

Module 5: SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CURRICULUM

LEARNING OUTCOMES

When completing this module you will be able to:

- Explain how the changing economy has influenced curriculum
- Suggest how curriculum has to cater for cultural diversity
- Discuss how the changing family institution influences curriculum
- Identify the demands of some special interest groups regarding curriculum
- List the criteria for knowledge that is most worth
- Identify the underlying beliefs determining school curriculum in early America and Japan
- Give reasons for the changing curriculum emphasis in these two countries

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‘A Big Fat World Problem’

DAVOS, Switzerland, Mon. – Concern over mounting levels of obesity has sparked a lively debate among food sector professionals and health experts about how to halt a trend that is medically and economically harmful.

The World Health Organisation said more than one billion people worldwide are overweight, including 300 million regarded as obese, a medical condition inking excess fat to long-term health risks.

The causes of growing obesity range from social, such as lack of exercise at school and home, peer pressure to eat the latest fads and centuries of habit, to corporations involved in price fixing and mislabelling of foods to suggest they contain less fat and sugar or more fibre than they do.

Two big problems identified were mislabelling and advertising as companies sought the upper hand in a cut-throat sector.

One of the biggest concerns raised at the debate was the lack of physical education at school and snack food in canteens and vending machines. They agreed that companies had to properly label their foods and social habits had to change. Parents were afraid to let their children play on the streets, while computers and television kept young people indoors.

Countries should incorporate consumer and health education in the curriculum and promote the importance of physical education in schools. Students have to be taught good nutritional habits at an early age.

[Source: *New Straits Times*, February 1, 2005]

4.0 Introduction

In Module 2 we discussed how educational philosophy influences curriculum. In chapter 3, we saw how psychological perspectives impacts curriculum. In this Module we will examine two factors that influence a curriculum, namely, society and history. Specifically, we will attempt to answer the following questions: What are some of the demands of society with regards to curriculum? How have the needs of society been considered when developing curriculum? What are some of these needs? What historical events have influenced curriculum?



Schools are part and parcel of society and exist for society. Society influences society through its curriculum. Schools, through their teaching of the curriculum, can shape and mould society and society in turn can impact the curriculum. There is rarely a curriculum that is developed without reflecting society. People today are vocal in expressing their views and are eager in seeing their opinions influence what is going on in school. With advancements in information and communication technology, people are talking and sharing views across the globe. They are seeing things happening in other school systems and would like to see some of these practices in their own schools.



ACTIVITY 4.1

Read the newspaper report on ‘The Big Fat World Problem’?

- 1) Can you identify the concerns of society?
- 2) What has been suggested to address the problem? Do you agree?
- 3) Do you have other suggestions to alleviate the problem?

4.1 Society and Curriculum

Education systems are closely tied to the institutional network of society. Thus, to understand how the content of schooling is shaped in any society, we must understand the relationship between education and other institutions in society. In other words, to understand what is taught, how it is taught and why it is taught, we need to look at the social forces that shape the curriculum. When designing curriculum, the following questions must be addressed:

- To what extent should curriculum consider the world outside of school?
- How do changes in society affect curriculum?

Knowing the social foundations of curriculum is crucial in making decisions about what should be included in the curriculum and eventually what happens in the classroom. Schools exist within the context of society and influence culture which in turn shapes curriculum. The story ‘*Curriculum of Forest School*’ illustrates this point. A curriculum should be able to prepare students for the present and the future. In other words, a curriculum should address the wants and needs of learners by responding to social conditions locally, nationally and globally (McNeil, 1995). Students might ask, “Why do I need to study algebra? I do not intend to be a mathematician, computer scientist or engineer”. The utility of certain subjects in a curriculum may not be obvious to learners but teachers know that solving problems in algebra involve thinking skills which may not seem immediately relevant but will serve students indirectly in many professions and jobs later in their lives. According to Burks (1998) content is useful;

- if it relates to the general body of knowledge needed by average human beings for conducting daily life (eg. reading, writing);
- when it is related to the specific present or future situation of the student (eg. to be a journalist one needs good language skills) ;

- if it develops thinking skills that probably increases the student's success in other subject areas or in general life-decisions (eg. geography develops spatial thinking, art develops design skills);
- if it fulfils unavoidable requirements imposed by society as entry qualifications to certain vocational and professional programmes (eg. mathematics as requirement for technical jobs).



Curriculum of Forest School

Once upon a time the animals in the forest decided to start a school. They agreed that the curriculum should include the following subjects: swimming, hopping, climbing, running, flying, digging and slithering. All animals were required to take all subjects.

