

## 2. Curricular Contribution for Media Education: A Process in Construction

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### ABSTRACT

This contribution analyzes media and information literacy from an educational and curricular perspective, emphasizing development of competencies that students require in order to participate actively in the modern world. It considers the political and technical components of curriculum development that reflect the type of society we wish to construct. Likewise, it presents the concept of inclusive education as an educational vision that aims at guaranteeing the right of all children, young people and adults to receive an education matching their expectations, needs and forms of learning, and that ensures participation and equal opportunities. The concept of a «glo-local» curriculum is discussed, which is based on developing competencies in students to enable feedback between global and local realities, trying to bring schools closer to the situations of daily life. The analysis concludes that media and information literacy should be cross-cutting in the curricula, which requires, among other tenets, high-quality teacher education, smooth communication among teachers, and solid, inclusive educational proposals within a participatory consensus-building process.

### KEY WORDS

Media literacy, inclusive education, competency-based approaches, curriculum development, curriculum, learning situations.

## 1. Introduction

Discussing media education from a curricular perspective promotes competency development in students. This basically means mobilizing and integrating values, attitudes, behaviours, abilities and knowledge to enable students to address and resolve situations in daily life, shaping and reinforcing their action as citizens to develop and change societies. Progressively becoming a competent person is a necessary step to be able to read, understand, criticize, and propose, effectively wielding citizenship comprehensively.

When we refer to education for citizenship in the framework of education as a right, we include Media Education as a core component, since the media permeate people's lives, generating, consolidating and changing –among other things– ideas, visions, attitudes and opinions. The challenge is not just to provide criteria and instruments so the child or youth can critically face off to the media, but also to understand that the media contextualize and often determine the ways that people exercise their rights culturally, politically, economically and socially.

We feel that media education must be part of a broader, plural, open, in-depth discussion about the roles of education and curriculum as key factors contributing to laying the foundations for citizenship and the kind of society we live in and want to build. Discussing the media without educational and curricular references and contents may be an exercise loaded with noble aspirations, but without the anchoring that the educational system actually requires to become a mental and social change factor.

Teaching and learning about media and information involves critical thinking when receiving and producing mass media. This entails knowing about personal and social values, responsibilities for ethical use of information, participation in cultural dialogue and maintaining autonomy in a context in which the influences eroding that autonomy may be particularly subtle. The media and teaching about media can be summarized as basic capacities: critical thinking, creativity, citizenship and intercultural communication<sup>1</sup>. These capacities materialize and develop through competences mainstreamed through comprehensive citizen education. Competencies must enhance opportunities and help narrow inequities in the knowledge society, attempting to reflect renewed ways of understanding and responding to children's and youth's expectations and needs.

We propose to discuss a series of ideas and concepts to inform the construction of a comprehensive vision of media education, namely:

- Political and technical construction of a broad vision of curriculum, by defining the roles of education;
- Inclusive education as the principle orienting Education for All that in fact helps democratize educational opportunities;
- The concept of a curriculum integrating realities, from global to local (glo-local), grounded in developing competencies to link effectively, critically, and creatively schools and classrooms to challenges and situations of daily life.

## 2. Education and Curriculum, Two Complementary Currents of Change

Viewing education as a right, the role of education in society has at least five core dimensions:

- Education as a means to lay the conceptual and empirical groundwork for democratic citizenship in a society sharing a basic set of values and norms. The purpose is to foster understanding, knowledge and to practice values such as liberty, pluralism, justice, solidarity, tolerance, respect and excellence. Integrating means understanding and valuing diversity and its multiple expressions, focusing on universalism by combining and reconciling global, national and local responsibilities. Present-day discussion (e.g., in France) regarding cultural models for citizenship in liberal republics illustrates the tensions and conflicts, as stated by Yves Lenoir<sup>2</sup>, between universal representation of values and norms based on a national body politic and forming a community as a free, instrumental association of people sharing values and purposes.

