

## EDUCATION OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM BETWEEN THE MIRRORS OF WISDOM, RESPONSIBILITY, AND DIGNITY

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**Abstract:** *The article is the express of a genuine concern about what it is happening nowadays in education worldwide. In spite of a more and more declared interest for this essential area, the reality rather shows a superficial approach of education both on strategic and tactical levels. Curriculum reforms happen everywhere in the world. On some meridians an educational reform has a starting point and an end. On others they seem to have only a perpetual beginning. Any reform needs a frame of reference with core theoretical bases, but the fundamental aspects of education, including the convergence of the specialty language are still in the middle of the crises. Education itself is considered as a field of anybody's expertise. The simple access to the power of decision appears that gives the full level of expertise for no matter who has this opportunity of decision power. The paper is an approach of several core issues derived from the expressed concern: (1) The ambiguity and plurisemantics of using basic concepts in the educational field; (2) What is understood by pedagogy and curriculum; (3) The role of professionals of education. (4) A last part with ten core milestone of curriculum reform in the world considered to be of interest is eventually presented.. This analyze with its conclusions is based on reflecting upon the specialty literature, and has as fundamentals an experience of more than 42 years as professional of education, from practitioner status until professor, and passing through all of the educational levels, from kindergarten to adults education, acting both in main stream and in special needs sectors. About 30 years of these 42 offered the opportunity of a bird eye scrutinize, based on acting as manager in different educational areas. Thus, some of the expressed opinions could be of interest.*

**Key words:** *science(s) of education, pedagogy, curriculum, professional of education professionals of curriculum, practitioners of education and practitioners of curriculum, educational and curriculum reform.*

## **1. Introduction**

Along my practical experience as teacher, educational counselor, trainer for continuing training of teachers, and, eventually, professor PhD, I had the opportunity to be in contact with people working within the educational practical field. Young or adults not very far from the end of their career, they have responded diversely in front of the speedy change of what it's happening in society and, implicitly, in education. Their position about the educational reforms is essentially very interesting.

The real opinions about these reforms are somehow hidden or dissimulated, in Romania, at least but not only. Here, the education is under an ongoing reform which seems to be without compass.

Thus, in this context, there are teachers who do not understand anything about the endless reform and recognize this reality; but they are very few. There are other teachers who understand almost nothing but have not the strength to recognize this and they react in two different ways. A first category of teachers keep quiet in public, listen and do what they were used to do. A second category, involving people extremely preoccupied to succeed in their career, no matter how, also don't understand anything or understand almost nothing. But they pretend to know everything. They are very vocal, use even in excess the new terminology, or what they think as being a new methodology, and try to be noticed everywhere. They take papers and pictures and produce proofs. And, as I have notice, like almost everywhere in the world, these proofs became a kind of purpose in itself. They cover a superficial qualitative work. But the core issue of misunderstanding or of the lack of understanding is still there, as a fundamental of a long time waited results of the educational reform, with its core sector: the curriculum reform.

With this experience in mind, I have not been surprised to find on internet the Goldstein Rebecca's statement of teaching philosophy. She appears to be a young teachers' trainer, "teacher educator", in her terms.

I'll quote a part of this statement because it, as a trigger of the sadness engulfed in my previously mentioned experience, represents the reason of reflecting upon the general issues emerging from the educational field and of writing this paper.

*Theory.... Practice.... Praxis.... Pedagogy.... As a graduate student and novice teacher, these terms were thrown about as forms of cultural and intellectual capital that separated the theorists from the practitioners. If you were a theorist you understood that all four terms were interrelated, or, that was what we'd understood from reading people like Freire, Bourdieu, and Lather. If you were a practitioner (in our program that meant you were "just a teacher"), you'd heard the words, perhaps used them, and were predominantly anti-theory because in your mind it had no real-world application. As someone who wanted to be and do it all--theory, practice, practice, and pedagogy—I found myself trapped in two worlds that while not outright enemies, certainly held an uneasy truce with one another. The irony of that is how such an uneasy relationship can limit the possibility of understanding that we can gain from both worlds. In the case of the theorist/practitioner divide, it is sad to think of the opportunities lost for learning. In all honesty, I continue to grapple with how we connect theory, practice, praxis, and pedagogy.*

The author of this statement wrote these thoughts from the perspective of a teacher's educator; some other interesting concerns are highlighted.

