Understanding the School Curriculum: Theory, politics and principles

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At a time of rapid social change and numerous policy initiatives, there is a need to question the nature and function of school curricula and the purposes of formal public education. Comparing curriculum developments around the globe, *Understanding the School Curriculum* draws on a range of educational, philosophical and sociological theories to examine the question 'What is a curriculum for?' In considering different answers to this fundamental question, it explores a range of topical issues and debates, including:

• tensions and dynamics within curriculum policy

• The implications of uncertainty and rapid social change for curriculum development

• the positive and negative influence of free market ideologies on public education

• the impact of globalization and digital technologies

• arguments for and against common core curricula and state control

It examines the possibility of a school curriculum that is not shaped and monitored by dominant interests but that has as its founding principles the promotion of responsibility, responsiveness, a love of learning, and a sense of wonder and respect for the natural and social world.

Understanding the School Curriculum is for all students following undergraduate and Masters courses in curriculum, public policy and education-related subjects. It is also for all training and practising teachers who wish to combine a deeper understanding of major curriculum issues with a critical understanding of the ways in which ideologies impact on formal state education, and to consider ways of producing school curricula that are appropriate to the times we live in.

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