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THE RELATIONSHIP

SCHOOL-SOCIETY, THEORY-PRACTICE SEEN FROM THE ANALYSIS OF THE CURRICULUM

LA RELACIÓN ESCUELA-SOCIEDAD, TEORÍA-PRÁCTICA VISTA DESDE EL ANÁLISIS DEL CURRÍCULO

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ABSTRACT

In this article five possible perspectives, not exclusive, are exposed to approach the curriculum, which answer the question what the curriculum is and what its nature is. This approach leads to the conclusion that delimiting it is to restrict its complexity and richness as a social practice, specifically in the field of formal or schooled practice, since it expresses the School-Society, Theory-Practice relationship and the role of its actors in the dynamics of educational institutions.

Keywords:

Curriculum, programme, educational practice.

RESUMEN

En el presente artículo se exponen cinco perspectivas posibles, no excluyentes, para abordar el currículo, las cuales responden al interrogante qué es el currículo y cuál es su naturaleza. Este abordaje lleva a concluir que delimitarlo es restringir su complejidad y su riqueza como práctica social, específicamente en el campo de la práctica formal o escolarizada, pues expresa la relación Escuela-Sociedad, Teoría-Práctica y el rol de sus actores en la dinámica de las instituciones educativas.

Palabras clave:

Currículo, plan de estudio, práctica educativa.

INTRODUCTION

The curriculum, in some way, will always be the object of concern of those people who are dedicated to teaching in educational institutions. In contrast, although Coll (1991) points out the complexity of the concept, he does not stop to describe each of the aspects in which the curriculum is involved. Beyond seeking to structure a definition of what the curriculum is, it describes its functions, managing to specify how the project that directs over school educational activities specifies its intention and provides adequate and useful action guides for teachers who have direct responsibility for its implementation. *“The curriculum is a guide for those in charge of developing it, a useful instrument to guide the pedagogical practice, an aid for the teacher”* (Coll, 1991).

This conception of the curriculum is based on the idea that certain aspects of personal growth considered important within the framework of the culture of the group will not take place satisfactorily or will not take place at all unless specific help is provided to start up the teaching activities specially designed for this purpose (Coll, 1991).

It is under this concept of curriculum that we will work based on the curricular analysis. Another important point when talking about the subject is that at the same time the concretion of the function of the school itself is being described, that is, that the curriculum is inserted within a context and social and historical moment in which it acquires meaning and form, it is a school phenomenon that expresses determinations that are not strictly school.

Within the curriculum of an educational institution, different forces with interests affect what Gimeno (1991) calls “external subsystems”, which determine the characteristics and design of the curriculum; this being the aspect of the social function that characterizes the curriculum as a praxis where a dialogue is established between the agents involved in the institution.

In this way, two elements of the curriculum are differentiated:

- The praxis of the curriculum
- Theorization of the curriculum.

The latter deals with the conditions for carrying it out, contributing to the concretion of the curriculum within the praxis in a given context. It is here where the curricular analysis makes sense; both its contents and its forms are basic to understand the mission of the educational institution, verifying if the curricular proposal satisfies the social needs to which it intends to respond. In other words, the curricular analysis appears as a condition to know and analyze what the school is as a cultural and socialization institution in concrete terms.

Curricular analysis becomes essential within educational institutions as it forms part of different aspects that largely

shape the reality not only of the institution but also of the same dynamics within the classroom, which is why it is impossible to define the curriculum as if it were a thing (Gómez-Ortega & Cáceres-Mesa, 2022; Díaz Barriga Arceo & Barrón Tirado, 2022; López Jiménez, 2023; Gutiérrez-Romero, 2023).

One way, among others possible, chosen to approach the study on the curriculum was to begin by reviewing the contributions made by highly recognized authors and theorists in the current academic community such as Gimeno Sacristán (1991); Kemmis (1988); Stenhouse (1984); Magendzo (1996), among others, which led to the identification of some perspectives or points of view to understand the nature of the curriculum, without the pretense of excluding other ways of approaching it, but always recognizing the need to make it thematic as a mandatory condition to intervene in the different educational practices.

Some points are recognized that persist in this path chosen to approach the undertaken study and that invite to continue inquiring about the curriculum, among which two are pointed out: one, that the existence of perspectives, theories, models and approaches on the curriculum arise with the appearance of the field of the curriculum as a specialized and institutionalized professional field in the educational bureaucracy of the State, when it regulates education; and two, that in a certain way, pedagogical and educational theories are also theories related to those of the curriculum, since they refer to it in some way when they show their ideas about how to organize educational activity and the question of what to teach; one of these examples is presented from the pedagogical ideas of Comenius in the 17th century, with his work *La Didáctica Magna*.