*As a teacher educator, it is important for me to model how these ideas come to together in my classroom. It is hard, however, to make that explicit to student(s-) [teachers], particularly since they are still experiencing teaching in the abstract. It is even harder to get student(s-) [teachers], to understand that every decision they make regarding teaching, learning, and knowledge, evolves from a core set of beliefs that they have about themselves, their students, and the world in general. As these beliefs become more sophisticated, they begin to mirror many of the theories that already exist. At the same time, students come to our classrooms with deeply embedded theories about the nature of the world, teaching, and learning. These theories, while not necessarily representative of those of the academy, still shape what these future teachers will do in their classrooms. That I understand that theory and practice live side by side in my classroom is one thing. To make it transparent so that students can see it is another matter. And, engaging students to explore their own theories as they put them into practice requires challenging their very core understandings of how teaching becomes teaching. (Goldstein Rebecca [w.y.]*

A multitude of question marks arises reading this statement. An in depth reflection upon the gap between theory and practice, and even between the theoreticians and practitioners, between the reform designers and the teachers who implement the designed educational reforms should be a real concern.

Also, what a genuine educational reform is and where it must start from?

Who should be the leading actors and the genuine beneficiaries of an educational reform? Are the theorists of education important in this approach or anybody can design and manage the process?

These few questions and many others became the starting point of several considerations.

In this paper the focus will be limited on some fundamental theoretical issues, because the topic is far too complex to be briefly covered.

## **2. Ambiguity and plurisemantics of using basic concepts in the educational field**

Mitter, W. (1982) arises the issue of even the duality of the basic term: science of education or sciences of education. The author says that there are scholars or specialists who express a kind of repugnance against highly sophisticated arguing on the abstract levels (Von Hentig, p.496 apud Mitter W. (1982, p.84). But a strong commitment to an educational science which is dedicated to the improvement of the educational practice deserves to take the risk of such an argue, in Mitter opinion.

Together with Mitter W, I know that an approach of using at least of the core terms, explaining their meaning is necessary, especially because of the ambiguity of the pedagogical language as it appears in different languages. As I have mentioned in a previous edited book the terminological differences appear particularly between the English language literature and the French language literature (or Latin languages in general). Sometimes, the same concept, with identical meaning appears as being different because of the specificity of the used language (Niculescu R.M. 2010,p.142). This is an enough strong reason for the authors to stress the meaning of a concept or phrase used within the paper or book context by the authors themselves , after no matter how complex passing through literature is done and how detailed are presented other different definitions and meanings for the respective concept or phrase. The readers should be aware during the reading about the meaning given by the author(s) for the respective issue. If an explicit definition of the author is missing the readers decodes the concept or the phrase using their own way of understanding them.

Within the limits of this paper only several terms should be approached; education, science(s) of education, pedagogy, and curriculum are the first to be considered.

In English the term of "education" covers both the theoretical and the practical field, while in other languages significant differences of this term, other subsequent and connected tones are to be found.

Historically speaking, a great debate can be detected around the concept of education and the field covered by it, on one side, and the claimed "motherhood" by different sciences: (mainly) by Philosophy, Psychology and even Sociology. Probably, because of these many claims of motherhood, a kind of "anti-educational" vogue may be detected within higher educational institutions; it may be also seen as a anti-educationists trend or even fashion. The cause could be also the fact that educations, as a common act, that exists since the human became a being of the world, everybody think that is a specialist.

The scientific approach of the education, a science or a group of connected branches entirely focused on education, scrutinized from different perspectives is strongly denied in" a good number of pamphlets and also sophisticated writings (Mitter W, 1982,p.93). There are "serious deficiencies and destructive patterns or activities in the area of education". This reality should be accepted. But this is not a good enough reason to "refute those who go on regarding education from a substantially positive point of view"(Mitter W, 1982, p.93). And it is not an enough reason to not take into account the necessity of existing and developing a genuine science around this concept and its reference field.

Based on an essential agreement with Mitter W. and the authors quoted in the presented paper, I pinpoint that: education as action within any society, done formally, non-formally and informally was, is and will be a fundamental one for the survival and development of the human being. The essence of this phenomenon has changed along the human history, its way of being done, the balance among the three mentioned forms is different today and,, probably will be something else tomorrow. The complexity of education grows as long as the complexity of society itself grows and the meaning of the concept education has been constantly modified. Mitter W. highlights the idea that if "new considerations and new inquiries are necessary it doesn't mean that the education itself as a core issue of a complex science should be refuted.

