

Chapter 3

Understanding Curriculum in Higher Education



3.1 Introduction

Curriculum is a neglected area of attention in both higher education scholarship and policy. Despite a lot of concern and debate about university teaching practice, the curriculum effects of new teaching approaches tend to go unexamined. Although the concept of curriculum is complex and contested, foregrounding curriculum draws attention to the question of ‘what’ is taught in important ways (Deng, 2018; Yates, 2006), as well as the complex relations between curriculum and pedagogy (Bernstein, 1976). This chapter discusses the concept of curriculum and its importance for understanding the implications of unbundled online learning. It puts forward an interpretation of curriculum development as a contested site of struggle over the question of ‘what counts as knowledge’ and how knowledge is defined within a particular program of study. The chapter discusses the concepts and theories derived from the field of curriculum inquiry which informed this understanding, and how these were taken up to understand the case studies of unbundled online learning discussed later in the book. It highlights the concerns a focus on curriculum draws attention to, which are neglected in debates centered on learning and teaching.

3.2 Engaging with Curriculum in Higher Education

Although questions around what a university education should emphasize have been widely debated, there has been very little work that has taken seriously the changing dynamics of curriculum making within universities. Curriculum is a term which tends not to be in favor within university policy documents where phrases such as ‘learning and teaching’ dominate. In the UK and Australian context, in particular, explicit interest in ‘curriculum’ as a subject of scholarship and policy debate within the higher education field has been limited. In their book *Engaging the Curriculum in Higher Education*, Barnett and Coate (2005, p. 1) write that in relation to higher

education ‘there is very little talk about the curriculum’. Considering the context of increasing policy concern with teaching discussed in the previous chapter, they note:

Despite the national seminars, the books, the new journals, the funded initiatives, the appointment of pro-vice-chancellors (for ‘learning and teaching’ or for ‘academic development’), the new interest in the ‘scholarship of teaching’ and the establishment in universities of ‘educational development centres’ or centres for ‘learning and teaching’ or ‘academic practice’, the idea of curriculum pretty well goes entirely unremarked’. (Barnett & Coate, 2005, p. 17)

In the book *Researching Higher Education* (Tight, 2012, p. 66) likewise comments that it is ‘uncommon to find higher education researchers (or practitioners) directly discussing the curriculum’. In Australia more recently, concerns have been raised about the declining reference to the term curriculum in government policy, and its use to simply denote course content (Hicks, 2017; Krause, 2020).

This neglect of curriculum has had implications for how its knowledge base and implications are understood and framed. In an introduction to a special issue on ‘Knowledge, curriculum and student understanding in higher education’, Ashwin (2014, p. 123) writes:

When policy makers discuss higher education and ways of defining the quality of an undergraduate degree, there is remarkably little discussion of knowledge [...] research into students’ experiences of studying in higher education has been dominated by studies that focus on teaching and learning, the majority of which tend to separate teaching from learning [...] This has meant that research has tended not to examine the relations between knowledge and curriculum in higher education.

While there is a substantial literature on the higher education curriculum in the US in relation to curriculum planning, structure, and design, and much debate about what university teaching should look like (as discussed in Chap. 2), there is limited engagement with questions about the relations between knowledge and curriculum and the ways in which curriculum is being constructed.

An emerging body of literature has begun to explore the curriculum question in higher education. A number of scholars engaging in this space have attempted to grapple with the question of what it means to research curriculum in higher education and how the higher education curriculum should be understood (e.g. Barnett & Coate, 2005; Coate, 2009; Karseth & Solbrekke, 2016; Yates et al., 2017; Young & Muller, 2015). This work (discussed further in Chap. 4) has drawn attention to the limited ways in which curriculum is framed in higher education and the importance of centering questions of knowledge in how curriculum is defined.

However, there is limited agreement on how curriculum should be understood as an object of inquiry. As Aoki (1980/2005, p. 94) writes, ‘The term curriculum is many things to many people’. Outside scholarly debate, ‘curriculum’ is frequently taken to simply refer to a syllabus or subject outline. However, decades of research in curriculum inquiry globally (focused primarily on the school curriculum) have struggled with the question of what curriculum means and how it should be understood conceptually. Definitions of curriculum are contentious and closely associated with different conceptual, philosophical, and ideological understandings of educational purpose (Connelly & Xu, 2010).

