

# Curriculum making and professional learning: interactions in teacher practices

A journey towards confirmation

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How did I arrive at this problem space?

2

What have I already discovered to date?

3

What is my problem space?

4

What is the problem itself?

1

How did I arrive at this problem space?



“*Just* who do we think we are?  
Just *who* do we think we are?  
Just who do *we* think we are?  
Just who do *we think* we are?”  
(Mitchell & Weber, 2005, p. 17)

2

What have I already discovered to date?

**Curriculum** “the activities and processes by which courses are designed, reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis, including institutional and national requirements”. (Pountney & McPhail, 2017, p. 1069)

**Curriculum making** “how the prescribed curriculum [...] are translated into the enacted curriculum, the day-to-day practices in their classrooms” (Priestley et al., 2012, pp. 208-209).

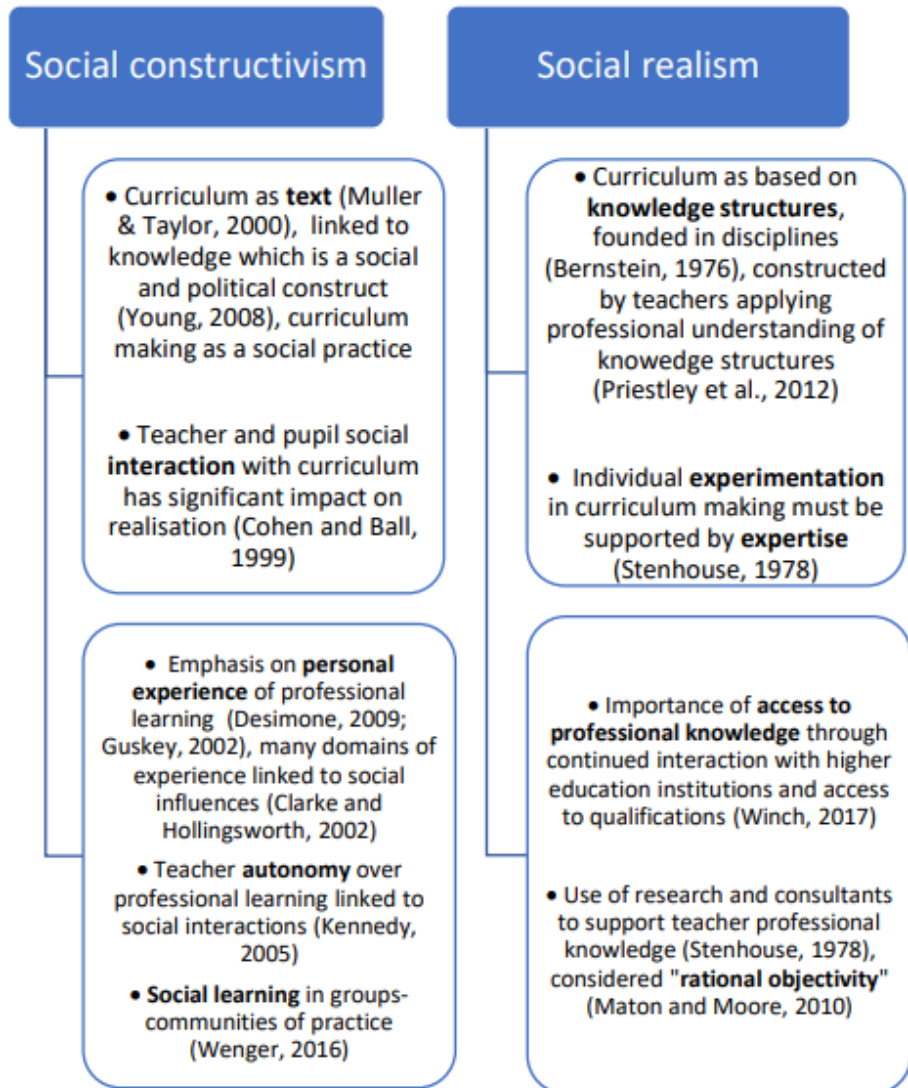
**Curriculum design** “the ability to manage the different types of knowledge in a sequence that matches not just the needs of the subject, but also that of the student”. (Winch, 2013, p. 128)

