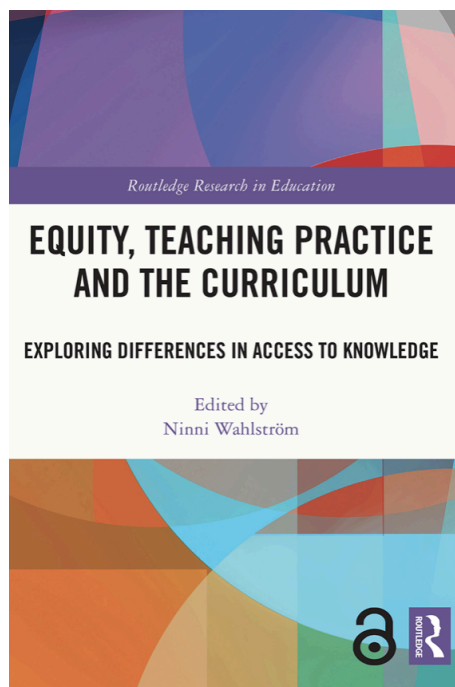


Book Review



Title: Equity, Teaching Practice and the Curriculum
Exploring Differences in Access to Knowledge

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This book, first published in 2022 by Routledge, is a part of the “Routledge Research in Education” series. A team of writers has expertise in education and curriculum studies from universities in Sweden and the United States. This book is edited by Ninni Wahlström, a professor at the Department of Didactics and Teachers’ Practices, Linnaeus University, Sweden. It consists of three main objectives. First, it explores the different classroom discourses and knowledge concepts originated and developed through teaching in high- and low-performance school in Sweden. Second, the core knowledge concepts, equity, curriculum, and pedagogy are investigated in relation to the students’ different opportunity for knowledge access and implications for students’ future opportunities and their well-being. Lastly, the relationship between different teaching factors is analyzed. This book consists of 10 chapters. Chapters 1–4 describe important theories related to the equity, teaching practice, and curriculum. Chapters 5–9 illustrate the empirical studies conducted in Swedish schools. Chapter 10 provides the authors’ discussions and recommendations related to the objectives of this book. The following sections are a brief summary of each chapter.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Role of the School as the Promotion of Knowledge, Equity and Democratic Norms

Chapter 1 introduces a theoretically-based understanding and a conceptualization of important concepts related to equity, teaching practice, and curriculum. The democratic citizen is discussed based on the influence of neoliberalism reform agenda that covers the western countries from the 1990s onwards. One of the outstanding examples is the school system in Sweden that was originally state-run and state-funded. It later became a decentralized responsibility for the municipalities. This is considered as a great shift from social liberalism to neoliberalism. In addition, the concept of justice is briefly introduced (more details in Chapter 3) and a brief background of the research project conducted in Swedish schools in the following chapters (Chapters 5–9) is illustrated. They are comparative classroom studies with insightful results in elaborated details.

Chapter 2: Policy, Knowledge and Promoting a Democratic Stance

Chapter 2 provides the illustration about the tradition history and their characteristics of the three important concepts of knowledge: social realism, transactional realism, and *Bildung*. (*Bildung* is a neo-humanist tradition spread in Germany during 1770–1830 with the concept of culture and cultivation. *Bildung* focuses on knowledge emergence in terms of an individual's self-cultivation and self-determination). In addition, the aim of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) framework of Education 2030 is described as a tool to investigate what kinds of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values are required by students nowadays. In addition, OECD framework of Education 2030 is used to explore the effectiveness of the instructional systems for developing these knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. The policy framework and the educational implications of social realism, transactional realism, and *Bildung* are discussed.

Chapter 3: Equity in Education

Equal Opportunities for What?

This chapter focuses on equity in education. The numerous meanings of equity are defined. The meanings of *equality* and *equity* are also clarified. In addition, two frameworks of justice—the capability approach and the principle of parity of participation—are presented. However, in education, it seems that there might be inadequate descriptions and discussions about equity in education in the European fields of studies in curriculum theory. Therefore, the deep investigation in this area needs to be conducted.

Chapter 4: Exploring the Importance of Teacher Feedback

Connecting Truthfulness and Student Learning

This chapter explains the significance of teacher feedback. Feedback can be about learning or behavior with formal or informal styles, or clearly described or implicit explanations. The truthfulness of giving feedback is described with these two necessary aspects: accuracy and sincerity. The author provides the comprehensible examples of giving feedback based on his experience as a teacher educator. The interesting aspect is that the framework of *Understanding by Design*, one of the common approaches to instructional design in the United States, is introduced. This design consists of three stages: specifying learning goals, moving from standards to planning assessment, and creating instructions. Finally, it is emphasized that providing feedback should be one of the important skills for teachers' development.

Chapter 5: The Students' Role in Standards-Based Education

Critical Reflections on Pedagogical Implications

Students' co-authorship in designing a curriculum is mainly discussed in this chapter. Normally, teachers are mainly responsible for a curriculum design, but it is argued that students' co-authorship be seriously considered. A conceptual framework of students' co-authorship role in teaching process is presented by pedagogy and general *Didaktik*, which is a general theory of teaching and learning used among German-speaking and Scandinavian countries. It focuses on content of education and the goal of education. Furthermore, this chapter presents the empirical evidence from two science classes from two schools in Sweden: Larch Tree School and Oak Tree School. The data were collected by video-filmed classroom observation during the full school year in 2018–2019 to investigate the students' role.