A protest against the existing educational theories and patterns could be accepted, and here it is the role of the specialists in the area to be aware that something should be re-thought. In my opinion, a new balance between the professionals specialized in other domains and the genuine professionals of education should be the high concern of nowadays. Even the other professionals are, in fact the product of education itself. But, nowadays, becomes obvious that the educational field on the entire period of ontogenesis seems to register a significant number of fails; thus, a broader

analysis should be taken into account, done in team not neglecting and denying the significance of education as a science. The education of all the children and students should be scrutinized, analyzed and assessed according to the requests of this new millennium. This kind of analyses must not be done only of those with special needs (gifted, with their excellent performances, and those who need a special aid for coping with their own education process). What is happening with the regular representatives of the new generations? Which is the cause or the source of their passivity, their worrying lack of motivation for an effective process of learning? Which are the weaknesses of education in their case?

These questions (legitimate and strongly existing even if their expression is a kind of underground one) should emphasize the role of looking at education from a high scientifically perspective. Mitter W ( 1982, p.94) suggests here the necessity to put together the efforts of all the professionals in education and all the others fields of sciences, for the them area of connection to the educational phenomenon, in order to establish appropriate aims, perspectives and postulates for the educational phenomenon in this specific era. What is important but sad in the same time, is that ideas had been highlighted in already 1982, within a conference of comparative pedagogy and now, after more than thirty years the problems still exists and they seem to be even stronger.

I agree with Mitter's statement that the issues of connection between education in theory and practice are extremely complex. Therefore the educationists (from the theoretical and practical field) must be deeply focused on what Educational Science represents as a system of disciplines dealing with both fundamental and practical issues in the field. The practitioners should "contribute to optimally exploring their own possibilities, but also respect the limit these possibility are set by man's intellectual and moral capacity". On the other side the professionals from the theoretical field of education should take into account what the field of practice signalizes. I stress the necessity that the principle of unity in diversity should be effectively connected to the principle of liberty in diversity (highlighted by Treml A.K. 1981, apud Mitter W., 1982, p. 94).

### **3. Pedagogy and curriculum**

These are other two concepts that need a special attention.

Murphy (2008) signalizes that " in different cultures at different points of time in history, the meaning and status of pedagogy have shifted" (Murphy P., 2008, p.28)

While in Britain the ‘dominant educational institutions ... have had no concern with theory and its relation with practice (Simon (1981, p.11, apud Murphy 2008p.28), in other western and eastern European countries pedagogy has a tradition of study. Simon is quoted as saying that “the failure to examine pedagogy limits the potential for effecting change through education. More than this, Simon quoting Fletcher’s, 1889, views that these changes are not possible ‘without something like scientific discussion on educational subjects, without pedagogy...”(apud Murphy, 2008,p.28) The author quotes Best, that states: ”however, in spite of this tradition [in the mentioned countries], or because of it, the study of pedagogy is one of confusion, ambiguity and change (Best, 1988 apud Murhy, 2008, p.28). In Best’s view, the status and meaning of pedagogy have changed in recent times and have been ‘devalued, deflected from its original meaning, or even discredited’.

All these represent statements implying or suggest the idea that the term pedagogy refers to the theoretical plan of education.

As Murphy highlighted, quoting some others authors, I agree that to examine pedagogy limits and its potential represents a strong condition of effective changes both in education and in society. Authors as Shulman (1987) or Fletcher’s (1889) with their beliefs, are quoted in order to stress the necessity to reconsider the term, the concept and the role of PEDAGOGY.

Analyzing the historical development of pedagogy as different authors or books present it (Murphy P., 2008, More Alex., 2003, Pedagogic theory, 2014.) defined developmental stages of a theoretical approach of education have been established. The observed stages are, obviously, strongly influenced by the reality and the level of development and force of the economic, social and scientific life of each historical moment.

Psychology, with its development of the theories of learning, sociology and anthropology, with always new approaches of the humans and their role in society, the new technology, and the growing complexity of the life of human society have determined interesting effects upon pedagogy. An interesting sliding from the central role of the educator within the educational process towards a stronger and more active role of the learners for their own development and education appears as obvious. This is happening firstly in formal education but has both roots and effects from and upon the non-formal and informal education as well.

When it is about the formal education, Pedagogy, as a theoretical approach of educational phenomenon, had a dual role along all this time. It always represented, on one side, a starting point, as a theoretical reference, for the practical approach. These theoretical bases had been roots for: designing the educational influence, the design implementation step, and further for the assessment moment. On the other side, Pedagogy had been a

necessary receiver of the assessment results, seen as determinants of change inside the pedagogy itself.

Unfortunately, the rhythm, the depth, the consistency and the fluidity of these passages from theory to practice and back to theory have implied and still record syncope with unpredictable effects.

The last decades of the previous century and, more than ever these first years of the third millennium, highlighted the new philosophy of the curriculum that still acting like a land of quicksand.