After making this approach to the proposals of the aforementioned authors and assessing their contribution to the construction of an idea of curriculum, five perspectives are then presented, clarifying that this approach to the curriculum is provisional, since the very nature of the curriculum entails a permanent dialogue with the historical-cultural-social context that implies changes in educational practices. It is also clarified that the way in which the perspectives are presented is not related to their importance, they are all offered as an alternative to think about the curriculum.

METHODOLOGY

To carry out the elaboration of this article, the theoretical method was carried out, which is used repeatedly from the elaboration of the research design, from the study of the state of the art on the scientific problem, to the interpretation of the data and verified facts and the corresponding conclusions and recommendations. Theoretical

methods in all educational research require a close correspondence with the first two levels of the theory that precedes them, which must be concerned and dealt with by every researcher. However, this has not always happened since they are usually declared in the design, limiting to the definition of each one without detailing how it was applied, that is, its usefulness.

DEVELOPMENT

When trying to structure the definition of curriculum, one must be aware of the complexity and breadth that has been attributed to this concept, only from this perspective it is possible to have a sufficiently broad overview of the role of the curriculum within school education. Different authors have given their own definition, each one with different nuances and aspects where the curriculum is inserted. From this perspective, Gimeno (1991) describes five formal areas from where the curriculum can be analyzed.

1. The point of view on its social function, as a link between society and the school.
2. Pretended or real educational project or plan, composed of different aspects, experiences, contents, etc.
3. The curriculum is spoken of as the formal and material expression of that project that must present its content, orientations, sequences to address it, etc.
4. It refers to the curriculum those who understand it as a practical field.
5. It also refers to those who exercise a type of academic and research discursive activity on all these topics.

Gimeno (1991), makes aware of the complexity, breadth and differences between conceptions of curriculum by examining some habitual conceptions.

1. Scope and sequence. This concept assumes that there is a clear distinction between educational ends and means, by restricting the concept of curriculum to educational plans, leaving out the realities. This concept places the curriculum in the guiding role of both instructional and evaluative decisions.

2. Syllabus. It is a plan for a complete course. It includes the goals and/or justification of the course, the topics, the resources used, the established subjects and the recommended evaluation strategies. It represents the plan for a course, both related to the means and its ends

3. Table of contents. By equating the curriculum with the content outline, it is assumed that the content of the teaching is equivalent to the curricular plan.

When the sole purpose of education is to convey information and teaching is to cover content, this definition may be sufficient. However, when education and teaching have another purpose then the table of contents fails to

answer questions regarding the objectives and teaching methods.

4. Textbook. Traditional texts present the content, without much guidance on what is important to learn or how to teach. It is more appropriate to describe contemporary texts as instructional systems. These include a teacher's guide, student study guide or practice manuals, tests, slides, lab items, and supplementary teaching materials.

5. Study plan. It leads to a vision of the curriculum as a series of plans that the student must follow.

6. Planned experiences. Many progressive educators hold that the curriculum is more than a set of documents. It comprises a whole set of experiences towards students, planned by the school.

The curriculum as a praxis means that different actions are involved in its configuration within specific conditions, each of these elements play an important role within the curricular framework and their relationship should not be established in a linear manner, but rather be understood as something built on a crossroads of influences (which Gimeno calls external subsystems) and fields of activities that also represent the fields of the curriculum.

This complexity and breadth of the curriculum is expressed in the five types of curriculum described by Posner (2005), contributing directly or indirectly to school dynamics and the academic development of students.

1. The official curriculum. It is documented in scope and sequence tables, syllabus, curricular guides, tables of contents, and list of objectives. Its purpose is to give teachers a basis for lesson planning and student development, and administrators a basis for monitoring teachers and holding them accountable for their practices and results.

2. The operational curriculum. It understands what is really taught by the teacher and its importance is communicated to the student and administrator. Teachers tend to interpret it in light of their own knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes.

3. The hidden curriculum. It is not generally recognized by school developers although it may have greater depth and impact on students than any other official or operational curriculum. Hidden curriculum messages are related to issues of gender, class and race, authority and school knowledge, among others.

4. The null curriculum. It is made up of subjects of study that are not taught, and on which any consideration must focus on the reasons why they are ignored.

5. The extra curriculum. Includes all those experiences planned outside of school subjects. It contrasts with the

official curriculum by virtue of its voluntary nature and its ability to respond to student interests.

The appearance of the five types of curricula in an institution is simultaneous, affecting the characteristics of the educational environment of the institution and contributing significantly to the development of students and the institution. The analysis of the school reality cannot be understood, without being aware of the multiplicity of the curriculum, any analysis that aims to fully understand the dynamics of an educational institution should not be limited to a single aspect that involves the curriculum, because these are not isolated elements within the educational environment, but rather elements that interact with each other, shaping the dynamics of the school context -institution, classroom-, in addition to determining the path that student learning and development should follow.

