

CONCEPTS AND  
STRUCTURE  
IN THE  
NEW  
SOCIAL SCIENCE  
CURRICULA

IRVING MORRISSETT, EDITOR

Based on a conference sponsored by the Social Science Education Consortium

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AND  
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Based on a Conference at Purdue University,  
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## FOREWORD

This book presents an excellent example of how two of the major purposes of the Social Science Education Consortium can be carried out. One of these purposes is the stimulation of an active dialogue among social scientists, with the purpose of supporting and guiding education in a search for the most appropriate learning materials and learning designs to offer teachers and students—materials and designs that will make the current and developing resources of the social sciences available for the construction of elementary and secondary curricula.

The second purpose furthered by the book is the development of mutual understanding and collaboration between the scientists and the educational specialists, to provide a bridge between the frontiers of social science knowledge and the learning experiences of pupils.

We believe that the book makes substantial progress in these two areas, and also illustrates and clarifies a number of additional potentialities and problems of social science education. For example, the necessity of coping with issues and methods related to values in education is revealed and fruitfully explored, and the usefulness of involving philosophers of science in the dialogue becomes apparent. Also, problems of the relationship of the other social sciences to history and geography are confronted openly and productively.

The Consortium sees the encouragement of this type of reflective inquiry as a top priority, supplementing its general concern for better liaison among curriculum development projects, for dissemination of information about curriculum resources, for exploring the issues in teacher education, and for promoting sound procedures for curriculum evaluation. We express our deep appreciation to all those who moved us a firm step forward through their thoughtful participation in the conference on which this book was based.

*Ann Arbor, Michigan*

*October 1967*

Ronald Lippitt, President  
Social Science Education Consortium, Inc.

## CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

Samuel Arbutal, Curriculum  
Coordinator  
History and Social Sciences  
Board of Education, City of New York

Donald Austin, Principal  
Leavitt Avenue Elementary School  
Flossmoor, Illinois

James Barth, Professor  
Education Department  
Purdue University

Harold Berlak, Assistant Director  
Metropolitan St. Louis Social Studies  
Center  
Washington University

Betty Cacioppo, Teacher  
University of Chicago Laboratory  
School

William Crowder, Professor  
Education Department  
Purdue University

Katherine Elbring, Secretary  
Social Science Education Consortium

Mary Endres, Director  
Purdue Educational Research Center

Raymond English, Program Director  
Greater Cleveland Social Science  
Program

Joseph Featherstone, Research  
Associate  
Educational Services, Incorporated

Herbert Feigl, Director  
Minnesota Center for Philosophy of  
Science  
University of Minnesota

Edwin Fenton, Co-Director  
Carnegie Institute of Technology  
Curriculum Development Center

William Gardner, Director  
Minnesota National Laboratory  
University of Minnesota

John S. Gibson, Acting Director  
Lincoln Filene Center  
Tufts University

Jack Grantham, Professor  
Social Studies Division  
Indiana State University

Peter Greco, Professor  
Geography Department  
Syracuse University

Robert Hanvey, Director of  
Curriculum Research  
Anthropology Curriculum Study  
Project

William Hering, Jr.  
Assistant to the Director  
Sociological Resources for Secondary  
Schools

Robert Horton, Professor  
Economics Department  
Purdue University

Oscar Jarvis, Elementary Curriculum  
Specialist  
Anthropology Curriculum Project  
University of Georgia

Sylvia Jones  
Secondary Social Studies Teacher  
Oxford, England

Robert Jozwiak, Principal  
Burtfield Elementary School  
West Lafayette, Indiana

Ella Leppert, Director  
Social Science Curriculum Center  
University of Illinois

Edward Lerner  
Social Studies Editor  
Science Research Associates

Robert McNee, Head  
Department of Geography  
University of Cincinnati

Ann Manheim, Junior Editor  
High School Geography Project

Gerald Marker, Coordinator of School  
Social Studies  
Indiana University

Judy Miller, Teacher  
Spoede Elementary School  
St. Louis, Missouri

Sister Mercedes Moore, Teacher  
St. Scholastica High School  
Chicago, Illinois

Franklin Morley, Curriculum Director  
Ladue (St. Louis), Missouri

Irving Morrissett, Executive Director  
Social Science Education Consortium  
Chairman of the Conference

Harold Negley, President-Elect  
Indiana Council for the Social Studies

John Nelson, Chairman  
Secondary Education  
Purdue University

Roland Payette, Research Associate  
Social Science Curriculum Center  
University of Illinois