Even if the term of curriculum has ancient roots, the explicit use come from the Middle Ages (the 5th century – the 15th century) when was promoted a type of curriculum focused on areas of knowledge, on organized in subjects contents, taught by mastery exposures of educators belonging to the order of clerics (Legendre, R., 2005: 322, apud Niculescu R., 2010, p.25).

Thus, the medieval meanings of the concept of curriculum are relatively restrictive. The theory of curriculum (the reflexive approach of this concept and its implication within the real educational phenomenon) could be situated at the beginning of the nineteen century. Since then, the theory of curriculum has had an amazing development but with so many ramifications that it has reached an eclectic approach that nowadays is confusing. The professionals of curriculum extend the concept, from the formal education towards the other two forms of educational phenomenon: non-formal and informal education. It is not the intention of detailing the approach of these issues in this paper. The topic has been approached in other papers. Important is to stress in this context that, in spite of sophisticated theoretical positions, the official documents of curriculum seem to remain within the restrictiveness of the first use of the term and, aware or not, referring only to formal education and having as central point still the contents to be taught, even if, in theory, the philosophy is much more wider. That is why the phrase "*pedagogy and curriculum*" is still in vogue, despite the ambiguities involved. Some arguments for this statement are further presented.

An abundant presentation of different positions of educationists and specialists in education can be find in literature ( More Alex., 2003, Westbrook J. at all, 2013), but it gives not enough arguments to conclude what is in fact the balance between pedagogy and curriculum, because of the simple reason that the two terms are still ambiguously defined.

A wide spectrum of approaches is to be found. For instance More A. (2003) treats the relation between the two concepts from the point of view of the teaching- and learning process. Generally speaking, at More A. or in other literature sources curriculum is seen only on the school level. The issue seems to be to clarify the necessary balance between *whatis to be taught*"(what is most commonly understood by the term '*curriculum*' says



More A. 2014,p.170) and *how to be taught* (what is most commonly understood by the term ‘*pedagogy*’, More A. 2014, p.171), in order to develop appropriate knowledge and skills. In nowadays papers the “*skill*” term has been extended to the concept of competencies, that imply attitudes, as well, and encapsulates knowledge as basis of the operational side of the competency: of capacities). It is not the place and the necessity to add here another complex debate focused on using concepts like competence/ competences, or competency/ competencies. I can notice and highlight here, that, in the More’s statement the term *pedagogy* is focused almost only on methodology of teaching.

Vygotsky and Piaget are quoted as being concerned with what Barnes has defined as ‘the central problem of teaching’: that is, ‘how to put adult knowledge at children’s disposal so that it does not become a strait-jacket’(Barnes 1976, p. 80 apud More Alex, 2014 p.15).

The author also stresses the issue of a dangerous gap between the skills and knowledge ( in nowadays terms : the competencies) that young people are encouraged to develop and acquire at school and their correspondents that are needed for individual and collective success in ‘the world outside’ (Blenkin et al. 1992; Kemmis et al. 1983; Apple 1980, apud More A. 2014, p.45). These words remind me about something read into an Australian paper where a teacher of pre-school education were suggesting that in school it is happening like when the children plays ” by adults within the dolls’ house) only pretending to live something real, still imitated but far from reality. Outside world in its development should be a reference point for the learner training, for their competencies development.

Many papers and books in literature seem to criticize more or less explicitly the so called imposed curriculum. More A. (2003) provides an entire chapter to this issue (6. Working With and Against Official Policy: pedagogic and curricular alternatives). The National Curricula are relatively new and they have been received with a huge reserve by the teachers (especially in countries like Great Britain is). Their existence is put under the umbrella of a so called *top-down perspective in pedagogy*. This is considered by Giroux (1988, apud. Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri , 2016) as the source of the gap between the theory and practice in educational field, with a perverse effect : a kind of passive attitude both of teachers and students (Elliot,1991, Kumaravadivelu,2003, apud. Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri , 2016),p.586).

The centralized curriculum seems to have consequences upon the evaluation process, as well. ” Schick’s division (1971, as cited in Kiely& Rea-Dickins, 2005) sheds light on this issue. He divides the evaluation system of his time into five groups: 1. Eyewash evaluation: to make a program look good. 2. Whitewash evaluation: to cover over the failure of a

favored programmer. 3. Submarine evaluation: to sink an unpopular programmer. 4. Posture evaluation: to satisfy a condition of funding and 5. Postponement evaluation: to put off the need to act (p. 947). Therefore, it can be concluded that such educational systems, in their entirety (pedagogy a term used by Kumaravadivelu, 2001) leave little room, if any, for teachers' active participation." (apud Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri , 2016,p.586) Not only these writings but the school and the wider educational field itself show that a more serious active involvement of teachers and students is necessary for properly preparing young generations for a real and speedy changing life. *Pedagogy of practicality* is requested. However, a good question may appear: *which are the limits of this practicability?*

Ommagio (1986) and further Pennycook (1989) (apud Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri, 2016, p.586,587) say that the "prepackaged" set of procedures to which everyone is expected to slavishly subscribe, and the so called interested knowledge delivered within this top-down philosophy can determine socio-cultural and political inequities. It is true that an imposed curriculum has its risks as previously presented. The risks of conformity may also go in the area of teaching methodology. But one can go further with the stressing of risks.

