

(Re)searching (Trans-Multi)Culturally Responsive Curricular Conversations

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Abstract:

Haunted by the regurgitating moments of schooling experienced by myself and my students in multiple cultural contexts, in this paper, I attempt to initiate a provocative dialogue regarding the kinds of conversations we should have to bring “education” into today’s culturally diverse classrooms. By sharing the current dilemmas encountered by many students in contemporary schooling, specifically in science and mathematics classrooms, I argue for the creation and enactment of a (trans-multi)culturally responsive curriculum. Drawing on Aoki’s inspired rhizomatic curriculum, Pinar’s *currere* as a complicated conversation, along with Schwab’s deliberated practice of engaging curricular commonplaces in a dialogue, I propose a (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricular framework as one way to invite teachers to engage deliberately in a complicated conversation that could broaden their understandings of culturally responsive education in today’s classrooms.

Keywords: inspired rhizomatic curriculum, *currere*, complicated conversation, deliberative enquiry, lived experiences, (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricula

Introduction: (Re)searching Education

I begin this paper by sharing haunting memories of my educational experience as a student, teacher, and teacher educator that motivated me to (re)visit curricular conversations and led me towards conceptualizing a (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricular framework. I continue with discussion about how restricted understandings of education as schooling have caused teaching to be abridged as an implementation, which deprives many students from the sense of belonging and accomplished recognition that education should bring (Esmonde & Caswell, 2010; Pinar, 2011c, 2013). In an effort to investigate the cause of the present realities of education, I then (re)visit the historical and contemporary understandings of curriculum (Egan, 1978; Eisner, 1979/1994; Pinar, 1993, 2012; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995; Schubert, 1997/1986).

After sharing the current dilemmas encountered by many culturally diverse learners in today's schooling, specifically in science and mathematics classrooms where these subjects are often taught as neutral, acultural enterprises (Gay, 2010), I then argue for the need to make schooling educational by acknowledging the lived experiences of culturally diverse learners (Miller, 2012; Pinar, 2012).

Finally, as an attempt to generate insights that could help teachers in welcoming the multiplicity of lived curricula in their cultural diversity-rich classrooms, I (re)visit the curricular frameworks of Ted Aoki, William Pinar, and Joseph Schwab. Informed by these key frameworks, I conclude the paper by presenting a (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricular framework as one way to invite teachers to engage deliberatively in a dialogic "complicated conversation" (Pinar, 2012, p. 193) that could help broaden their understandings of culturally responsive curricula and thereby help bring in education for life's sake (Cajete, 1994; Dewey, 1929).

Since mathematics is a "tool of conceptual thought" for learning Science (Nashon, 2006, p. 6), the capitalized term Science in this paper refers to the broader area of Science that includes both science and mathematics, specific subjects that are usually taught as separate content entities in schools. Throughout this paper (except when quoting), I have used the capitalized terms Self and Other(s) to emphasize the need to critically examine relationships within, between, and among ourSelf and Other(s). While using words such as *us*, *our*, and *we*, I have addressed all of us as relational (trans-multi)cultural human beings who are able to transcend identities bounded by culture, ethnicity, gender, race, sex, and dis/ability or any other boundaries, and connect with each other as one "human kin" (Grimmett, 2013).

Haunting Memories

Moment One

The pencil snapped into two. The child's face distorted as if almost about to cry, but no sound escaped from her mouth. The child's mother, who was sitting on the floor in one corner of the classroom along with the other parents and grandparents, stood up immediately and dragged the child out of the classroom with an apologetic look on her face. The other children continued chanting the numbers, "twenty-one, twenty-two..." mechanically following their teacher who kept a stern look on her face, showing no signs of guilt from having just hit a child. The number recitation continued until fifty. The teacher stopped and sat down behind her desk. The teacher candidate began his practicum lesson.

It was 2011. While working as a teacher educator at the College of Micronesia, Kosrae, in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), I was expected to observe the practicum session of one of my teacher candidates in this third-grade classroom.¹ I was ten minutes early that day and therefore was able to witness this horrifying act—a teacher hitting a pencil on a child’s head so hard that it broke—just because the child was not repeating the numbers in English as demanded. The new lesson by the teacher candidate continued. No sign or hint of any discomfort on anyone’s face. My heart beat increased. Unable to concentrate on what the teacher candidate was saying, I felt numb. My vision blurred. Was I crying? For whom?