- Education as a key social and economic policy contemplating equity and quality as complementary concepts in the quest for conditions and opportunities for equitably distributed well-being. Education is not just social policy, but a key cornerstone of sound economic policy. Without equitable, high-quality education, sustainable economic growth and fair distribution of opportunities are unattainable. Therefore, education as economic and social policy entails developing public policies to narrow the disparities in access to educational achievement, often associated with the lack of an approach to education adapted to the diversity of cultural, social, economic, gender, ethnic and migratory factors. Gaps in learning outcomes and in acquisition of basic competencies –as shown by PISA– may prove to be powerful sources of exclusion and disenfranchisement for most of society (as in Latin America<sup>3</sup>).

- Education as the main factor in reducing poverty and marginalization with a long-term outlook emphasizes the need for early interventions to facilitate children's development. Historically, the role of education has been understood as circumscribed to situations of poverty, implementing compensatory and/or remedial measures (e.g., school meals and health care targeting certain societal groups). However, since the 1990s (e.g., in Latin America), the scope of discussion has been expanded and enriched by introducing the concept of «educability».

As Néstor López<sup>4</sup> puts it, educability is a relational concept about the degrees of interconnection between 1) family and societal conditions suited to enable active participation in the educational process (access to minimal well-being and socialization of values and attitudes promoting and supporting the relevance of learning) and 2) educational conditions (schools familiar with students' characteristics and expectations and pursuing strategies to meet them).

The role of government is a key factor to ensure this interrelation, forging the necessary links, interactions and dialogues among civil society, families and schools. The concept of educability helps transcend a sort of social determinism, mainly associated with the belief that it will be enough to improve material conditions, in order to achieve quality education; further, it emphasizes the educational system's

responsibility to understand and be responsive to student diversities. Learning conditions and processes call for a minimum foundation of educability.

- Education as the most effective way to achieve dignified, proactive, intelligent, productive integration of national societies in a globalized world. This is not to accept fatalistically that the world's realities cannot be changed, or to endorse international values and standards as «politically correct» as the one proper way to think. On the contrary, it entails developing citizen competencies to address real-life situations promoting and facilitating critical analysis of reality and the capacity to understand and change that reality.

Moreno (2006) says: «Educational reform worldwide is increasingly curriculum-centred, as growing demands for change tend to focus on both structures and contents of school curricula»<sup>5</sup>. The curriculum must integrate political and technical components into an educational proposal reflecting the type of society we hope to build. So, with an understanding of the basic roles of education, curricular discussion emerges as the necessary counterpart, as one of the fundamental instruments available to materialize a vision of education.

Demeuse and Strauven (2006) say that a global vision of curriculum should include: learning outcomes to achieve, pedagogical and instructional strategies linked to teaching and learning, teaching materials for teachers and students, the discipline's contents, evaluation of learning outcomes and achievements, and curriculum management<sup>6</sup>. Recognizing its multidimensional nature, Blaslavsky (2002) conceptualized curriculum as «a dense, flexible contract among politics, society and teachers»<sup>7</sup>. The idea is to combine and blend universal concepts supporting implementation (density), and to help generate clear, concrete opportunities to choose among options and materialize them (flexibility). Curricular proposals work better with sound national referents shared by all, fostering local freedom and autonomy for school administrators and teachers to co-develop the curriculum.

Curricular issues are not endogenous or exogenous for any person or institution. The curriculum expresses and reflects a society's values, attitudes, expectations and feelings about its welfare and development. It is also a complex mixture of visions and interests of multiple institutions and stakeholders, often contradicting each other.

A curriculum may be viewed as a product (the what) or a process (the how), both equally important. Prerequisites for quality learning include, among others: sensible curricular documents reflecting society's vision of what and how students should learn; innovative implementation strategies that are conducive to a pleasant, friendly learning environment; and inclusive teaching and learning practices.

A curriculum is not «the answer» to educational problems. However, there is no effective educational reform without sound curricular vision. It would be difficult to improve educational quality (processes and results) without developing a curricular vision justifying why and what is important and relevant (basic and necessary) to teach students, according to how we interpret society's expectations and demands.

Interpretations are always arguable, and largely swayed by political, ideological and historical considerations. A good example is the discussion about national history programme objectives and contents, especially in societies that have experienced recent conflicts<sup>8</sup>.