Everything went on well until the third day when the principal, Wise Old Owl noticed some disturbing trends. For example, the rabbits were excelling in hopping but performed poorly in flying tests. The cheetahs were scoring A's in running but were getting D's in digging. The ducks were getting straight A's in swimming but were failing in the slithering course. The snakes easily got A's in slithering but had difficulty flying.

An emergency staff meeting was held among the teachers to find out whether it was due to poor teaching or was it a curriculum problem. It was agreed that the teachers were good and dedicated practicing research-based instructional strategies. Professor Lion from Forest State University was called in as a consultant. He discovered that the problem was not due to poor teaching but rather the low level of curriculum utility. He pointed out that ducks really do not need to know how to slither and cheetahs should not be forced to learn digging skills. Neither should the snakes be asked to take flying classes.

Prof. Lion concluded that animals were forced to learn skills that were not relevant to their situations. However, there are certain skills every animal needs to know such as finding food and water. He proposed that the curriculum be revised to include instruction in generic skills such as food-acquisition principles and social skills. But, animals were allowed to specialise in subjects most applicable to their species (eg. swimming, running). The animals all rejoiced when the recommendations were implemented and shouted "Now this is a useful curriculum".

[source: adaptation of L. F. Buscaglia (1972), Love. Thorofare, NJ: C.B. Slack, cited in R. Burks, A theory of secondary curriculum utility, 1998.

www.randallburks.com/curriculum.htm]

4.2 Changing Economy and Curriculum

Few would disagree that the main function of education is to produce people with appropriate skills and knowledge to enable them to participate in the nation's economy. (refer to the "Curriculum of Forest School"). The nature of schooling tends to reflect the nature of the society in which it is found (see Figure 4.1). For example, in the latter part of the 19th century, life in the United States was farm based and schools mirrored that lifestyle. The one-room school house was sufficient to meet the needs of an *agrarian society*. School started late and ended early in the day to allow time for students to help their families with farm work. School dismissed entirely during the summer so that children could help their parents the fields. Education was primarily didactic and learning was less book-based than it is today. Controlled largely by the teacher, education focused predominantly on basic skills. Teachers taught reading, writing and arithmetic to complement the skill students learn outside school. Since relatively few students progressed further than grade 6 or 7, the need for higher levels of education was minimal.

By the beginning of the 20th century, the industrial revolution brought about drastic changes in the economy of many countries. More people moved to live in cities and working in factories. As a consequence new skills were needed in an *industrial society*. It was then that a great change took place in education: the model of schools as a factory emerged. Students were taught the facts and skills they needed for industrial jobs, which they were likely to hold their entire lives. One-room schools were eventually replaced by large buildings. Students were sorted by grades and sat in straight rows, with a teacher at the front of the classroom in control of learning. The curriculum was compartmentalised and taught in separated bits and pieces – similar to the way that work is completed on an assembly line. Schools became efficient social institutions with the goal of turning out identical products.

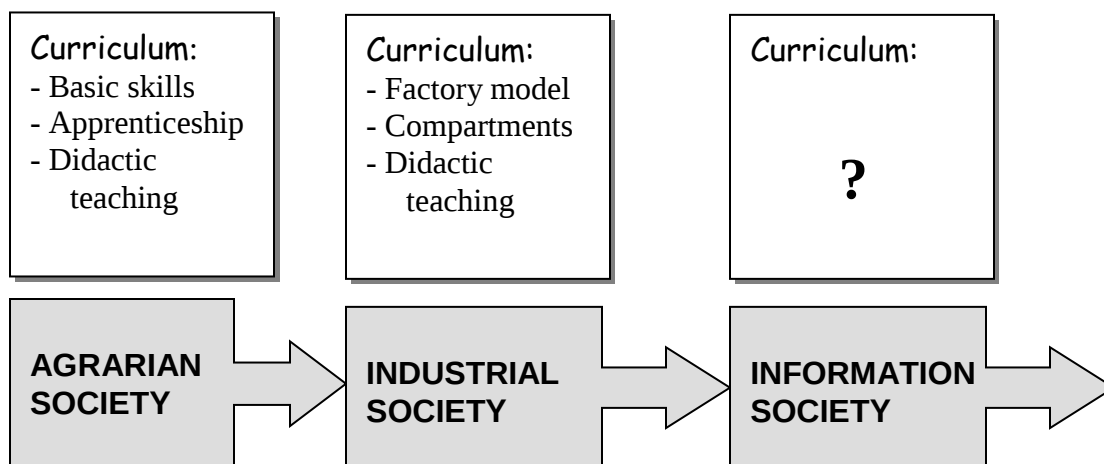


Figure 4.1 Changing Economy and Curriculum

The appearance in the early 70s of the microprocessor and the explosive growth of networking and information technologies in the 80s and 90s witnessed the growth of the knowledge economy. Multimedia innovations and the growth of the internet have transformed our ability to access information. Despite all these changes, we are still educating students in factory-model schools. Many of the skills being taught currently are intended for jobs that either no longer exist or will be radically different by the time a student graduates. While being aware of the trend, educators are still unsure as to what the curriculum of the post-industrial-style classroom should be.