Nona Plessner  
Senior Curriculum Coordinator  
Educational Services, Incorporated

William Rader, Director  
Elementary School Social Studies  
Industrial Relations Center  
University of Chicago

Joseph Rueff, Coordinator  
Economic Education Project  
Elkhart (Ind.) School City

Galen Saylor, President  
Association for Supervision and  
Curriculum Development  
University of Nebraska

Terry Schurr, Research Associate  
Social Science Teaching Institute  
Michigan State University

Michael Scriven, Professor  
History and Philosophy of Science  
Indiana University

Malcolm Searle, Executive Assistant  
National Council for the Social Studies

Lawrence Senesh, Professor  
Economics Department  
Purdue University

Peter R. Senn, Consultant  
School of Education  
Northwestern University

James Shaver, Professor  
College of Education  
Utah State University

Irving Sigel, Chairman of Research  
Merrill-Palmer Institute of Human  
Development and Family Life

Margot Silverman  
Assistant Supervisor of Social Studies  
Dade County Public Schools  
Miami, Florida

Charles Smock, Professor  
Psychology Department  
Purdue University

Irving Sosensky, Professor  
Philosophy Department  
Purdue University

Robert Stake, Associate Director  
CIRCE  
University of Illinois

John Stinespring, Chairman  
Social Studies Department  
Elkhart (Ind.) High School

W. W. Stevens, Jr.  
Visiting Research Associate  
Social Science Education Consortium

Stowell Symmes, Staff Associate  
Developmental Economic Education  
Program

Hilda Taba, Professor  
School of Education  
San Francisco State College

George Vuicich, Assistant Director  
High School Geography Project

Robert Winters, Chairman  
Social Studies Department  
Scottsdale, Arizona

## PREFACE

Most of the new social science curriculum projects have begun their work with an intensive and sometimes prolonged study of the subject matter to be included in the curriculum. A number of outstanding scholars in the various social sciences have participated in these inquiries. Thus far, little information has been made available—to other projects or to schools and teachers—about the outcome of these studies. Further, there is no assurance that there will be any general dissemination of the results of these labors, other than in an implicit form when the final materials are published.

The Social Science Education Consortium has felt for some time that there could be great value in an early exchange of ideas among project workers about approaches taken to social science content in the new curricula. Such an exchange was the task proposed for the conference on which this book is based, in the hope that it would contribute to the improvement of the large and growing amount of academically-based curriculum work, by cross-fertilization of disciplines and projects, and by sharpening both hindsight and foresight on the best approaches to curriculum content.

Responses to invitations to the conference were enthusiastic, and reactions of participants after the conference, both verbal and written, were still more enthusiastic. I think these responses can be attributed largely to the great need that is felt for confrontations of the kind that were possible at the conference—among curriculum project people, social scientists, university educators, teachers, curriculum directors, and school administrators. I hope this record of the meeting has captured, in readable form, the expositions and the confrontations that made the conference rich and memorable for those who attended it.

The presentations made at the conference were subjected to some revisions, mostly stylistic, by the editor and the authors. Chapter 1 was not given as a speech at the conference; it represents my own view of the conference theme, put together from thinking during the planning stages of the conference, preliminary notes to conference participants, introductory remarks at the conference, and reflections following the conference.

Providing a record of the conference discussions posed the greatest problem for the editor. The decision to present it in dialogue form

was influenced primarily by a reluctance to bury colorful phrases and clashing opinions in indirect discourse. The price of this color is paid in occasional discontinuities that shoot off like tracks in a cloud chamber. But as conference chairman, the editor was able to exercise some *ad hoc* control over the discussion, and, as editor of this book, he could add *post hoc* control – mostly to reduce the volume of words and, to a lesser extent, rearrange content.

### The Structure of the Book

The planning of the book is best indicated by topics of the authors: a major emphasis on cognitive content and its structuring (Chapters 2, 3, 5, 6, 10 and 11); an important secondary emphasis on values as content in the curriculum (Chapters 13 and 14); and tertiary emphasis on the processes of learning (Chapter 8). The importance of conference participants other than the speaker-authors – curriculum project people, classroom teachers, principals, social scientists, university educators, and philosophers – is indicated by the space allotted to dialogues distilled from the conference (the “Round Table” chapters – 4, 7, 9, 12, and 15.)