Understandings of the curriculum take a range of forms. Cliff et al. (2020, p. 3) identify four orientations to the curriculum. In the first, curriculum as content transmission, curriculum is understood as reproductive and uncontested, with the role of lectures and students being to transmit and acquire knowledge respectively. In the second, curriculum as product (which Cliff et al., 2020 identify as associated with unbundling in higher education), the various components of the curriculum such as content delivery, academic support, and assessment are packaged to meet the needs of students, lecturers, and other key actors. In the third and fourth orientations, curriculum as process and praxis, curriculum is understood as mutable, emergent, and aimed at critical engagement and transformation. Barnett and Coate (2005, pp. 28–38) have also distinguished between five different approaches to framing curriculum. These include ‘curriculum as outcome’, where the focus is on specifying course objectives, benchmarking, and transparency; ‘curriculum as special’, evident where curriculum policy directives are indirect and academic authority over curriculum is emphasized; ‘curriculum as culture’, which understands curriculum as a practice of academic knowledge cultures; ‘curriculum as reproduction’, which focuses on the ‘hidden curriculum’ and the implicit rules of the game students are required to negotiate; ‘curriculum as transformation’, which focuses on its potential to empower and transform student lives; and ‘curriculum as consumption’ through which students are positioned as consumers of education. These debates are useful for understanding the value and limitations of different constructions but can make it difficult to precisely define what the curriculum is and what curriculum inquiry is for.

This is complicated by different uses of the word curriculum, which is sometimes understood as synonymous with pedagogy and sometimes as distinct from it (Connelly & Xu, 2010). Conventionally, curriculum is predominantly understood as ‘what’ is taught, while pedagogy denotes ‘how’ that is taught. Yet as Barnett and Coate (2005, p. 5) suggest, one issue challenging discussions of curriculum is the question of ‘where do issues of curriculum end and issues of pedagogy begin?’. Distinctions are frequently drawn between the intended and enacted curriculum or, in Barnett and Coate’s (2005) terms, between the ‘curriculum-as-designed’ and the ‘curriculum-in-action’ as it occurs within classrooms. For many scholars, curriculum and pedagogy are seen as inseparable, with curriculum understood as ‘nothing except as realized and its realization is dependent upon not just its reception among the students for whom it is intended but also their actual engagement with it’ (Barnett & Coate, 2005, p. 5). This perspective positions the intended curriculum as irrelevant and focuses instead on what students themselves perceive as important and how they engage with an educational encounter.

However, as argued in Chap. 1, considering curriculum as distinct from but related to pedagogy is important for ensuring questions about what students are drawn into as knowledge are not neglected in favor of questions about how effectively students learn and how they are engaged. Traditionally, the question of what counts as knowledge has been considered central to curriculum making and is part of what makes study engaging with curriculum distinct, particularly given the challenge of separating

curriculum issues from more general educational concerns (Connelly & Xu, 2010). Green (2010, p. 45, emphasis in original) writes:

The question of knowledge is central to educational theory and practice alike. Classically, what is widely regarded as the fundamental curriculum question is *What knowledge is of most worth?* – usually attributed to Herbert Spencer, writing in the latter part of the 19th century. That question is in turn commonly and characteristically rendered, somewhat transformed, as *What should the schools [and universities] teach?*

The question of ‘what should count as knowledge’ is also identified as a key curriculum question by Deng and Luke (2008) in their chapter for *The SAGE Handbook of Curriculum and Instruction*. Deng and Luke (2008, p. 10) comment that the responses given depend on individual theoretical orientations and perspectives as well as ideological and cultural investments. They suggest:

the task of curriculum theory is to problematise and foreground different claims on the formations of subject matter; to understand their epistemological bases and their teleological assumptions about the purpose of schooling and education; to identify whose and which versions of knowledge, practice, and experience are entailed; and to understand the educational and intellectual, social and cultural bases and consequences of these particular selections.

Although there is as a result considerable debate about the extent to which such questions continue to matter and the ways in which they should be framed (see Deng, 2018; Pinar, 2012); focusing curriculum on the question of ‘what counts as knowledge’ illuminates important considerations around what is valued within education. As Green (2018) argues, such questions are about ‘what’ is taught but also point to issues of purpose. In other words, why knowledge has been selected and to what ends.