Moment Two

*Paroge likoge to banoge nawab...keloge, kudoge to hoge kharab!²
If you read and write, you will become a king....If you play and jump around, you
[your whole life] will be spoiled!*

Going to school in the mid-1970s in one of the rural villages of India was an interesting adventure! Riding to school on a horse cart, and sitting and writing things on the bare sand under the Neem tree was fun. Yes, it was fun, as long as you did everything *right*. One mistake or a slow response to a teacher’s question, and get ready to be thrashed with a freshly plucked Neem twig!

I was five, in Grade 1. Already *schooled* for two years, how could I forget that making mistakes is not allowed in school! A burning sensation and peeled skin at the back of my knees was a souvenir of my *failing* performance in math class. The marks on my skin have gone, but the mark of failure has scarred my heart forever....I still cannot overcome the fear of failing; if you fail you are ignored and looked down at by all...failing might mean you are rejected for life. Was I not good at math or did I become *good* after that whipping? I had to...otherwise, I would be *good for nothing*!

Moment Three

Good for nothing...that’s how one of my Kosraean teacher candidates felt in classrooms in the United States of America (USA). Bent head, slumped shoulders, despairing eyes...sitting desolately in a corner of the classroom....I almost could not recognize that it was the same teacher candidate who went to the USA after completing his first year of the teacher education program in Kosrae. Returning two years later, was this the same person who used to be the life of the classroom? In coming days, I tried to console and cheer this teacher candidate, but at times it seemed that the damage was permanent. The broken image of this student has stayed with me. I must admit that this is not the first time that I have witnessed such destruction of students’ self-esteem. Many shattered images of students have shadowed my journey of learning and teaching in India, in the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), and in Kosrae, FSM. The realization of becoming nobody from somebody is shattering....I can understand how it leaves one with the agony of not knowing anything...here you are....*Good for nothing again! Does anybody care?*

Longing for Belonging: The Unspoken Voice of a Learner

Who am I? What do I know?	Unaccomplished...Life-	Uprooted...
Would you like to know?	less...Useless...Unwanted...	how do I become anchored...
Would you like to care?	I feel like the Dust...that is	in this rootless classroom?
Mesmerized in y(our)	bound to be left (thrown)	How could I belong...
(W)esternized World...	out...	and still be me?
Do you see my perplexity...	My soul...my thoughts...my	Can I also proffer...
Understand my fear..?	cultural ways of knowing ...	my cultural insights...
Today's schooling...	All these I have to wipe out...	the skills my ancestors
technicalized teaching...	on the doormat...leave them	treasured?
scored testing...	outside... at the door...	Would you be fair...
measured successes...	Cultureless!	and allow me to share...?
Uniformity, excellence...	I have to become...	Would you dare to care...
standardized achievements...	If I want to belong...in this	and...
Strangers' sciences...	acultural classroom?	leave a door open with...
mathematical abstractions...	I long for belonging...	
How do I compete...	And grieve for my	NO DOORMATS!
where do I stand?	knowledge...	
Is that all...All that matters?	Is it learning...Learning for	
	Life?	

Why do we have to wipe away our culture and our ways of knowing, and follow standardized test-based teaching in today's classrooms? I feel the agony of many students who are treated just like that unwanted dust which is bound to be wiped off at the doormat. Can anybody hear these unspoken voices and understand students' longing for belonging? How do I help myself and my students in regaining faith in education? What should education be about?

What Is Education?

The word *education* is etymologically derived from the Latin *ēducātiō*, meaning a rearing, a bringing up, through *ēdūcō*, which means: I educate, I train, I lead forth, I take out, I raise up, and I erect (Harper, 2014). Thus, education embedded in experiences of life is meant to raise a child in/for life. In fact, "education, experience, and life are inextricably intertwined" (Dewey as cited in Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. xxiii). However, in today's world, the meaning of education has become restricted to "social/human engineering" (Pinar, 2005, p. 1).

In many countries that include Australia, China, Europe, India, FSM, RMI, the United Kingdom (UK), and the USA, schools are turned into "factories" (Aoki, 1992/2005, p. 189) of "social and cultural reproduction" (Giroux, 2001, p. 223). In all the "Race to the Top" efforts to "improve education" in the name of "school reform," the questions of quality of education are forgotten (Pinar, 2012, pp. 43–53). To bring "best practices" in teaching that will ensure that "No Child [Is] Left Behind" (Pinar, 2013, p. 16), the teachers are sentenced to *cover* prescribed frozen curriculum through text-based teaching for the tests that aim towards preparing students for jobs without meaning. My personal experiences resonate with these realities.