My work in editing this book has left me with a profound respect for the contributions made by speakers and other participants in two days of open and soul-searching communication. Participants were not unwilling to stay with the topic – the content of social science curricula – but they also insisted on recognition of the relationship of content to the whole educational enterprise of which it is only one part. The overall result was, to my mind, close to ideal: a concentration on the particular part of education designated as the conference theme, with enough reminders of important related matters to keep our feet on the ground.

### Content, Processes and Values

The most persistent theme of the conference discussions was the relationship between substantive content, learning processes, and values. This matter was the main topic in the first discussion (Chapter 4), and recurred later in various forms. The sharpest conflict was over the relationship between content and processes. Differences appeared, not over whether there should be content or process, but over the relationship between them and the emphasis on each. Several arguments were given for emphasizing process rather than content. One was that formal education can never

cover all the educational needs that may arise in the future of a particular individual; therefore, it is necessary for students to learn how to learn, so that they may meet their own educational needs as they arise after formal schooling is completed. Another argument, stated by a developmental psychologist, was that the division of knowledge into subject areas is arbitrary, and subject to change; therefore, it is more valuable for children to learn how to learn than it is to learn particular content that is tied to particular disciplines whose boundaries may be quite different in the future (Sigel, pp. 42-3). A third argument for stressing the processes of learning rather than content was that the content of knowledge is changing so rapidly—an estimate of a “half-life” of fifteen years for today’s knowledge was mentioned—that the waste of obsolescence can be avoided only by a stress on learning how to learn (Hering, 41; Senesh, 40; Taba, 39; McNee, 69).

The discussion of processes included several related ideas—discovery, inductive learning, inquiry, and problem solving, which receives the most explicit discussion. Despite widespread approval for processes of this kind in preference to the more familiar didactic methods, questions were raised. An educator said that much of the devotion to process is lip-service, not backed up in curriculum designs (Shaver, 41-2). Others pointed out that “problem solving” is in need of better definition (Berlak, 69; Taba, 69), and that, in any case, it has not been shown that problem-solving ability is something that carries over from one subject to another (Berlak, 69). *Inquiry* as a process was also examined. The suggestion that inquiry may be a gimmick to get the children to plan what teachers have already decided they should do (Marker, 112-3) was answered with the declaration that some inquiry problems are genuinely open-ended (Featherstone, 113), although there must be a certain amount of prescreening and structuring of experiences (Lerner, 113; Plessner, 114).

Long before the planned presentations of value issues, questions about values in the curriculum arose. Participants were reluctant to discuss the substantive content and the processes of social science education without including values (Fenton, 44; Berlak, 44), and various complex relationships within the triangle of content-processes-values were noted. For example, there are important questions about methods or processes of dealing with values, just as there are questions about processes of dealing with substantive content (Berlak, 44). Value may be attached to analytical processes, such as valuing results derived from inquiry over those derived

from authority (Fenton, 67); and values may be influenced by the content that is selected for study (Fenton, 44, 46; Hering, 45).

Value issues arose throughout the conference, and took the center of the stage in the final discussion session. It would serve no purpose to try to summarize the spirited discussions here, but the major issues can be pointed up.

One issue was the role of rationality in values. In one of the most intriguing exchanges of the conference, the view that most, and perhaps all, value issues can be resolved on rational grounds (Scriven, Chapter 14 and pp. 142-6) was sharply contested (Feigl, Chapter 2 and pp. 147-8; Shaver, 117, 120).

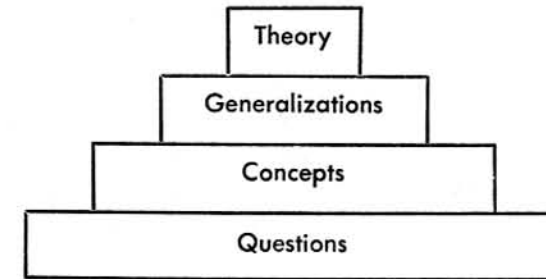
There did not seem to be much question that values should be related in some way to the social studies, but there were differences as to whether teaching about values is usually associated with the social studies as a matter of convenience (McNee, 138-9; Shaver, 139-40) or because it is an integral part of the social sciences (Scriven, 140).