For Coll (1991) there are four sources of the curriculum that specify the intentions and the action plan to follow in education, these sources give meaning and are a guide for curricular design, their analysis allows establishing the bases that the designers used for preparation of the curriculum.

1. Psychological Analysis: Provides information regarding the factors and processes that intervene in the personal growth of the student, thus helping to plan the pedagogical action more effectively.

2. Internal structure of the disciplines: It helps to separate the essential knowledge from the secondary ones, to find an internal structure and the relationships that exist between them, their contributions being decisive to establish a sequence of learning activities that facilitate significant assimilation as much as possible.

3. Sociological analysis: It allows to determine the cultural forms or contents whose assimilation is necessary so that the students can be an active member of the society and agent, in turn, of cultural creation; it also makes it possible to ensure that there is no break between the student's school activity and their extracurricular activity.

4. Pedagogical experience: It provides new points of view and offers alternatives, but it integrates the experiences that have been successful, this forces the curriculum to be permanently open to modifications and corrections that derive from its contrasting.

Next, the three aspects in which the curriculum is developed will be addressed, its design, development and evaluation, each one of them implies an important process for the concretion and success of the curricular map, so the relationship between them must be understood in a narrow and bidirectional way allowing not only the concretion in the practice of the curriculum but also an opportunity for improvement and refinement in its evaluation.

As teaching and learning are intentional processes and activities, its planning is essential, since if it appears impossible to determine the purpose of such processes as well as their development, which in turn would limit the possibility of analysis and transformation.

The curricular design appears as a decision-making process for the elaboration of the curriculum, prior to its development that flexibly configures the instructional space where it will be put into practice.

The design activities appear in an intermediate space between the intentions and purposes that are pursued and the educational practice; this marks an important relationship between the process of design and development of the curriculum, that is, that the curricular design requires the analysis of the educational practice to be structured, allowing to adequately configure the practice of the teacher's work.

Curricular design appears as the instrument in charge of guiding the actions of teachers by providing information on what, when and how to teach and evaluate; always open to the possibilities of modification and correction that arises from its concretion and development, becoming a process of progressive enrichment (Coll, 1991).

The form, structure and representation of ideas, actions and contents are known as the curricular model, this model serves as a guide when putting the curricular project into practice, each one of the curricular models starts from a practical and theoretical perspective that it guides the reflection and plantation of the decision-making of the curricular design, without ever losing sight of the contextual variables and the real conditions where it intends to be installed.

The usefulness of curricular models resides in their ability to provoke reflection on the practice, on the contextual conditions in which it is carried out, on the nature of the contents that it incorporates and with respect to whom it is directed. Román & Díez (2003), develop a classification of four types of models.

Academic model: This model is focused on the contents as a way of knowing that they are structured in subjects to be internalized; the structuring, organization and sequencing of the contents and the subjects, determine in turn, other types of models: disciplinary, interdisciplinary, integrated, multidisciplinary. Within these contents, the basic elements of culture are present in one way or another, whether as capacities, skills, values, attitudes, methods, procedures or activities; all knowledge developed unintentionally is part of the unofficial or hidden curriculum.

Technological model: Focuses its design on specifying the desired purposes or results; these results are structured through objectives that can be general, specific or operational, the concretion of the contents through the

tasks or activities will have the purpose of achieving said objectives generating observable, measurable and quantifiable behaviors.

This model, also known as behavioral, starts from a perspective of teaching and learning as adjustable and measurable processes, its psychological theoretical foundations are based on a behavioral approach whose key idea is based on the stimulus-response-reinforcement paradigm.

Imperative model: It is nourished by different perspectives that perceive the teaching and learning processes as complex, changing activities, difficult to control and technically predict, the conception of teaching of this model is inserted in a reconceptualization of culture and reconstruction that allows the development of activities values and social ideals.

This conception of teaching determines the consideration of the flexible and contextualized open curriculum, focusing its design, development and evolution on the teaching-learning process and not only on the results.

Starting the reflection of the curricular design from the imperative model; the design must guarantee the construction of objectives in the form of capacities the contents must be presented as problems that will be acquired through methods, activities or broad procedures, always contextualized based on the previous knowledge of the students; in turn, the evaluation, instead of focusing only on the final quantitative results, will be given in a quantitative, formative way present throughout the teaching-learning process.

Socio-critical model: The socio-critical model is based on the understanding of the student as a free and unique subject with specific characteristics and needs; the learning of socially significant content is prioritized within constructive activities, taking advantage of conflictive situations that promote negotiation and dialogue, thereby generating shared learning that develops cooperative, solidarity, and liberating values in students. The socio-critical model perceives the official curriculum as an instrument for reproducing relationships and inequalities; unlike, it considers the use of a contextualized, negotiated, and agreed curriculum to the characteristics and needs of the agents involved.

b) Curriculum Development

It is important not to lose sight of the fact that the curriculum is ultimately a well-structured educational proposal that acquires value when it is contrasted with the reality in which it is embodied, that is to say, that it is in educational practice and in the activities in which the ideas, intentions are concretized and values acquire meaning.