Without entering in the extended field of a socio-cultural and philosophical approach of education, it is obvious that a too obedient attitude of teachers in this top-down approach of *pedagogy and curriculum* (concepts used with the meaning presented above) determines incredible situations. I, and a group of colleagues, had the occasion to be in contact with a European educational context considered as high quality one. There, I have met educators using very clever conceived teaching materials and potentially effective; unfortunately the teachers appeared as not having any adequate idea about why they use them, and for what benefits for children. More than this, they looked as being totally uninterested about this perspective. They simply were asked to apply a procedure implying the use of these materials. No more questions and reflections!

Consequently, I can agree the idea that conformity can leads to an uncritical and unproductive society. Pre-fabricated procedures and teaching materials, suggested or, more evil, imposed without giving space and opportunities to teachers for thinking, arguing and eventually deciding what to choose or create for a particular group of students needs can be more than dangerous. The passivity and the useless sense may be insinuated for both teachers and students and a genuine development of effective competencies necessary for a changing society remain a simple sterile statement.

Something more dangerous than imposed methods may be highlighted. One can speak about the imposed or induced attitudes of

obedience in front of educational procedures, methods and teaching materials considered "modern" but less understood.

For instance, nowadays it is in fashion to work with the critical thinking methodology. Is it wrong? No, if we agree the idea that a critical thinking attitude versus a reality with a speed of change like nowadays involves is more than necessary. However, in the real educational field, a lot of not understood procedures connected to critical thinking methodology are used without any kind of critical thinking responsibility. The essence of the so called set of methods involved within the process of developing a critical thinking attitude of students seems to be not understood but only they are frenetically used. I do believe that here it is not the issue of imposed methods to be used, but of delivered procedures, not entirely and in depth understood. The term imposed is probably not the very proper one. A kind of self-ordering appears, for being as the others, for being in trend. This attitude has deep roots within a not enough explained philosophy of a central curriculum purpose.

A contents that is considered adequate as knowledge base for developing a specified kind of necessary competencies, should be delivered by using appropriated methods. The development of effective cognitive, motor and/or social competencies through the respective content approach is the core purpose for a peculiar group of student. Together with Kumaravadivelu (2003, apud Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri, 2016, p.587), I agree that "a solution, and one of the three attributes of postmethod pedagogy" should be for teachers to seek "alternative to methods" and even creative procedures with keeping the essence of the recommended methods, but being suitable for the concrete context of a particular learning situation. Thus, I also agree the idea that "practitioners should be empowered to free themselves from the shackles of a method-based ideology and formulate their own theories of practice congruent with their context" (Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri, 2016, p.587). This philosophy allows freedom for diversity even if the national/ central curriculum asks and leads towards a necessary unity.

I add a supporting argument from Richards (2013, apud Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri, 2016, p.588) who pleads for the appropriateness of teachers' freedom to find their own way to adopt and adapt a central curriculum design. When planning their lessons, they should follow a process of inquiry and deliberation, after a proper investigation, reflection, changing ideas and sharing experiences with other teachers. I would add also the importance of scrutinizing the specificity of one cohort of learners compared to others the teachers had worked with, along their own career. It seems to be a more appropriate curriculum approach, keeping the core issues and demands of the central design, following the core competences to be developed according to the central curriculum, but accepting a kind of unpredictability of the outcomes for each student as an individual, giving to each student the necessary space to develop individually, according to his/ her own possibilities, needs and aspirations. I do believe that, thinking in terms of this philosophy, a wider space of genuine development based on activism and

motivated involvement within the learning process is available for each both teachers and learners.

When Nation & Macalister, 2010 (apud Arash V. Naeni, Nima Shakouri , 2016, p.588) say that teachers have to make choices regarding curriculum design in every lesson they do not mean that it is supposed that teachers should produce materials for their own classes, "but that they should both practice doing so every now and then to remain critical and autonomous, and apart from that, have a transformative approach to the received materials and curriculum."(Arash V. Naeni, Nima Shakouri , 2016, p.588). A process of transformation is highlighted here but to transform something it is necessary to have what the transformation has as a base.

