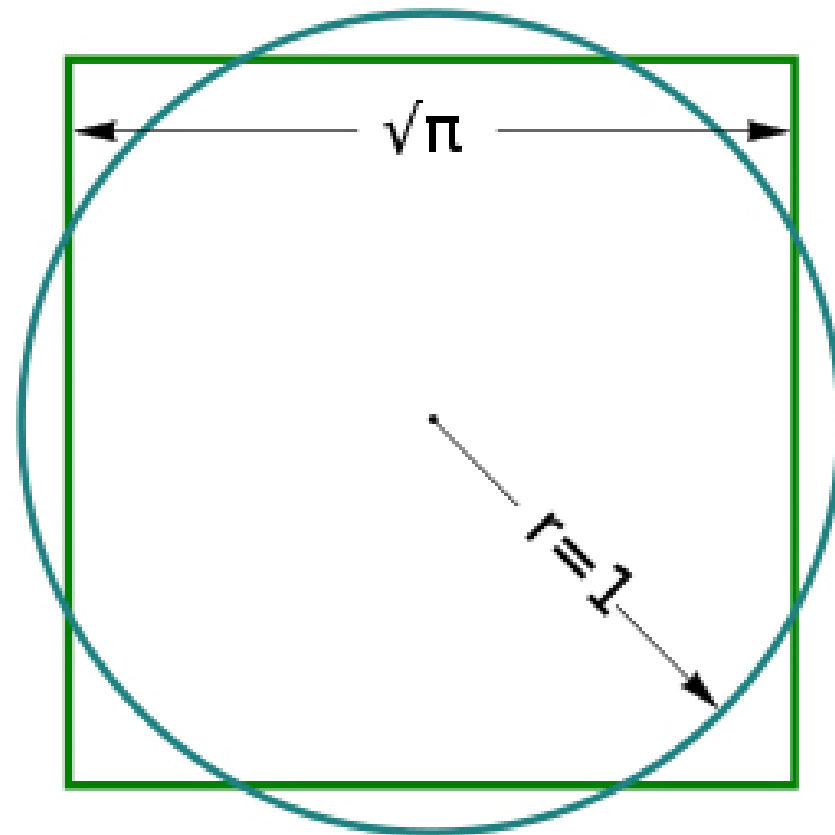
‘This cycle of *hype, hope* and *disappointment* is perhaps the biggest lesson to be learned from the 20th century.’

Selwyn, N. (2011) *Education and Technology: Key Issues and Debates*, London: Continuum, p. 59.

‘Ministers of education are politicians, not pedagogues. Indeed, they may know very little about the process of education; their task is to make political rather than pedagogical decisions.’

Ashworth, M. (1985). *Beyond methodology: second language teaching and the community*. Cambridge University Press . p. 93.

So, how do we square the circle?



- collaboration
- communication
- professionalization

Collaboration

‘Achieving and maintaining coherence requires the active engagement and co-operation of all participants throughout the life of a curriculum. The process depends upon good will, but it also requires the existence of organisational structures which facilitate its achievement and can then sustain it.’

Richards, op. cit, p. 12.