Following this work, this book takes a particular approach to grappling with curriculum questions, focused on the question of what counts as knowledge and how particular agendas are put together. Curriculum is understood in relation to this as a ‘site of struggle’ (Ashwin, 2014) and a ‘socio-political and cultural process of decision-making’ (Karseth, 2006) which is inevitably infused with points of contestation about what matters within a disciplinary field and for the education of students. It defines ‘what counts as knowledge’ in complex ways, including via relations with pedagogical form and assessment design (Bernstein, 1976). Curriculum here is understood as a knowledge practice that is both boundary enforcing, defining what counts as legitimate knowledge within a field and enrolling students within particular knowledge traditions (Barnett & Coate, 2005; Becher, 1989; Nespore, 1994), but also as a potential site of change that enables the building of new knowledge and the development of new trajectories toward an unknown future (Bernstein, 1976; Yates, 2012). In other words, curriculum is a practice that is both about the reinforcing of current ways of thinking but also about the potential for change.

The focus of the book is primarily on the intended curriculum rather than its enacted form and on how university leaders and lecturers understand what is being set up in teaching. The curriculum is more than just the intentions of particular lecturers, but intentions and interpretations are an important part of what is put

together as curriculum. As Yates (2006) argues, curriculum asks us to think about what is being *set up* to be taught and learned and the kinds of agendas taken up and not taken up in that, as well as what is actually being taught or learned. What is being conveyed or intended to be conveyed as new courses are put together and the choices being made about values and emphases and directions are important (Yates, 2009). This focus means some important considerations concerning students' own knowledge constructions and experiences of curriculum are not considered. But as discussed in Chap. 1, this was a deliberate decision to foreground considerations which have been neglected in discussions of university teaching.

The remainder of this chapter explores the thinking about curriculum informing this book. It considers the politics of curriculum and the centrality of the knowledge question, the relations between curriculum and pedagogy, the future possibilities enabled by different curriculum forms, and the material constraints of curriculum as a practice. These issues (particularly in relation to the knowledge question) are discussed here in general terms before being taken up in relation to more specific issues (disciplinarity and constructivist teaching) in Chap. 4.

3.3 The Politics of Curriculum and the Centrality of the Knowledge Question

Curriculum has long been defined as the 'what' of education and as concerned with the question of 'what counts' as knowledge. Bernstein (1976) classically defined curriculum as capturing 'what counts as valid knowledge', distinguishing this from pedagogy and assessment which he saw as concerned with the transmission and realization of that knowledge. Curriculum sets out what is important for students, both explicitly in terms of the content to be taught, and implicitly in terms of the ways of knowing and being that are valued (Yates & Grumet, 2011). Curriculum, as Yates (2006) suggests, is about what substantively students are being drawn into as knowledge through education. It incorporates pedagogic perspectives about how students learn, but 'it is led by the question of what to teach' (Morgan & Lambert, 2018, p. 43).

Within universities, curriculum acts to define what counts as legitimate knowledge within particular fields and areas of study (Barnett & Coate, 2005; Becher, 1989; Nerland & Jensen, 2012; Nespor, 1994). Curriculum enrolls and connects students with disciplinary and professional fields, and is part of the way in which disciplinary and professional identities are developed in students (Nespor, 1994). As Becher's (1989) work on academic cultures (discussed further in Chap. 4) illustrates, curriculum constitutes part of the way disciplines and professional fields mark their boundaries and define how legitimate knowledge within those fields is understood.

Curriculum, however, is never simply about a settled agreed body of knowledge but is inevitably selective and political. It brings up questions about the content of education and how and by whom that is decided. Within the curriculum literature,

there has been significant attention to the politics of curriculum selection and the ways in which curriculum comes to represent the political views of the dominant class. Since the publication of the classic text *Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education* (Young, 1971), a significant body of curriculum research has been interested in questions about whose interests are served by different ways of constructing curriculum and assessment. Michael Apple's (1990) work in particular has drawn attention to the nature of curriculum as a 'selective tradition', which in both theory and practice 'entails the normative selection, classification, and framing of knowledge from the archive of human knowledge' (Deng & Luke, 2008, p. 3). Within this line of thinking, the knowledge of the curriculum is understood as not given, but a construction, and one which represents the perspectives of the powerful rather than something which is universally true. It is inherently ideological and impossible to divorce from issues of class, race, gender, and power relations (see Deng, 2018). These debates have played out in universities in relation to calls to decolonize the curriculum and have been seen in recent student movements such as 'Why is my curriculum white?' (see Rudolph et al., 2018).