The question of "indoctrination" also arose naturally in the discussion of values. There seemed to be little question that some form of inculcation of values and attitudes belongs somewhere in our educational system. Whether the inculcation should be accomplished mainly through rational processes in the context of particular social studies problems (Senesh, 72-3), through learning experiences particularly planned for training in values (Scriven, 128-30, 131-2; Taba, 133; Shaver, 134-5), or in various contexts not particularly related to social studies (Feigl, 140) was not settled.

There was also some discussion of what types of values it is permissible to teach. According to one view, teaching proper classroom behavior and proper attitudes about inquiry are permissible objectives of inculcation, but teaching substantive values, e.g. democracy is better than communism, is not (Fenton, 67).

## Content

Around the central theme of the conference, many controversies swirled, related to the components of social science content. What is the relationship of history and geography to the (other?) social sciences—as a matter of human knowledge and in the construction of curriculum patterns? It appeared that the philosopher's invitation to history to join the science club (Feigl, 19-20) was implicitly but firmly rejected. Taking a little freedom with the philosopher's schema (Feigl, 20), one can describe his hierarchy as follows.



This is a hierarchy in which one goes *up* from questions, through concepts and generalizations, to the capstone of theory. The historian ignored theory entirely (Fenton, Chapter 5), denigrated generalizations (52), found a little utility in concepts (52-3), and settled on questions as "the heart of history" (53-4). He was determined to *descend* the philosopher's ladder!

I have distorted the picture to make my point. Professor Feigl did not put "questions" at the bottom of his hierarchy, and I am sure he would stress the importance of good questions in scientific inquiry. Professor Fenton talked about *analytical* questions, and stressed the importance of discovering and using the right questions. But he also said that "each historian has his own list" of questions. Where, then, can one hope to find some convergence in the thinking and findings of historians? Scientists seek convergence in verified theories; what is the common ground sought by historians? It did look very much as though history was declining philosophy's invitation to join the sciences.

Regarding its relationship to science, geography's position was a little more equivocal than that of history. The mention of earth science, location theory, cultural geography, and political geography (McNee, 61) indicate a willingness to flirt with the sciences, both natural and social. But the emphasis on key questions (57) and research traditions (58), and the establishment of criteria for membership in the geographers' "tribe" on the basis of shared methods and values, shows a reluctance to consummate the flirtation.

## The Place of the Social Sciences

On the question of where the social sciences fit into the total curriculum, as reported in the conference, both anthropology (Hanvey, 95-6) and sociology (Hering, 65-6) have a strategy of infiltration in established courses, and a number of other projects are known to have a similar strategy, with United States history, world



history, civics, government, and problems of democracy as the main guerilla targets. Economics at the elementary level, "orchestrated" with other social sciences in the "organic curriculum," is aimed at replacement of existing social studies curricula (Senesh, Chapter 3 and pp. 41, 67-8). Questions were raised, not in the defense of the displaced subjects, but about crowding the curriculum with new and perhaps more demanding subject matter (Hering, 66; Senn, 87).

In a defense of "social studies" against the intrusion of the social sciences, the question was also raised as to whether the structure of the social sciences should play any independent role in the social studies, or only serve as a source of whatever content the general educator wishes to use (Shaver, 122-4). A social scientist who was among the strongest advocates of using the structure of the disciplines did not feel that the structure must be presented to the children, particularly in the elementary grades. He argued for a structure as an essential element in the training of teachers, to give them a firm foundation for using curriculum materials based on the disciplines. He stated that as children move into the secondary grades, more and more structure of the disciplines can be introduced explicitly (Senesh, 46). Some strong approval for this approach was expressed (Fiegl, 48-9).

### Other Problems

The nature and utility of behavioral objectives were discussed. Behavioral objectives were viewed as useful aids in establishing and testing goals of learning in the realms of values, learning skills, and substantive content (Fenton, 65); and there was a reminder of the history of thought about behavioral objectives (Taba, 66). But some confusion crept in when behavioral objectives seemed to be put in a position of conflict with content objectives (Sigel, 65; Taba, 66) and with inquiry processes (Stake, 71). It appears that the confusion arose out of two meanings attributed to the term "behavioral objectives." On the one hand, it may indicate the kinds of behavior that a learner must exhibit in order to show that he has learned what he was supposed to learn. The learning that is specified and tested may be of content, process, or values. Used in this way, behavioral objectives refers to a way of specifying whether learning has taken place; it does not refer to the substance of what is to be learned (although the process of specifying behavioral objectives in this sense may have some beneficial side

effects in the form of clarifying the substance and improving the teaching methods).

