CHAPTER 2

CRITICAL TURNING POINTS

In the nineteenth century certain events occurred that proved to be turning points in the development of the curriculum and in thought about the curriculum. Dewey's laboratory school at Chicago was one such event and so was Spencer's raising the entire question of the purpose of education. The purpose of the Dewey school was in Dewey's own words "to discover in administration, selection of subject-matter, methods of learning, teaching, and discipline, how a school could become a cooperative community while developing in individuals their own capacities and satisfying their own needs."[1] Dewey's school produced results of continuing value and significance.

The essay by the English philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) *What Knowledge Is of Most Worth?* (1859) had considerable influence on curriculum thinking (and on the curriculum as well). Since its publication, we have never stopped asking Spencerian questions.

The work of Francis Parker in Quincy, Massachusetts, in the 1870s proved to be a turning point in the course of curricular events. Parker achieved something constructive and of continuing usefulness to those who seek to improve the curriculum for children. Yet not all of the turning points in the curriculum signalled progress. Some, such as the report of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies (1893) and the report of the Committee of Fifteen on Elementary Education (1895) are generally considered as conservative and perhaps regressive in their impact. The history of the curriculum has had its ups and downs.

This chapter considers the great events and the great ideas of the nineteenth century that proved to be very influential in the evolution of the curriculum. Among the turning points examined are Spencer's ideas on education, Parker's work in the Quincy schools, the work of the National Education Association's Committee of Ten and Committee of Fifteen, the Laboratory School at the University of Chicago and, finally, the founding of standardizing or accreditation associations to establish criteria for college entrance.

NO PERMANENT ANSWER. Equally important in curriculum development is the need to ask Spencer's question continually. "When Spencer asked, 'What knowledge is of most worth?' he posed a question which must always be considered and reconsidered," observes Oliver, who goes on to point out that what might have been of great worth at one time has given way to a new worth with the advancement of knowledge.[7] Indeed, virtually every national report on school reform throughout the twentieth century has addressed this question implicitly if not explicitly. A chief problem has been that in periods of perceived crisis, the schools find themselves vulnerable to narrow sociopolitical demands for shifting curriculum priorities, giving emphasis to one side of the curriculum at the expense of an equally worthy side.[8]

ARRIVING AT CONSENSUS. It is one thing to theorize that "most worth" should be determined on the basis of philosophy and the best available evidence. It is quite another, however, for the theory to be put into practice. Curriculum is the responsibility of various groups, often with conflicting ideas and ideals. A guiding principle offered by Richard Clark is genuine participation. Faculty members, parents, and students should not be asked condescendingly for input. They should be "mobilized to participate actively in the developmental processes and decision making of the school. Not only do they participate eagerly, but their participation is authentic."[9]

Clark offers as an example the development of a high school core curriculum. A study committee of parents, teachers, and district curriculum persons spent a year developing recommendations under the leadership of a school principal. Local community groups conducted hearings, and each faculty member worked intensively to develop recommendations. The developmental process involved task forces of teachers representing all areas of the curriculum working with district curriculum specialists. The point of importance is that the process took time (actually, three years) and required interactions among the individuals who participated in the development of the curriculum as well as in decision making on related concerns. Conflicts became secondary to the goal. Moreover, as Clark points out, the participants did not regard the work as something to be finished, but viewed the outcomes as requiring follow-up. All participants are seen as members of an "active" school.[10] Clark speaks from his experience as an educational leader.

Researchers have shown considerable interest in the concept of curriculum deliberation, the process by which persons representing groups with differing ideals arrive at consensus about the curriculum. Needless to say, deliberation can take place in many settings and under many institutional arrangements. It has been found that the curriculum conference is a particularly useful way of arriving at consensus.[11] A curriculum conference is a well-planned and prepared deliberation situation in which participants meet to work on matters of common concern with regard to the curriculum and to determine and approve the curriculum. Clearly this is different from a standing curriculum committee meeting or special workshop. The curriculum conference requires a great deal of planning or "prestructuring," in which "a preliminary study takes place to write a report that contains information from multiple data-sources about . . . subject matter, learners and teachers. But existing curricula are also analyzed."[12] The report highlights the best available evidence as well as differences in viewpoints. (Here the material may be useful in sorting evidence from opin-

examine and improve education in Quincy. Two years before, on public examination day, the Quincy School Committee had made an appalling discovery. The graduates of the grammar schools were unable to spell, write, or speak effectively. When asked by the committee members to read from an unfamiliar book, they were bewildered and lost. They had been trained only for examination and could not read with fluency or comprehension. Furthermore, questions about their studies revealed that the children had no understanding of the thinking process. All they could do was parrot memorized responses to memorized questions prepared in advance by their teacher.

