Toward Understanding Post-Structuralism and Curriculum.

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**Abstract**
This dissertation describes extensions of post-structuralism in contemporary curriculum discourses. Post-structuralist thought is mainly associated with the seminal work of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Jean-Francois Lyotard, and Michel Serres. Post-structural criticism and analysis challenge prevailing structuralist approaches and question the fundamental assumptions upon which these approaches rest. A key assumption of structural approaches is that all phenomena are constituted by an underlying structure. In curriculum, these structural assumptions (often scientific) remain unacknowledged and thus are immunized against criticism; rather, they are incorporated into the preferred structural analyses, interpretations, and organizations promoted by the promise of order and rationality. The notion of 'rationality'—scientific in essence—has been the dominating force of curricular "planning." The problem is not that reason has turned into domination, but that we do not fully recognize its domination. Chapter One and Chapter Two portray historical formations of post-structuralism in order to identify specific threads or themes which lay a basis for understanding post-structuralist elements of contemporary curriculum theory. The author investigates the extensions (in Chapters Three and Four) of post-structuralism in current curriculum theorizing. Working from concepts of 'subject,' 'history,' and 'differences' identified in major works by Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, Lyotard, and Serres, this study identifies those concepts of these scholars that surface in contemporary curriculum discourses. This study explores the works of eight curriculum theorists now drawing on contemporary post-structuralist thought. This focus will not only give rise to reexamining the questions and problematics of curriculum, but will also put forward a post-structural framework for curriculum inquiry, which might provide a rethinking and reexamining of curriculum discourses. A final purpose of this study is to link aspects of Eastern Taoism and Zen philosophy with post-structuralist thought which will provide curriculum theorists with an intercultural understanding of "the play of unrecuperable differences" and irresolvable paradoxes. The notion of "Tao" and Zen may provide a useful counterweight to Western logocentric thought and the metaphysics of presence. In addition, the connection (passage) between Taoist and post-structuralist thought may serve to illuminate the questioning post-structuralism posits. Curriculum as post-structuralist text may vitalize the curriculum field itself.

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As the name suggests, post-structuralism arose as an intellectual movement in reaction to the shortcomings of structuralist approaches in linguistics and the social sciences. Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) in linguistics and Claude Lévi-Strauss in anthropology developed theories that explained language and social action, respectively, as the product of objective structures alone. This postmetaphysical version of mutual recognition and mutual understanding does not, in their view, require the identity of subjects, but fosters the inclusion of the other into ethics without the need for totality. Post-structuralism, a broad-based and therefore loosely structured interdisciplinary movement which originated in France during the 1960s and spread rapidly to other countries thereafter. Both structuralism and post-structuralism place language at the center of their respective world view, as they both derive from Saussure’s linguistic breakthrough. In that sense, they are very similar. They both reject the empiricist view of language as a transparent medium between our mind and the world, and they both claim that language is rather to be seen as a system of signs existing independently from both the mind and physical reality. Post-structuralism, on the other hand, cannot help viewing this pseudoscientific endeavor as futile and even ridiculous. The post-structuralists argue that truth and objective reality are not only inaccessible, but also altogether inexistent within language. Understanding Poststructuralism. This book is no longer available to purchase from Cambridge Core. Cited by 34. Implementing the Finnish Literacy Curriculum in a First-Grade Classroom. Classroom Discourse, Vol. 6, Issue 2, p. 143. Post-structuralism is importantly different from postmodernism, although the two are often considered one and the same by the general subject. Although there are certain areas of overlap, thinkers from one school almost never identify themselves with the other school of thought. Postmodernism importantly seeks to identify a contemporary state of the world, the period that is following the modernist period. Post-structuralism refers to the intellectual developments in continental philosophy and critical theory that were outcomes of twentieth-century French philosophy. The prefix “post” refers to the fact that many contributors such as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Julia Kristeva were former structuralists who, after abandoning structuralism, became quite critical of it. In direct contrast to structuralism’s claims of culturally independent meaning, post-structuralists typically view culture as