Related arguments have also drawn attention to the nature of the higher education curriculum as a site of struggle rather than a given. Such work highlights the ways in which curriculum in higher education is not simply a singular construction, but one which is infused with multiple and potentially competing understandings and purposes about what matters for education and for knowledge. Karseth (2006, p. 256), for example, has defined curriculum as a 'social construction where the process of decision-making is seen as a socio-political and cultural process which takes up conflicting arguments'. She draws here on Ian Westbury's (2003, p. 194) argument that 'the term "curriculum" must always be seen as symbolizing a loosely-coupled system of ideologies, symbols, discourses, organizational forms, mandates, and subject and classroom practices'. In a similar vein, Ashwin (2014) has also argued that the recontextualization of research knowledge into curriculum knowledge encompasses 'sites of struggle in which different voices seek to impose particular versions of legitimate knowledge, curriculum and student understanding' (Ashwin, 2014, p. 124; see also Slaughter, 2002). Barnett and Coate (2005, p. 51) have likewise defined curriculum as 'dynamic and in flux [and [...]] the site of contested interpretations'. Krause (2020, p. 2) has criticized rationalist understandings of curriculum as failing to 'represent adequately the curriculum as a site of contestation, conflict and debate'. Others have similarly highlighted that the ways we think about what matters in curriculum necessarily take up a range of different concerns, including issues related to cognition, to identity formation, and to ethics and social values (Clegg, 2011; Gewitz & Cribb, 2009; Yates et al., 2017; Zipin et al., 2015).

These perspectives highlight the importance of understanding curriculum texts and decisions about what content is selected and how that is put together as not pre-given but temporary settlements. Such settlements inevitably take up some things and neglect others, defining what is important within a course and creating different kinds of effects or conditions of possibility for what is then taken up in the teaching or by the students. Any curriculum is therefore inevitably infused with multiple and

competing points of contestation about what matters within the disciplinary field and for the education of students in a broader sense.

Understanding curriculum in higher education means attending to these differences and contestations. This highlights the need to attend to not just what is said to count as knowledge, but also what is evident in the underlying purposes and values of those constructing curriculum. In the design of the research discussed in this book, such arguments informed the study's interest in the different and competing concepts of knowledge at work within university leaders' and lecturers' thinking and practices. For this book, the focus on the selective nature of curriculum was not about the politics of knowledge and whose voice is being heard (although these issues are undoubtably important), but about the diverse pressures and assumptions underpinning curriculum decisions and the ways in which these are put together. The research considered how curriculum was understood by both those driving new unbundled online initiatives, and those developing new subjects for those initiatives, including in terms of its relationship to the knowledge field, and what effects, challenges, and conditions of possibility that created.

These perspectives are important for understanding the implications of unbundled online learning reforms. Although there are exceptions (e.g. Bayne et al., 2020; Cliff et al., 2020), most of the debate about MOOCs and other unbundled online learning models has focused on issues of student learning and engagement. While these issues matter, focusing solely on these concerns means that the politics of curriculum and the effects of new approaches on knowledge are neglected. Curriculum, as Yates (2006) has argued, puts the politics of education on the table. These political issues do not go away if curriculum conversations are not centered, but if the focus is only on student learning and engagement, they can be left hidden.

3.4 The Relations Between Curriculum and Pedagogy

A focus on curriculum thus draws attention to issues not captured by the learning and teaching agenda, where how learning occurs is the primary focus (Yates, 2009). However, this does not mean that curriculum can be understood as disconnected from pedagogy. Bernstein's work in particular has explored the complexity of the connections between curriculum and pedagogy and their relationship to how knowledge is defined through education. As introduced in Chap. 1, Bernstein (1976, p. 85) categorized curriculum as a core 'message system' of education through which formal education knowledge is realized, alongside the other two message systems of pedagogy and evaluation/assessment. He proposed that formal educational knowledge is realized through those message systems and should be understood as 'the underlying principles which shape curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation'. For Bernstein (1976, p. 85), curriculum 'defines what counts as valid knowledge', pedagogy 'defines what counts as valid transmission of knowledge' and evaluation 'defines what counts as valid realization of knowledge'. Each of these three message systems is understood

to exist in complex relation to each other, with each message system informed and constrained by the others.