Certainly, Donald Schubert (1997/1986) was right: Today's "school[ing] seems to be about things—information detached from the meaning of life" (p. vii). Paul Brandwein

(1962) has correctly expressed the emotional dilemma of teachers, that too often the teacher sees the child reflecting Houseman's song: "All alone and afraid—in a world I never made" (p. 144). Indeed, in the present system of schooling, teachers feel pressured and powerless, but the greatest casualties are the students, who are stripped of their sense of belonging, ownership, and self-worth (Esmonde & Caswell, 2010; Henry, 1994; Pinar, 2012).

In 1803, Immanuel Kant said: "It is through good education that all the good in the world arises" (as cited in Schubert, 1997/1986, p. 1). If such is the case, then we must begin questioning "*what [good] education is* [emphasis added]" (Dewey, 1938/1998, p. 116). Are not the consequences of present habits of schooling, perpetuated by today's "economic monoculture" (Michaels, 2011, p. 106) detrimental not only for individual students but also for society as a whole? We must be aware that "when the story of education no longer tells us what it means to belong in society...our shared humanity is denied and we lose a place in the world" (p. 106).

How can we bring humanity with dignity into our classrooms and interrupt this "master narrative" (Pinar, et al., 1995, p. 5) of "cultural and ideological hegemony" (Apple, 2004, p. 5) that is written with "reverence for numbers" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. xxiii)? We must (re)visit and (re)discover what curriculum *is*.

What Is Curriculum?

The word curriculum is derived from the Latin word *currere* meaning "the course to be run" (Eisner, 1979/1994, p. 5), with secondary meanings of a "race-course or a career" (Egan, 1978, p. 66). However, since its inception, the term curriculum has been used in various contexts by different people "in a wide variety of ways" (Eisner, 1979/1994, p. 25). In the medieval world, the meaning of curriculum changed from a race course for running, to the course to be run—from the "container to the content...from the temporal constraint within which things happen to the intellectual pursuits, the things that happen within the constraints" (Egan, 1978, p. 66). Thus, even though there were "profound disagreements about *what* content should be used to exercise the Mind," the key questions for the curriculum designers remained: "What should the curriculum contain, followed by what is the best way to organize these contents?" (p. 66).

Another turn in the curricular history came with Pinel's work with exceptional children and Montessori's adaptation of his methods, leading to emphasis on the belief in the natural goodness of children. This shifted the focus of curricular designers from subject/content to the learner—from *what* to *how*. Thus, the prime attention on the methodological question of *how* the content should be taught, made the *what* of the curriculum less important (Egan, 1978).

Moreover, the discoveries about individual differences among learners and the emphasis on methodological processes made it difficult for the traditional curriculum question of *what* to stand as a distinct question because: "To know *what* the curriculum should contain requires a sense of *what* the contents are *for*" (Egan, 1978, p. 70). Thus, this ambiguity, the loss of any comprehensible boundaries in the field of curriculum inquiry, resulted in "a general failure of nerve, of vision, and of significance...leading to a lack of a clear sense of purpose of education" (p. 69). Let us discuss the implications of such obscure curricular understandings.

Curriculum: Current Dilemmas

In today's "gap gazing" (Gutierrez, 2009, p. 9) schooling, which is mainly focused on measuring students' successes in terms of standardized norms and closing the "achievement gap" to ensure "accountability" (Mathison, 2003, p. 37), the meaning of curriculum has become unintelligible. Often conceptualized as its static noun form, curriculum has become limited to its "thingness...[just] a track...a race course to be traversed" (Doll, 1993, p. 278). Frozen in textbooks, lesson plans, and guidebooks, such a conception of curriculum forces teachers to ignore students' subjectivity and follow the "ritual of alignment" to bring "uniformity" through standardized testing (Pinar, 2013, p. 8) and give students "schooling at the cost of their education" (Kemmis, 2005, p. 12).

Grumet (1981) has described curriculum as "the collective story we tell our children about our past, present, and future" (p. 115). However, the story of formulized official Canadian curriculum is a "deformed, fragmented, and incomplete" story that is based solely on the colonial version of one national Canadian history (Pinar, 1993, p. 61). Ignoring the powers and purposes of those who are taught, this story of Canadian curriculum does not invite any conversations that could promote harmonious understandings among students (Miller, 2012). Denying the contributions that diverse wisdom traditions, peoples, lands, and languages could offer, this curricular story rather perpetuates the "dysconscious roots of racism" in the society (Tupper & Cappello, 2008, p. 559).

