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Ivan Illich once said: “Learning from programmed information always hides reality behind a screen”. What Shaireen Rasheed of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the School of Education at the CW Post Campus of Long Island University in Brookville, New York in the United States of America has done in this book is to provide a conceptual and philosophical framework for looking behind the screen of the teleological givens within instrumental curriculum and to explore the possibilities of a curriculum of action that is based on Sartre’s and Maxine Greene’s concepts of freedom.

This framework, which is an existentialist perspective, implores educators to look past the givens associated with neoliberalist concepts of education that are said to produce degrees of passive compliance to the possibilities associated with a curriculum which fosters critical spirit – a spirit which, once deployed, seeks possibility, hope and change.

If you are interested in freedom and emancipation, and how it relates to curriculum within our teaching institutions, Rasheed provides an easy to read, yet conceptually grounded, journey. This journey starts in Chapter 1 where the author clearly articulates Maxine Greene’s concept of freedom and its relationship to action. How this developed from Sartre is highlighted, as are the similarities and differences between their perspectives. It is in Chapter 2 where the journey builds to emancipatory interests, with Rasheed articulating Greene’s resonance with Freire with regard to the concept of naming. What is emphasised is the importance of providing curriculum space for naming to occur, which then flows to taking collective action towards change. In Chapter 3 the construct of ‘possibility’ is taken further through accentuating the utility of literature and how some literary texts can be used to explore freedom and possibility. The final chapter is ateleological in its suggestions around the provision of curriculum that fosters “dialogical knowing, thinking and experiencing” – curriculum that celebrates multiplicity as opposed to standardisation.

This book is particularly useful for beginning educators in the sense that it will prompt them to examine the platform upon which they make their day-to-day curriculum and teaching decisions. It is also useful for experienced educators whose reading of the text will cast them into a space where they can re-explore that which influenced them to be(come) educators in the first place.

Overall, then, *The Existentialist Curriculum of Action* gives substance to Plutarch’s claim that “the mind is a fire to be kindled, not a vessel to be filled”. It highlights how curricular initiatives that use the language of freedom and possibility put paid to those
which foster passivity, are restrictive and are often driven by market ends. It is a refreshing journey into possibility, and an asset to those educators who want to consider and possibly to consolidate a resistant professional epistemology.