What to include or exclude from a curriculum, in terms of disciplines and contents, always generates complex, heated debates; often, a core problem with educational reform is ending up with an overloaded curriculum that is too much for students to learn effectively (Operti 2006)<sup>9</sup>. Coll and Martín (2006)<sup>10</sup> established the difference «between what is basic and absolutely necessary, and that which is basic and desirable in elementary-school curriculum» – «absolutely basic» being learning that is essential to students' personal and social development, to their lifetime pursuits and social inclusion. They have said that «curricula and school time are not elastic».

Discussion about most curricula does not involve the roles that society and its stakeholders expect from education, but rather with historical disciplines, traditional forms and contents for organizing knowledge, and the strong and sometimes decisive influence of corporate interests. Cristián Cox (2006) refers to the «cultural rigidity of categories for organizing knowledge and observable isomorphism between this structure and teachers' professional identity»<sup>11</sup>. Cecilia Braslavsky, who was responsible for reforming high-school education in Argentina (1997-99), considers that «an attempt to shift boundaries between disciplines also involves redefining teachers' positions and identities»<sup>12</sup>.

The problem is not just redefining the traditional boundaries among disciplines in response to the changing epistemological nature of the way knowledge is constructed, validated and ultimately applied in daily life, but also reflecting on how the new way of organizing knowledge actually affects teaching and learning in classrooms. For example, a social sciences curriculum would surely be a better way of sharing broader schemes of reference with students to enable them to understand the world they live in (including, for example, media education), than the traditional arrangement of history and geography as separate, disconnected subjects. Similarly, if teachers and administrators oppose the new curriculum and do not even try to understand it; this generates what Jacinto and Freites Frey have called «resistance to facing a reform»<sup>13</sup>.

It is likely to be tempting to return to the past, to the pre-reform stage that is «more comfortable and less bothersome», reaffirming the disciplines and traditional ways of teaching (frontal learning strategies, conveying more than sharing and imposing rather than orienting). So, we run the risk that students will see the curriculum as something distant and irrelevant, unmotivating and eliciting no commitment to learning. Such a curriculum penalizes the most vulnerable population sectors most, since they often have no other cultural, social or cognitive stimuli to help motivate them and to make sense of school. This holds for remote population groups without, for example, any libraries to look for information of interest, where reading becomes irrelevant to students' lives.

### 3. Democratizing and Including

The central challenge for educational change is to include everyone, democratizing the conditions and opportunities for access, processes and results. Equal opportunity has historically meant access to education, mainly to elementary school (e.g., creating schools in rural areas). This concept of equality has spread and grown to include equal conditions for social service provision, for acquiring basic competencies and achieving results. Further, we now talk of equity rather than equality as the guiding criterion to design and evaluate policies and programmes, particularly in regard to narrowing inequities (gaps) such as in learning outcomes.

Achieving increasing equity requires inclusive educational systems and curricula. The concept of inclusive education has evolved to mean that all children must have equivalent learning conditions and opportunities regardless of their social and cultural backgrounds and different abilities and capacities.

The pressing need to democratize opportunities to access and enjoy quality education can take inclusive education as a central category to re-create and renew policies and programmes for educational change. Inclusion is not just a response to traditional, structural problems of poverty and challenges of modernization and socio-cultural integration. Inclusion is also a way to address other forms and contents of exclusion, such as social gaps separating people from access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), marginalizing youth who do not study or work, and considering social or cultural diversity as an obstacle to integrating society.

Inclusive education means enforcing the right of all children, youth and adults to education, participation and equal opportunities, lending special attention to those living in vulnerable situations or suffering from any sort of discrimination. From a social perspective, inclusive education is substantially related to the discussion about the type of society and quality of democracy we want and pursue (a feedback loop between education and society). So, inclusive education is a central social policy underpinning long-term equitable development of society.

This expanded perspective reveals core issues of educational inclusion, such as 1) the fight against poverty, marginalization, segregation, exclusion, and HIV-AIDS; 2) considering cultural diversity and multiculturalism as a right and a context for learning; and 3) guaranteed rights for minorities, immigrants and native populations.