Hence, it comes as no surprise that the increasing cultural diversity of student populations has become a key challenge for teachers in Canada (Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2012; Freiler, et al., 2012). Canadian schools are increasingly becoming sites of isolation and social injustices because they are poorly equipped to deal with the existing student diversity (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013; Kirova, 2008). The hidden acts of violence embedded in school lessons perpetuate notions of "Standardized Whiteness" as the "norm," and other cultures as inferior, and thereby force many learners to "ignore their own subjectivity by taking a vow of silence" (Henry, 1994, p. 299).

In fact, ignorant of the lived experiences of students, such a curriculum perpetuates a "deficit perspective" that views socialization experiences provided within home environments of certain cultures as inferior, rendering students coming from these socio-cultural backgrounds as "problems to be fixed" (Niето, Bode, Kang, & Raible, 2008, p. 176). The "one size fits all" approach to teaching executed by this curriculum imposes Western Science as the "high status knowledge" on every student who should *master* it in order to function competently in the "mainstream" (Lee, 2001, p. 489).

The situation becomes dire in science and mathematics, subjects which are often perceived as neutral, acultural truth (Gay, 2002). The very idea of science and mathematics as a canonical knowledge validates these subjects as culture-less, making it difficult for many teachers and students to conceptualize and envision these as multicultural curricular discourses (Gay, 2010; Stewart, 2010). Consideration of science and mathematics as an "international currency for national and global technological development" (Jegade, 1995, p. 122), the "gatekeepers" for higher education (Noddings, 1994, p. 90), a ticket for entry into high-status jobs, and a winning token for higher social status, further pressurizes teachers to force their students to achieve mastery in these subjects (Gutstein, 2007).

Thus, in efforts to teach useful "legitimate knowledge" (Apple, 2004, p. 61), the science and mathematics curriculum is compartmentalized (Hodson, 2010; Wagner, 2005). Severing the interconnections between content and real-life contexts, such a fragmented curriculum makes it difficult for many students to cross cultural borders that are created

due to cognitive cultural conflicts between their own everyday cultures and the culture of Science (Aikenhead, 2006; Aikenhead & Elliott, 2010; Bishop, 1994). Furthermore, ignoring the “cultural capital” (Giroux, 2001, p. 239) and “funds of knowledge” (Nashon & Anderson, 2013, p. 403) that many students bring into classrooms, such practices of teaching and learning create hegemonic hierarchies woven with(in) the political, economic, and cultural ideologies of control and aggravate the embedded racism in schools (Apple, 2004; Castango & Brayboy, 2008).

Undeniably, the current Euro-Canadian practices of teaching scientific knowledge as “empirical, literal, and irrevocable truths” (Schwab, 1962, p. 24) based on dangerously “ahistoric acultural” textbooks that endorse the superiority of “Western/Eurocentric Science” (Krugly-Smolkska, 2004, p. 420), at the cost of Other(ed) cultural ways of knowing, mark an educational failure. The peripheral integration of indigenous cultural knowledges in these science textbooks reiterate the Othering that attempts to bring cultural knowledges under the control of dominant knowledge forms (Ninnes, 2003). Such unintelligent ways of making cultural knowledges Other(ed) objects of study may unwittingly become a continuation of resilient treatises of “white supremacy” (Gillborn, 2005, p. 491). These ways permeate a distorting image of Science; Science becomes mere pure knowledge, which is standardized by the Western norms, not a human product that develops within societies and cultures (Stewart, 2010).

Such realities demand that we raise the key curriculum question, “What knowledge is most worth?” (Pinar, 2011a, p. 7), especially in the present Canadian context that does not approve the assimilationist “melting pot” (Pinar, 2011b, p. 2) nature of multiculturalism, and is struggling to keep its “mosaic social fabric” (Kirova, 2008, p. 119) of ethno-cultural diversity intact. How could we communicate that, often considered as value-free and certain, Science has a culture of its own, and scientific knowledge is both personally and socio-culturally constructed (Bishop, 1994; Driver, Asoko, Leach, Mortimer & Scott, 1994; Kuhn, 1970)?

Let us (re)visit the key curricular frameworks of Aoki, Schwab, and Pinar to initiate a curricular *enquiry* that allows us to critically examine the *what* and *how* of curriculum together (Egan, 1978) in relation to our present socio-cultural contexts. In this way we will see and *understand* what these frameworks offer and how they could complementarily inform the conceptualization and enactment of (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricular discourses in today’s cultural diversity-rich classrooms.