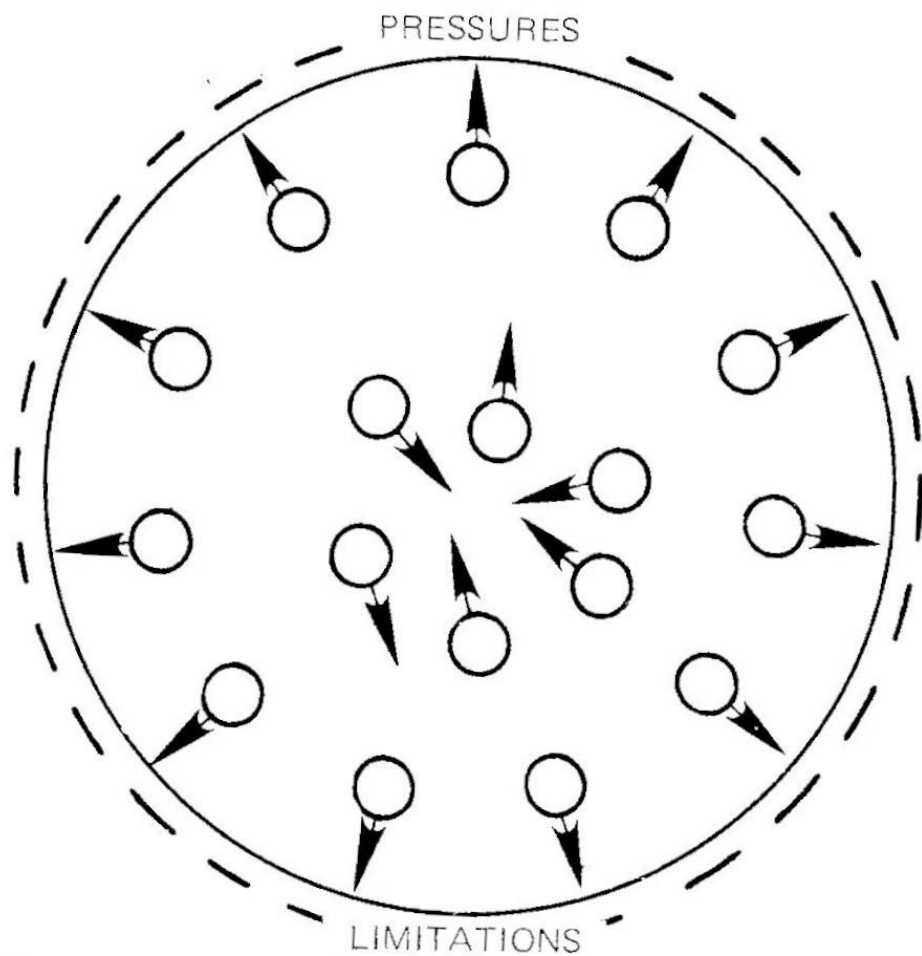


Figure 11.2 The frustrated organization

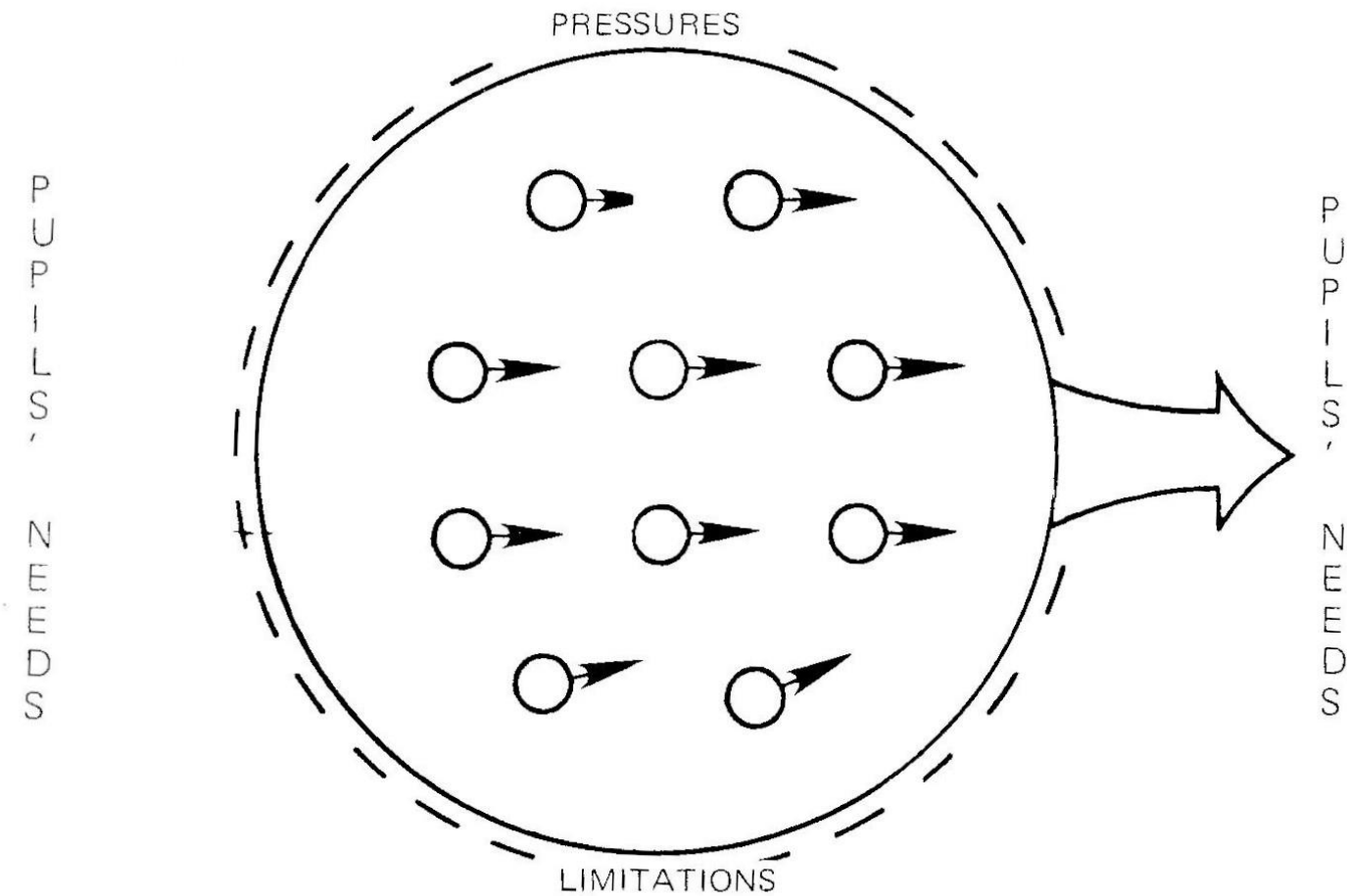


Figure 11.3 The purposeful organization

from Everard, K.B. & Morris, G. (1985) *Effective school management*. London: Paul Chapman, p. 139.

Communication

‘No amount of central curriculum planning ... will make significant changes in what is learned, if school communication systems remain unchangedA culture which reduces pupils to passive receivers of knowledge is likely to reduce teachers to passive receivers of curricula, and deny them the time and resources that would enable them to take active responsibility.’

