

## CURRICULUM AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

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**Abstract:** Curriculum is an important factor when researching an educational model, a training institution or any content related to education. Understanding the curriculum comprehensively and deeply as well as grasping curriculum development trends will help educators have clearer orientations. The article focuses on clarifying the concept of curriculum, approaches to curriculum, classification of curriculum, phases of curriculum development, general elements of the curriculum framework and current trends in curriculum development.

**Keywords:** Curriculum; education model; development trend.

### 1. Introduction

Curriculum is not a new concept but the way we understand it and the theories related to it is still an unresolved issue. In the history of education, the concept of curriculum was considered to have first appeared in 1918 with Bobbitt's work "The Curriculum" (1918) and then gradually became widely used in developed countries. Depending on curriculum approach, curriculum development models as well as the specific socio-economic development situation in each period of time, experts and researchers on education has different views on the curriculum. The research will focus on clarifying issues related to curriculum as well as analyzing current trends in curriculum development.

### 2. Research results

#### 2.1. Curriculum concept

"Curriculum" has the Latin root "currere" which means "to run, to run a course". So Curriculum was understood as simply a course. However, along with the socio-economic development, there are more and more different interpretations of the curriculum.

Bobbitt (1924) argued that curriculum can be defined as a system of activities aimed at discovering or perfecting learners.

Hollis and Doak Campbell (1935) stated that curriculum "includes all the knowledge and experiences that the learner has under the guidance of the school". Curriculum is considered as a series of experiences developed by the school to help learners strengthen their discipline, develop thinking and acting capacity...

Kerr, J. F. (1968) defines curriculum as "all learning planned and directed by the school, whether it is carried out in groups or individually, on or off campus".

According to Wentling (1993) "A curriculum is an overall design for a course that outlines all the content to be trained, specifies what can be expected of learners after the course, outlines the process required to deliver the training content, the training methods and the way in which the learning outcomes are assessed and tested, all of which is arranged in a tight timetable."

The curriculum is not just “a set of plans made for guiding learning” but also the “actualization of those plans” (Glatthorn et al., 2018, p. 3). Accordingly, the curriculum consists of different phases, from design to development, implementation and evaluation, each of which affects the comprehensiveness of the curriculum. Throughout that process, efforts are made to ensure that students master specific, curriculum-related content. In fact, what students perceive and learn is also influenced by cultural and social norms, which contribute to what is sometimes called a “hidden” curriculum.

Along with the development of socio-economic in the process of globalization, the concept of curriculum is also updated. According to the main message that UNESCO (2020) wants to spread, “Curriculum must be appropriate to the diverse needs of learners and the desire for an inclusive society”. The International Bureau of Education (IBE) defines an inclusive curriculum as one that “take into consideration and caters for the diverse needs, previous experiences, interests and personal characteristics of all learners. It attempts to ensure that all students are part of the shared learning experience of the classroom and that equal opportunities are provided regardless of learner differences” (IBE, 2019).

## ***2.2. Curriculum approach***

Depending on different approaches, different curricula will be designed. Traditional curriculum models have generally emphasized inputs, objectives, academic subjects, content, knowledge and the teacher. Increasingly, the focus has shifted towards outputs and learning outcomes. The significance placed upon learning outcomes may take various forms, but generally implies that certain results are expected from students in each subject or learning area at the end of each school level, including mastery of content and specific skills, or more general capabilities such as problem solving or decision-making. According to IBE (2013, p. 63) there are different approaches to curriculum as follows:

### ***a. Learning content-based approach***

This classic approach is based on a sequence of topics to be developed. The teaching process develops in a linear progression and is linked to a sequence mandated by the content. Content delivery is planned so that its complexity increases gradually, and prerequisite knowledge must be acquired before progressing to the next step. Content may be organized according to discipline, but also according to theme.

### ***b. Learning objectives-based approach***

The development of objectives-based curriculum occurred in the United States of America under the influence of behaviourist psychology. Under this type of curricula, behavioural objectives are emphasized since learning is understood as a change in the perceptible behaviour of students. Pedagogic objectives are usually presented and classified into categories of learning that comprise a taxonomy which includes objectives and examples of associated behaviours; the best known system was Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, which classified objectives into domains, particularly cognitive and affective domains. Others later added more dimensions, including the psychomotor domain. More recently, Bloom’s Taxonomy work has been updated by Anderson and others and continues to be influential. The advantage of this approach is that it is centred on the learner and his or her activity, providing a definite notion of the scope devised for

the content and also helping to determine better assessment criteria. Critics have argued that objectives-based curriculum was burdensome and mechanical, ignoring differences between learners. Some argue that it may be well-suited to particular subject areas like science or mathematics but that in other areas where autonomous, personal judgements of value or taste are required, objectives are of limited use.