Buttressed with his study of elementary-school methods in Germany, Parker had his opportunity to apply them as superintendent. Unlike many superintendents of today, he carried out curriculum development responsibilities personally. Parker understood his charge clearly: to help the children of Quincy to develop the power of expression.

Parker's Pedagogy

Because Parker believed that methods of teaching should be patterned on the child's natural way of learning, he adopted the word method of teaching reading. This, after all, was the way children learned to speak the language. Grammar was thrown out of the school and talking and writing were put in.

Conversation, which was one of the innovations in Quincy schools, was cultivated as an art. "What did you do last evening?" or "What did you see on your way to school this morning?" were questions being answered by children who previously had been mouthing words by rote, without understanding the ideas they represented. All writing was related to children's activities, experiences, and feelings. Spelling was taught through this meaningful kind of writing.

Parker was opposed to teaching geography via the disconnected morass of facts and statistics in geography textbooks. Instead, the children took field trips around Quincy and made mud models and sketches of the landscape. These methods were indeed revolutionary at a time when in most schools pupils were expected to remain in the same position throughout the day without turning their heads.

The novel approaches of the "Quincy system," as it came to be known, attracted national attention. Children were learning to read, write, spell, and think simultaneously and holistically. As Parker said, they were learning to "talk" with their pens, as they had learned to talk with their tongues—by using them.[15]

The reaction to these methods was mixed. There were those who called Parker a charlatan, as they would have called anyone who tried to teach children how to think before they had thoroughly memorized the implements (facts) for thinking. In the main, however, his methods were widely acclaimed in both the general press and professional literature. Typical was the statement of B. G. Northrup, secretary of the Connecticut State Board of Education: "In Quincy, the children write better *throughout all the schools of the town* than is the case in *all* the schools of any other town within my knowledge in our country."[16]

A London journal, however, was unimpressed, finding the developments in Quincy to be nothing more than Froebel's theories put into action.[17] A comment fre-

ing up the socioeconomic ladder. One point is of central importance in our discussion of the report of the Committee of Ten (1893) of the National Education Association (NEA). When the high school idea was born in the 1820s, it was not intended to be a college preparatory institution. The Boston School Committee had been pressured by the public to establish a school that would "furnish the young men who are not intended for a collegiate course of studies, and who have enjoyed the usual advantages of the public schools, with the means of completing a good English education, and of fitting themselves for all the departments of commercial life."[22]

The school for young men opened in 1821, and a high school for girls five years later. But secondary education was not completely democratic until it took on the college preparatory function of the academy as well as preparing terminal students. The high school chose very early to take on both functions. This almost could have been predicted, particularly in frontier states such as Ohio and Indiana, where people were just too egalitarian to like the idea of a dual school system and where elementary and secondary education were distinguished from one another on the basis of social status.

But egalitarianism was also evident in the state of Massachusetts, which in 1827 passed the first general legislation under which high schools could be established. People liked the high school because it offered a curriculum for "life"; that is, it provided students with the foundation for careers in commercial and mechanical fields and education beyond the 3 R's to meet people's thirst for learning. The first high school in Boston, for example, included work in geometry, trigonometry, philosophy, and history, in addition to surveying, bookkeeping, and navigation. Because there was usually only one high school in most towns and because it was felt to be more democratic, the American high school also took on the college preparatory function.

The Secondary Curriculum in Conflict

As the nineteenth century progressed, the college preparatory function took on increasing importance. The variety of purposes that the high school tried to serve seemed inevitably to conflict. Some saw the high school as a college preparatory institution and others as a place where noncollege-bound students could prepare for life in the American community. When only a small percentage of the population even attended high school, these conflicts were not urgent. But when secondary education began to expand enormously in the last decades of the nineteenth century, these problems became pressing. Although some were demanding a more practical education, others were continuing to argue for mental discipline and a curriculum with heavy emphasis on the classics. What was happening is well expressed by Butts and Cremin: "The lines of battle were being formed that were to last for a hundred years to the present."[23]

THE PROBLEM OF ARTICULATION. Efforts by colleges to spell out the secondary curriculum in detail have already been mentioned in Chapter 1. No doubt that high schools were uneven in the variety and quality of their courses, but the high school had not been originally intended to be a college preparatory institution. Nevertheless, the growing interest in high schools focused on the articulation of high school

the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies, the Committee of Fifteen on Elementary Education, and the Committee on College Entrance Requirements. Of these, the Committee of Ten was the most influential.