(Trans-multi)culturally Responsive Curricular Discourses

Education is always a moral and political activity, and there is no neutral educational process (Freire, 1997). Thus, what we need at this time is to initiate a *dialogical complicated conversation* through teaching that becomes a *bridge* between *curriculum-as-planned* and *curriculum-as-lived* (Aoki, 1986/2005; Pinar, 2012). Transcending the theory-practice divide, such teaching as a *moral action enquiry* would allow teachers to “enact curriculum” (Wraga, 2002, p. 17) as a “situational praxis” (Aoki, 1983/2005, p. 116) that invites each student as a “[trans-]multicultural human being” (Banks & Banks, 2010, p. 37) to begin a (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricular discourse that stems from the belief that “[trans-] multiculturalism [is] a normal human experience” (Goodenough, 1976, p. 4). However, in the present multicultural contexts, where socio-political and gendered identities are merging, and cultural and ethnic boundaries are becoming blurred (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013), such bridging among the multiplicity of lived curricula would require more. It would require “posing with distinctness, the question: Where are we [*now*]?” (Lévinas & Nemo, 1985, p. 30). Answering this question demands courage to seek the truth of our educational

experience, the truth of our *(trans-multi)culturalization*—the truth of our *beingness* as humans. Also we need to ask: Are we willing and ready to transcend our individualized fractured identities and inquire into our own intentions about (trans-multi)culturally responsive education with full consciousness?

Indeed, while attempting to understand multiculturalism, multicultural education, and curriculum in the Canadian context, we must engage in radical reflection and ask: *What is the status of these concepts in Canada now, and what does this mean for classroom practice?* Only then can we understand how to invite students to make sense of the diverse, dynamic multicultural world around them. What should be the “curriculum of initiation” (Egan, 1978, p. 65) for Canadians? What set of norms, knowledge, and skills should we promote for the continuance of Canadian society as a (trans-multi)cultural society, which despite its diverse ethnic, cultural, racial, and gendered initiations believes, enshrines, and cherishes the “*métissage*” (Cuccioletta, 2001/2, p. 3)—“the dynamic amalgam evolving out of the common experiences” (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013, p. 108)—of cosmopolitan citizens in a just society?

Rather than focusing our attention on looking at curriculum methodologically to think only *about how* we should teach, we must begin (re)thinking what curriculum *is* (Aoki, 1986/2005). And while doing so, we need to not only see both the *how* and *what* of curriculum (Egan, 1978) in mutual interaction, but also understand *why* these interactions should inform a (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricular discourse in present contexts (Pinar, 2012; Schwab (1970/1978). By recognizing that “educational practice [and thus the curriculum is]...both a site and form of cultural politics” (Giroux, 2005, p. 166), we must not only care about including the *multiplicity of voices* in the “official” (Hodson, 2010, p. 201) curricula prescribed in the “educational menu” (Eisner, 1979/1994, p. 88), but also strive for *justly* including the *cultural multiplicities* present in the “hidden curriculum” (Giroux, 2001, p. 71) and the “null curriculum—the curriculum that schools *do not teach* [original emphasis]” (Eisner, 1979/1994, p. 97).

One way to begin such a *just* curricular discourse is to question the way of life that we have constituted in the name of modern standardized schooling by following Aoki (1984/2005), who seeks to uncover the meaning of *competence* in its Latin root *com-petere*, where the meaning of competence is to be able “to seek together” (p. 130). Unlike the notion of competence locked within the realm of “Western reason” where it becomes an “instrumental reason and instrumental action” (p. 113), which denies the meaning of cultural reality and socio-cultural significance of the living acts of teachers and students, Aoki’s communal venturing of dialogic *competence* invites teaching to be situated in all commonplaces. Aoki’s *competence* will allow us as teachers to become reflective practitioners (Schön, 1983/2009) and to (re)think and respond within our teaching moments to the question, “What does it mean to be human?” (Aoki, 1984/2005, p. 130) within a situational praxis.

Criticizing the “arboreal landscape” of “C & I (curriculum and instruction, curriculum and implementation)” (Aoki, 1993/2005, p. 204), a monofocal vision of curriculum where instruction and implementation become mere shadows of the planned curriculum which is written in a “prosaic abstract language...for faceless people in a homogenous realm” (p. 207), such a situational praxis invites us to *dwell* in the *multiplicity of lived curricula*—in a rhizomean landscape where “life [is] constantly in flux” (p. 205)—allowing teaching to happen as an ongoing, dialectical, transformative process of mutual action and reflection with(in) a special context “in-between curriculum-as-plan[ned] and curriculum as lived (C & C)” (Aoki 1986/2005, p. 163). Transcending the pedagogical relationship of teacher and students based on the Cartesian subject-object dualism of Self/Other(s), such a situational

praxis creates spaces for a complicated conversation that allows teachers and students to engage openly in an intersubjective, non-violent recognition of Self and Other(s) as: “historical being[s]...[who are] makers and co-makers of [their own] history” (Aoki, 1984/2005, p. 130) to discuss and decide what “stories” (Aoki, 1993/2005, p. 210) count and don’t count in a (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricular discourse.