From a strictly educational standpoint, an inclusive strategy carefully considers the specific, unique details of each child and youth, to provide them with genuine lifelong educational opportunities. The ways teachers and students interact and generate empathy, growing closer, understanding and respecting their differences, will jointly create the appropriate, feasible conditions of relevant learning opportunities for all.

Education including all must progressively personalize educational offerings in response to diversities –not just cultural or social, but also individual. Personalization of education is a growing trend in educational systems and basically provides a way to achieve high levels of equity and quality. This entails, among other things: a)

developing more flexible curricula adapted to the requirements of different population groups, less overloaded with contents and more oriented toward developing the competencies required to cope with the situations and challenges of daily life; b) schools led and managed in an open, ongoing relationship with the community, upheld by professional communities of practice that believe in and work toward developing relevant responses to students' learning needs; c) differentiated support for students, so each school foresees learning difficulties and overcomes them with personalized attention, as an opportunity to learn more and better.

In general, making education inclusive<sup>14</sup> calls for reflection and collective action regarding the concepts of social justice, beliefs about each student's learning potential, conceptual frameworks embodied in the best practices for teaching and learning, and promotion of a broader view of the curriculum to include processes and results.

#### 4. A Glo-local Curriculum to Reconcile Diverse Realities and Democratize Learning

Educational systems seeking inclusion as a central policy goal will necessarily require curricular change and development to materialize in schools and classrooms. Curricular construction is specific and unique in each national context, reflecting the diversity of approaches and proposals by multiple stakeholders, within the educational system and outside it, to meet society's needs (the arduous, complex and delicate task of understanding and responding to society's expectations and demands). There are no international «success» models to copy or replicate mechanically. However, there are trends, references and results to share inter-regionally that look like visions, strategies and «sensible practices» (rather than calling them «best practices», which could sound prescriptive).

One of the greatest challenges lies in striking the delicate balance between global society and national needs. As Cox (2006) puts it, «without such a balance, wouldn't there be the risk of contents (globally referenced or aligned) without context (national socio-economic realities)?»<sup>15</sup>. The quest to reconcile and integrate national and local realities and contents would seem to be an increasingly universal trend in the approach to and materialization of educational change.

What are some of these universal trends? First of all, agreement about the education – curriculum association and that the curriculum reflects the society we want to build, outlined in a series of foundational goals, structures, strategies and evaluation systems, grounded in a common vision. This is not the summation of uncoordinated subjects limited to the teacher-subject relationship and lecture-type styles of transmitting information and knowledge.

Secondly, the progressive universalization of curricular concerns and issues demanding precisely a suitable inter-relationship among global, national and local levels. Globalization contextualizes these topics but the answers are always national or local constructs. There is growing recognition of common core issues (e.g., citizen education, education for sustainable development and HIV / AIDS), leading to

significant similarities in structure, contents and methods for new curricular proposals (Meyer, 1999)<sup>16</sup>. Competency-based approaches that countries at different levels of development are tending to adopt contribute to a relative standardization of curricular change.

Thirdly, following the previous point, there is also growing awareness that implementing curricular change results in similar challenges in different regions of the world, as described by the International Bureau of Education (IBE-UNESCO)<sup>17</sup>. Braslavsky (2004) found that educational systems are constructed on the basis of imagined societies more than on reality, and imagined forms of progress are quite similar over the world<sup>18</sup>.

Braslavsky (2004) has also suggested the possibility of working toward a «glo-local» curriculum<sup>19</sup> integrating realities and issues under a diversity-based concept of universalism. Accordingly, there are five aspects that seem to reflect certain increasingly universal trends:

- A marked emphasis on such learning areas and subjects as mathematics, languages (native and foreign languages complementing each other, English starting in elementary school) and sciences (integrating the teaching of biology, physics and chemistry, to develop scientific and technological competencies) and mainstreaming worldwide concerns (citizenship education, education for sustainable development, etc.). This array of proposals promoting equitable quality education supports democratization and extension of educational opportunities (e.g., nine to ten years of basic education).