On the other hand, behavioral objectives may refer to certain parts of the subject to be learned, particularly to the learning of behavior related to values and processes, in contrast to knowledge about values and processes. The ambiguity could be avoided by using the terms "objectives stated in terms of behavior that will demonstrate the learner's accomplishment of the objectives" for the first meaning, and "objectives related to changing the behavior of the learner" for the second. An alternative to such clumsy phraseology would be some agreed-upon shorthand expressions, such as *behaviorally-stated objectives* and *behavior objectives*, respectively.

The importance of evaluation was recognized and discussed briefly (Senn, 114; Plessner, 114; Featherstone, 114), and the inadequacy of our knowledge recognized (Sigel, 114); but the matter was left mainly for future consideration (Senesh, 150). Strong pleas were made for better and fuller rationales for particular curriculum materials (Fenton, 73; Berlak, 88-9; Lerner, 93-4) as guides to evaluation and as aids to schools and teachers who must establish priorities and choose materials.

The lack of communication between professional educators and content specialists was noted with regret, and with the hope that conferences such as this one would help to bridge the gap (Taba, 90; Senesh, 68, 151).

The great need for teacher training programs to parallel the development of new curricula was noted (Fenton, 73; Hering, 75), bringing forth much information about how some of the needs of teacher training are being met and, incidentally, giving thumbnail sketches of a number of the important curriculum projects not otherwise reported at the meeting. Useful information about teacher training was reported from the Lincoln Filene Center at Tufts University (Gibson, 74), the Educational Research Council of Greater Cleveland (English, 75), the Developmental Economic Education Project of the Joint Council on Economic Education (Symmes, 76), and from activities of school systems in Salt Lake City (Shaver, 76), New York City (Arbital, 76-7), and Dade County (Miami), Florida (Silverman, 77).

One of the most useful aspects of the conference was the confrontation between the curriculum project people and the teachers. "Don't underestimate the classroom teacher," the conference was told, in effect. "Give her credit for intelligence and give her elbow room." (Miller, 92-3; Morley, 66.) "The experts don't own the educational enterprise," warned an educator, "they work for it."

(Searle, 93.) But the conference was also reminded that many teachers are less able and need more help than the kind of teachers who have the initiative and opportunities that enable them to attend a conference of this sort (Lerner, 93-4).

The need to take account of the requirements and capabilities of the child was considered at some length in one of the presentations (Sigel, Chapter 8), and a spirited disagreement developed later over the question of whether the needs of the child are being met in the development and implementation of the new curricula (Taba, 90; Saylor, 91-2; Fenton, 91; Payette, 91-2).

There were a number of expressions during the conference of the value of Consortium activities like the one reported here. Such activities are instrumental in establishing better communication among relevant groups that communicate too infrequently (Taba, 47-8) and in improving coordination among different parts of the process of curriculum development and implementation (Fenton, 73). Several important topics on which the Consortium might focus in future conferences were suggested, including teaching training, evaluation, dissemination, and inductive processes.

### Acknowledgments

I am grateful to several conference participants for their assistance in editing various parts of the proceedings; to all of the speakers and other participants for their prompt help in clarifying, approving and occasionally elaborating the remarks attributed to them by the tape recorder; and to Professor Terry Denny of Purdue University for a thoughtful reading of the entire manuscript, which eliminated many errors of both substance and style.

October 1967

Irving Morrissett

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THE  
NEW  
SOCIAL SCIENCE  
CURRICULA

Irving Morrisett  
Purdue University

# The New Social Science Curricula

## CHAPTER 1

### Concepts

A concept is an abstraction—an idea generalized from particular cases. Abraham Kaplan has described a concept as “a prescription for organizing the materials of experience so as to be able to go about our business. . . . What makes a concept significant is that the classification it institutes is one into which things fall, as it were, of themselves. It carves at the joints, Plato said.”<sup>1</sup> A useful concept should identify a cluster of properties that usually go together and that have a meaningful relationship to each other. An example of a concept that is not very useful is “epilepsy,” a term that groups a number of particular instances that have only the superficial symptom of seizures in common, and that differ in their more significant characteristics. This example suggests that concepts may serve purposes beyond that of mere description. We want a definition that “carves at the joint,” for example, so that the dinner host, employing the concept of “thigh” to guide his attack on the roast chicken, will avoid chopping at the midpoint of the femur.