Gimeno (1991), defines the curriculum as the bridge between theory and action between intentions and projects and reality, which is why it becomes essential to analyze the practical structure in the development of the curriculum.

Understanding the curriculum as a well-articulated proposal that determines the characteristics of the elements that are involved in the teaching-learning process, the teacher and the students play a very important role in its realization, although the curriculum specifies the intentions and guides the actions of teachers in their didactic practice, to the extent that teachers appropriate the curriculum through the autonomy that it gives them in the construction of activities and tasks that specify the contents and intentions of the curriculum, the teacher acquires great responsibility in its design instructional.

Coll (1991), understands the process of curricular design and development as two closely linked aspects, pointing out that to the extent that a curricular design manages to be implemented and generalized and is really used by teachers in their daily practice, the development process and by therefore their improvement and enrichment will be assured.

c) Curricular evaluation

Evaluation, as well as other aspects of school education, such as the conception of learning, teaching, the role of the teacher and the student have been in constant evolution.

The evolution of the conceptualization of evaluation within education and educational or non-educational institutions appears linked to the appearance and development of paradigms or psycho-pedagogical approaches (behaviorism, constructivism, sociocultural), as well as changes in the political and social context, (Rosales, 1990).

For Stufflebeam (1985) the evolution of curricular evaluation during the 20th century distinguishes five stages:

- The pre-tylerian period.
- The Tylerian era.
- The time of innocence.
- The era of realism.
- The age of professionalism.

The decade of the forties witnessed the warlike, technological, scientific and economic and social model competition between the US and Russia, better known as the cold war; in 1957, Russia launched the first satellite into space, Sputnik, an event that turned on the alert lights of the US government, seeing itself at a disadvantage in scientific and technological development with respect to Russia, soon the North American government began the development of reforms to its educational system, as well

as the economic impulse to national projects in curricular reforms (Stufflebeam, 1985).

In this context, the evaluation appeared as the necessary instrument to judge the effectiveness of educational policies, as well as the use of economic resources. By 1942 Ralph W. Tyler presented the first curricular model of evaluation (Tylerian model) conceptualizing evaluation as the process of determining to what extent the objectives have currently been achieved through the curriculum and teaching programs, establishing the level to which the students have reached, changes in behavior and how close they are to those defined in the objectives.

For Tyler, the evaluation should maintain a recurring nature, its function should be to provide feedback on the development and operation of the program seeking to maintain consistency between the defined objectives and the work done.

However, despite these great conceptual and methodological contributions, the Tylerian model in its development was limited exclusively to assessing the final achievement (Stufflebeam, 1985).

This reduction in the conceptualization and methodology of the evaluation failed to meet the expectations that were expected from it, its results were of little use to curricular designers and to identify the factors that contribute to identifying the effectiveness of the programs.

From this disappointment of the conceptualization and methodology of the evaluation, authors such as Cronbach and Scriven redefined the conceptualization of evolution, guiding it towards decision making; for Cronbach, the purpose of the evaluation must be to collect and use the information to carry out decision-making around the best implementation of the plan or program; in turn, the evaluation must contemplate two moments: the formative evaluation developed during the implementation or curricular development process and the summative evolution that must be carried out at the end of the implementation of the plan (Stufflebeam, 1985).

The conceptual contributions of Cronbach and Scriven gave rise to a series of models that started from these evaluative principles, one of which was the CIPP model construction developed by Stufflebeam. The CIPP model is based on the conception of evaluation as the process of identifying, obtaining and providing useful and descriptive information about the value and merit of the goals, the planning, the realization and the impact of a determined object, in order to serve as a guide for decision making, solve responsibility problems and promote understanding of the phenomena involved and improvement (Stufflebeam, 1985).

The main purpose of the evaluation will be to provide useful information for the decision-making process; the

evaluation methodology is constituted through four types of evaluations.

- Assessment of the context.
- Evaluation of inputs.
- Evaluation of processes.
- Evolution of the product.

Curricular maps are visual tools that allow organizing what is going to be taught in an educational center, taking into account each subject or thematic area, age period and period of the year, be it months, quarters or semesters.

The curricular map is presented in the form of a table and thanks to its simple structure, it is very easy to understand and consult on future occasions.

A curriculum map is an educational tool in which the contents of the curriculum of a school year are presented visually. This is an element that can help teachers and educators to find inconsistencies or overlaps in some elements of their plan, or find points for improvement in it.

First perspective: Álvarez Méndez (1987), presents two models to approach the curriculum from the point of view of didactics. That is, of the teaching-learning process: The curriculum understood as a project and as a process, as opposed to the curriculum understood as the planning of instructional purposes to be achieved.