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE OF TEN. College professors predominated the composition of the committees; indeed, the Committee of Ten included five college presidents. It is obvious from the major recommendations of the committee that the report was dominated by the more conservative beliefs and ideas of the colleges and universities of the 1890s. For example, the report reflected a belief in the value of the classical subjects for mental training.

Determining the Course of Secondary Education

The report of the Committee of Ten was enormously influential on the secondary curriculum for a generation after its publication in 1893. Interestingly, one of the ways in which it was influential concerns the rise of national committees for guidance on curriculum problems. The procedure has continued to operate to this day. Since the Committee of Ten, the recommendations of groups of eminent persons have influenced educational policy. The 1980s and 1990s witnessed a veritable foray of such reports on educational reform. The most notorious of these documents, *A Nation at Risk,* was issued in 1983 by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Education.[28]

The procedure usually operates in this fashion: National task forces or committees are appointed and meet to deliberate on the problems assigned to them, for example, the decline of U.S. preeminence in global industrial markets. Following the discussions, one or two committee members write up the agreements, and the report is circulated among the other committee members for their verification. By the time the recommendations are implemented, the group of experts has scattered to the four winds. Eminent persons who decide what to include or remove from the curriculum are seldom around to take responsibility for the outcomes.[29]

A PARADOXICAL REPORT. The report of the Committee of Ten cast the mold for secondary education for years to come, but the report itself was strikingly paradoxical. Two paradoxes are particularly noteworthy. The report states without equivocation that "secondary schools do not exist for the purpose of preparing boys and girls for colleges."[30] Yet despite this recognition, the report proceeds to recommend curricular offerings geared almost entirely toward college preparation. The second paradox concerned whether subjects should be taught differently to students going to college. The committee decided that every subject should be taught in the same way and in the same depth to every student, no matter what the student's probable destination, and despite the fact that the high school was a terminal educational institution for the overwhelming proportion of the students.

What actually was behind this recommendation? Was it the spirit of democracy or a conservative spirit? Did the Committee sincerely believe that the traditional college preparatory subjects were best for those who sought from the high school some

Figure 2–1. Range of Curricular Offerings (High School) as Proposed by the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies, 1893.

1st Secondary School Year	2nd Secondary School Year
Latin ..... 5 p.	Latin ..... 4 p.
English Literature, 2 p. English Composition, 2 p. } ..... 4 p.	Greek ..... 5 p.
German [or French] ..... 5 p.	English Literature, 2 p. English Composition, 2 p. } ..... 4 p.
Algebra ..... 4 p.	German, continued ..... 4 p.
History of Italy, Spain, and France .. 3 p.	French, begun ..... 5 p.
Applied Geography (European political—continental and oceanic flora and fauna) ..... 4 p.	Algebra,* 2 p. Geometry, 2 p. } ..... 4 p.
	Botany or Zoology ..... 4 p.
	English History to 1688 ..... 3 p.
25 p.	33 p.
	*Option of bookkeeping and commercial arithmetic.

3rd Secondary School Year	4th Secondary School Year
Latin ..... 4 p.	Latin ..... 4 p.
Greek ..... 4 p.	Greek ..... 4 p.
English Literature, 2 p. English Composition, 1 p. Rhetoric, 1 p. } ..... 4 p.	English Literature, 2 p. English Composition, 1 p. English Grammar, 1 p. } ..... 4 p.
German ..... 4 p.	German ..... 4 p.
French ..... 4 p.	French ..... 4 p.
Algebra,* 2 p. Geometry, 2 p. } ..... 4 p.	Trigonometry, Higher Algebra, } ..... 2 p.
Physics ..... 4 p.	Chemistry ..... 4 p.
History, English and American ..... 3 p.	History, (intensive) and Civil Government ..... 3 p.
Astronomy, 3 p. 1st 1/2 yr. Meterology, 3 p. 2nd 1/2 yr. } ..... 3 p.	Geology or Physiography, 4 p. 1st 1/2 yr. Anatomy, Physiology, and Hygiene, 4 p. 2nd 1/2 yr. } ..... 4 p.
34 p.	33 p.
*Option of bookkeeping and commercial arithmetic.	