- Progressive opening of the curricular structure toward activities defined at the school and local level, where the school plays a pivotal role in co-developing the curriculum institutionally and pedagogically<sup>20</sup>. This entails a fundamental change in the ways we understand teachers and their roles. Beatriz Avalos quite rightly says that «over the course of their lengthy teaching careers, educators have developed their own opinion about what to teach and what should be done»<sup>21</sup>. Teachers cannot be considered as mere implementers of others' designs and plans, disregarding their backgrounds, visions and feelings about educational and curricular reform.

- According to the comprehensive vision of the curriculum that we are suggesting, teachers are deeply involved in curricular change as co-developers, overcoming the traditional separation between design and implementation. Teachers become key historical actors who are irreplaceable for the necessary ample discussion about what curriculum is most appropriate to meet society's demands and expectations. If any educational reform is to succeed, teachers must participate in the conceptualization and definition of the curriculum's role in society. This does not imply simply accepting their visions, ideas and strategies, but rather recognizing their role, making it publicly clear for the many stakeholders in the educational system and outside the system, as a necessary starting-point to construct collectively curricular change.

- Ongoing renewal of approaches to teaching in order to center education on students' expectations and needs, to better address their diverse contexts and ways of



learning, closer to day-to-day situations. Undoubtedly, conceptualization and increasing use of competency-based approaches is crucial for renewing methodologies (e.g., designing criteria and components for formative evaluation), complemented by significant shifts in discipline categories (e.g., mathematical problem-solving in daily-life contexts, and the communicational approach in language teaching).

- Greater concern regarding the introduction of religious education in national curricula. A study by Jean-François Rivard and Massimo Amadio (2003) revealed that, in half of the 73 countries analyzed, religious education appears at least once in the class schedule during the first nine years of schooling, as either a required or an optional course<sup>22</sup>. A core question we might ask is how religious education can contribute to comprehensive citizen education in societies that understand laicism to mean respect for and safeguarding of diversities, under a series of universal shared values.

- The emphasis on multicultural education as a cross-cutting topic that may be approached through a group of disciplines under various formats (mandatory/ elective). Generally multicultural issues are approached as part of a curriculum to promote the idea of «learning to get along with each other», renewing learning strategies and methodologies (e.g., developing competencies involving negotiation and peaceful conflict management skills).

Conceptualizing a glo-local curriculum regarding universal concerns and issues, competency-based, to seek the necessary balance and an enriching integration between national and global realities. This is possible if we understand that all the resources we can mobilize to develop competencies (e.g., values, attitudes, knowledge and skills) to address situations are historical and social construction for which the intention and meaning are defined by institutions and stakeholders dynamically and variably.

Competency-based approaches may be understood as possible progressive ways to achieve an inclusive curriculum, integrating, as Philippe Jonnaert<sup>23</sup> puts it, the curricular logic (resources and activities to cope competently with different types of situations), the learning logic (students developing competencies) and the logic of action in situations (applying competencies). Competency-based approaches involve developing actual capacities in effective terms, not virtual capacities in hypothetical terms.

An inter-regional comparative analysis of countries that have applied competency-based approaches<sup>24</sup> shows us, among other things:

- The need to discuss educational policy in depth, seriously and frankly addressing competency-based approaches, without dodging ideological considerations<sup>25</sup>, but informed by data and evidence in order to clarify concepts and proposals. A competency-based approach can be a valid alternative to the notion of a curriculum as a plan of studies, providing an innovative way of conceiving and organizing discipline-contents, contributing to the development of individuals who are competent as autonomous, critical, assertive citizens. It challenges the traditional way of seeing the educational system as the sum of its sub-sectors, institutions, stakeholders and discipli-

nes, encouraging discussion around cross-cutting themes of curricular development viewed holistically. It also profoundly impacts the balance and distribution of power within the educational system and around it, by opening discussion up to include society, its requirements and needs, and tough-mindedly questioning any teaching that is limited to conveying information and knowledge by lecturing.

- Consolidation of competency-based approaches, mainstreamed to help conceptualize and define the foundations, goals, curricular structures, syllabus and institutional and pedagogical practices in schools and classrooms. Competencies are not defined in general, abstract terms as curricular orientations, but incorporated into all stages of curricular development, coherently reaching to the actual classroom.