Concepts are commonly used in constructing curricula. When the objectives of a curriculum or a unit are stated, the understanding of certain ideas, or concepts, is usually included. The listing is selective: “Key” ideas or concepts are chosen. The objectives may include, for example, an understanding of “measurement,” “society,” “fairness,” “subtraction,” or “economic system.” Whether the concepts are useful depends on something beyond their customary acceptance and their teachability; it depends on their relationship to a larger body of knowledge.

Concepts are the basis for any scheme of classification. Classification, or taxonomy, is a prominent part of every curriculum, particularly in the early grades. It is important for teachers and children to understand the role that concepts and classifications play in learning. Concepts and classifications are the building blocks of knowledge. "Every taxonomy," Kaplan wrote, "is a provisional and implicit theory."<sup>2</sup>

### Structure

Structure is the arrangement and interrelationship of parts within a whole. A structure can refer to the relationship of concepts to each other; for example, the concepts "economic system" and "political system" may be related to each other in a structure called a "social system." Conversely, a concept may itself have a structure. The concept "economic system" can also be thought of as a structure, having component concepts such as "money" and "spending" which are structurally related to each other.

A typical social studies unit has a list of objectives to be achieved, or understandings to be learned. I have frequently applied to these lists what I call "the shuffle test for structure." The test is applied by shuffling the individual items in the list and then making a judgment about whether anything was lost in the process. If there is no noticeable difference in the usefulness of the list after the shuffling, the test indicates that the original list was without structure. Whether a lack of structure in the list of objectives means that there is a corresponding lack of structure in the materials themselves can be debated; it can also be investigated. I suspect that failure to pass the shuffle test frequently indicates that the accompanying curriculum materials contain isolated, unstructured pieces of content.

The ordering of units within a social studies course may also fail to pass the shuffle test, though perhaps less frequently than is the case with the objectives of a unit. If units are ordered chronologically, as in many history courses, the structure will be lost in the shuffle test; but it is an open question whether chronological ordering provides a useful structure. Units may also be ordered according to the spiral theory, one version of which says that children learn best if they start with content closest to themselves and move outward into the wide world.

What is new in "the new social studies curricula" is increasing emphasis on a new kind of structure that is different from chro-

nology and from the spiral theory. The new structure is the scientific structure of the social science disciplines.

### Theory

A theory is a general statement about relationships among facts. The facts that are a part of a theoretical statement are not isolated facts, but idealized facts; they have been organized into concepts. A theory is a structure of concepts; it states a relationship—often a causal relationship—among the concepts. A theory is something more than a structure; it is an explanation of how a structure works.

It was a great insight of Kant that "concept formation and theory formation go hand in hand."<sup>3</sup> Concepts are the building blocks of theories, and therefore good theories depend on good concepts. To pursue the analogy of Plato with which we began, it would be difficult to devise a good theory about the mechanics of how a chicken runs without the concept of "joint." But the discovery of good concepts is, conversely, dependent on good theories. At the risk of pursuing the poultry analogy too far, we can note that this is the familiar chicken-and-egg problem.

The solution to the dilemma is, of course, a process of successive approximation, in which better theories lead to better concepts and better concepts lead to better theories. An important corollary is that we must be willing to discard old theories for new *and* old concepts for new.

It is the essence of theory that it organizes and simplifies the profusion of facts in the world. "Nature must be much simpler than she looks to us," said the eminent biologist Albert Szent-Györgyi. "To the degree to which our methods become less clumsy and more adequate, things must become not only clearer, but very much simpler, too. Science tends to generalize, and generalization means simplification."<sup>4</sup> At a low level of generalization, concepts simplify facts; at a high level of generalization, theories simplify facts.

### Structure and Theory in the Curriculum

In his much-quoted book, *The Process of Education*,<sup>5</sup> one of Bruner's two major themes is that elementary and secondary education should make much greater use of the structure of the disciplines. (The other major theme is that we can begin to teach that structure in the very early years.) The principal reason he

gives for the increased use of structure is very compelling: it simplifies the process of learning. Simplification is achieved in four ways: structure makes a subject more comprehensible; it facilitates memory of a subject; it contributes to transfer of learning from one subject to another; and it facilitates intuitive thinking.