Source: Committee of Ten. *Report of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies* (Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1893), p. 4.

The Legacy of the Committee of Ten

The committee's hope that the high school curriculum ought to permit any student to go to college came to be increasingly realized through the course of the twentieth century. The tendency in a growing number of states was to provide the opportunity for all high school graduates to attend college, even those who did not follow a prescribed college preparatory course. Access to higher education also increased for

However, the Committee of Fifteen (1895) protested strongly against the scientific method in elementary science teaching.

> It is important not to hasten the use of a strictly scientific method on the part of the child. . . . He is rather in the imitation stage of mind than in that of criticism. He will not reach the comparative or critical method until the era of higher education.[39]

In light of this conclusion, one hour of "oral lessons" in natural science (which included hygiene) was recommended.

The committee's approach to the development of the child was mechanical. School work was distributed into eight separate years, each with its own definite subjects to be covered. The committee was cool to the concept of curriculum synthesis. "Rigid isolation of the elements of each branch" was considered essential in elementary learning.[40] The committee's outlook almost compelled the teacher of a given grade to take an isolated view of her work rather than being guided by the ideal of the child's whole development. The number of children in a room, which in the graded schools of the time often ran as high as sixty, was an added condition that, in Dewey's words, "compel them to be led in flocks, if not in hordes."[41]

Class size was not dealt with by the Committee of Fifteen. But as every teacher knows, the curriculum is profoundly influenced by school conditions. Large classes make it less likely for teachers to plan lessons that stress individual inquiry and judgment and provide for the individual child's needs. As it happened, the committee emphasized a curriculum broken up into isolated parts that did not require individual inquiry. Had the committee included observation and experimentation in science instruction and treating each child as unique, there would have been conflict with at least two existing conditions: a large number of children in a room that limited the contact of teacher with child, and of child with child, and the teacher's outlook, which was confined to one year of the child's development. But the committee's report merely reinforced existing conditions.

Solidifying the Status Quo

Eliot had proposed that the number of elementary grades be reduced from ten to eight. This recommendation was endorsed in the report of the Committee of Fifteen, as was his plan to substitute the study of algebra for arithmetic in the seventh and eighth grade. (See Figure 2–2.) At the outset of the report the committee stated that grammar, literature, arithmetic, geography, and history are the subjects in the elementary school with the greatest value for training the mind. This was the philosophy of William T. Harris, who authored most of the report and was the most well-known educational philosopher of the time.[42] Throughout the report, the committee held the line against the newer subjects, allotting them relatively little time in the school program.

There were some vigorous expressions of dissent by committee members on such points as "oral lessons" in science (telling by the teacher) and the failure to include observation and experimentation in science instruction. But Harris and

other conservatives won out, despite the mounting evidence on the need for hands-on experience in children's mental and social development.

The Final Result

In the paper he presented at the 1893 NEA meeting, Eliot had suggested a reduction in the time devoted to grammar and arithmetic so that the elementary-school program could be diversified and enriched. But the end result of the committee's deliberations was to give these subjects even higher priority than they had before. Indeed, grammar now topped what had become the official list of the common branches. It may be said that the effect of the report of the Committee of Fifteen on the elementary curriculum was to further entrench and intensify the problems that Eliot had sought to solve.

On the matter of curriculum synthesis, the report of the Committee of Fifteen was a turning point for the worse. The problem of curriculum segmentation and isolation continues to this day.

DEWEY'S LABORATORY SCHOOL AT CHICAGO

On the occasion of Dewey's ninetieth birthday, the British Ambassador to the United States wrote:

> For fifty years Dr. Dewey has urged us to relate the school to life and above all to the life of the child. Wherever British children today are active, purposeful, and happy in school there is little doubt that they owe something to the active, purposeful, and long life of a great American philosopher.[43]

The tribute was one of many from leaders in education, government, and the arts from all over the world. In *The New Leader* magazine, which had run many of Dewey's articles, Dewey was honored for his contributions to the fields of education, psychology, ethics, art, and political science. Although Dewey wrote on a range of problems, it was education that had, as *The New Leader* noted, virtually been revolutionized by his ideas. And not only in the United States, but abroad as well.[44]

If that revolution had a beginning, it was surely in the experimental school founded by Dewey at the University of Chicago in 1896. Like any laboratory, the purpose of the school was to test theoretical ideas and advance the body of knowledge in a field—in this case, education. The ideas to be tested were Dewey's philosophical and psychological principles, or as Dewey put it, his "philosophical interpretation of psychology."[45] Dewey believed that thinking (and knowledge) developed as children attempted to solve problems that originated in active situations. For Dewey, this (or any) theoretical principle is of little value unless tested.