- Conceptualizing learning situations as a strategy and an instrument to implement effectively a competency-based approach (Jonnaert, 2006<sup>26</sup> & Roegiers, 2007<sup>27</sup>). Quoting Jonnaert, «situations are the origin and criterion for competencies», but we have a long way to go before our competencies are driven by learning situations. Rather, the tendency has been to apply learning resources to situational problem-solving.

- The need to understand that learning situations are effective ways to select, mobilize and integrate lessons learned, linking curricular development to the challenges, concerns and situations of daily life. Students' expectations and needs are the focus of conceptualizing and defining situations, striving to grasp that students are not the objects of learning, but individuals who learn in diverse ways.

- Educational reforms based on competencies must include changes in teachers' profiles and roles, and support their ongoing professional development. One of the main obstacles to educational reforms has been and remains the unhealthy, ineffective lumping together of elementary and secondary education based on competency development, with teacher training curricula still heavily divided into subject disciplines and the transmission of information and knowledge.

## 5. Final Observations for Open Discussion

We may agree that media education is a core component of comprehensive citizen education, starting from very young ages, to help democratize society and educational opportunities. A citizen who has not been educated in the required competencies to understand, analyze or criticize the media is seriously hampered in attempting to wield citizen's rights or participate in society.

So, the challenge is not just to convey information about the media to young people, or to list good intentions about developing capacities and competencies regarding comprehensive citizen education. We must primarily think about the role, functions and implications of media instruction in terms of a) a long-term view of education; b) a curricular proposal that is inclusive of diversities –cultural, social and individual– reaching out to everyone and c) a series of competencies and knowledge comprising a concept of democratic citizenship, integrating local, national and global

concerns, and explicitly addressing inter-relationships among political, economic, social and cultural dimensions of enforcing and enjoying rights.

A possible option to explore is mainstreaming media education through curriculum from elementary to the university within the framework of life-long learning, so students face the challenge of finding answers to learning situations linked to real life. Media education is not memorizing and repeating information or introducing concepts such as «current affairs» in study programmes regarding social science disciplines.

Mainstreaming is complex, long-term and requires solid curricular proposals, quality teacher training, and much coordination and group work among teachers. Breaking away from «excessive subject-oriented curricula» and teacher «isolationism» is a tough task, calling for time and patience, but it is essential to move toward an inclusive curriculum. It is possible to think about different ways of mainstreaming, for example, with more media education in those subjects related to communication and citizen education. What we feel would not be desirable would be to box it into a subject, because that would reduce and ignore its relevance to constructing and consolidating democratic societies.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Moore, P. (2008). *Teacher Training Curricula For Media and Information Literacy*. Adaptation of the first preliminary version of the international expert group report, 16-18 June 2008. Paris, UNESCO.

<sup>2</sup> Lenoir, Y. (2006). Chapter I. *Citizenship and Multiculturalism, The Terms of the Debate* (original in French). In Lenoir, Y.; Xypas, C. & Jamet, C. (Eds.). *School and Citizenship. A Multicultural Challenge*. Paris: Armand Colin; 7-24.

<sup>3</sup> An international evaluation of knowledge and skills conducted by PISA/OECD in 2003 clearly indicates the considerable distance separating Latin America especially from Europe and, to a lesser degree, from the Asian countries. For example, on the Mathematics test, designed to assess skills as applied to daily life, the three Latin American countries involved finished last (Brazil, at the bottom with Indonesia and Tunisia), next-to-last (Mexico) and third-to-last (Uruguay, tied with Thailand) out of 40 countries. See OECD. (2004). *First Findings of PISA 2003. Executive Summary*. Paris: OECD. Chart I; 9.

<sup>4</sup> López, N. & IPEE-UNESCO (2005). *Equidad educativa y desigualdad social [Educational Equity and Social Inequality]*, in *Desafíos de la educación en el nuevo escenario social latinoamericano [Challenges for Education in Latin America's New Social Scenario]*. Buenos Aires: Offset DIFO S. H.; 81-108.