Without doubt, in the post-industrial or *information society*, a new curriculum will be needed. It is envisioned that in the new model, education will be more personalised. In other words, education will be more differentiated to meet each student's learning requirements. Students will be challenged with higher expectations of learning, and encouraged to think critically and creatively as they solve problems. They will spend more time using information technology and learn independently. The knowledge gained and skills acquired and attitudes nurtured will support them throughout life.



SELF-TEST 4.1

1. State how change from an agrarian economy to an industrial economy has influenced curriculum
2. List some of the features of a curriculum for an information society. Suggest other features.

4.3 The Changing Family Institution and Curriculum

In an agrarian or pre-industrial society, gender determined the role of individuals. Men worked at their various crafts or the farm. When boys were old enough they worked alongside their fathers. Women on the other hand maintained the house, caring for the children and training the girls. They also sewed, processed food (such as milling cereal) and produced clothing. Thus, men, women and often children worked for the betterment of the whole family and there was no individual bread-winner. Families were large and the extended family where parents lived with their adult children was common.

The shift to the industrial economy brought about changes to the family institution. The extended family where parents lived with their adult children and their children rapidly declined, especially in urban areas. The family changed from an extended kinship family to a nuclear family which consisted of parents and their children only. Men moved from working in farms and cottage industries to work in offices or factories owned by corporations. Women also moved out of households to work in business, factories and offices, double income families gradually became common in many of today's society. As parents worked away from home, children suffered. Conditions at work sometimes strained relationship between father and mother which

leading to stress in children affecting their performance in school. To compound the problem, families were disrupted with divorce which saw an increase in single-parent families. Some adults remarried and formed new families from previous marriages posing many challenges of their own.

As more and more families moved to live in urban areas, a different set of values were acquired. For example, in the early days, family, religion and school complemented each other as social institutions. A shift in values has resulted in changes in the relationship between family, education and religion. Social norms that guided the behaviour of earlier generations have relaxed and these social institutions (family, education and religion) are increasingly losing their ability to guide the behaviours desired of today's generation (Sowell, 2000). Children could now support their own families with their own earnings and as a result no longer needed the blessings of their elders. Since advancement on the job depended on the individual's ability and not kinship ties, obedience was no longer a necessity (Roberts, 1990).

Families have also been disrupted with stress, violence, crime and having to live in poor neighbourhoods. This has led to depletion of parents' personal resources leaving them with very little energy to handle their children appropriately. Parents are distancing themselves from schools and are passing on the task of educating their children to the school. Schools are finding it difficult to cope with the job of educating the next generation without the active involvement of parents in the education of their children.

4.4 Cultural Diversity and Curriculum

Society is increasingly becoming diverse, especially in urban areas. Societies are becoming more multicultural, multiethnic and multi-religious and it is important that curriculum understands and reflect these changes. As stated by Ornstein and Hunkins (1998), "the complexion of our students is changing from one colour to various shades of colour and this adding of colour and cultural diversity will continue into the foreseeable future" (p.146). As the world moves towards becoming a global village, society will become even more diverse with people bringing in new values, new languages and a new way of life.

Addressing diversity in the curriculum will continue to be a challenge for educators. It is a task that will at times be politically sensitive. One concept that has interested educators is assimilation or integration of the diverse groups. In the 60s and 70s the *melting pot* approach was adopted in some countries (most notable is the United States) in an attempt to assimilate people of different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. It is metaphor for the way in which diverse societies develop, in which the ingredients in the pot (people of different cultures, languages and religions) are combined so as to lose their distinct identities resulting in a final product that is quite different from the original inputs. Usually, it involved the blending of minority groups with the majority. It was hoped that a national identity would evolve from these varied attributes. However, in practice the culture of the majority became dominant. This approach has proven to be less successful in assimilating people and has been replaced by the *salad bowl* approach. Here people of diverse backgrounds are all in the same salad but maintain

their own unique features. Cultural diversity or pluralism recognises that most societies are composed of many voices and many ethnic groups. It is a framework in which groups show respect and tolerance of each other; coexist and interact without conflict. Power and decision making is shared leading to more widespread participation and greater feeling of commitment from society members.