*c. Competency-based approach*

This is the latest approach, where competency is understood as the ability to face complex situations by mobilizing specific knowledge and general cognitive and non-cognitive resources. Stemming from a growing concern about the quality and relevance of education, and partly as a result of the need to frame educational aims around broad social demands, competencies have increasingly become an important component of educational discourse and practice. Competency-based curricula tend to avoid a subject-based approach and emphasize the intersection of learning areas by exploring transversal themes or offering more realistic scenarios across several disciplines

IBE (2019) has proposed 7 competencies that learners need to be equipped in the 21st century as well as in the 4.0 Industrial Revolution:

- Lifelong learning: Knowing how to learn is the most important ability because in a world where change is constant and rapid, what we learned before can easily become obsolete. Knowing how to learn affords people the regenerative capacity to reinvent themselves for changing contextual demands and avoid being eliminated.

- Self-agency: The 21st century requires people to be self-actualized agents. This demands capacity and empowerment to analyze the demands of one's environment and apply all resources at hand (knowledge, skills, technologies, etc.) to take self-benefitting and self-fulfilling action.

- Interactively using diverse tools and resources: Increasing complexity also demands effective, efficient, and interactive use of a range of tools and resources relevant for the task at hand. These tools and resources go beyond the constituent elements of competence to include intellectual, cultural, religious, linguistic, material, technical, fiscal, physical, and virtual resources, the interface of the self and machines in smart factories of Industry 4.0, the use of multiple technologies, of time, etc. Responsible use of tools and resources is also at the heart of responsible consumption and sustainable lifestyles, which contribute to sustainable development.

- Interacting with others: Increasing complexity requires individuals to interact effectively with others. It demands collaboration to resolve complex problems and create integrated solutions across contexts. It is also a key competence for social interaction, social cohesion, harmony, justice, and ultimately a peaceful and reconciled future.

- Interacting with the world: This competence enables people to be local and global. It enables awareness, sensitivity, and advocacy for collective challenges and opportunities at a local, national, regional, and global levels. It entails multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-lingual perspectives that embrace diversity as an enriching asset. It also entails effective and positively impactful engagement from local to global levels.

- Multi-literateness: The 21st century requires people to be multi-literate and to flexibly deploy these literacies. Basic literacy (the three "R's" of reading, writing, and arithmetic) is no longer adequate. It is perhaps more appropriate to speak of fundamental literacies. These go beyond the three "R's" to include micro competences like digital,

cultural, financial, health, and media literacies. These literacies are fundamental in the 21st century, and even more so in Industry 4.0. They are not viewed as dichotomous, where one is either literate or illiterate. They are continuous, ranging from entry level to expert. Different contexts will demand different types and levels of literacies.

- Trans-disciplinarity: Increasing complexity requires ever more sophisticated solutions that integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines and from domains of knowledge. Emphasis on application demands a deeper mastery of disciplines. The need for deep and narrow specialization will remain essential, especially in workplaces, but narrow specialists will be tremendously challenged in daily life where impactful action demands a decent level of understanding of several disciplines.

The above general competencies will be a valuable reference for curriculum development, but how to integrate those competencies into the curriculum of each specific job with its own requirements is an issue that needs further study.

### **2.3. Curriculum classification**

There are many ways to categorize curricula. Based on the organizational level, the curriculum can be divided into 07 levels: national level, industry level, school/institute level, faculty level, curriculum level, subject/module level, lesson level.

Based on curriculum approach, curriculum can be classified into subject-based curriculum, module-based curriculum and competency-based curriculum according to professional standards. Subject-based curriculum is a type of program in which the basic structure and content is built or designed mainly from subjects in the fields of natural sciences, social - humanities and science and technology. Modular curriculum is established on the basis of selection and combination of modules. A module is a complete unit of learning that combines relevant knowledge and skills with specific instructions and processes to create a certain level of knowledge or competence. Competency-based curriculum is a program in which the training process focuses on capacity building (jobs and professional tasks) meeting job standards. Learners are considered to have completed a course when they have demonstrated that they have mastered all the competencies specified in the program, regardless of the length of study.