<sup>5</sup> Moreno, J.M. (2008). Chapter 10 - *Conclusiones. La dinámica del diseño y el desarrollo del currículo: escenarios para la evolución del currículo [Dynamics of Curricular Design and Development: Scenarios for Curriculum Evolution]*, in Benavot A. & Braslavsky C. (Eds.). *El Conocimiento Escolar en una Perspectiva Histórica: Cambios de Currículos en la Educación Primaria [School Knowledge in Comparative and Historical Perspective. Changing Curricula in Primary and Secondary Education]*. Buenos Aires: Granica; 332.

<sup>6</sup> Demeuse, M. & Strauven, C. (2006). *Développer un curriculum d'enseignement ou de formation. Des options politiques au pilotage [Developing Curriculum for Learning or for Education. From Political Decision-making to Pilot Efforts]*. Introduction. Brussels: De Boeck; 9-28.

<sup>7</sup> Braslavsky, C. (2002). *The New Century's Change: New Challenges and Curriculum Responses*. New Delhi: COBSE - International Conference.

<sup>8</sup> The IBE has produced a series of country case studies (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Guatemala, Lebanon, Mozambique, Northern Ireland, Rwanda and Sri Lanka) analyzing the role of educational policy changes in social and civic reconstruction and redefining national citizenship in the context of identity-based conflicts. See: Tawil, S. & Harley, A. (Eds.) (2004). *Studies in Comparative Education: Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*. Geneva: IBE-UNESCO.

<sup>9</sup> Opertti, R. (2006). Cambio curricular and desarrollo profesional docente en la agenda del Plan de Acción Global de Educación para Todos (EPT) [Curricular Change and Teacher Professional Development in the Agenda of the Global Action Plan of Education for All (EFA)]. OREALC-UNESCO. El currículo a debate [The Curriculum in Debate], *Journal of PRELAC*, 3 (Regional Project on Education for Latin America and the Caribbean). Santiago, Chile: Salvat Impresores; 28-48.

<sup>10</sup> Coll, C. & Martín, E. (2006). Vigencia del debate curricular [The Relevance of Curricular Debate]. OREALC-UNESCO. El currículo a debate [The Curriculum in Debate], *Journal of PRELAC*, 3 (Regional Project on Education for Latin America and the Caribbean). Santiago, Chile: Salvat Impresores; 6-26.

<sup>11</sup> Cox, C. (2006). Chapter 14. Cecilia Braslavsky y el currículo: reflexiones sobre la travesía de toda una vida en búsqueda de una educación de calidad para todos [Cecilia Braslavsky and the Curriculum: Reflections on the Journey of an Entire Lifetime in a Quest for Quality Education for All]. In: Benavot, A. & Braslavsky, C. (Eds.). (2008). *El conocimiento escolar en una perspectiva histórica: cambios de currículos en la educación primaria y secundaria [School Knowledge in Comparative and Historical Perspective: Changing Curricula in Primary and Secondary Education]*. Buenos Aires: Granica; 383-404.

<sup>12</sup> Braslavsky, C. (Ed.) (2001). Los procesos contemporáneos de cambios de la educación secundaria en América Latina: Análisis de casos en América del Sur [Contemporary Change Processes in Secondary Schooling in Latin America: Analyses of Cases in South America]. In: *La educación secundaria. ¿Cambio or inmutabilidad? Análisis y debate de procesos europeos y contemporáneos [Secondary Schooling. Changing or Unchangeable? Analysis and Debate about European and Contemporary Processes]*. Buenos Aires: Santillana.

<sup>13</sup> On the basis of educational reforms that took place in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, Jacinto and Freites Frey describe three ways to address a reform: 1) passive acceptance (following the letter but not the spirit); 2) creative adaptation (the new and the old is introduced in appropriate proportions in the school context); or 3) resistance, as mentioned in the text. See Jacinto, C. & Freites Frey, A. (2006). *Ida y vuelta: política educativa y las estrategias de las escuelas secundarias en contextos de pobreza. Estudios de casos en América Latina [Back and Forth: Educational Policy and Strategies of Secondary Schools in Contexts of Poverty. Case Studies in Latin America]*. (Prepared for the International Manual on school effectiveness, publication pending). Buenos Aires: IIEP.