How should curriculum address cultural diversity or pluralism? The challenge confronting educators is developing curriculum that is responsive to students' diverse social and cultural values and at the same time capable of creating a national identity based on core values and practices. It may be necessary to have different programmes, different pedagogical approaches, flexible curriculum and even varied educational environments to address the needs of all students. No society can afford to socially or economically marginalise any student and the curriculum must nurture students to become active participants in a dynamic and emerging society (Schon, 1993).

4.5 Special Interest Groups and Curriculum

Curriculum decision making is political. Various special interest groups continually propose what should be included in school curriculum. The topics range from substance abuse to the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

- Environmental groups insist that students should be taught about conservation and preservation and the inculcation of values to love the environment. Among the concerns of these groups are caring for our rivers, industrial pollution, saving the whales and leatherback turtles.
- Substance abuse is another concern of society. Substance abuse includes drugs (such as heroin, marijuana, ecstasy pills, etc), alcohol, cigarettes, glue sniffing and so forth. Society has repeatedly emphasised the need for substance abuse prevention programmes to be included in school curriculum. Groups involved in prevention of drug addiction are keen to see that students are taught about drug addiction in the hope that they will be more aware of the problem and say “no” to the habit.
- Consumer advocates are keen to see that students are taught about their rights and responsibilities as consumers in the hope that they will be more prudent consumers as students and later as adults.
- Health groups have also suggested that schools introduce programmes about HIV Aids awareness, nutritional information, and other health related issues. As society becomes more developed, the rise in obesity is of concern in terms of its consequences on the health system, especially in worker productivity and increased expenditure on health care [refer to Activity 4.1].
- Sex education has been a topic that has been proposed at various points; especially when statistics and instances of teen pregnancy and promiscuity are highlighted by the media and government reports.
- Crime prevention by educating the community on crime prevention techniques and by getting citizens involved in crime prevention activities such as

- neighborhood watch to reduce the number of crimes and increase the quality of life of citizens.
- Governments are also determined to ensure that students are taught about their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Citizenship education has been proposed in an effort to politically socialise students with democratic ideals, principles and practices. Being prepared to play a part in political institutions is essential such as the ability to make informed decision at the personal and societal level. Similarly, to be educated to take an active part in the cultural life of society such as holding on to religious and moral beliefs, the ability to use and interpret a wide range of media, socialisation of children and so forth



SELF-TEST 4.2

1. What changes are happening to the family institution? List other changes not mentioned in the text.
2. What is the difference between the *melting pot* and *salad bowl* approaches in assimilating people of diverse backgrounds?
3. Identify other special interest groups and interested parties who have voiced their opinions on what should be taught.

4.6 Knowledge that is Most Worth

As society changes so does knowledge. Knowledge is growing at a rapid rate and educators are finding it a challenge as to what to include in the curriculum. Increase in knowledge, especially in science and technology is the result of increasing subdivisions and specialisations within the fields. Proliferation of several new fields of study or branches has contributed to exponential increase in the quantity of knowledge. For example, in the field of information technology alone, information is expanding daily. Just look at the number of new words and terminologies being coined in the field of computer science, telecommunication and genetic engineering. The continuing debate on what knowledge should be included in the curriculum of primary, secondary and even tertiary level education. Some segments of society argue that students should be given a general education which will equip them with generic skills to function effectively in society. Others argue that students should be given the knowledge and skills of specific disciplines to prepare them for specific careers. Futurists such as John Naisbitt and Alvin Toffler assert that knowledge should prepare students for the future. “Nothing should be included in the required curriculum unless it can be strongly justified in terms of the future. If this means scrapping a substantial part of the formal curriculum, so be it” (Toffler, 1972, p.132).

Ornstein and Hunkins (1998, p.153) provide the following guiding principles in selecting knowledge for a society that is changing rapidly:

1. Knowledge should comprise basic tools (this includes reading, writing, arithmetic, oral communication and computer literacy)
2. Knowledge should facilitate learning how to learn (provide learners with skills and tools to be efficient and effective independent learners)
3. Knowledge should be applicable to the real world (to be able to apply their knowledge in the solution of real-world problems)
4. Knowledge should improve learners' self esteem and personal integrity (learners to feel good about themselves and be able to get along with others)
5. Knowledge should consist of many forms and methods (because of there are different ways of learning, various options and alternatives should be provided for acquiring knowledge)
6. Knowledge should prepare the individual for the world of technology (able to keep abreast and function in an accelerating world of science and technology)
7. Knowledge should prepare individuals for the world of bureaucracy (able to deal with various types bureaucratic organisations in government, business, industry and services)
8. Knowledge should permit the individual to retrieve old information (to modify and transform old knowledge to produce new knowledge)
9. Knowledge acquisition should a lifelong process (schools provide the basics and beyond that individuals learn from other sources such as books, newspapers, television, internet)
10. Knowledge should be taught in context with values (teaching has to incorporate values because interpretation of knowledge reflects the value structure of the individual)



ACTIVITY 4.2

1. To what extent do you agree with the guidelines proposed by Ornstein and Hunkins on knowledge that is most worth for schools?
2. Examine the suggestions in relation to your primary and secondary school curriculum?