**Curriculum development** “applied branch” of curriculum theory, bringing together curriculum and teacher practice in order to facilitate better teaching and learning. (Stenhouse, 1978, p. 3)

**Professional development or learning** “seems to depend on a somewhat arbitrary attribution of a broader, more general meaning to professional development and a more specific individual meaning to professional learning.” (Fraser et al., 2007, p. 156)

## Constructing a “translation device”

Pountney and McPhail (2017)



## Curriculum making and professional learning: a vignette

*During the spring term, year 3 and 4 teachers visited the museum site that would play a central role in their upcoming, History-led **expeditionary, project-based scheme of work (SoW)**. The SoW they were **planning**, centring on the Vikings, but with other **interdisciplinary subject links**, formed part of a 2-year cycle. Although this SoW had been taught previously in the school, it was undergoing a **mandatory process of review** to ensure quality. Throughout their visit, teachers shared ideas for the structuring of the expedition, drawing on the museum exhibits. They worked together as a **group**, verbally forming the **curriculum**, before recording this as a long-term plan later in the day. The team also discussed the upcoming **critique process**, and they reflected on the need to present a high-quality scheme of work during this meeting.*



**Opportunities for professional learning were woven into a systematic process of curriculum making**

“[Sharing curriculum plans] is very much a supportive criticism and it’s a direction, directing us into our own rethinking of it. But I don’t think we’re ever really told what to do”

Classroom teacher

**Creating a thematically structured school curriculum required specific professional knowledge**

“I’d cut up the national curriculum [...] And what they had to do was decide on which kind of naturally fitted together from the national curriculum. And then from that, they grouped all the national curriculum statements up, and then decided on what the expedition would look like.”