The following figure (nr. 1) represents an attempt to put together a series of ideas generated by the previous presentation in order to visually expose the possible relationship between the concepts involved. On this figure, the reader can design the various synthetic aspects surprised above. Specifically he or she can reflect on the teaching-learning process as it is implied at different levels: (1) the level of education as a complex phenomenon; (2) the theory of education in general (called in some literature works as pedagogical level); (3) the educational practice level in which the curriculum (formal) already designed at the strategic (pedagogical) level is implemented, is put into practice with more or less explicit or direct-indirect influences from the non-formal and informal curriculum.

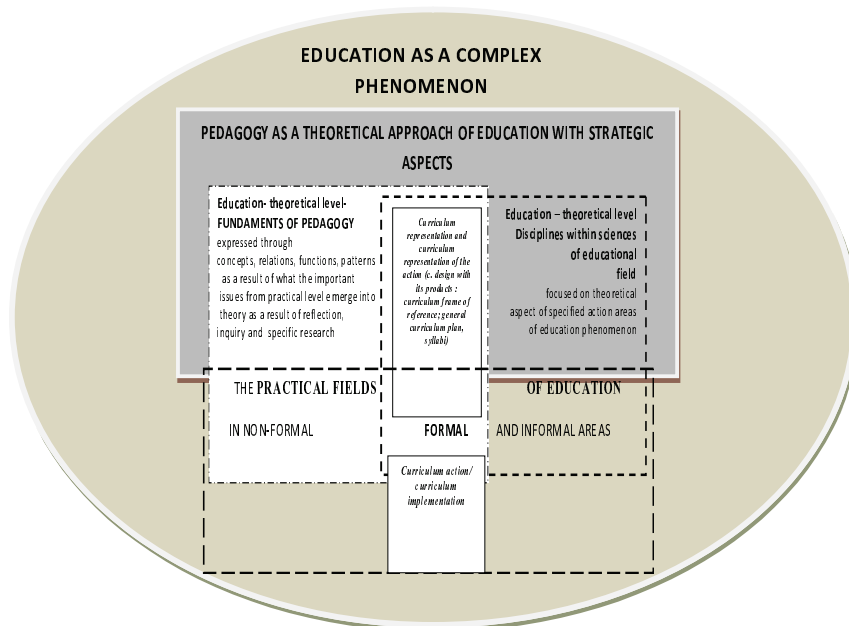


Fig. 1. Pedagogy and curriculum

#### **4.Role of professionals of education.**

A thorny issue is highlighted in specialty literature: the necessity of professionals of education able to deliver a central curriculum and basic materials to be used when this central curriculum is implemented. A wide range of opinions are presented by the literature, in a diachronic or synchronic approach. It is not the intention of this paper to debate all these opinions but some core ideas have been felt to be necessarily pinpointed.

This beginning of the third millennium arises so many new issues in the life of the Planet. It becomes obvious that the human being living successfully nowadays and looking to the future to be must be solidly equipped with adequate competencies: based on essential knowledge, able to put in practice and find out cognitive capacities rapidly adapted to always changing daily requests, and guided by appropriate attitudes and values for a global world. Some aspects are genuinely common for the entire world. They however receive peculiar nuances within continental and national context.

These aspects should value and contained within central curriculum plans aiming to facilitate the effective changes, sharing ideas and practices worldwide. On the other side, it becomes highly necessary to let the "*educational cells*" represented by the life of each classroom to have its own freedom. These must follow the wide route of central curriculum but with a selected vehicle and adequately packed baggage (content and methodology), adapted from what it is supposed to be carried (done) as common request; a peculiar class/ group of students need their own specificity aiming a adequate, genuine and effective development. They do need their own rhythm of travel (learning) and its own stops for recharging and adjustment, according to the particular qualities of each traveler (learner); all these, with the clear aim of achieving at the highest possible level the destination of the educational route, the necessary competencies for survival and for developing the society within which each learner of the present will be a future active worker/professional and citizen.

The role of the teacher is considered as the central one along entire this process. The quoted paper pinpoints the idea that teachers can play a vital role in the success of a curriculum. Arash V. Naeini and Nima Shakouri (2016) reiterate the idea supported by Widdowson (1990) that "what learners do is not directly determined by the syllabus but is a consequence of how the syllabus is methodologically mediated by the teacher in the pursuit of his own course of instruction" (Widdowson [1990] p. 129, apud Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri , 2016, p.589 ).