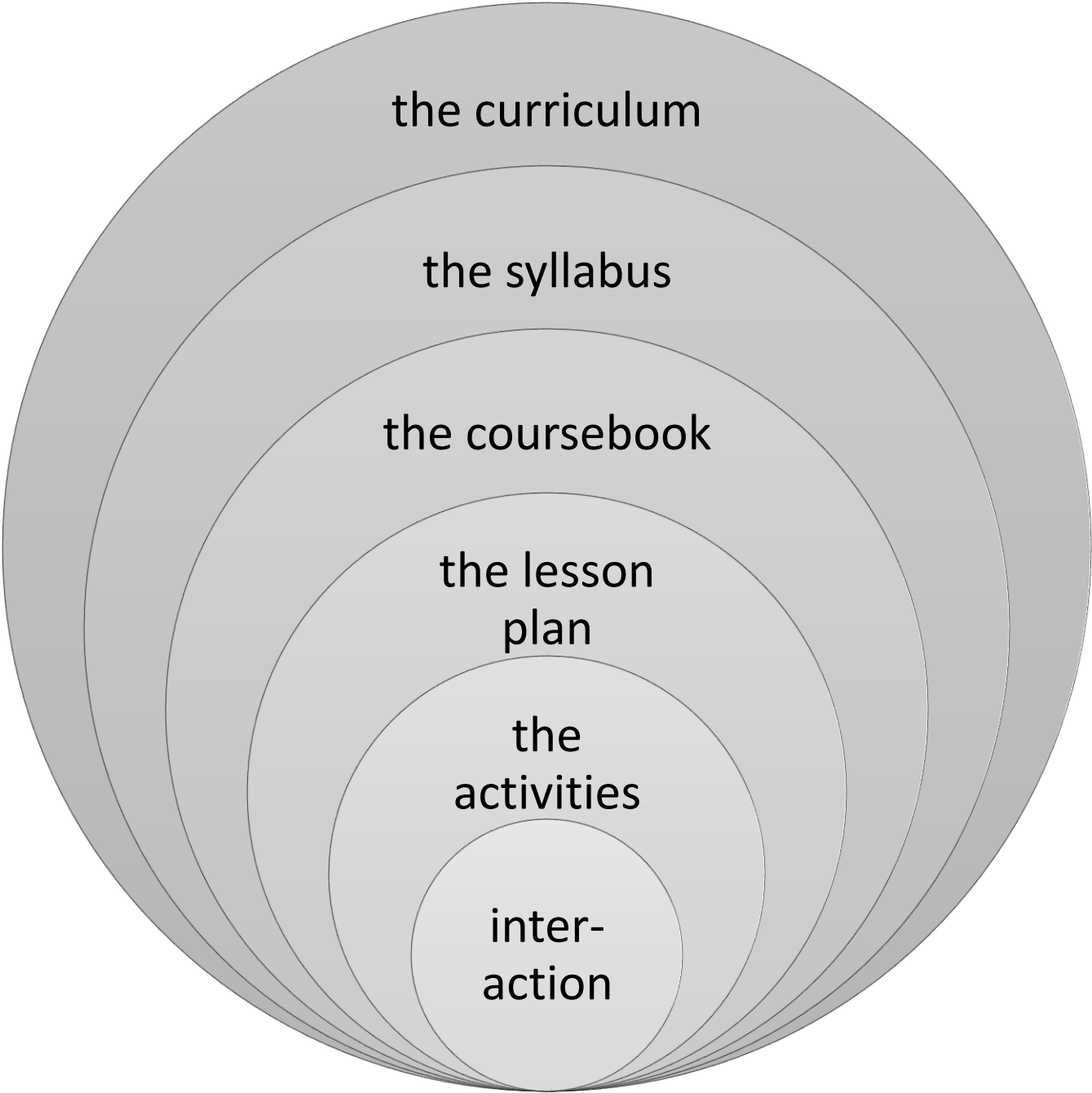
Barnes, D. (1976) *From communication to curriculum*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, p. 188.

Professionalization:

‘The strength of the profession results from the sum of the attitudes and actions of individual teachers.’

Ashworth, op. cit, p. 71.

What do individual teachers have some control over?



the curriculum

the syllabus

the coursebook

the lesson
plan

the
activities

inter-
action

‘The social history of classroom talk, which has prioritised authoritative discourse on the part of the teacher, combined with the mechanistic view of teaching enshrined in much government education policy, creates its own inertia, and it requires a conscious effort on the part of teachers to overcome this.’

Skidmore, D. (2016). ‘Authoritative versus internally persuasive discourse.’ In Skidmore, D. & Murakami, K. (Eds.) *Dialogic pedagogy: the importance of dialogue in teaching and learning*. Bristol : Multilingual Matters, p. 167.

‘Keep the number of display questions to a minimum. The more genuine the requests for information, the more natural the discourse.’

Kramsch, C. (1985). Classroom interaction and discourse options. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 7, 169-183

Pay attention to the message of students' utterances rather than to the form in which they are cast (...). Keep your comments for later.

Make extensive use of natural feedback (“hmm,/interesting/I thought so too”) rather than evaluating and judging every student utterance following its delivery (“fine/good”). Do not overpraise.

Kramsch, C. (1985). Classroom interaction and discourse options. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 7, 169-183

‘Curriculum innovation ... can only come about through a fundamental change in the way educators and students interact with one another [...] Reform thus occurs from the bottom up, one pedagogical action at a time.’

van Lier, L. (1996) *Interaction in the language curriculum: awareness, autonomy & authenticity*. Harlow: Longman, p. 158



Thanks!

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