In the second model focused on the objectives, it is interesting to highlight the importance of the prescription and anticipation of the expected results of teaching, which are contemplated in the objectives that are given in advance, even long before the didactic process begins to function. Thus, the contents, methods, techniques, technical resources and the evaluation must be means to achieve the predetermined objectives.

From this model, it can be said that the curriculum basically refers to the predetermined objectives, which are the constitutive and sufficient elements of the program, in such a way that the entire educational process is only a means to achieve them. In this perspective, teaching is a technical-instrumental activity that must be efficient to achieve the predetermined objectives. The curriculum, as a list of certain objectives in the educational field, is also a control system, and it is from them that the teachers responsible for teaching and the students are evaluated. The technological-instrumental attractiveness is high, especially when what is pursued is economic profitability as a consequence of applying a technical rationalization to teaching.

The development of the curriculum, in this model centered on objectives, gave rise to the taxonomies of objectives that become the fundamental concern for the programmer of the curriculum, under the assumption that

well-formulated objectives, with the requirements of their technical demands, are the essential condition, since they are the axis around which all the other components of the curriculum are structured (content, strategies, resources, etc.).

Undoubtedly, as a reaction to this reductionist and simplistic conception of the teaching and learning processes, the alternative model of the curriculum as a project and process arises, based on the influence of Action-Research models whose characteristic is to implement the complex teaching process. Learning, as a pedagogical intervention project, aimed at solving the practical issues of teaching-learning and as a process that permanently tries to improve the practice of teaching. Thus, what enters as an essential and basic issue is the teaching process, without forgetting that this remains in practice linked to learning.

Álvarez Méndez (1987), points out that the model as a project and as a process is grouped around some concrete actions of the teacher, inspired by the thought of Stenhouse (1984), as well as:

- The teacher must base his teaching on the open debate to problematize the contents of the programs and other aspects of learning that intervene in the curricular development to provoke reflection, and adoption of a position in front of them and to stimulate the research of the students.
- The teacher recognizes the context and this is a reference for teaching the program to be developed.
- The teacher should not take advantage of his privileged position of legitimized authority in the school to assert his points of view.
- The teacher has responsibility for the quality of their students' learning.

This first perspective of the curriculum, in its two models, is taken as a common reference to the program understood as Teaching Contents. In addition, these proposals are still valid today in some educational organizations, which take the curriculum as basically referring to the didactic, thus covering the concepts of teaching / learning, study plan, program and resources.

Second perspective: the curriculum is a crossroads of various practices of an eminently social nature and pedagogical concern gravitates around it. Gimeno Sacristán (1991), states that from the second half of the 20th century, the movements around educational reforms in Europe, the US and Australia, generated many questions that led to a review of the concept and role of curriculum, and this is how diversity of ideas are found, such as meanings that refer to the curriculum as practice; to curriculum theory as a meta-theoretical concept; to the curriculum as a theory of teaching; to the global problem of schooling.

In the context of this debate, the socio-critical approach to the curriculum appears which starts from the perspective of a critical sociology applied to the educational phenomenon. This vision maintains that the curriculum, by participating in the school environment, must be observed and analyzed in that social context which contains patterns of reason, norms of practice and conception of knowledge. Thus, the problem of thematizing about the curriculum consists, then, in questioning it in the sense of how it occurs in the context of the ideological configurations of social distribution of knowledge and power found in the school.

The meaning of McCutcheon (quoted by Cherryholmes, 1987) also appears who picked up the idea of Zais (1976), who proposes by curriculum what students have the opportunity to learn at school, whether explicit, implicit or null. The explicit curriculum is made up of everything that the school offers through "certain explicit and public purposes" (Eisner, 1979, p. 74); the implicit curriculum is the set of expectations that "are profoundly more powerful, long lasting than what is intentionally taught or what the explicit curriculum of the school expresses" (Eisner, 1979, p.75); and the null curriculum, which is made up of what *"the school does not teach... and which may be as important or more important than what it teaches"*. (p. 83).

This perspective places the curriculum in the problematic field of the practice of the selection of contents, in the presentation of these and in the reasons why others are excluded or ignored and, likewise, presents the curriculum as the world of possibilities to which students see themselves as an opportunity to learn, since they learn both from what is intentionally offered to them and from the opportunities that are excluded. On the other hand, Cherryholmes (1987), advances in pointing out that the curriculum is also the study of what is valued, underestimated and excluded in the different practices in the school, which is given priority in the educational practices in the school.