Valuing the multiplicity of educational phenomena in which lives are “embodied in [the] very stories and languages people speak and live” (Aoki, 1993/2005, p. 207), conversations within this (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricular framework will bring forward deeper understandings of “difference”—the understandings that will focus not on the differences in their individuality but “on the relations among differences” (Aoki, 1978/2005, p. 106). Such a relational vision will allow us to open up new possibilities for contextual (trans-multi)culturally responsive teaching in our classrooms: “one focusing on 4 R’s: Relations, Rich in context, Recursive in design, and Rigorous in application” (Doll, 2012, p. 168).

Pinar’s (1975) method of *currere* guides us further in this journey by inviting us as teachers and students to become self-aware of our lived realities and identities as they take form through socio-political encounters in our teaching and learning processes. Making us aware of the political, socio-cultural, and economic dimensions of schools, *currere* informs us that individual and collective social justice are companion efforts that could arise, not in conflicts about individuality or collectivity, but in the “realm of the personal,” where we could learn to see politics not “out there in the society” but “in here in our minds, bodies, and everyday speech” (Kincheloe, 1998, p. 130).

Thus, inviting us as teachers and students to become “action researchers of ourselves,” *currere* presents a critical form of knowing that enables knowledge construction through “reflection that is grounded in socio-historical contexts” (Kincheloe, 1998, p. 133). Allowing us to *understand* “why we see what we see,” such a reflective encounter with school knowledge transcends the technical blueprints of lesson plans (Kincheloe, 1998, p. 134), and academic culture of passivity, and invites us to develop self-knowledge by critically analysing interpretations of events in light of our lived experiences and their cultural meanings (Pinar, 2012).

Hence, *currere* is asking us as teachers and students to be cognizant of the “transference” (Pinar, 1975, pp. 4–5) that makes our vision of looking and understanding someone as partially veiled. Inviting us to become logically aware of our preconceived notions and unresolved conflicts with(in) ourSelf and the power of emotion and rational mode, *currere* guides us to hold such emotions in abeyance and overcome our own cultural biases by speaking from where we live.

Furthermore, to expand the “hyper realities” of modern times that assault our identities, *currere* as an “autobiographical inquiry” creates a space for us to critically engage in a “running meta-dialogue, a constant conversation with self” to interrogate our psychological and social perceptions of the world and to explore and understand our own identity subjectively by enquiring: “*What do I do with what I have been made?*” (Kincheloe, 1998, pp. 132–133). Such an empowerment of ourSelves through *currere* allows us to explore our own “interior experiences of the individual vis-à-vis multiculturalism” to understand who we are and who we wish to become. In present contexts, where the dominant culture contributes to the shaping of the identity of the marginalized “with all of its race [culture], class, and gender based pathologies,” *currere* reminds us that even though “we are shaped by others’ perceptions of us” (pp. 130–131), *we simultaneously contribute in shaping our own wor(l)ds*.

Moreover, by welcoming an ethics of care that underlies *relational caring*—“a moral way of life” that transcends the self-referenced caring and brings receptive attention and empathy into classrooms—*currere* helps us in recognizing how the *differences within and between* various cultural groups could be utilized to extend the potential of human life with(in) a (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricular discourse (Noddings, 2012; Pinar, 1975, pp. 4–5).

Schwab’s *eclectic attitude* and *practical, functional deliberation* takes this curricular enquiry to a communal level and provides a “platform” (Walker, 1971) where lived curricula (of all stakeholders) that are informed by Aoki’s (1987/2005) inspired, rhizomatic curriculum, and Pinar’s (1975) method of *currere* could come together as “*five experiences*” and “*four commonplaces*” to begin a *complicated conversation*. Involving *teacher, learner, subject matter*, and the *milieu* as four essential *commonplaces* that are included in all *curriculum making*, Schwab’s (1978/1970) approach calls for a thoughtful *deliberative enquiry* to (re)discover the meaning of education, curriculum, and the “character of educational thought,” and to (re)establish the “organic connections [that] exist in education [through] the methods of practical...*cherishing of diversity and the honoring of delegated powers*” [emphasis added] (Westbury & Wilkof, 1978, p. 3) by inviting (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricular discourses.