The fact proves that the same curriculum has different influences and effectiveness on different learners. There are factors that seem to be outside the curriculum but have a great impact on learning results. It is recognized that curriculums need to be viewed from more angles. According to IBE (2013, p. 58), curriculums can be classified into 5 categories:

- Intended or specified curriculum is concentrated upon the aims and content of what is to be taught - that is, curriculum which is planned and expressed through curriculum frameworks and other formal documents which may be mandated by the authority of law.

- Implemented or enacted curriculum relates to what is offered for students in schools which may include local interpretations of what is required in formal curriculum documents. In these cases, curriculum and instruction are seen as being closely interrelated.

- Experienced curriculum refers to the formal learning actually experienced by students. This is focused upon the learner, his or her knowledge and perspectives, as well as his or her ability to learn and interact with the curriculum.

- Hidden curriculum refers to the student experience at school beyond the formal structure of the curriculum, and in particular the messages communicated by the school or education system concerning values, beliefs, behaviours and attitudes. The messages contained in the hidden curriculum may complement the intended and implemented curricula or they may contradict them.

- Null curriculum refers to those areas and dimensions of the human experience which the curriculum does not identify and which are not addressed through teaching. The null curriculum is a collection of all the necessary but overlooked information and processes to prepare students for social life. An illustrative example of this curriculum is that some content related to politics, religion, beliefs would have been included in the curriculum but for some reasons they were excluded. Learners will probably still have access to those contents, but not through the curriculum.

#### 2.4. Phases of curriculum development

Developing a curriculum is an inevitable requirement because it is impossible to have a curriculum for all models, all schools at all times. Although curriculum approach is different, the choice of model can also be different, but the general process for curriculum development is almost all through certain phases. UNESCO (2020, p. 114) proposes 4 phases of curriculum development.

**Table 1:** Phases of curriculum development

Phase	Participants	Questions	Enabling or constraining factors
<i>Pre-design and design</i> Written curriculum (as embodied in approved texts)	- Ministry of Education - Teacher organizations	Who is pushing for inclusion and on the basis of what paradigms?	There is usually a genuine interest in inclusive education.
<i>Development</i> Supported curriculum (as shaped by resources allocated to deliver it)	- Curriculum department - Publishing houses - Teacher organizations - Students, parents and organizations through consultations	Who is included in the process and at what stages? Who makes the final decisions, and what are they based on?	A focus on the general curriculum and the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes to be mastered by all may result in a heavy and overloaded curriculum. Not enough time may be allocated to subjects, or textbooks may not be available or appropriate.
<i>Implementation</i> Taught curriculum (as observed in class)	- Teacher education institutions and universities - School leaders and teachers - School boards	Are teachers and school principals prepared? How?	Opportunities for teacher education and professional development and other support may be insufficient. If teachers are forced to follow the curriculum with fidelity but have limited autonomy, the inclusiveness objective may be diluted.

Phase	Participants	Questions	Enabling or constraining factors
<i>Evaluation</i> Assessed curriculum (as tested)	- School inspectorate - Curriculum department - Examination department	Is school inspection prepared to assess the new curriculum? What is assessed at the end of education? Who is involved in measuring the success of the inclusive curriculum?	The role of formative evaluation may be neglected, and national examinations may neglect the importance of non-academic areas of learning for inclusiveness.

In Table 1, UNESCO has divided the curriculum development process into 4 phases, which specify the participants, issues that should be noted through questions need to be answered, benefits, difficulties need to be calculated in advance. In addition, the UNESCO report also emphasizes that during the curriculum’s design phase, education systems need to decide on the breadth and depth of the inclusion paradigm they will follow. In the development phase, certain content is eliminated and new content is added. Parents may find it hard to reconcile some topics with their personal, cultural or religious beliefs. Teachers may realize the new curriculum requires them to teach new skills or take more inclusive pedagogical approaches. Even if these hurdles are overcome, an inclusive curriculum’s effectiveness is really put to the test during the implementation phase, when the intended curriculum is interpreted and enacted in schools, without proper understanding and mastery of the expected pedagogies, the reform could easily lose steam

### 2.5. Common elements of a curriculum framework

To build a curriculum, the framework is the backbone that determines the success or failure. Following are the core elements that make up the curriculum framework according to IBE (2013):

**Table 2:** Common elements of a curriculum framework

<i>1. Introduction: Current context</i>	Reflects the findings of the contextual scan and describes the social and economic environment in which teaching and learning occur.
<i>2. Educational policy statements</i>	Describes the government’s goals for education, such as universal literacy and numeracy, the development of skills needed for economic development and the creation of a stable and tolerant society.
<i>3. Statement of broad learning objectives and outcomes / Standards for each level/cycle</i>	Describes what students should know and be able to achieve when they complete their school education. Outcomes should be expressed through a range of domains, including knowledge, understanding, skills and competency.