Understood in this way, the curriculum as what students have the opportunity to learn, it is presented with several characteristics such as:

- A guide to plan school life.
- A guide to evaluate life in school.
- A set of situations, experiences within the school structure and organization, in such a way that even what happens in school administration is no longer just administration, but rather it is part of what is taught and students learn. Similarly, transactions between students are learned and are part of the null curriculum.
- Pedagogical theories, fundamentally, are gravitating and intervening with intentions proper to the field of the curriculum, affecting its practice.

From this perspective of the curriculum, progress is being made in understanding that its nature is a social practice made up of behaviors, beliefs, rationality schemes, values, didactics, ideologies and administrative-economic policies that determine, in turn, the theorizing about the curriculum same concept is being elaborated.

In this same perspective, Gimeno Sacristán (1991); and Gimeno Sacristán & Pérez (1996), point out that the curriculum is part of multiple practices, classified into subsystems, partly autonomous and partly interdependent, which generate multiple varied forces that affect pedagogical action, which is also given by the own contexts in which it is based, such as the classroom, the personal, the social, the historical of the school and the political that presents the patterns of authority and power.

Returning to Gimeno Sacristán (1991), he distinguishes eight areas related to curricular practice, of which some basic ideas can be pointed out in light of the General Education Law 115 (MEN, 1994):

1. The area of activity political-administrative. It regulates under different schemes of political intervention the spaces of autonomy in decisions and in management. It is one of the external determinants of curriculum development. In the General Law of Education 115 (MEN, 1994) and Decree 1860 (MEN, 1994), identifies the School Government as the source of organization of the political-administrative activity of the educational institution.

2. Scope of participation and control in the preparation, development and evaluation of the curriculum. It varies according to the administrative and democratic tradition of each context. Today, in the General Law of Education 115 (MEN, 1994), the decisions on the configuration of the curricula, among these the programmatic contents, their evaluation, etc., are in school government bodies which treats, within the framework of the Law, to keep a balance in the powers of decision on the different forms and curricular spaces.

3. The ordering of the educational system, in structures of levels, modalities, cycles, grades, etc., mark some guidelines to order and pre-configure the path (the curriculum) that young people and children must follow in the educational institution. The General Education Law 115 (MEN, 1994) determines for these purposes, objectives by grades, by cycles and by levels.

4. Media production system. They are the materials, didactic resources, etc., that help us to specify the curriculum. If you analyze what media are used, you can discover the dynamics that move around interests and pedagogical styles that conceal a series of conditions that affect the development of the curriculum. The resources are mere neutral instruments, but the uses that are made of them, for example the book and notebooks, give us indications

of the teacher's training, of the ways of exercising power, of carrying out the teaching-learning processes, among others other aspects.

5. The system of Cultural, Scientific, Technological, Artistic Creation, etc. Under the condition of understanding that the curriculum is a selection of culture. This instance affects in a determining way the selection and diffusion of the different knowledge. The importance of this system influences the fact that, due to the socialization function (reproduce-transform), it is necessary to organize the action and base the creation of culture under pedagogical, epistemological and methodological paradigms. This work is carried out fundamentally under the agreements in the groups of teachers, especially those who work in related areas or in the same area. Law 115 provides for the organization of the Academic Council and the academic organization through area coordinators.

6. Technical-pedagogical subsystems. The training of teachers is definitive in the development of the curriculum, since they basically create languages and traditions, conceptualize, systematize knowledge and information and create the pedagogical styles that they use to organize curricular practice and influencing the same school organization. Today it is recognized that the teacher training subsystem is critical for the development of curricular practices and that is why Law 115 provides mechanisms to qualify their actions, improve the quality of teacher training from the scientific-pedagogical perspective and from the self-management of their own development as a professional.

7. Innovation Subsystem. It is to understand that if society has a dynamic of profound changes that occur very often over time, the school must be qualitatively renewed, in such a way that there are accommodation processes thought critically to social needs. If the pedagogical technical subsystem is made up of creative professionals, with scientific training, with sensitivity to the needs and problems of the environment, innovations have a field of great probability, especially if teachers act in well-coordinated groups and with leadership focused on processes of change, thought with an educational sense and not in isolation. One of the dangers of innovations is unplanned change. The General Education Law 115 (MEN, 1994) foresees and encourages Curricular Innovation and has created funds to finance school groups that are proposed and promised as innovative experiences.

8. Subsystem-Practical-Pedagogical. It is the didactic activity; it is what is commonly called "teaching to..." It is the exchange between teacher and students mediated by the academic tasks of the teaching-learning process.

Understanding the curriculum as a crossroads of the practices of all these areas or subsystems is to understand it in its complexity that results from diverse interactions.

The curriculum is prefigured, configured and intended to be objectified as a project that is presented as the result of decisions on various determinants, such as economic, social, cultural and pedagogical foundations, but in its development, there is a real and daily context in which in which interests and actions that exist and subsist in people (actors) are at stake, even despite the project, and that affect it in its realization

In this approach, the evaluation as a curricular component, as a whole, has the function of self-regulating the interactions that occur between the project that prefigures and configures as design and the practice, as its development. This implies, as a consequence, assuming that it is naive to reduce the curricular exclusively to the pedagogical and the didactic, as it seems to be the basic tendency of the first perspective, mentioned above.