However, the role of the central curriculum and its quality must not be denied or minimized even the previous idea can be accepted. This high

quality central curriculum must be understood as a general route to be followed by the educational system within a specific socio-cultural context. There are as many central curricula as many national or provincial structures exist in the world, in a world with other kind of connections nowadays. The specificity of the new world requests a necessary connection among these curricula as well.

The world itself needs another core type of personality for the human beings of the third millennium. Humans of nowadays and of the future must be capable to adapt themselves to changes and challenges as never had been before. That is why it is not possible and desirable to let the entire decision of developing the specific curricula only on the individual levels of teachers no matter how good they could be. A core structure of the designed outcomes<sup>1</sup> of curricula worldwide may be desirable in the new context. Consequently the connections among curricula designers, implying an effective sharing of knowledge and good practices among the specialist in curriculum development appear to be more than necessary. International research educational programs focused explicitly on these aspects may be extremely useful.

That is why the role of the specialists in pedagogy, generally speaking, and in curriculum development, particularly, proves to be a major one. They may be expected to play the role of the architects of the main routes of curricula in the world, aware about their role, responsible and open minded. Their power to influence the educational policies in different countries should be higher that it is today. The unity in diversity should be the concern of the strategic level of curriculum design. On the other side, the unity of these main routes of curricula, as a necessity, does not exclude the active role of each teacher when it is about the tactical level of curriculum within the implementation process. Even if the new world of the future requests personalities with specific core features, they remain unique on the individual levels and, therefore, the development of each personality must take into account the peculiar enculturation context, the specificity of each child or student along its own development process in ontogenesis.

## **5. Some common milestones of curriculum development in the world**

In my opinion some core issues should be considered as milestones for the curricula development and implementation within a global world.

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<sup>1</sup>Expected outcomes or expected results ( as they are called in several curricula; e.g. Ontario curriculum)

1. Each national (central) curriculum design should be developed according to what it is happening on a wider referential area (geographically, culturally, socially and economically speaking)

2. The specialists in pedagogy and curriculum development should work together, sharing ideas and experience, trying to understand each other, speaking a common language on the level of core concepts and accepting in an open minded manner the inevitable differences that emerge from the specificity of each concrete linguistic, cultural-economical, social and religious context, with acceptance and positive attitude and without tendencies of imposing any ideas from a group to another. They have to keep in mind the benefit of the future citizens of this Blue Planet for the genuine preservation of its treasure and against any destructive tendency no matter where it could come from.

3. The communication among the specialist in pedagogy and curriculum development with all the teachers that are to be connected in the process of implementation and evaluation of curriculum must be the best one. The teachers as practitioners do need a genuine and effective understanding of what a new curriculum design intends. This may be done within the in-service training programs, before the implementation starting focused on explaining everything is necessary about the new curricula; further, well designed and effective done continuing education programs may help the necessary ongoing adjustments asked by the practice itself. These programs may serve as sources for a continuing curriculum assessment favoring the high quality of implementation and of the final results: the obtained learners' competencies. This training should involve more and more effective the specialists in pedagogy and curriculum development as well.

4. Any new central curriculum at a national/ provincial level, as a strategic approach should emerge from the entire previous experience with the already implemented curriculum, experience that involves highly actively each teachers of the reference area.

5. The implementation process of a new developed central curriculum should be preceded by an pilot process of assessment with criteria focused on competencies claimed both by the local social-economical-cultural request of the near future, and the general social-economical-cultural requests, common for a wider area, if not for the entire world.

6. The post design curriculum assessment, along and after a pilot implementation, must be followed by necessary adjustments finalized before its generalized implementation within the area it was designed for.

7. The process of the generalized implementation must be preceded by effective explanation of the intentions of the new curriculum design, of its general frame, not only for the practitioners but for parents, decision makers

belonging to communities and even media ( in order to avoid later wrong or embarrassing comments) . The genuine understanding of the core issues and of the degree of teachers' freedom to adapt and chose what it is important and suitable for each learner, of the responsibility of each teacher for the decision making process on the tactical level of curriculum must be also issues strongly considered by the managers of curriculum design and implementation.

8. The monitoring process of curriculum implementation should have clear milestones, defined perspectives and criteria; effective monitoring actions must be carried on. Some core aspects are to be taken into account:

8.1. The effectiveness of a curriculum is determined by the added value regarding the structure of the developed competencies for each learner involved within the teaching-learning process; from this point of view, the perspective of the final product, the central issue of curricula should be the learners and their competences development. The products of curriculum are not the central plans and the subordinate syllabi. They are only the final product of the curriculum design. In the culinary art, however ingenious and valuable are the recipes, the final value is given by the quality of the prepared products. The role of professionals in the culinary field is to meet the basic requirements of the recipes, while maximizing the values of the potential at hand. Similarly, when we are talking about the science and art of education, highly well conceived curricula and syllabi may exist, as products of curriculum design; but their quality is eventually measured in the competencies of each student under their influence in the educational process. This quality also depends on the mastery of practitioners of education to effectively implement them, by maximizing the students' individual potential and using plenary the contextual conditions.