Considering curriculum development as an inherent responsibility, Schwab’s practical and quasi-practical methods of deliberation demand *practical rationality* and *eclectic understandings* to explore, develop, and refine “humanistic modes of inquiry” for studying classrooms, conducting educational planning, and initiating curricular discourses that welcome contextualized ongoing “interaction between means and ends” (Schwab, 1970/1978, p. 318). Paving the way for us to have “more realistic views of what curriculum planning entails and what educational research is likely to provide,” Schwab’s deliberative enquiry promotes moral action, reciprocal authority, and communal dynamism that would allow us to make curricular decisions with(in) a (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricular discourse that will “suit changing contexts riddled with idiosyncrasies” (Eisner, 1984, p. 204) of our multicultural wor(l)ds.

Enactment of such a (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricular discourse in today’s cultural diversity-rich Science classrooms would enable students to cross cultural borders and engage in learning of Science as a “human activity” (Aoki, 1992/2005, p. 197). By participating collaboratively in this *deliberative enquiry* about how and what “Science [should] be taught as humanity” (Aoki, 1993/2005, p. 199), we would be able to begin *dialogic complicated conversations* to create “belonging togetherness” (p. 199) through “pedagogical watchfulness and pedagogical thoughtfulness” (Aoki, 1992/2005, pp. 195–197) with(in) and among the *multiplicity of lived experiences* where teaching becomes a thoughtful realm of *practical moral action* that stimulates *(w)holistic humanizing knowledge* in cultural diversity-rich classrooms.

In Figure 1, I have attempted to represent the key ideas evolved in this discourse of *understanding* (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricula. The lived experiences of all people involved are at the centre of three key curricular frameworks, which complementarily engage five common places in a complicated conversation that is informed by the key ideas of all three frameworks, presented in the outermost circle.