Chapter 6: Curriculum Coherence

Exploring the Intended and Enacted Curriculum in Different Schools

Chapter 6 presents two main approaches to curriculum coherence and the investigation of Swedish standards-based curriculum reform. It points out that although teachers are the key person, the strength of curriculum coherence should be the cooperation from various parties in the entire policy process. The critical aspects in curriculum coherence is illustrated based on a numerous empirical evidence. Regarding the investigation of the curriculum coherence in the enacted curriculum, the empirical examples are elaborated. Two schools, considered as a high-performance school and a low-performance school, were chosen to provide the insight in how the curriculum coherence dominated in their settings.

Chapter 7: Principal Agency

Educational Leadership at the Intersection Between Past Experiences and Present Environments

This chapter mainly examines one of the empirical studies in the research project about the school principals' struggle in order to lead their schools to the professional standards. The transactional realism approach is presented. Next, the principal agency is discussed through the transactional realism. In addition, the empirical data are presented in this chapter. Five principals from high- and low-performance schools in Sweden were interviewed about teaching policies. Contextual and temporal dimensions were considered under this study. In relation to the school principals' interviews, three aspects were focused: school principals' past personal and professional experiences, school principals' experiences in dealing with problems, dilemma, and challenges in the present situation, and principal agency's projective dimension, future goals, and visions.

Chapter 8: Teaching Repertoires and Student Perceptions of Knowledge in High-and Low-Performance Classrooms

Chapter 8 primarily investigates teaching repertoires and teenage students' perceptions of knowledge from two classes of a high- and low-performance secondary schools in Sweden: natural sciences and Swedish class. These two classes were defined as the Birch tree class and the Larch tree class. The exploratory approach was employed in this empirical study with video and audio records, and a focus group and semi-structured interviews. The analyses are presented in three sections. The first section consists of the classroom observations and interviews with teachers, the contextual description of the different classrooms, and teaching repertoires. The second part illustrates the student perceptions of knowledge developed by students' discussion about teaching. In terms of students' access to knowledge, the last section provides the discussions and evaluations of some implications of the outstanding teaching repertoires based on general observations in this study.

Chapter 9: Pedagogical Segregation from Students' Perspectives

This chapter mainly analyzes the empirical study in pedagogical segregation from students' perspectives. The study focuses on two main aspects: the classroom pedagogies (organization, the chosen content for teaching and learning, the possible interaction and communication) and the emergence of the students' perspectives towards these classroom pedagogies. Students from two classes at Oak School were chosen in this study: Swedish subject and Natural Sciences. This study was conducted over one school year in 2018–2019. Ethnographic reflexive approaches were employed with video and audio recordings, a focus group, and semi-structured interviews.

Chapter 10: Knowledge, Curriculum and Teaching on Matters That Concern

A Concluding Discussion

In this chapter, the authors propose the in-depth recommendations to fill the gaps between high- and low-performance schools in Sweden. Four themes are discussed: knowledge, equity, teaching (types of feedback, assessment, and classroom discourses), and curriculum. In addition, the discussions and arguments about powerful knowledge and meaningful knowledge in teaching are explained.

From my point of view, I highly recommend this book to academicians, lecturers, educators, policymakers or those interested in curriculum, teaching practices, and equity. The team of writers, affiliated with the research group at Linnaeus University, Sweden, has dedicated eight years in education policy, curriculum, and classroom research from a curriculum theory. The collection of data in this book is massive and extensive which makes this book valuable for professionals in the field of teaching.

Considering the merit of this book, Chapters 1–3 provide the related theories from the western philosophies and pave the background for readers, including author's real experiences about giving feedback in Chapter 4. Chapters 5–9 illustrate empirical studies from schools in Sweden with extensive explanation. The data is presented in a comprehensible way with a logical order. Those who do not have any backgrounds in education, equity, teaching practice, and curriculum will be able to understand these concepts quite easily. In my opinion, the empirical studies from Chapters 5–9 are a good reflection and could raise the awareness of those who involve with the education field for better development in their own educational setting. However, a barrier for those who are not in the field of teaching profession could be that they would not understand some knowledge concepts or theories in Chapters 1–3. I would recommend the readers go through Chapters 5–9 with the empirical studies and explanation. Therefore, they could comprehend knowledge concepts and theories better. Additionally, reading the last chapter could enhance the readers' understanding about holistic view of this book.

Regarding its implications for EFL teachers, educators, policymakers, it seems that some of them are similar to Thai context. The readers can engage themselves and be able to grasp the scenarios presented in Chapters 5–9. Additionally, the authors' discussions and recommendation in Chapter 10 provides the valuable insights which are useful for teaching profession. The subsequent sections are valuable implications from the selected chapters.

Chapter 4 discusses the role of teachers and feedback in the classroom. It emphasizes the significances that teachers should provide thoughtful feedback. The author also outlines some practical steps when giving feedback. Additionally, the teacher collaboration should be established to empower this skill, one of the essential skills for their professional development.

Furthermore, Chapter 5 explores students' role in standards-based education and Chapter 6 discusses the necessity of curriculum coherence. Normally, teachers, course designers, and policymakers are chiefly responsible for curriculum development. Therefore, students should be

allowed to be one of the co-authors in designing their curriculum and to ensure that the curriculum meets their real-world needs. In addition, the curriculum should be tailored to each individual school's setting. This could lead to the ultimate outcomes in students' learning in the world today.

In the last chapter, the authors conclude that in order to elevate equity, promote teaching practice, and develop the curriculum more effectively, those in the education field, including teachers, educators, and policymakers, should be conscious of both powerful knowledge and meaning knowledge in their teaching approaches.

About the Author

Supranee Puimom is an English-language lecturer at Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Kasetsart University, Kamphaeng Saen, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand. She received a Master's Degree in English for Specific Purposes from Kasetsart University, Thailand. Her research interests include curriculum and material development and lifelong learning.