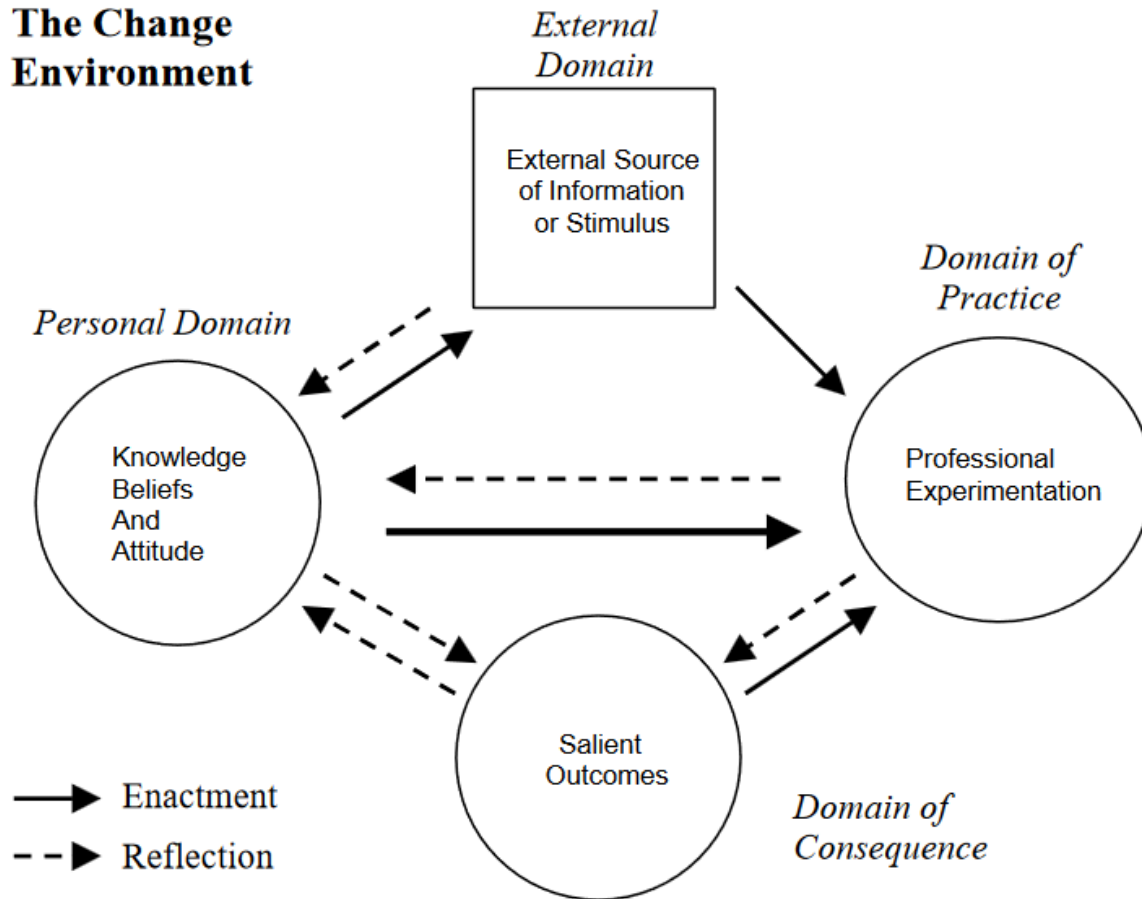
School leader

*What more can we discover through exploration of knowledge practices?*

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What is my problem space?

# Example 1: models of professional development



*The interconnected model of professional growth (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002)*

## Example 2: teacher knowledge practices in Literacy teaching

Grünthal et al. (2022)

**Reading for pleasure** as a central feature of the literacy curriculum's *high epistemic quality*, "getting pupils to **enjoy both reading literature** and, at the same time, to develop **critical and creative thinking** as well as **gaining factual knowledge** through reading in all school subjects"

Choice of literature "is an indicator of teachers' **powerful disciplinary knowledge**"

Ellis and Rowe (2020)