4. <i>Structure of the education system</i>	Describes the school system within which the curriculum framework is to be applied. It should specify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of years of schooling, including compulsory schooling.</li> <li>• Stages (or cycles) of schooling and their duration.</li> <li>• Number of weeks in the school year and teaching hours in the school week.</li> </ul>
5. <i>Structure of curriculum content, learning areas and subjects</i>	Describes the organization of content within the framework and the extent to which schools and students can make choices. It might describe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An outline of subjects or learning areas to be studied in each stage or cycle (such as core, elective and optional subjects).</li> <li>• A brief description of each subject or learning area, outlining the rationale for its inclusion in the curriculum and the contribution it makes to the achievement of the learning outcomes defined in Section 3.</li> <li>• The number of hours to be assigned to each subject or learning area in each stage or cycle.</li> </ul>
6. <i>Standards of resources required for implementation</i>	Describes standards as they apply to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers - qualifications, teaching load (number of classes per week).</li> <li>• Students - number per class in each subject.</li> <li>• Materials - textbooks, computers, other equipment, facilities - classrooms, furniture, supplies.</li> </ul>
7. <i>Teaching methodology</i>	Describes the range of teaching approaches that might be employed in the implementation of the framework.
8. <i>Assessing student achievement</i>	Describes the importance of assessing the extent to which students achieve the outcomes of each subject and recommends or prescribes modes of assessment (such as written or oral examinations, performance and practical-skill demonstrations).

### 2.6. Trends in curriculum development

UNESCO's Office of International Education (2013, p. 47) has summarized the international trends in curriculum development as presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Trends in curriculum development

<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>
Teaching	Learning
Transfer of facts	Student construction of knowledge
Memorization of information	Analysis, synthesis, evaluation, application of information
Focus on knowledge	Development of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes

<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>
Summative assessment of academic achievement	Authentic and formative assessment of competency
Learning by rote	Applied learning / learning in context
Categorized knowledge (traditional subjects)	Integrated knowledge (broader learning areas)
Schooling	Lifelong learning
Focus on inputs	Focus on outcomes and processes
Didactic teaching	Participatory, activity-centred approaches that incorporate interactive methods
Assumption that there is one “learning style”	Recognition that there are several “preferred learning styles”
Curriculum as product	Curriculum as both a process and a product

However, along with the development of science and technology, especially the impact of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 as well as the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the trend of curriculum development has also changed. UNESCO (2021) has highlighted the urgency of rethinking curriculum in light of reinforcing the commitments of the Education 2030 Agenda on learning, disruptive systemic worldwide societal changes, and crucially, the profound transformation of education and education systems post Covid - 19 through 10 main clues:

**Clue 1: Understanding the younger generations**

One of the biggest challenges facing educational systems worldwide is understanding students from a generational lifespan perspective that values and supports them as infants, children, adolescents, young people, and, foremost, as protagonists taking responsibility for their own learning. The lack of intergenerational empathy is evident in educational, curricular, pedagogical, and teaching proposals that fail to make the connections between contexts, circumstances, values, emotions, and cognitions in order to address the diversity of expectations and needs of all learners.

**Clue 2: Combating factors related to vulnerability**

Approaches to counteracting vulnerability require that we understand, value, and support people as individuals before we decide on any kind of sectoral intervention and certainly before narrowing people to the prescriptions deemed necessary by institutions. It is important, then, to reaffirm that each person has enormous potential, unknown a priori, for learning and development. This potential is characterized by a series of goals, processes, and phases in which a multiplicity of genetic and environmental factors, as well as set of interventions (by governments and/or by other institutions or actors) interact with each other.

**Clue 3: Reinforcing understanding between school and families**

The global pandemic has led to discussions around the realignment of roles and responsibilities among educational institutions, teachers, students, and communities. Although the need to rethink roles was undoubtedly overdue even before the pandemic, the lack or discontinuity of in-person school activities has highlighted the relevance of



deepening mutual understanding and trust as well as the collaboration among key school stakeholders. Reimagining the educational system entails not only broadening and deepening the roles of students and educators but also empowering families as learning coaches who can in turn support their children's learning.