4.7 Evolution of Curriculum

Have you ever wondered what school was like in 1930? What subjects were taught to the primary school child during that time? What textbooks were used? In Malaysia, during the 1950s the textbooks used in the primary school were biased towards life in England. For example, students learned about the English farmer and his daily activities. If you trace the history of any education system, you will be able to identify many events which have influenced the curriculum. Curriculum is created by people based on the circumstances and beliefs during that period of time. The curriculum is reflective of the political ideologies, economic systems, religious convictions and conceptions of knowledge at a particular point in time. To understand how these beliefs and practices have influenced curriculum throughout history, the educational systems of the United States of America and Japan are examined beginning from the 17th century to early 20th century.

4.6.1 Case Study 1: History of the American School Curriculum

Europeans came to America and established the first colony in Jameston, Virginia in 1607. Many of the people who settled in America came to escape religious persecution. The Pilgrims, founders of Plymouth, Massachusetts, arrived in 1620. Later they settled in the other New England region in the states of Maine, Vermont, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New Hampshire. In the south, other than Virginia, they settled in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Maryland. Slaves were brought in to work in the tobacco and cotton plantations and by 1770 there were more than 2 million people living the colonies under British rule.

School Curriculum in Colonial America: (before 1776)

At the primary level, the main purpose of schooling was to teach children to read, write and spell for purpose of reading the Bible, government notices and common law. The first primary school was built in Massachusetts. There were two main types of schools, *the town school* and private schools. The *town school* was a locally controlled primary school. Often it was a crude, one-room structure attended by both boys and girls of the community (see Figure 4.1). Students sat on benches and studied their assignments until called on by the teacher to recite. In that one-room were children from ages 6 to 14 years. Attendance was not always regular depending on weather conditions and farming cycle. Which time of the farming cycle do you think attendance would be low? The *private schools* were established by religious groups and specific ethnic groups to educate their own children. These primary schools also focused on reading and writing and religious education and were attended by upper-class children.



Figure 4.1 A One-Room Schoolhouse in Colonial America

Teachers were expected to know many subjects as they taught students of different age groups attending different grades in one classroom.

[Source: www.newdeal.feri.org/library/ab95.htm]

At the secondary level there were two types of schools; Latin grammar schools and the *Academy*. The sons of the upper class attended *Latin Grammar School* for preparation toward entering university. The curriculum consisted of studying Latin, Greek, arithmetic, classical literature, ancient history and religious education. These schools followed closely the model of European schools and their role was to support the religious and social institutions of that era (Morrison, 1990). *The Academy* was established to offer a practical curriculum for those not going to university. Its curriculum consisted of English grammar, classics, composition, rhetoric and public speaking. Latin was not considered a crucial subject. Students could choose a foreign language based on their vocational needs. For example, those who wanted to go into business could do German, French or Spanish. Mathematics and history was given importance together with the teaching of specific skills such as carpentry, engraving, printing, farming, bookkeeping and so on.

With regards to university education, most students from Latin grammar schools went to Harvard or Yale. The curriculum consisted of courses in Latin, grammar, logic, rhetoric, astronomy, ethics, metaphysics, ancient history, Greek, Hebrew and natural sciences.

The education system described above was to a large extent confined to the New England States. What was happening to the rest of the United States? In the Southern colonies (such as South Carolina, North Carolina, Maryland and Georgia), education was left to the family or home education. Wealthy landowners employed private tutors to educate their children and some sent their children to England to finish their education. For most poor whites who worked on their farms, formal education was nonexistent. Unable to read and read and write, many grew up to be subsistence farmers like their parents before them. Children of black slaves in the plantations were forbidden to learn to read and write and were cast aside as the underclass of society. Children were taught from an early age that mankind was divided naturally by race; each race having certain physical and mental characteristics which had remained fundamentally unchanged throughout history. Southerners justified slavery on the basis that blacks were incapable of improvement, all the while denying them access to any type of formalised education.



SELF-TEST 4.3

1. What was taught in primary schools in the New England States during the colonial period?
2. How were children in the Southern colonies of the United States educated?

