

**AN ANALYSIS OF CURRICULUM POLICY
FOR UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL HISTORY
IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA FROM 1983 TO 2000.**

William J.R. ALLEN

This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment for the degree of
Doctor of Education
at The University of Western Australia

2004

DECLARATION

This thesis is my own work, and no part of it has been submitted for a degree at this, or at any other, university.

William J. R. Allen

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study in this thesis was to conduct a longitudinal analysis of curriculum policy for upper secondary school History in Western Australia (WA) from 1983 to 2000. During this period three significant changes were made to the History curriculum for students in Years 11 and 12, in 1982-3, from 1985 to 1990 and in 1996-97. These changes evolved from a number of influences. Also, they impacted on, and were reflected in, relevant History curriculum documents, and had a considerable impact on the teaching and learning of the subject.

For the purpose of the research, policy was conceptualised as a trajectory, with each phase having three principal contexts: the context of influence, the context of policy text production, and the context of practice (Ball, 1993, 1994a; Ball & Bowe, 1992; Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992). Analysis of the context of influence focuses on the antecedents and pressures leading to the gestation of policy. These include: the various social, economic, political and educational factors driving the policy; the influences of pressure groups and broader social movements; and the historical background to the policy, including previous developments and initiatives. The context of policy text production is concerned with the generation of the policy texts and includes an analysis of the policy documents themselves. Analysis of the context of practice involves investigating the interpretation and enactment of the policy by those responsible for carrying it out, and by those for whom it is intended.

Qualitative methods have been used for data collection and analysis. The primary sources of data collection were a range of relevant documents, supported by semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Analysis was based on the methods of data reduction, data displays and drawing conclusions.

The findings of the study reveal the complexities of the policy process. In particular, they reveal the struggles by different interest groups to bring their understandings and views of the nature of History teaching to bear on upper school curricula. Within each of the three phases of change different interest groups were able to dominate the contest to impose their versions of the nature of History, and how it should be taught and assessed. The changing nature of History in the post-compulsory years of schooling in WA in the last two decades of the twentieth century is explained by the changing influence of a range of forces, which emerged from

different levels and impacted on the subject, in the context of a constantly shifting policy environment.

The findings are brought together in a meta-analysis which identifies four major trends in the History curriculum policy process in WA. These trends are ‘curriculum as worthwhile knowledge’, ‘curriculum policy as a form of control, and its impact upon teacher professionalism’, ‘the role of the state in the policy process’, and ‘public policy perspectives on the curriculum’. The meta-analysis concludes with an assessment of Looney’s (2002) argument that Ball's model of policy analysis as adapted for use in this study provides a satisfactory unitary theory of curriculum in a 'post-Tyler' age.

The findings of the research provide implications for future education policy processes, particularly in the light of proposed curricular changes to upper school subjects in WA, to be mandated in 2007. There are also potential implications for curriculum and for policy, in theory and in practice in contexts beyond the Australian state of WA.

Style

The style and format adopted in the production of this thesis is that employed by the American Psychological Association as recommended in their *Publication Manual* (APA, 2001).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose and significance	2
Background	4
<i>History curricula in Western Australia before 1983</i>	5
The curriculum policy context in Western Australia	9
A theoretical framework for policy analysis	14
An overview of research methods	18
<i>Data collection</i>	20
<i>Data analysis</i>	22
Structure of the thesis	22
CHAPTER 2 DEVELOPMENTS IN HISTORY TEACHING SINCE 1960, IN ENGLAND AND WALES, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND AUSTRALIA.	24
Introduction	24
The nature of the crisis in History teaching in an international context and some responses	26
<i>The nature of the crisis in history teaching in England and Wales, and some responses</i>	26
<i>The nature of the crisis in history teaching in the United States of America, and some responses</i>	31
<i>The nature of the crisis in history teaching in Australia, and some responses</i>	35