The Curriculum Problem—What Dewey Hoped to Discover

With regard to the curriculum, Dewey and the teachers in the Laboratory School hoped to identify the direct, present experiences of children from which more orga-

SUBJECT MATTER AS EXPERIENCE. At the heart of Dewey's approach to curriculum development was his theory of knowledge. Learning and education are social in nature because there is always human interaction involved—the influence of some people on others. The sets of facts, concepts, and generalizations that we label geography, mathematics, science, and so on are nothing more or less than selections from past social life and "represent the answers found for social needs."[55]

It is all too easy to regard these sets of facts, concepts, and generalizations as external to the learner, to be mastered by encouragement and devices by the teacher. But Dewey believed that the maximum benefit for the child was when systematic knowledge grows out of the experiences and interests that he or she already has. The instructional problem is how to bring about this growth. The first thing to be determined is the kind of experience appropriate for the child at a given time—what kind of experiences get a hold on the youngster, what he is capable of doing and can do to the greatest advantage and with the least waste of time. These interests and experiences offer a key to the selection of subject matter.

SUBJECT MATTER AS PURPOSE. What a ridiculous thing to insist that there is a fixed body of knowledge that is forever set off and labeled physics, geography, or history, said Dewey. "Exactly the same objective reality will be one or the other or none of these three, according to the interest and intellectual standpoint from which it is viewed."[56] For example, a square mile of territory, when viewed from one interest, would be labeled trigonometry, from another standpoint we would label the facts regarding it geography, and from still another interest, it would become historical knowledge. "There is absolutely nothing in the fact, as an objective fact, which places it under one head," pointed out Dewey. "Only as we ask what purpose or end some individual has in view do we find a basis for selecting and arranging the facts under the label of any particular study."[57]

Dewey and the Laboratory School teachers hoped to determine how, out of the child's interest and purpose, a subject as a form of experience gradually differentiated itself from other experiences and developed into the systematic knowledge of the adult.

The Three-Dimensional Curriculum

The curriculum in the school conducted by Dewey had three dimensions: the child's side (activities), the teacher's side (logically organized bodies of subject matter: chemistry, physics, biology, mathematics, history, language, literature, music, and physical culture), and the side of democratic social life and purpose.

REASONS FOR ACTIVITIES. Behind the activities was Dewey's conception of the psychological nature of the child. Dewey argued that children are inherently active with strong impulses to investigate, to share with others what they have found out, to construct practical things, and to create. Dewey developed this psychological concept into a curriculum principle: The child's impulses are an enormously important educational resource, and opportunities should be provided to children to develop them through engagement in activities.

sion, cooperation and control by a unified plan."[60] The Laboratory School had such a plan: a civilizational theme. Beginning with activities familiar to four- and five-year-olds because they were activities of the home, the developing curriculum led to the study of related occupations in early civilization. Following the way of social evolution, it traced human progress through discovery and invention to the occupations and organization of contemporary society.

The study of occupations provided opportunities for and required the child's increasing ability to abstract, that is, to bring out a special idea. For instance, farming as studied by six-year-olds simply showed what some people do and how they serve others. Seven-year-olds reviewed this material, but the emphasis was on the evolving needs in human history that required this occupation and the way it has affected present social life.