School Curriculum after Independence: (1776 -1900)

The American Revolution of 1776 ended British rule in the colonies. The new government set a new mission for education. Emphasis was on ‘life, liberty and equality’ as enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights which formed the constitution of the United States of America. Emphasis on democracy, the development of a strong federal government, the idea of religious freedom and the new discoveries in natural science saw the decline of religious influence over primary and secondary schools (Ornstein and Hunkins, 1998). For example, individuals like Benjamin Rush and Thomas Jefferson asserted that American schools should be reformed to focus on subjects such as science, reading, writing, geography and higher mathematics. Education should be made accessible to the wider population and not confined to upper-class and privileged few. Mass education was essential if citizens are to actively participate in the democratic process.

The *monitorial system* taken from Europe was introduced in American schools by Joseph Lancaster (1778-1838) in which academically superior students or monitors were taught by the teachers and they in turn taught their classmates. The system enabled a small number of adult masters to educate large numbers of students at low costs in basic and often advanced skills. Instruction was highly structured and based on rote learning and drilling of reading, writing and arithmetic. The system was practiced both in primary and secondary schools. Later this system gave way to schools that were graded and students of the same age groups were grouped together.

The *common school*, today’s public school, evolved as a result of the belief that a well-educated citizenry was essential to the survival of a new-found democracy. Through a common programme of civic education, it set out to inculcate an American identity and loyalty. Its major purpose was to integrate children of various social, economic and ethnic backgrounds into the broad American community. The aim of the common school was to develop basic literacy skills of students that could be used in everyday life as well as learn skills and attitudes that made one into a competent shopkeeper, merchant, artisan and worker. The education provided as to facilitate upward mobility and occupational choice (Ornstein and Levine, 1985). Schools were financed by the state and the local community who governed them. The coming of the common school laid the foundation of the American public school system. By 1900 the majority of children aged 6 to 13 were enrolled in primary schools. Table 4.1 traces the curriculum of the American primary school from 1800 until 1900.

Table 4.1 The American Primary School Curriculum 1800-1900

1800	1825	1850	1875	1900
Reading	Reading	Declamation	Literature	Literature
Spelling	Declamation	Spelling	Spelling	Spelling
Writing	Spelling	Writing	Penmanship	Writing
Religion	Writing	Conduct	Conduct	Conduct
Arithmetic	Good behaviour	Mental arithmetic	Arithmetic	Arithmetic
-	Arithmetic		Primary/Advance	
-	Manners and morals	Manners	-	-
-	Bookkeeping	Bookkeeping	-	-
-	Grammar	Grammar	Grammar	Grammar
-	Geography	Geography	Home geography	Geography
-	-	US History	Text geography	Text geography
-	-	Object lessons	US History	History studies
-	-	-	Object lessons	Nature study
-	-	-	Science	Science
-	-	-	Drawing	Drawing
-	-	-	Physical exercises	Physical training
-	-	-	-	Music, play, sewing, cooking

[Source: From E.P. Cubberley (1920), *The History of Education*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, p.756, cited in A. Ornstein and F. Hunkins, *Curriculum: Foundations, Principles and Issues*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, p.74]

Later in the 19th century, the public high school was fashioned to complete the educational ladder that led to the state college and university. As the common school movement expanded, the ideal was to provide as much education as possible for all children and youth. The slogan was “more education for more people” and high schools were established and it gradually replaced the Academy. By 1890 there were 2526 high schools in the United States with an enrolment of more than 200,000 students. In 1900 about 10% of the youth aged 14 to 17 were in school which rose to 50% in 1930. The provision of public secondary schools became an obligation of the states, rather than a volunteer matter for parents and the local district to decide.

Between 1800 and 1825, the curriculum of American secondary schools consisted of Latin, Greek, classical literature, writing, arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry, bookkeeping, grammar, rhetoric, surveying, astronomy, geography, philosophy and foreign languages (Spanish, German & French). Between 1875 and 1900, the curriculum included all subjects listed earlier plus the following subjects: meteorology, chemistry, physiology, health education, botany, zoology, biology, physics, world history and ancient history. The curriculum was expanded to allow students to explore their interests and capabilities.



ACTIVITY 4.3

List of Punishments in a North Carolina School, 1848.

Rules of School (Strokes)	Lashes
Boys and girls playing together	4
Fighting	5
Playing cards in school	4
Telling lies	7
Nick naming each other	4
For misbehaving to girls	10
For having long finger nails	2
Wrestling in school	4
Unable to recall a word from memory without excuse	1

1. Comment on the punishment for breaking schools rules in early American schools.
2. Compare the punishment for breaking school rules above with your school system.