Developments in philosophy, pedagogy, psychology and sociology, and their influence on History curricula	41
<i>Ontology, epistemology and the changing nature of History</i>	42
<i>Pedagogical influences on the changing nature of History</i>	47
<i>Educational psychology and theories of learning</i>	50
<i>Sociology and its impact on History curricula</i>	53
Conclusion	57
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	58
Introduction	58
Aim and research questions	58
The policy analysis framework	61
<i>The framework of Ball and others</i>	62
<i>The framework of Taylor and others</i>	65
<i>Vidovich's framework</i>	67
Implications of the policy framework for the research methodology	69
<i>Qualitative research approaches</i>	70
<i>Interpretivism as the principal research paradigm</i>	70
<i>Issues of reliability and validity</i>	73
Data collection and analysis	75
<i>Documents as data</i>	75
<i>Interviews</i>	79
<i>Data analysis</i>	83
Conclusion	86

CHAPTER 4	FIRST PHASE OF THE POLICY PROCESS: 1983 – 84	88
Introduction		88
The institutions of upper school curriculum policy making in Western Australia, with special reference to History curricula		89
Context of influence		92
<i>Social factors influencing the policy process</i>		93
<i>Political factors influencing the policy process</i>		94
<i>Economic factors influencing the policy process</i>		95
<i>Cultural factors influencing the policy process</i>		97
<i>Educational factors influencing the policy process</i>		98
Context of policy text production		106
<i>Analysis of the contestations in the process of formulating History curriculum policy</i>		107
<i>Analysis of the policy texts</i>		115
Context of practice		121
<i>Impact of the new curriculum on the teaching and learning of History</i>		123
<i>Impact of the new curriculum on levels of professional morale</i>		126
<i>Impact of the new curriculum on the teaching of Australian History</i>		127
<i>Impact of the new curriculum on curriculum pressure</i>		128
<i>Impact of the new curriculum on numbers of students taking History in Years 11 and 12</i>		131
Conclusion		132
CHAPTER 5	SECOND PHASE OF THE POLICY PROCESS: 1985 TO 1990	134
Introduction		134

The changing institutions of upper school curriculum policy making in Western Australia, after 1984, with special reference to History curricula	135
Context of influence	137
<i>Economic factors influencing the policy process</i>	138
<i>Social factors influencing the policy process</i>	140
<i>Political factors influencing the policy process</i>	141
<i>Broader educational factors influencing the policy process</i>	142
Context of policy text production	147
<i>Analysis of the policy texts</i>	161
Context of practice	168
<i>Impact of the new curriculum on the teaching and learning of History</i>	168
<i>Impact of the new curriculum on levels of professional morale</i>	172
<i>Impact of the new curriculum on the teaching of Australian History</i>	177
<i>Impact of the new curriculum on curriculum pressure and student enrolments in History</i>	179
Conclusion	181
 CHAPTER 6 THIRD PHASE OF THE POLICY PROCESS: 1996-97	 183
Introduction	183
Changes to the institutions of upper school curriculum policy making in Western Australia, from 1990 – 1997, with special reference to History curricula	184
Context of influence	185
<i>Economic factors influencing the policy process</i>	186
<i>Political factors influencing the policy process</i>	187
Context of policy text production	197
<i>Analysis of the policy texts</i>	209

Context of practice	219
<i>Impact of the new curriculum on the teaching and learning of History</i>	220
<i>Impact of the new curriculum on assessment structures and practices</i>	224
<i>Impact of the new curriculum on levels of professional morale</i>	228
<i>Impact of the new curriculum on the teaching of Australian History</i>	229
<i>Impact of the new curriculum on curriculum pressure and student enrolments in History</i>	232
Conclusion	233
CHAPTER 7 META-ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	235
Introduction	235
Meta-analysis of the research findings	236
<i>Curriculum as worthwhile knowledge</i>	236
<i>Curriculum policy as a form of control and its impact upon teacher professionalism</i>	245
<i>Role of the state in the policy process</i>	251
<i>Public policy perspectives on the curriculum</i>	258
Conclusion	265
CHAPTER 8 FUTURE DIRECTIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM AND POLICY; THEORY AND PRACTICE	269
Introduction	269
Implications for policy	270
Implications for curriculum	272
Implications for theory	275
Implications for practice	277