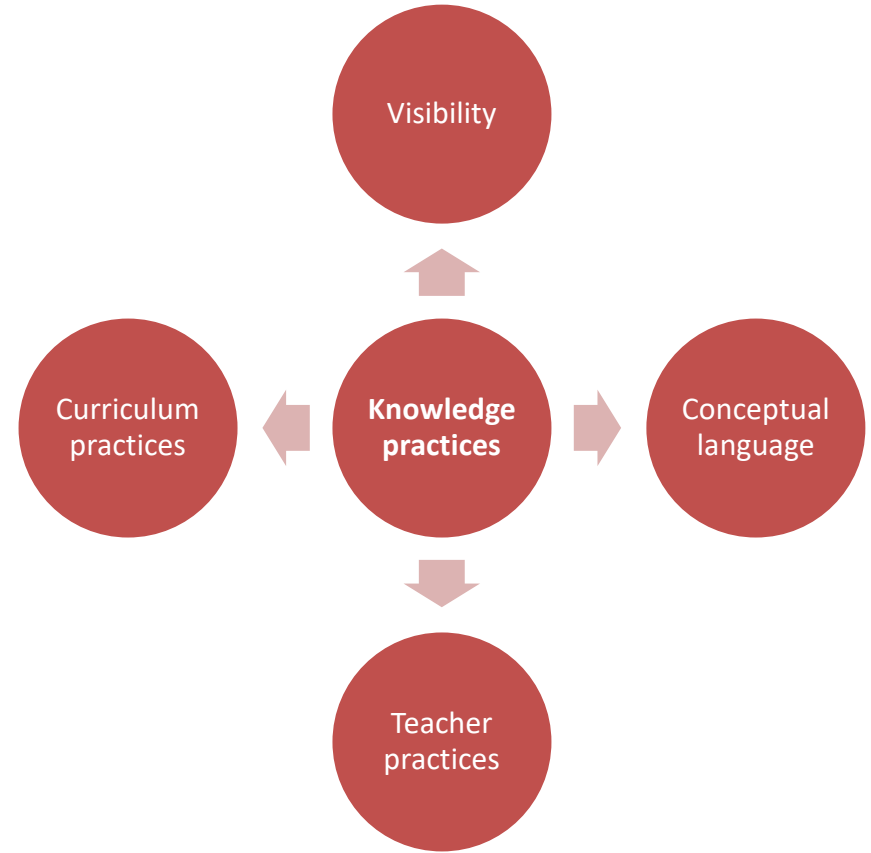
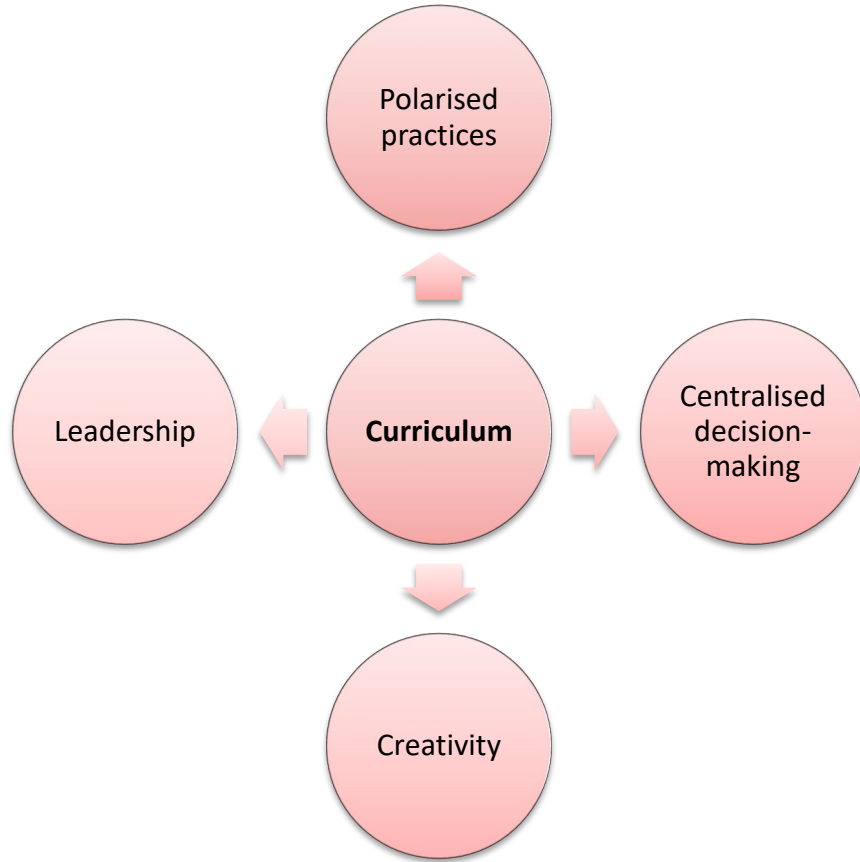
"It is not simply that some people get more experience of literacy and others less; the research reveals real differences in **how people think about texts**, how texts order their thinking, and the **kinds of literate practices and responses** that are common and considered worthwhile across different communities, including differences in the unspoken **beliefs and values** about the nature, point and purpose of being literate."

Teachers need "to be **knowledgeable about children's literature**", but also need to make pedagogic decisions such as allowing space for the growth of "personal literate identities"

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What is the problem itself?

# Exploratory phase



1. What are the practices involved in teachers' curriculum making and professional learning in the primary phase?
2. What knowledge is needed for teachers to enact these practices, and what knowledge is gained through them?
3. What are the effects of identified approaches in supporting teachers to gain the required knowledge?

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