4.6.2 Case Study 2: History of Japan's School Curriculum

School Curriculum: Tokugawa Era (1603-1867)

A significant date in Japanese history is the ending of wars between different warlords in 1603 and the founding of the Tokugawa Regime by Tokugawa Ieyasu. The Tokugawa family took over control of the country and ruled as Shogun or “generalissimo”, in the name of the Emperor. The Shogun’s government, called the Bakufu (or ‘tent-government’) was a the national government of Japan which had jurisdiction over areas controlled by the Tokugawa family as well as areas controlled by many feudal lords. The Tokugawa shoguns established a high bureaucratic government, giving great control over Japanese society from its system of education to its business practices and religious institutions. Japanese society was stratified as follows: daimyo (lords), samurai (warrior), farmers, artisan, merchants and others (actors and outcasts). During the Tokugawa period, there were five types of schools, namely; shogunal schools, daimyo schools, shijuku, terakoya and gogaku.

The **Shogunal** schools were for the children age 8 to 15 years from the samurai or warrior class. Emphasis was on the teaching of Confucianism (it was forbidden to teach other doctrines), gunnery, technology and cartography. Confucian classics were memorised, and reading and reciting them were common methods of study. With this form of education the role of the samurai gradually changed from warrior to administrator. By the end of the Tokugawa era there were 27 shogunal schools.

The **Domain** schools were set up in all the feudal domains of Japan and provided education for the samurai but later extended to commoners. The curriculum was based on Confucian ideas but included history of Japan and China, calligraphy, composition and etiquette. Some of the domain schools also taught Chinese and Western medicine, Dutch studies, military science, geography and astronomy. There were nearly 300 domain schools and about half opened their doors to commoners. Many of the schools emphasised different curriculum for the different ranks of the samurai. For example, for the higher ranked samurai children character education was most important with focus on proper manners, proper language to superiors and inferiors, frugality, toughness, moderation in food and drink. The aim was to prepare them to take over the governing class and to be future leaders. 'Practical' subjects such as arithmetic and Western subjects which produced technicians was introduced to the lower samurai class and commoners but not the higher samurai class.

The **Shijuku** (*private academies*) were private schools which provided education for the samurai class from primary until higher education. Similar to the domain schools, many of them opened their doors to commoners. There were about 1,100 shijuku schools by the end of the Tokugawa era. These schools offered a curriculum consisting of medicine, Dutch studies, Western subjects, military subjects and navigation. Since they were private schools, they were freer than other schools to teach doctrines and subjects that were forbidden (Passin, 1982). These schools became the centres which held strong views against the Tokugawa shogunate. They produced leaders who helped spread Western ideas and knowledge. The idea of merit was being practiced in these schools as opposed to the class students originated from. For example, an individual's performance and examination grades were emphasised rather than his social class.

Figure 4.2 Terakoya schools during the Tokugawa period

Temple schools educated children of common people. Students were taught to read, write and use the abacus. In capital city of Edo, the literacy rate was 86% for boys and 30% for girls. In the outlying areas, the literacy rate for boys was 56% and for girls it was 15%.

[Source: www.honco.net/.../01/caption/caption-3-09.html]



The **Terakoya** (*children of the temple*) was the most important and widespread school for commoners. These schools were originally run by Buddhist temples but later became secular for the common people (see Figure 4.2). Though the majority of terakoya

schools were concentrated in the towns and cities, some were established in the rural areas to improve the literacy levels of farmers and artisans. The majority of *terakoya* schools focussed on reading, writing and arithmetic. Some schools also taught vocational subjects, etiquette, morals and accounting while others taught geography, history, science, military arts and even English. Students were not divided into grades. Although coeducation was the norm, there were far fewer girls than boys, and the two groups were rigidly separated in seating arrangements. Attendance requirements were casual and easily adjusted to the work routines of shop or farm. During the busy agricultural season village *terakoya* schools were closed and students were given time to keep up with their household chores.

By the end of the Tokugawa era there were 14,000 *terakoya* schools and over 17,000 teachers. Teachers were not trained or licensed. Most were volunteers consisting of retired officials, public-spirited samurai and educated commoners. Students did not pay fees and teachers were not paid. Schools were maintained by donations. Teachers were highly respected and had great authority. According to a well-known textbook, “the pupil should be careful not to step on the teacher’s shadow or to come within seven paces of him” (Passin, 1982, p.33). Teaching methods were not standardised and the basic subjects were taught using simple primers (elementary textbooks) prepared by teachers which were closely linked to the daily life and occupational expectations of students. The following are some examples of these primers:

- Farmer’s reader
- Increased Profits for Farmers
- Bumper Crops
- Merchant Reader
- Navigation and Shipping Reader
- Wholesaler’s Reader



SELF-TEST 4.4

1. What were the main differences between the curriculum of the *shogunal*, *domain* and *shijuku* schools during the Tokugawa era?
2. What are the main features of the curriculum of the *terakoya* schools? Why was such a curriculum preferred?