<sup>14</sup> Nind, N. (2005). Inclusive Education: Discourse and Action. *British Educational Research Journal, Thematic Review*, 31, 2, April 2005; 269–275.

<sup>15</sup> Cox, C. (2006). *Op. cit.*; 245-258.

<sup>16</sup> Mayer, J. (1999). *Globalization and the Curriculum: Problems of Theory in the Sociology of Education*. Presentation to the International Symposium organized by the University of Lisbon, Lisbon, November 1999.

<sup>17</sup> The regional seminars held by the IBE since 1998 on curricular development and capacity-building have made it possible to identify many common elements among the regions of the world regarding curricular design, administration and evaluation. See IBE-UNESCO. (2005). *A Community of Practice as a Global Network of Curriculum Developers: Framework Documents*. Geneva: IBE-UNESCO. ([www.ibe.unesco.org/COPs.htm](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/COPs.htm)).

<sup>18</sup> Braslavsky, C. (2004). *Desafíos de las reformas curriculares frente al imperativo de la cohesión social. Reforma Curricular y Cohesión Social en América Latina [Challenges of Curricular Reforms Vis-à-vis the Imperative of Social Cohesion. Curricular Reform and Social Cohesion in Latin America]*. Final

Report from the International Seminar, organized jointly by the International Bureau of Education and the UNESCO office for Central America in Costa Rica (5-7 November 2003 in San José, Costa Rica). Geneva: IBE/UNESCO; 36-47.

<sup>19</sup> Braslavsky, C. (2004). Op. cit.; 36-47.

<sup>20</sup> A study by the IBE (2002) about school schedules in 23 countries found 15 of them including a time slot for different options, elective disciplines and planning of school activities. See IBE-UNESCO, ABEGS (Cols.) (2002). A Review of Time Allocated to School Subjects: Selected Cases and Issues. Geneva: IBE-UNESCO.

<sup>21</sup> Avalos, B. (2006). El currículum a debate. Currículum y desarrollo profesional de los docentes [The Curriculum in Debate. Curriculum and Teacher Professional Development]. Paper presented at the Second Meeting of the Inter-governmental Commission of the Regional Educational Project for Latin America and the Caribbean. (PRELAC). Santiago, Chile: OREALC-UNESCO.

<sup>22</sup> Rivard, J.F; Amadio, M. (2003). Teaching Time Allocated to Religious Education in Official Timetables. Prospects, Quarterly review of comparative education, 3, 2; 211-221.

<sup>23</sup> Jonnaert, P. (Ed.) (2007). Le concept de compétence révisité [The Concept of Competency, revisited]. Observatory of Educational Reforms (ORE). Montreal: University of Québec.

<sup>24</sup> Operti, R. (Guest Editor) (2007). Open File Curriculum Change and Competency-based Approaches: A Worldwide Perspective. IBE-UNESCO, Prospects, XXXVII, 142, June. Heidelberg: Springer.

<sup>25</sup> In highly polarized, politicized scenarios, focused on neoliberal policies and their impact on education, discussions about competencies have tended to be mainly ideological and rhetorical. Competency-based approaches tend to be rejected, in some cases, with the excuse that they support neoliberal policies since they supposedly promote the development of capacities, skills and attitudes adapted to labor market requirements and, more generally, to the norms of the market economy and globalization. Such competencies, they argue, tend to accept the world as it is rather than promote critical thinking and individually or socially critical action.

<sup>26</sup> Jonnaert, P. (2006). A Review of Competencies as Ways to Organize Training Programs: Toward Competent Performance (original in French). IBE Working Paper on Curricular Issues (on-line). Geneva: IBE/UNESCO. ([www.ibe.unesco.org/en/communities/community-of-practice-in-curriculum-development/competency-based-approaches/e-forum-approaches-by-competencies-2006.html](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/communities/community-of-practice-in-curriculum-development/competency-based-approaches/e-forum-approaches-by-competencies-2006.html)) (2007-09-11).

<sup>27</sup> Roegiers, X. (2007). Pedagogy of Integration. Competencies and Integration of Knowledge in Teaching. Original in French. CECC-AECI, San Jose: De Boeck, IDER Collection.