To illustrate these relationships, Bernstein (1976) categorized curriculum as being developed via two forms which he termed collection code and integrated code. A curriculum defined by a collection code was categorized by clear subject or disciplinary boundaries and forms. Here, what counts as knowledge in each subject is derived from the authority given to the discipline and the knowledge legitimized within that. Comparatively, within an integrated code, curriculum is defined by a topic or problem, with authority given and legitimate knowledge defined by the integrating idea. The two codes arise from different concepts of what counts as having knowledge as well as different concepts about how the knowledge is to be acquired and legitimately realized and built over time. To explore the underlying structure of the two forms of curriculum, Bernstein proposed the concepts of classification, which refers to 'the degree of boundary maintenance between contents' (p. 88), and framing, which refers to 'the degree of control the teacher and pupil possess over the selection, organisation, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted' (p. 89), and the strength of the boundary between non-school knowledge and educational knowledge. These concepts refer to the rules organizing the content and the organization of what is relayed, rather than what is actually enacted by a teacher within the moment of teaching.

Bernstein proposed that the underlying structure of the collection curriculum was based on strong classification, while an integrated curriculum was based on weak classification. He argued that curriculum with strong classification and framing (as in a collection code) is based on a visible pedagogy (evident for example in didactic methods, or where the rules are made explicit to students), while curriculum based on weak classification and framing (as in an integrated code) is based on an invisible pedagogy (evident for example in action methods). Under this framework, pedagogy can be considered visible where the criteria and manner of transmission are explicit, and invisible where the criteria are diffuse and the manner of transmission implicit. Visible pedagogies align with standardization, mass teaching, and cross-institutional comparison, while invisible pedagogies have multiple diffuse evaluation procedures that are not easily subject to precise measurement and are reliant on small class sizes and an educational architecture which together enable individual assistance to be provided to students. These arguments draw attention to the effects of different pedagogies on what is educationally possible, and the relations between curriculum and pedagogy as part of this.

Biesta (2010) has put forward a similar argument in his critiques of the learnification of education (discussed further in Chap. 4). This work emphasizes that 'the means [i.e. pedagogy] we use in education are not neutral with regard to the ends we wish to achieve [but] contribute qualitatively to the very character ... of the goals which they produce' (p. 36). As Biesta argues, we need to always consider both whether such ends are desirable and 'what students will learn from our use of particular means or strategies' (2010, p. 49).

These arguments highlight the complex and interconnected relations between curriculum and pedagogy. They suggest that new pedagogies are not neutral with

regard to the knowledge taught but contribute in substantive ways to what is made possible and how the knowledge of a subject is understood. This has important resonance for understanding the implications of unbundled online initiatives, where curricular and pedagogical responsibilities are separated. It points to potential problems with dividing these responsibilities on educational coherence; these challenges are explored further in the case studies in the latter half of this book.

3.5 Curriculum as About Future Possibility

This understanding of curriculum emphasizes its role not only in capturing ‘what counts’ as knowledge in the present time, but also in setting up future possibilities. Bernstein’s (1976) above categorization and analysis of different curriculum forms suggests that where integrated codes may tie students to the dominant idea, collection codes are problematic in some respects but potentially allow for a stronger foundation in building toward new directions over a longer period of study. Yates (2012, pp. 269–270) writes in relation to this:

The caution his [Bernstein’s] analysis raises is that taking a particular approach at one stage can produce problematic or perverse effects at another. Integration codes do open up new ways of engaging and using the knowledge of students – but they have the potential danger of tying students to the dominating idea and requiring a more uniform ideology by their teachers in order to work, rather than giving students the tools to go further. Collection codes conversely pose big problems for those concerned about social inequalities, for learners lacking the right cultural capital and dispositions, and they have the potential to produce some rigidity. Nevertheless, Bernstein argued, this kind of strong disciplinary boundary work is also a source of the later boundary breaking and creative work that happens with those who make it through to the PhD.