Bruner scarcely mentions "theory" in *The Process of Education*, and one can surmise that he had two reasons for this omission. One reason could be that he did not want to frighten the people whom he wants to influence. The other could be that he wanted to emphasize the importance of many generalizations and relationships that belong to the theory family but are not complex enough to be called theories. Clearly he had in mind theories, or parts of theories, or incipient theories. His examples of structure include exercises in constructing units of measurement, in relating the Triangular Trade of the American colonies to the general need of people to trade, and in locating hypothetical cities on an unfamiliar map which shows only physical features.

Joseph Schwab has also stressed the importance of teaching the structure of disciplines. He argues that they should be a part of the curriculum; and, even more significant, that

they are important to teachers and educators: they must be taken into account as we plan curriculum and prepare our teaching materials; otherwise, our plans are likely to miscarry and our materials, to misteach.<sup>6</sup>

Science can no longer be considered a process of gathering, reporting, and summarizing facts, Schwab says. Progress in science depends on conceptions, on deliberate constructions of the mind. The conceptions tell us what facts to look for; it is impossible to look at everything. They also tell us how to interpret the facts; and the facts, when we try to fit them into our structures, may tell us that we should modify our structures.

Like Bruner, Schwab seems to shy away from "theory." He speaks freely of "principles," "laws," "patterns," "bodies of knowledge," "truth," and "inquiry," but avoids the terms "theory" and "theorizing." Structure, as Schwab defines it, is a *part* of the process of theorizing; but Schwab is clearly talking about theories and theorizing. His arguments for the use of the structure of disciplines are rich with examples drawn from theory—from biology and modern physics, for example.

Lawrence Senesh has been developing his "organic curriculum" since 1959.<sup>7</sup> The organic curriculum is a well-articulated structure of concepts and relationships, based primarily on economics but embracing more of the social sciences as the basic idea has grown and been incorporated into curriculum materials. The curriculum is "organic" in two senses. Like a plant, it has a structure that matters; it can pass the "shuffle test." And, like a plant, it grows, beginning in the early years with a structure that contains the most important elements of the subject in simplified form, and growing in depth and complexity through successive grades.

Unlike Bruner and Schwab, Senesh has not been shy about mentioning "theory." The organic curriculum is intended to be a theoretical structure, in tune with up-to-date substantive and methodological findings in the social sciences.

### Structure and Theory in the New Social Science Curricula

The major emphasis of the new social science curricula, as of the new curricula in the natural and physical sciences, is on the structure, theory, and methods of science—or on the concepts and syntax of the disciplines, as Schwab has put it. This is true of the Anthropology Curriculum Study Project, at the high school level; the elementary anthropology projects at Educational Services Incorporated and the University of Georgia; the "episodes" under development by Sociological Resources for Secondary Schools; the Developmental Economic Education Program of the Joint Council on Economic Education; the Senesh elementary economics program; the San Jose Economics 12 program; the high-school economics program at Ohio State University; the University of Chicago's Elementary School Economics program; the University of Michigan's elementary Social Science Education Program; the eclectic Projects Social Studies at the Universities of Illinois and Minnesota; and others. Some of these projects put more emphasis on teaching theoretical content, others stress the methods of investigation—"doing what scientists do"; all are designed to make greater use of the social sciences.

The situation is somewhat different with the new geography and history projects. These disciplines have never claimed a theoretical body of knowledge in the same sense as those possessed or being developed by the natural, physical, and social sciences. The High School Geography Project is making use of those limited bodies of theory which it shares with other disciplines—particularly

location theory, which it shares with economics, and cultural anthropology. To a greater extent, it is stressing the methods of geographers, particularly methods of observing and classifying natural phenomena, and methods of studying the effects of physical environment on the historical development of man.

The projects which are oriented primarily to history, at Carnegie Tech, Amherst, Northwestern and Educational Services Incorporated, making no claim to a body of theory, have gone all-out on methods of investigation. They are presenting their students with a fascinating array of original documents—diaries, news stories, maps, contemporary accounts, and so on—and challenging them to analyze and interpret them. Both deduction (“Do the documents support the judgments of history?”) and induction (“What do you make of the evidence?”) are encouraged, with induction a somewhat more popular approach.

A very useful contribution to conceptualization of the social sciences for curriculum purposes has been made by the Social Studies Curriculum Center at Syracuse University. Midway in its five-year project, it has recently published a booklet describing thirty-four concepts selected by its project workers and consultants as some of the most significant ideas on which to build elementary and secondary curricula.<sup>8</sup> The list came out of hundreds of pages of background papers and numerous project conferences. One of the concepts, “Conflict—Its Origin, Expression, and Resolution,” is elaborated in a 24-page appendix, to show how rich a structure can be built upon one of the concepts.