8.2. The central role of the teacher must genuinely be a reality not only an official declaration. This issue must be correctly understood both by managers and teachers, each category being able to assume and properly act in their specific roles. The freedom of decision for teachers must be a reality even if the general route to be followed is established by the central curriculum plan. The teachers must not be only receivers of requests, prolific producers of papers and "proofs" about what they do with the students and passive actors in a play felt like a " foreign coat".

8.3. The central curriculum can establish what kinds of clothes are expected to be produced, can offer necessary suitable materials, suggestions about how to be cut and sewn the clothes in question. It is not necessary and maybe even not at all desirable that each teacher to have the skills of a fashion designer. But each teacher should be able to know what kind of clothes is suitable for every child's or student's clothing even if, generally speaking they all belong to a pre-established established category. The



teacher should also know what materials are necessary and appropriate for each cloth for each student, what kind of tools may be used within each specific context. The choice should be the teacher's responsibility, together with their students and the students' families, all the time all of them being aware that each child must finally have adequate clothes for their own future time, respecting their personality, their specificity and not transforming them into passive wearers of clothes felt as extraneous.

The *extraneous cloth metaphor*, used both for how the teachers and students could

feel and act in interaction with a new curriculum, can suggestively explain why teachers and students may act passively when the interaction is not well managed. The perverse results are imminent: lack of motivation for teachers and learners, superficiality in teaching and learning, and eventually, a low standard of students' competencies obtained as results. And what's worse is that neither teachers nor students have a sense of harm; an extraneous cloth is given up without regrets.

8.4. The monitors and the assessors of curriculum effectiveness must take into consideration all these aspects. They have to understand the importance of focusing the assessing process of the outcomes of curriculum on *the added value for each student* (as already has been mentioned above). The comparing the acquisitions in terms of competences of different learners or putting them into an evaluative rapport with an external standardized scales could be important for statistic but it is not essential for an effective education of all the categories of learners, an education for the real life of the future, a life of changes that asks strong and flexible competencies developed as high as possible for each individual learner. The learners are different, the contexts of curriculum/ curricula implementation are different, and the cultural, social, economic and financial resources are substantially different even if the central curriculum is common. There are to be appreciated the different levels of students' performance if an improvement is noticed. It is true that in a world of competition the learners as graduates or competitors will be in the situation to be compared through the competencies they have achieved; but in educational circumstances the main concern must be to maximally develop the individual potentials within specific and concrete context. The life itself will make the differences later, in a fair way, if the role of education had been properly achieved.

9. The entire process of curriculum evolution from design, through implementation, assessment and further towards preparing a new cycle of curriculum development must have continuity, congruence and consistency. For these qualities are responsible, in my opinion (slightly different by what Kumaravadivelu, 2001, apud Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri, 2016, p.586 states) both professionals, specialists in pedagogy and curriculum, and

teachers specialists in teaching various fields. *Pedagogy of practicality* means to act as professional at any level in a way to facilitate the maximum and genuine development of each human potential.

10. The genuine focus on the individual development implies the creativity, and the responsible courage of each teacher who really work in the benefit of each child/student. McDonough and Shaw, 2003, cited a saying of an advisor for the Council of Europe who stressed the idea that the individualization can be respected even within a hugely authoritarian framework. Until a certain point this saying can be true, with a condition: the authoritarian frame to be a wise one that take into account the necessity of unity even if the real world is a huge diversity. The central authority must understand, respect, "co-ordinate and potentiate" the freedom of teachers to work in a personalized way with the particular learner. A genuine respect for these leading actors of the educational process may be stronger expressed. But this respect is also conditioned by a more evident expression of what is represented by the self-respect.

All these ten milestones, as a genuine Decalogue, should be points of reflection and analyze for the representatives of the three main involved categories of human resources within each educational reforms: educational policy representatives, professionals of education and curriculum ones and practitioners' representatives. All of them should be creative professionals in their place of acting, and responsible designer of a future society through the products of their synergic activity: the future professionals in different areas and citizens in society. Creativity implies freedom but, in the same time, the freedom has a price: the high degree of awareness of the huge responsibility for the quality of this future. Both, respect and self respect, trust and self-trust are values and attitudes without which nothing of high quality is possible. The corollary of the dignity is the strongly requested additional value to all the previously mentioned qualities..

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