Third perspective: the Curriculum as Cultural Mediation. Taking up and enriching the constitutive elements of the second perspective, this third understands the curriculum as an instrument of action and social intervention in school settings, and as a powerful enabler to configure cultural projects of society in general.

The curriculum is, then, the process of selection, organization and transmission of culture in the school environment. When it is referred to as the selection of cultural contents, the relationship with intellectual and procedural contents to be learned and with axiological contents that are oriented to the realization of a global educational-cultural project for their students and, ultimately, for society. Therefore, these cultural contents as contents of the curriculum are a logical condition for teaching processes to take place in the school, which are structured or organized under psycho-pedagogical keys to offer themselves as a cultural-educational project in the Institution.

Kemmis (1988) points out that the curriculum is an educational project of a school for its teachers, for the students, for the community and for society as a whole; and following Gimeno Sacristán (1991); and Gimeno Sacristán & Pérez (1996), the curricula emit a balance of interests and forces that gravitate on how the educational system is presented in a historical moment, and it is through these interests and social forces that the aims of education are achieved formally schooled.

Somehow, the curriculum reflects the conflict between the different interests within a society and the dominant values that govern the pedagogical and educational processes. In school, in general, a position is adopted against interests and there is a selective orientation towards culture, which is specified and transmitted through the school curriculum. Consequently, the analysis of the curriculum is a necessary condition to know and analyze what the school is (its proposal) as a cultural and socialization institution (reproductive and transformative function) in concrete

terms. And it can also be derived that curricular innovations are analyzed within a social structure and a historical context, which provide them with the framework of socially defined needs to change it.

Understanding the curriculum in this perspective, it can be said that in the school the contradictions that cause movements in its management towards new balances in its actors and in society are stimulated intentionally or not.

At present, from the perspective of critical sociology applied to education, much interest has been placed in revealing how the function of selection and organization of cultural contents by the curriculum, in the school, is linked to the mechanism and function of distribution. social of knowledge, especially that which is considered valuable; in such a way that, as Apple (1986) points out, the results of the school (among these, school success and failure) are also created by it, while the curriculum as an instance of cultural mediation reflects content selection, social forms and practices, consciously or unconsciously, in accordance with an ideology of the dominant groups in society.

From the post-structuralist perspective, we can say that the curriculum is also a question of power and that curriculum theories, insofar as they seek to say what the curriculum should be, cannot avoid being involved in questions of power: Selecting is a power operation; privileging a type of knowledge is an operation of power; highlighting, among the multiple possibilities, an identity or subjectivity as an ideal is an operation of power.

Curriculum theories are not, in this sense, situated in a "purely" epistemological field of competition between "pure" theories. They are actively involved in the action of guaranteeing consensus, of obtaining hegemony. They are situated in a social epistemological field. They are in the center of controversial territory.

No curriculum, as obsolete it may be, is ideologically neutral. The absence of valuable content is also another content and the practices that are done in school to keep students within insignificant curricular content (valued in this way by the ruling class) is also a hidden curriculum, which is necessary to decipher and reveal when evaluated. According to Apple (1986), the hidden curriculum is the set of values, attitudes, models, canons, norms, guidelines that are not explicit in the declarations of aims and objectives of the teachers and the institution, but are effectively taught and those who are not used to speaking publicly.

Fourth perspective: the curriculum is itself the problem of solving the question of the representation of the social processes of reproduction. The curriculum cannot be defined but understood as an educational problem. We reveal this fourth perspective in Lundgren (1992), an Australian

researcher at Deakin University, on representation as a central problem in educational theory.

For this purpose, the author points out several assumptions that need to be clarified, such as:

1. Context of production. Production implies, on the one hand, the production of the necessities of life and of material objects; on the other, of the production of symbols, of norms, of valuation systems; and, finally, the production of conditions (organization) of society in which it can continue. Social production, then, includes mental and physical work as a proper condition of production.

2. Context of Social Reproduction. Social production is made both from its material base and from its culture; that is to say, it reproduces the conditions of the labor force in all its sense and the systems of representations: symbols, skills, values and knowledge. Education, especially school education, has to develop the processes of transmission and reproduction of culture in the new generations.

3. The content of our thought or our mental representations are a reflection of our socio-cultural context.

4. The subjective cognitive reconstruction of the world that surrounds us acts on our tasks, actions and modifies, consequently, the objective realities of our social and cultural context.

5. When the processes of social production (context of production) are separated from those of reproduction, as a consequence of the complexity of the social and cultural dynamics, caused by the growing industrialization that intervenes intensely in the organization of work, which refers to how to represent the reproduction processes at school.