Conclusion	278
REFERENCES	280
APPENDICES	297

LIST OF FIGURES

3.1	A modified policy cycle: Incorporating macro constraint and micro agency	69
4.1	The bodies involved in determining upper school syllabuses and examinations in WA before 1984, with particular reference to History curricula	91

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AEC	Australian Education Council
AISWA	Association of Independent Schools in WA
ALP	Australian Labor Party (Federal branch and State branch)
ASAT	Australian Scholastic Aptitude Test
BSE	Board of Secondary Education
CCWA	Curriculum Council of Western Australia (replaced SEA after 1997)
CSE	Certificate of Secondary Education
EDWA	Education Department of WA
HAWA	History Association of WA (later became the HTAWA)
HJSC	History Joint Syllabus Committee (1975 – 1992)
HSC	History Syllabus Committee (after 1992)
HTAWA	History Teachers Association of WA
JSC	Joint Syllabus Committee (one for each TAE / TEE subject)
MOVEET	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment and Training
NSW	New South Wales
OBE	Outcomes-based education
PEB	Public Examinations Board (based in UWA 1913 – 1974)
SC	Syllabus Committees of the SEA (Replaced JSCs after 1992)
SEA	Secondary Education Authority of Western Australia
TAE	Tertiary Admissions Examinations (1974 – 1985)
TAEC	Tertiary Admissions Examination Committee
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TEE	Tertiary Entrance Examinations (After 1986)
TISC	Tertiary Institutions Service Centre
USA	United States of America
UWA	The University of Western Australia
WA	Western Australia

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I acknowledge two outstanding supervisors, Associate Professor Lesley Vidovich and Professor Tom O'Donoghue. Since I sat in his first class at UWA, Tom has been an inspiring teacher and mentor. It was Tom who gave me the confidence to pursue a Doctorate, persuaded me to resume study at UWA, and guided me in the choice of this topic which I have found fascinating. I have valued greatly his historical skills and attention to detail. Lesley has also been a most inspiring teacher and mentor, for whom there is never too little time to give support and guidance. I have learnt so much about the policy process from her, and have enjoyed our many discussions about education, policy and schools. Both supervisors gave me opportunities to teach in Masters' programmes abroad, which have deepened my understandings. They have been caring, wise, friendly and supportive, and my debt to them is enormous.

I acknowledge the valuable contributions of the interview respondents, who not only gave of their time generously and imparted enormous detail, but also followed up with further advice or sources of information. I am also most grateful to staff at the Curriculum Council of WA, who always made me feel very welcome and who gave all possible assistance in the search for documentary evidence. In particular, I thank Anne Shilling and Maxine Spalding for all their efforts.

Colleagues in schools and History departments have had a huge influence on my career, which is reflected in this study. In particular, I acknowledge Wilf Hammond, Norman McLeod and the late Tom Percival, who gave me a love of History teaching at Durham School; Don and Betty Carter at Wesley College, and Mal Poole; Phil Burns, Mike Kinsella, Greg Symonds and colleagues at Corpus Christi College; and Chris Lilleyman, Tina Campbell, and my other departmental colleagues at Perth College. Their wisdom, support, guidance and friendship over the years have been most important.

I have loved teaching History because I have had the opportunity to meet some wonderful young women and men in my career and I acknowledge most sincerely their contributions what is an *opus amori*. Memories of them remain ever fond and strong. In particular, I acknowledge my Year 11 Perth College History class of 2003, whom to leave was one of the biggest costs of this study.

I have always valued the contribution of my parents, Rena and Bill, who made enormous sacrifices to give me the best education when I was younger, and for their unconditional love and support. My deepest thanks go to Pat, Nikki and Ben, and little Bayden, who have always had faith in me and loved me, and who have supported me through my years of study. They have made huge sacrifices to allow me to pursue my dreams and study full-time this year and for that, and for everything else, I will always be so grateful. I dedicate this work to them.