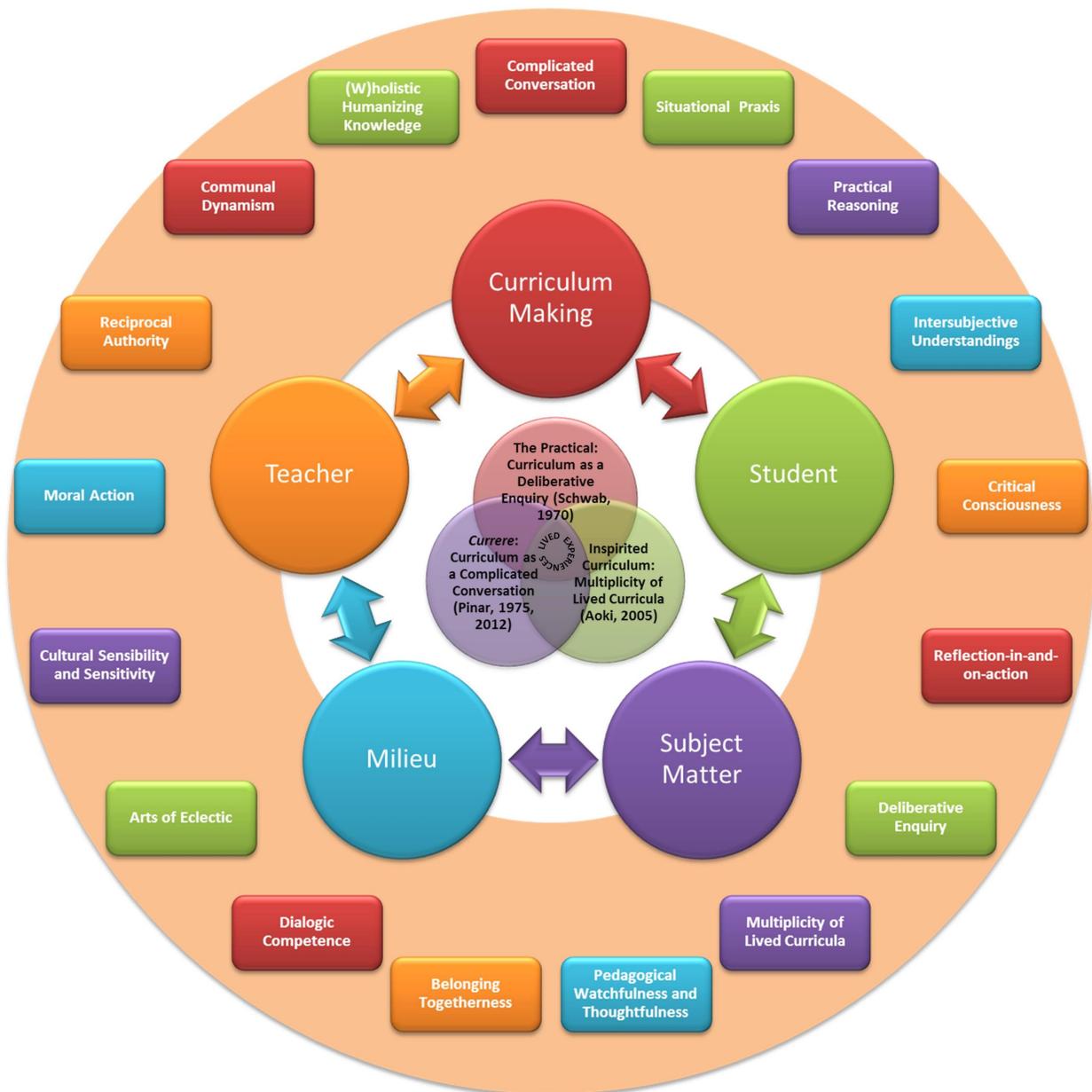


Figure 1. *(Trans-multi)culturally Responsive Curricula.*

Conclusion and Future Hopes

Inspired by Pinar (2010) who challenged the temporal cohesion of lived time by stating that “not everyone is living in the same present nor regards the past as past” (p. 528), I acknowledge that there is no single fixed (trans-multi)culturally responsive curriculum. To initiate a (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricular discourse in our cultural diversity-rich classrooms, it is essential that we move beyond identifying ourSelves and Other(s) based on our perceived socio-politically informed identities and remember that not every person of the same culture holds the same cultural beliefs, values, and attitudes. We must recognize that culture is dynamic, fluid, and multiple—informed through our historic,

personal, and political temporality “culture...as a construction [simultaneously] *constructs us as we construct it* [emphasis added]” (Banks & Banks, 2010, p. 37).

Thus, *there is no single human world* as a fixed point of reference—individually and collectively—we *make cultural wor(l)ds that are multiple* (Banks & Banks, 2010). And it is these multiple worlds—the “multiplicity of lived curricula” (Aoki, 1993/2005)—that I hope a (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricula would invite, acknowledge, and help flourish in our classrooms. By creating understandings about the distinctions between “visible and invisible or explicit/implicit or overt/covert culture” (Banks & Banks, 2010, p. 38), such a curricula will utilize these distinctions to provide opportunities to develop (trans-multi)cultural understandings as means of knowledge creation in cultural diversity-rich classrooms (Ghosh & Abdi, 2013).

By integrating key insights of the curricular approaches of Aoki, Pinar, and Schwab, a (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricular discourse would create cultural sensibility and sensitivity among teachers and students. This would enable them to engage *deliberately* in teaching and learning moments as (trans-multi)cultural human beings who are willing to transcend self-absorbed hegemonic identities of “I am because I think” and understand our relational existence as “ubuntu—I am because we are” (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 257).

Indeed, a (trans-multi)culturally responsive curricula would allow us to recognize ourselves as Heidegger’s “*Dasein*” (Stapleton, 2010, p. 44)—the relational being and accept Other(s) not as “the Other who is different” but as “the Other who is part of [my]Self—a fellow human kin” (reconstructed from Grimmer, 2013). By recognizing the *relations among differences*, such a curricular framework would remind us that when there is nothing in common, our “alterity” (Pinar, 2012, p. 46) becomes an authenticity of Other(s). In such a situation, it would be wise for us to engage in a “complicated conversation” (Pinar, 2012, p. 47) that honours the multiplicity of voices and allows us to deliberately initiate an “allegory” (Pinar, 2011a, p. 3) that makes us *both* the Self and the Other(s). Inviting education as a “*mode of life* [emphasis added]” (Dewey, 1929, p. 75), this (trans-multi)culturally responsive curriculum would ensure “respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility” (Archibald, 2008, p. 18), and relational reverence in our teaching and learning processes, so that no students are punished and/or forced to wipe out their cultural ways of knowing in any classroom.

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I dedicate this paper to my students and all the teachers who strive to bring responsiveness into their teaching and learning processes and welcome education for life.

This paper is a tribute to my parents who inculcated in me the belief that “education is the greatest wealth in the world because it can never be stolen—the more we share, the more it grows.”

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Endnotes

¹ The transition to instruction in English begins at the third grade level in Kosrae, FSM.

² A chant in Hindi which was (and still is) used by many parents and teachers in India to remind children of their responsibility/manners as a student.