

INTEGRATED PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL BASED CURRICULUM

PERSPECTIVE INTEGRATE ASUPRA CURRICULUMULUI LA DECIZIA ȘCOLII

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Abstract. *The new curricular vision of present education brings the necessity of adapting school curriculum at the needs of the community the school institution serves. In this context, the problem of curricular offer the school has to analyze requires a special attention. The present paper aims at emphasizing the ways through which school curriculum can be adapted and realized in order to satisfy this desideratum. School based curriculum becomes therefore the main link instrument between school organization and community. It answers the exigencies of education post-modernity of integrating, at the level of curricular projection, the non-formal and informal context. The study focuses on the concrete ways of integration, at the level of school based curriculum, of all forms of social organization of education. It is also highlighted the methodological dimension of CSD by stressing the existent relations between the sources of curriculum and the didactic strategies used in the class.*

Key words: curricular design, postmodern curriculum, school based curriculum

Rezumat. *Noua viziune curriculară a educației actuale aduce în prim planul preocupărilor necesitatea adaptării curriculumului școlar la nevoile comunității pe care instituția școlară o deservește. În acest context, problematica ofertei curriculare pe care școala trebuie să o realizeze necesită o atenție deosebită. Lucrarea de față își propune să evidențieze modalitățile prin care curriculumul școlar poate fi adaptat și realizat pentru a satisface aceste deziderate. Curriculumul la decizia școlii devine astfel, instrumentul principal care leagă organizația școlară de comunitate. El răspunde punctual exigențelor postmodernității educației de a integra la nivelul proiectării curriculare contextul nonformal și informal. Articolul se concentrează asupra unor modalități concrete de integrare la nivelul curriculumului la decizia școlii a tuturor formelor de organizare socială a educației. Este accentuată și dimensiunea metodologică a CDȘ prin evidențierea relațiilor existente între sursele curriculumului și strategiile didactice folosite în clasa de elevi.*

Cuvinte cheie: curriculum la decizia școlii, curriculum postmodern, design curricular

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum post-modernity begins with the revolution proposed by Ralph W. Tyler's design (1949). This period will produce multiple approaches of curriculum theory and methodology. We can position the various conceptions in this period in two stages:

- the stage of elaboration and application from the perspective of permanent education (1950-1980)
- the stage of designs multiplications from contesting the rational design to rethinking it (1980-1990).

Having in view an argumentation of an axiomatic type, S. Cristea (2003, p.221) analyzes the paradigm of curricular projection and presents it as a fundamental direction of education evolution.

Therefore, curricular projection presents an axiomatic value available at the level of the whole educational system, allowing for the orientation of the activities proposed in the direction of permanent education and self-education, the premises of the fully capitalization of educability of every human personality.

This perspective represents one of the reasons for which our research refers to the delimitation of the axiomatic and epistemic design of curricular projection and its effects on curriculum at school decision.

Latest studies (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992, Schoonmaker, 2002; Schwab, 1969/1997) offer teachers a central role in curriculum projection (curriculum making, curriculum enactment), they being those who take decisions at the level of the class. According to J. Snyder (1992, pp. 402-435), it is because of the fact that curricular projection represents “the educational experiences created by teachers and students together”. Therefore, curriculum presupposes “a network of relations” (Fried R. L., 2001) of the way teachers and students position themselves towards the content of learning.

The present paper aims at emphasizing the ways through which school curriculum can be adapted and realized in order to satisfy these criteria. The curriculum paradigm offers the vision and the necessary guidelines for designing the CSD.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The research pursued qualitative strategies combining the content analysis, the qualitative analysis of data and the study of specialty documents. Having this perspective on the object and methodology specific of curriculum, it requires a hermeneutical approach. It represents the major way through which the essentialization of the object research can be provided.

A clear epistemic object, stabilized and consolidated at the level of globality and depth cannot be recognized through empirical methods borrowed from the experimental model specific of nature sciences (S. Cristea, 2004, 2006, 2007).

Only if we have in view such vision, curriculum at school decision will answer the necessities of the open educational context in which manifests school nowadays. According to S. Cristea (2004, p.4), post-modernity, regarded as a cultural pattern, promotes a new way of understanding the relation between knowledge and experience, between theory and practice at the level of human action. It presupposes the permanent reconstruction of the necessary correlations between the main actions at the level of educational processes and their individualized development in psychosocial contexts and situations that are extremely variable and diversified.

As regards the content, curriculum is related to student’s learning experience. Only in this way the traditional pedagogy will be surpassed, pedagogy within “the textbook and the teacher compete in order to present the child the study object as it

appears for the specialist" (J. Dewey, 1902). Curriculum is understood as a pedagogical project organized by correlating the study disciplines with the student's direct and indirect learning experiences, extended beyond the formal environment.

This vision adapts the school matter to child's experiences and life environment. Therefore, curriculum at school decision serves these finalities by offering more flexible instruction activities and their higher educational capitalization.

In the context of capitalization, equally of the formal, non-formal and informal environment, the activities programmed, which involve school responsibility in the direction of individual, psychological and social development of student's personality become possible.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The definition and choosing the educational objectives of curriculum cannot avoid the informal-local community the student lives in. Therefore, the curricular project of the school contains the result of negotiations with local authorities that can estimate the requirements of the labor market, the interests of the companies such as students' optimal integration in society to be realized.

If we consider the curriculum at school decision (CSD), its projection starts from identifying students' needs and researching their interests. They constitute in a source of education goals. Taking into account students' interests in learning results is caused by considering education "an active process which involves the active efforts of he who learns". The main goal is that of involving the student (based on his interests) in the process of education; it is justified by the fact that "when school situations present interesting elements for he who learns, he will actively get involved and will learn to treat them efficiently" (R. Tyler, 1949, p.11).

School should not limit to students' interests in certain areas of study, especially because they can vary depending on the various stages of development. It should widen and deepen students' interests such as they can continue their studies after finishing their formal training. Therefore, the openness towards permanent education and instruction is anticipated.

An efficient variant is that in which the interests represent the starting point of instruction and their lack can be the reason for realizing education.

The guiding idea to be followed is that of defining students' training needs that have to be met (*ibidem* p.13). Curriculum at school decision can be realized through certain research methodologies and strategies such as:

- the social investigation at the level of the community the students belong to that has to identify the generality or specificity of the needs; this method could offer a series of data about school activities, social relations, school habits etc.
- interviewing students and parents. Informal data can be obtained, data about the way students think, about their attitudes, life philosophy, by realizing questionnaires regarding attitudes, interests, needs, abilities etc.

The results of these investigations related to the socially accepted standards and norms should represent a solid basis for formulating objectives and structuring curriculum at school decision.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Postmodern curricular projection offers the informal context an important role, including the learning experiences offered by school as well as those realized outside school by the student in the environment that represents a major part of his development.

2. Therefore, it is promoted the extension of learning experience offer towards those outside school, they representing an important source of curriculum at school decision.

3. We should identify the extent to which researches can offer viable data or the weight schools (individually, locally, regionally) can hold in establishing the priorities of the local curriculum. The projection of curricular objectives represents the crucial moment of CSD. If the objectives do not reflect all these determinations, the resulted curriculum will not be efficient.

4. Establishing curricular objectives represents a principle that should be reflected in CSD projection and not the elaboration of a predetermined and abstract set of objectives.

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