The Syracuse list is made up of eighteen “Substantive Concepts,” including, for example, sovereignty, power, scarcity, habitat, institution, and social change; five “Value Concepts,” including dignity of man, empathy, loyalty, government by consent, and freedom-and-equality; and eleven “Concepts of Method,” including objectivity, interpretation, evaluation, and evidence. Most of these concepts cut across two or more of the established social-science disciplines. The list is a challenge to other projects to make available similar work they have done in the course of thinking about curriculum content.

An important purpose of documents such as the Syracuse publication is—like the purpose of this conference—to encourage dialogue early in the process of curriculum development. Let me begin the dialogue by raising a few questions about that publication.

First, should “basic ideas or concepts” be identified with “struc-

ture”?<sup>9</sup> The book itself has a form of what I would call “structure”—the division of concepts into “substantive,” “method,” and “value.” But it does not discuss the idea of structure. Nor is an effort made to build each group of concepts into a structure (that is, none of the three sections could pass the “shuffle test for structure”); this is a matter that the project will have to deal with when and if it develops an integrated course.

Second, what is the significance of listing “historical method and point of view” and “the geographical approach” as “concepts of method”? I suspect this is evidence that the project made no more progress than have most others in figuring out what is the relationship of geography and history to the (other?) social sciences. One searches the list in vain for a substantive concept to identify with history or geography, as “culture” is related to anthropology, “power” to political science, and “scarcity” to economics. These problems of kinship and paternity, suggested by the Syracuse list, also arise in the following chapters of this report.

Finally, what can be done with the “value concepts”? The Syracuse book discusses the problem posed by society’s conflicting demand that the schools should teach “good citizenship,” while avoiding “indoctrination.” One can criticize the project for failing to resolve this dilemma with a clear statement of the proper role in the curriculum of its list of values, or of any list of values. But, of course, a clear statement *for* teaching “good citizenship” (and, therefore, in favor of indoctrinating) or *against* “indoctrination” (and, therefore, against teaching good citizenship) might bring down even greater criticism.

### And Then What?

The general agreement on the part of many people in the new curriculum projects to make the social studies more analytical and scientific is the first chapter of what may be a very important book. But it will be a long time before the book is finished and the reviews and sales figures are in.

Many questions will have to be answered before the story is finished. Will there be too much or too little diversity of approaches, in the matters of content versus process, independence versus integration of the disciplines, and the like? Will the available resources for curriculum development be scattered among small and ineffective splinter groups, or dominated by a few

monopolistic sources of power? Is there sufficient awareness on the part of the new projects of the desires, needs and limitations of children, teachers and school systems? Assuming that the new projects have worthwhile innovations to offer, how can they help to solve the teacher-training dilemma: that in-service training on a broad front is beyond available resources and institutional possibilities, but that training new teachers to go into an environment that will not support innovations is ineffective? What will the academic departments in colleges and universities contribute? Will they abandon their single-minded, parochial interest in departmental majors and Ph.D's, to share with professional educators the difficult task of designing good programs for training the teachers upon whom the success of any new curriculum efforts depends? Will parents, school administrators and the public accept important innovations in the social studies; will they allow the scientific method to be applied to morality, religion, national history, sex, economic systems, and the family? Is the general assumption that children can learn more than they are now learning, with the same input of time and effort, a sound assumption? How can we find out whether the new curricula are really better than the old ones?

The story has just begun.



1 Abraham Kaplan, *The Conduct of Inquiry; Methodology for Behavioral Science* (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1964), p. 50. I have relied on Kaplan for a number of ideas in the following discussion of concepts and theory.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 53.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 52.

4 Albert Szent-Györgi, "Teaching and the Expanding Knowledge," *Science*, 4 December, 1964, p. 1279.

5 Jerome Bruner, *The Process of Education* (New York: Vintage Books, 1960).

6 Joseph Schwab, "The Concept of the Structure of a Discipline," *The Educational Record*, July 1962, pp. 197-205.

7 Lawrence Senesh, "The Organic Curriculum: A New Experiment in Economic Education," *The Councillor*, March 1960, pp. 43-56.

8 Roy A. Price, Gerald R. Smith, and Warren L. Hickman, *Major Concepts for the Social Studies* (Social Studies Curriculum Center, Syracuse University, 1965).

9 *Ibid.*, p. 3.