Ludgren (1992), with these assumptions, critically and interestingly points to the curriculum as the problem of representation and turns it into the central problem of Educational Theories. The relationships between production and reproduction contexts will be indirect and communication between them is established through some institutional texts that express what the school selects, organizes, classifies and distributes under didactic-pedagogical codes to solve the problem of representation. Also included are the set of principles that, in the form of a curricular code, show how knowledge, skills, and values should be selected, organized, and transmitted.

This perspective or conception of curriculum contains two phases: one, which refers to the process of designing or formulating the text to be reproduced; and another, to its development. Each phase is historically conditioned by external and internal factors to the same educational institution, which confirms the curriculum as a problematic field of Educational Theory and Practice.

Fifth Perspective: Curriculum as a configurator of educational practice. Gimeno Sacristán (1991), raises the

perspective of the Curriculum as a configurator of educational practice and conceptualizes that from this perspective the curriculum focuses on the Theory-Practice dialectic as the integrating scheme of the problems of school educational practice. Reid (1980), cited by Gimeno Sacristán (1988) considers that *“the curriculum places us before practical problems that we can only solve through appropriate action”*. (p.56).

From a critical perspective, in the socialization functions of the school, curricular practice is situated with an intentionally complex, ideological, active and historical role. In the curricular discourse, and among this the one related to the teaching-learning or didactic process, the problem of the contents is integrated with that of the methods; that of the processes of teaching with that of learning, likewise the phenomena of the classroom with those of the context; and that of technical-pedagogical decisions with those of administrative policies and power systems in the institution.

From this perspective, which Gimeno Sacristán (1991) calls “The bridge between theory and action”, curricular practice is located as a research practice that tries to focus on the problems that arise in and from educational practice and also tries to solve it with the intervention, above all, with teaching as a practical activity. On the other hand, a curricular theorization materialized in a design cannot be oblivious to the complex determinations that pedagogical practice is subject to, that is, the curriculum must be devised around the real and concrete problems that occur in the institutions. schools, such as those of teachers and students and those that affect the community in general.

The conception of a curriculum as a configurator of a school social practice requires scrutinizing the conditions in which it is produced and should contribute to a better understanding of educational phenomena and to commit to the intervention of reality to transform it. Stenhouse (1984), regarding the curriculum, conceives it as a field of communication between theory and practice, a relationship on which and in which the teacher must be an active researcher.

On the interrelation of theory and practice, two large fields full of meanings arise; on the one hand, that of the intentions and the concrete reality of the school and, on the other hand, the ideas for the practice and the conditions of the reality of that practice when it is being developed.

Magendzo (1996) states that, from the point of view of democratic contexts, the essential condition for the field of curricular theorization is to take care that the discourses that are produced are not covert discourses of ideologies that legitimize interests that are not recognized they argue, in order to reproduce the social system, hindering the conditions that would lead to achieving autonomy. On the contrary, with the intention of improving practice, the

curricular framework should serve as an emancipatory instrument, to lay the foundations for more autonomous and democratic actions in the school.

This perspective enriches the approach of the curriculum as an institutional cultural project, since it rescues the school micro-spaces as spaces of action where the liberating and creative action of new ways of being cultural is promoted in the communities and school groups, in counterbalance to options that only make cultural reproduction possible.

Advancing in the perspective of the curriculum as a configurator of educational practice, the curriculum can be understood as a series of hypothetical procedures with which knowledge and culture are communicated in the school. The general ideas about education that are generated at school become working hypotheses that have to be verified by the curricular action that is developed by teachers with their students. Thus, the working hypothesis is a curricular action, not only because of what it implies as a research and/or experimentation process, but also because it has implications in terms of educational and pedagogical theory. The assessment made of the curricular action is given based on reflective criteria of educational order and according to educational purposes.

In the context of this perspective, Stenhouse (1984); and Kemmis (1988), suggest that the curriculum is a research process that prefigures educational practice, because it plans and organizes it, in such a way that the curriculum becomes a working hypothesis open to questions and verification by the educational community, and within which knowledge is built and managed. In this sense, the curricular as configuration of an educational practice is a proposal that clearly specifies a set of contents and methods and has the range of a suggestion regarding what in the classroom can be valuable and is possible to teach and learn. Thus, the curriculum becomes a hypothesis of educational work.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of these five curricular perspectives leads to the conclusion that to define it is to limit its complexity and richness, since it can be observed how the concept of curriculum has been progressively expanding and acquiring new contents and different meanings depending on the theoretical position from which the different authors who study and develop it start.

In short, the curriculum is a historical construct, both in its theory and in its practices, and it is each educational community that must define it according to how they explain the school-society, theory-practice relationship and the role of its actors in the dynamics of educational institutions.

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