Apart from formal schooling, a highly developed apprenticeship system provided direct vocational training. This was carried out mainly in the family, though some involved apprenticeship in commercial houses. Besides learning a trade, the training also included discipline and proper behaviour. The educational achievements and the high respect for learning of Tokugawa Japan played a large role in Japan’s smooth transition to the modern age in the Meiji period. With a large number of schools for both samurai and commoner children, the country had achieved a high general literacy rate. The Tokugawa shogunate showed great interest in learning even from foreign countries. They supported the translation and study of Western works on science, geography, medicine, military science and other subjects. These studies allowed the Japanese to be exposed to

Western technology and ideas, which facilitated the transition of Japan to a modern country in the Meiji era.

School Curriculum: Meiji Era (1867 - 1900)

When the Tokugawa period began, few common people in Japan could read or write. By the period's end, learning had become widespread. Tokugawa education left a valuable legacy: an increasingly literate populace, an ideology based on meritocracy (even though it practiced feudalism), and an emphasis on discipline and competent performance. Under subsequent Meiji leadership, this foundation would facilitate Japan's rapid transition from a feudal country to a modern nation. Internally Japan was faced with an entirely new form of government; having been ruled under a feudal system since 1600, the Japanese were not individually prepared to become a modern nation. To better prepare themselves for modernization, a national education system was introduced to help Japan catch up with the West. The education system would not only raise the level of common education, but would also work toward instilling a sense of national pride.

Initially the Japanese hurriedly translated western text books and used them in their classrooms. However, they soon learned that schooling can be used as a boost to national pride; by replacing American or European stories of triumph with those of Japanese war heroes. The education system was used to establish a strong sense of Japanese patriotism. Also, the new system of education was geared toward creating a distinctively Japanese culture; no longer would the Japanese use traditional Chinese symbols in formal writing, instead they developed a system of casual writing that would be understood broadly. The education system was developed in a manner that would prepare the youth for more technical positions all the while creating a strong sense of nationalism and love for the Emperor.

Even with the progress in the field of education, more had to be done to remove the feudal traditions of the past. In order to prepare the population for a centrally administered government, the traditional feudal districts were gradually consolidated into larger blocks. The larger districts allowed for a more efficient system of administration and gave the government more power to control the people.

In educating their society, the Japanese not only sent thousands of students abroad to study at foreign universities, they also hand selected individuals who would visit other countries and study specific niches of culture, industry, or military. From their experiences the Japanese then consciously decided which methods to adopt. They looked to the United States for educational reforms. As an indication of its success, elementary school enrollments climbed from about 40 or 50 percent of the school-age population in the 1870s to more than 90 percent by 1900.

By the 1890s, after earlier intensive preoccupation with Western ideas a conservative and traditional orientation evolved: the education system became more reflective of Japanese values. The emperor when visiting a local school, found out that some Japanese students speaking in English were unable to translate back into Japanese the English that they spoke. In 1879, he issued the Great Principles of Education and argued that the decline of Japanese culture was due to Western education. Confucian precepts were stressed, especially those concerning the hierarchical nature of human relations, service to the new state, the pursuit of learning, and morality. In the early twentieth century, education at the primary level was egalitarian and virtually universal,

but at higher levels it was highly selective, and elitist. College education was largely limited to the few national universities. Three of the imperial universities admitted women, and there were a number of women's colleges, some quite prestigious, but women had relatively few opportunities to enter higher education.



ACTIVITY 4.4

Education and Social Mobility

In modern society occupational stratification is relatively open. People can achieve different levels of socioeconomic statuses. They can be socially mobile, up or down the stratification system. However, this is not always with some systems of stratification:

For example:

- In slave societies, such as the American South in the 18th century, the slave is legally owned by their master and their position is fixed.
- In caste societies, such as in India, position in the stratification system is fixed at birth and strictly no social mobility is allowed. However, this is gradually breaking down today.
- Similarly, in feudal societies, such as in Europe and Japan in the 15th and 16th century, social position is fixed and clearly defined (i.e. lords, vassals and fiefs). People could not move up the social ranks.

1. How has education enabled social mobility? Give specific examples.
2. Why do you think a sector of the population are either deprived of education or given a different form of education in these societies?
3. Is social stratification still prevalent in society? Give specific examples.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How has the school curriculum in your country responded to different societal demands?
2. When you were in school, were the concerns of society regarding the curriculum similar or different from the concerns today?
3. Interview individuals who were in primary or secondary school during the 1960s. What was schooling like during that period? Has it changed or in many respects still the same today?

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