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EVALUATING CURRICULUM PROPOSALS:

Towards developing a set of criteria based on  
the analysis of selected curriculum documents.

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## ABSTRACT

This study deals with the problem of evaluating curriculum documents which prescribe or make recommendations for curricular change. In 1980 a number of state and national education authorities in Australia released documents which contained proposals for reformulating the curriculum. Several of these proposals took the form of prescribing or recommending a core curriculum while others opted for a whole curriculum approach to the problem of the selection and transmission of educational knowledge. Although these are presented as practical documents - as proposals for action - they also contain theoretical and ideological components which are usually understated. It is the contention of this study that the evaluation of such proposals should not be based solely on their pragmatic or technical aspects but that their theoretical adequacy and links with ideology should also be taken into consideration. To this end, four of these documents have been selected, two of each type of proposals, and are used to provide material to develop criteria for making evaluative decisions about the theoretical and ideological aspects of curriculum proposals. Internal criteria, based on an analysis of the coherence and consistency of curriculum proposals, are derived by relating the proposals to one of two general theories of education. External criteria derive from a meta-critique where an attempt is made to formulate broader propositions which recognise the existence of opposition among various assumptions and are inclusive of those in conflict.

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