Bernstein argues that a collection code curriculum ‘involves a hierarchy whereby the ultimate mystery of the subject is revealed very late in educational life’ (1976, p. 97). This mystery, meaning ‘the potential for creating new realities’ (i.e. how the research field works) is revealed only ‘to a select few who have shown the signs of successful socialisation’ (1976, p. 97). Bernstein wrote that only these few then experience ‘the notion that knowledge is permeable, that its orderings are provisional, that the dialectic of knowledge is closure and openness’, while for the many socialization of knowledge is socialization into order, and can be alienating and potentially meaningless (1976, p. 97). Yates (2012, p. 269) notes that Bernstein ‘was one of the few sociological theorists who took seriously the dynamics of what is produced by different forms of curriculum, both in terms of identity building and in terms of building powerful and new knowledges’, beyond the attention to the social messages or disciplining the curriculum delivers. His work shows the ways in which curriculum constitutes a site of knowledge construction, with different configurations enabling different possible futures.

For unbundled online initiatives, this work raises questions for the kind of futures enabled for students by particular constructions, particularly for MOOCs which are

taken outside a wider program of study. Unbundling can be understood here to have effects that are not just about the immediate engagement of students but are about what they are able to take away from curriculum and the kinds of futures that are enabled, both for students and for knowledge traditions.

3.6 Curriculum as a Material Practice

Finally, curriculum must also be understood as a material practice, subject to and productive of particular constraints and conditions and situated within institutional contexts and policy agendas. Curriculum, as Yates (2006) writes, brings together questions about what knowledge is important, about educational institutions and their pedagogical and organizational practices, about individual subjectivity, and about the individual and social outcomes of education practices. Studies of curriculum are about intellectual questions, but also ‘practical, political and pragmatic’ ones (Yates, 2006, p. 10). Curriculum cannot be understood in isolation from the specific context within which it is situated. Curriculum inquiry, as Morgan and Lambert (2018) argue, needs to engage with and make links between both theoretical ideas and concepts, and the process of curriculum making. Questions about ‘what counts’ as knowledge cannot be divorced from questions about what institutions are trying to do in relation to curriculum and teaching within particular contexts and at particular times. This requires attention to policy and the institutional contexts in which new curriculum agendas are enacted.

Curriculum is always negotiated within these contexts, with those responsible for curriculum development not simply implementing curriculum policy directives but acting (or not acting) upon those in a range of ways, informed by structural and material constraints. As work in the field of policy sociology has demonstrated, curriculum and learning and teaching policies are not neutral but discursively produced with effects that are non-linear but interpreted, contested, and enacted differently across different sites of practice (Ball, 2006). Policies are always ‘set against existing commitments, values and forms of experience’ (Ball et al., 2011, p. 11) and can have effects beyond those intended, acting to mold understandings and practices in the contexts in which they are introduced (Shore et al., 2011). As Ball (1997, p. 270) has argued:

Policies pose problems to their subjects, problems that must be solved in context. Solutions to the problems posed by policy texts will be localised and should be expected to display ad hocery and messiness. [...] Policies do not normally tell you what to do, they create circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed or particular goals or outcomes are set.

Drawing on these understandings, the research examined in this book considers the ways in which different actors interpreted and constructed the contexts in which they work, and the effects of this on their curriculum thinking and practice. Unbundled

online initiatives are emerging in a challenging context for universities and academic work (as discussed in Chaps. 1 and 2) and this is also a focus on how their curriculum implications are considered.

3.7 Conclusion

The concept of curriculum has significant value for understanding the implications of unbundled online learning. Despite contestations about what curriculum means, foregrounding curriculum and analytically distinguishing it from pedagogy illuminates important concerns, including those in relation to knowledge, politics, and educational futures. In this book, curriculum is understood as not settled but contested and negotiated over time. It is inevitably concerned with the question of what counts as knowledge and is therefore infused with points of contestation about what matters within the disciplinary field and for the education of students. Understanding these points of contestation, and the underlying principles and assumptions about educational knowledge which shape curriculum, provides important insights into the effects, challenges, or conditions of possibility created for knowledge within an education program. Bernstein's (1976) work also highlights the complex and interconnected relations between curriculum and pedagogy. This suggests that new pedagogies or platforms are not neutral with regard to the knowledge taught but contribute in substantive ways to what is made possible and how the knowledge of the subject is understood. This points toward problems with the separation of curricular and pedagogical responsibilities evident within unbundled online learning.

This chapter has addressed some general thinking about curriculum and how it can be understood and approached as an object of inquiry in higher education research. The following chapter expands on this discussion of curriculum in relation to two important issues: differences between disciplines and fields in the formulation of curriculum and the extent these are recognized in university strategy; and the push for constructivist pedagogies and its effects on curriculum construction.

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