Dewey and his Laboratory School faculty, and members of the university faculty in pedagogy, chose occupations as an organizing theme, although there are other possible organizing themes, noted Dewey. What is of critical importance, Dewey found, is that teachers confer constantly to achieve a coherent curriculum. The Laboratory School appears to have pioneered in collaborative decision making and teacher reflection. Dewey recounted that "fellows and members of the faculty of the pedagogical department, graduate-student assistants, and the regular teaching staff of the school all met weekly with the directors to discuss the reports of the school in relation to theoretical principles and to revise future plans accordingly."[61]

The Laboratory School experimented with and discarded many different activities in subject matter fields, which was its purpose. The teachers' work proceeded in accord with a clearly defined framework—the occupations that make for society, and Dewey's concept of progression from activities to formal studies. As Wirth points out in his discussion of the Laboratory School, there was a well-considered curriculum design.[62]

One can see readily from the records of the Laboratory School, the photographs of student activities, and the examples of student work that remain, that the curriculum was based on psychological knowledge about children and on logically organized and useful facts, concepts, ideas, and generalizations and principles from the major fields of knowledge. It appears to have been a curriculum of high quality in which the youngsters engaged in knowledge applications on a daily basis.

The Dewey School, as it became known, served to introduce educators and parents to the possibilities of what a curriculum can be. As Dewey reminds us, the three-dimensional curriculum is always in the making, it is never made.[63]

ACCREDITATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

In the years following the Civil War, school and college people became increasingly concerned with a fundamental question: What are the best criteria for determining admission to college? The concern stemmed from a chaotic situation. Procedures were inadequately defined and carelessly applied. Sometimes they depended on the relationship between a certain college and a certain teacher. The variety of acceptable high school programs and the diversity of college entrance requirements led

In addition to the North Central Association, five other regional associations were formed. In order of their founding, they are: The New England Association (1885), the Middle States Association (1887), the Southern Association (1895), the Northwest Association (1917), and the Western Association (1924).

THE COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION BOARD. In 1900 another institution of continuing influence came into being. The College Entrance Examination Board was founded for the purpose of constructing and administering examinations for high school students applying for admission to college. Once again, the purpose was standardization and the solution of a very practical problem: Teachers and principals no longer had to prepare different students "going to different colleges in different amounts and different books of Latin, Greek and other subjects."[66] This had not been as much of a problem when only a tiny proportion of the age group attended college.

The College Entrance Examination Board was an East Coast invention. The founding college members were Barnard, Bryn Mawr, Columbia, Cornell, Johns Hopkins, New York University, Rutgers, Swarthmore, Union, Pennsylvania, and Vassar. (Harvard joined later.) One reason for the board's founding was that as public high schools grew in number, the link between high school preparation and college requirements lessened. Students far from the East Coast could not sit for the college's own examinations, and admissions officers lacked enough information to evaluate unknown applicants from unknown schools. The member Eastern colleges allowed applicants to take the College Board examinations in place of their own examinations. Most colleges continued to rely on high school accreditation in admitting applicants.

The time came, however, when the number of qualified high school graduates increased to the point where colleges had more qualified applicants than they could admit. The Scholastic Aptitude Test, intended to provide colleges with a way to evaluate an applicant's ability to learn, was administered by the College Board beginning in 1926 with a limited population. Renamed the Scholastic Assessment Test in 1993 in belated but masked recognition of the limited validity of the test as a measure of aptitude, the SAT has grown enormously over the years and has come to garner great media attention, especially when declining scores can be cited.

From Regulation to Service

The creation of the College Entrance Examination Board allowed the newly established regional accrediting associations to work toward the improvement of secondary schools generally, rather than focusing mainly on standards thought to be most applicable for college preparation. But for many years the accreditation standards tended to be defined along quantitative lines, having tenuous relationship to the actual quality of the school.

Then in 1932 the six regional associations embarked on an effort to form and test new criteria along such dimensions as the school's philosophy, student population, curriculum, community, faculty, guidance services, student activities program,

dents. The study found that what was needed was a good high school with a well-integrated curriculum, and students would succeed in college.[71] The approach to accreditation of the National Study of School Evaluation is supported by this study. The Eight-Year Study is discussed in Chapter 3 and other sections of this text.

The diversity of American postsecondary education is enormous. Differences in mission among institutions of higher education mean that there is no single "best method" of admission, and that there is a college suited more or less for almost anyone who is motivated for further education.

PERSPECTIVE

The effects of the nineteenth century turning points for education are all around us. Blue-ribbon panels continue to ask Spencer's question: What knowledge is of most worth? (Spencer's answer was science.) School teachers and curriculum personnel need to learn to ask Spencer's question themselves. The question has no final answer. The curriculum is necessarily unfinished and unfinishable. Like education itself, curriculum development is a continuing journey for progressive improvement. Consensus should not be a curriculum committee's main concern; a sound basis for decisions should be the main concern.