#### **Clue 4: Deepening glo-local education**

More than ever, education must entail connection, nearness, and convergence across cultures, traditions, group affiliations, countries, and regions that come together to promote universal values and frameworks respectful of and accommodating to diversities and differences. In effect, a glo-local education represents a pledge to support a worldwide societal contract that demands new forms of cooperation and understanding between countries as well as, crucially, a forward-looking and reliable educational multilateralism that reimagines education. This entails rethinking curriculum and pedagogy to lay the foundation for students to actively assume the role of producers, protagonists, discussants, and disseminators of a new order of global harmony.

#### **Clue 5: Enhancing the focus on the person**

The global pandemic, with its numerous and devastating effects, reorients the discussion toward people and their life circumstances as well as their hopes, frustrations, and plans. In particular, in education - prior to the pandemic and even more so during it - the need for a holistic vision of human development that incorporates various interrelated facets has been evident. We consider human well-being and development from a perspective that reaffirms the value of social, humanist, universal, and globally minded justice in education.

#### **Clue 6: Promoting synergies among values**

The 2030 Educational Agenda that UNESCO spearheaded emphasizes that teaching values throughout the course of life lays the foundation for harmony, well-being, justice, and sustainable development. Values constitute the inescapable and beneficial foundation of all teaching and learning, no matter its form, content, or implications. To a great degree, we must overcome the conditioning and prejudices that cause us to regard the teaching of values as prescribing and imposing beliefs, group affiliations, worldviews, and societal models.

#### **Clue 7: Valuing diversity**

Diversity is essentially a window of opportunity for expanding learning opportunities, processes, and outcomes, and for supporting students' holistic development. It also entails understanding and acknowledging the many dimensions of each person's uniqueness and identities, as well as their social, cultural, gender, ethnic, and territorial contexts.

#### **Clue 8: Focusing on education that enhances freedom**

A forward-looking and progressive curriculum engages students to independently think through and make decisions that allow them to exercise their freedom fully. All those competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, resilience and empathy, are strongly sustained by teachers' openness to promoting learners' freedom and to learners expressing freely.

### **Clue 9: Moving toward hybrid modes of education**

Hybrid modes of teaching, learning, and assessment are based on the integration and complementarity of in-person and distance learning, led by teachers with the goal of guiding, enhancing, assessing, and demonstrating each student's learning. In light of moving toward hybrid modes, it is urgent to reimagine educational systems to ensure learning anywhere at any moment within a new order of global harmony and sustainable development for people, citizens, and communities.

### **Clue 10: Inspiring affection for educators**

The global pandemic is challenging educators at the very core of their role as mentors and guides for students and as facilitators of student learning. Essentially, their capacity to respond to a situation that is unexpected, complex, and unpredictable has strengthened their resilience, enabling them to design and implement educational initiatives. Educators are daring to explore the unknown and to search for solutions they can design, develop, demonstrate, and evaluate in dialog and constructive collaboration with their colleagues.

10 clues mentioned by UNESCO need to be carefully considered according to the characteristics of each education system, each educational model as well as each training institution. These are not merely related to the post-Covid-19 curriculum and when the pandemic ends, everything will return to the original time, but are that will guide education in the future. They will affect all elements of the curriculum from objectives, output standards, content, training methods to assessment. Therefore, policy makers, educators, especially education administrators, need to be prepared to timely adapt to the new context.

### **3. Conclusion**

The curriculum is always the core element through which the social ideals and aspirations are expressed by mean of education. It answers the questions of why, what, how, when, where when implementing the educational model. Having an overview of the curriculum and identifying future curriculum development trends will help guide policy making, design and implementation of effective educational models, towards sustainable development.

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## TÓM TẮT

### CHƯƠNG TRÌNH ĐÀO TẠO VÀ XU THẾ PHÁT TRIỂN

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Chương trình đào tạo là yếu tố quan trọng khi nghiên cứu về một mô hình giáo dục, một cơ sở đào tạo hay bất kỳ một nội dung nào liên quan đến giáo dục. Hiểu về chương trình đào tạo một cách toàn diện và sâu sắc cũng như nắm bắt được những xu thế phát triển của chương trình đào tạo sẽ giúp cho những người làm giáo dục có những định hướng rõ ràng hơn. Bài báo tập trung làm rõ khái niệm chương trình đào tạo, các cách tiếp cận chương trình đào tạo, cách phân loại chương trình đào tạo, các giai đoạn phát triển chương trình đào tạo, các yếu tố chung của khung chương trình đào tạo và các xu thế phát triển chương trình đào tạo hiện nay.

**Từ khóa:** Chương trình đào tạo; mô hình giáo dục; xu hướng phát triển.