Reading specialists and early childhood educators continue to rediscover (indeed, reinvent) Francis Parker's "Quincy system." Parker demonstrated in a public school system (Quincy, Massachusetts) before the turn of the twentieth century that children can have a more meaningful educational experience if reading, writing, and oral language are taught holistically. Indeed, an independent study by an inspector from the Massachusetts State Board of Education found that the children in Quincy excelled in reading, writing, and spelling. This is not to imply that Parker's principle was without opposition. There were always critics. In the 1970s and 1980s reading was once again reduced to an assortment of isolated skills as the result of the curriculum retrenchment of back to basics. Nevertheless, the idea that learning to read and write are interrelated processes was here to stay. Recently, Parker's method was reinvented under a new label: the whole language approach.

Parker's emphasis throughout the curriculum in Quincy (and later, at the Cook County Normal School in Chicago) was on observing, describing, and understanding phenomena appropriate to the child's experience. When these abilities had begun to develop, conventional school subjects were introduced. Little wonder that Dewey referred to Parker as "the father of progressive education." Dewey himself built on Parker's developmental concept in working out the curriculum in his own school.

To this day, educators continue to try to integrate the traditional subject curriculum. This curriculum became fully entrenched by the reports of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies and the Committee of Fifteen on Elementary School Studies issued toward the close of the nineteenth century. The Committee of Ten was created in response to demands for uniform college entrance requirements. The high school was not originally intended to be a college preparatory institution. Although most students did not go to college, the larger effect of the committee's recommendations was to turn the high school into a college preparatory institution.

The nineteenth century was a time of new beginnings in education, of great optimism for a better future. The idea of progress in education and society continued to prevail with the challenges of the twentieth century.

PROBLEMS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. In discussing Ralph Tyler's basic work in curriculum development, John Goodlad notes: "The question of what knowledge is of most worth becomes an integral part of curriculum planning." [John I. Goodlad, *What Schools Are For* (Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1979), p. 43.] From your own experience, do teachers and administrators ask Spencer's question? Explain. Do you think that it is important for them to do so? Why or why not?
2. How would you answer Spencer's question today?
3. What illustrations can you give of Parker's reforms in the curriculum today?
4. According to two staff development specialists, "Busy people typically do not engage in reflection. They rarely treat themselves to reflective experiences, unless they are given some time, some structure, and the expectations to do so." [Joellen P. Killion and Guy R. Todnem, "A Process for Personal Theory Building," *Educational Leadership*, 48 (March 1991), p. 14.] Were these conditions for reflection all present in Dewey's Laboratory School? Explain.
5. Why was Dewey's three-dimensional curriculum a critical turning point in curriculum thought and educational improvement?
6. Dewey and the teachers in his school attempted to establish their school as a form of community life. They believed that schools could only prepare children for social living if the school was a small cooperative society. "The idea involved a radical departure from the notion that the school is just a place in which to learn lessons and acquire certain forms of skill," recounted Dewey years later. "It assimilated study and learning within the school to the education which takes place when out-of-school living goes on in a rich and significant social medium." [John Dewey, "The Chicago Experiment," in Katherine Camp Mayhew and Anna Camp Edwards, *The Dewey School* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1936), p. 466).] Do the curriculum and school organization today reflect the concept that the school is just a place to acquire skills or the school is a small cooperative community? Give examples.
7. Do you believe that Dewey's idea in question 6 was a positive contribution? Why or why not?
8. The *Evaluative Criteria* for secondary schools states the following expectations for faculty involvement in curriculum development:

   > The faculty, under the leadership of the building administrator, is actively involved in curriculum development procedures; curriculum evaluation and revision procedures; the selection of instructional materials; and the resolution of curriculum/instruction-related problems. [National Study of School Evaluation, *Evaluative Criteria*, 6th ed. (National Study: Falls Church, VA: 1987), p. 59.]

   Evaluate your own school on the above expectations, indicating the extent to which each expectation is being met.
9. Do you believe that a high school subject should be taught the same way to all students whether or not they are college-bound?
10. What is your appraisal of the proposal of the Committee of Fifteen as a curriculum for today's schools?
11. Compare the Report of the Committee of Ten with a more recent report for educational reform in terms of (a) the problems addressed, (b) the evidence cited, and (c) the remedies proposed. In your opinion were these reports well grounded in their diagnoses and prescriptions? Explain.