

## The Brazilian Curricular Failure: A Critical Reading by the Discourse of Experience

*Luiza Baumer Mendes, Roberta Moraes Faiolo Silva, Rodrigo Braz Carlan, Marcele Pereira da Rosa Zucolotto*  
(Franciscan University, Brazil)

**Abstract:** This article presents some questions, as well as reflective possibilities regarding curriculum notions within the current educational context. Nevertheless, by means of a literature review, a critical questioning about the discourse of experience in the field of learning and its correlations with curricular current practices are examined. From this perspective, the act of thinking about experience in the field of learning is, above all, reflecting on what occurs or happens within that process and which somehow affects, touches and makes sense to the individual. Therefore, presenting a reflection on the curriculum, as well as what it provides the subjects through the act of learning shows that, from an understanding of learning related to the field of the affections and the subjective constructions — experience, it is possible to look at the curricular conceptions and realize that in fact there is no promotion of experience.

**Keywords:** education, curriculum, experience

### 1. Introduction

“Nada restará de nossos corações. Cada uma de nossas partículas retornará a seu elemento. Mas nossas palavras traçaram um rastro, vibraram no ar, tocaram a outros. E o que vibra segue seu caminho, incita, se recarrega, se multiplica, cresce e continua” <sup>1</sup>(Larrosa. 2016, p. 113).

The rest is no longer the rest. The experiential spark of teachers is no longer sprayed, and therefore we need to be more emphatic to point out that one characteristic of contemporaneity is volatility, where everything is modifiable, and thus, finding the discourse of experience in school is, indeed, an extremely difficult task. The practice carried out by education professionals, such as “what should be taught” needs constant updates, since as guiding artifact, the curriculum is a vectorial mechanism that fosters social directions, as well as the teaching action.

The concept of failure, in etymology, is found from synonyms such as: lack of success; ruin and even defeat. However, the current public policies, direct the action of teaching through the curriculum to the optics of success, so that the teacher can fail or not succeed. Thus, the curriculum, in recent decades, takes part as an important tool to the Constitution, as well as the training of school Praxis (Larrosa, 2015).

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to question, through a bibliographical review, the contemporary curricular approach applied to basic education, as well as to promote its dialogue with the experience

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Rodrigo Carlan, Psychology, Franciscan University, research areas/interests: education and psychology. E-mail: [rodrigocarlan@hotmail.com](mailto:rodrigocarlan@hotmail.com).

<sup>1</sup> Translation: “Nothing will be left of our hearts. Each of our particles will return to its element. But our words traced a trace, vibrated in the air, touched others. And what vibrates goes its way, incites, recharges, multiplies, grows and continues”.

discourse. Nevertheless, while pointing out the abovementioned tool as extremely formative, as well as a disappointment put into practice today as a discardable activity, it is reasonable to highlight possible guidelines amid this problematic.

Thereby, enabling the curriculum to fill in a gap in the Constitution of the subject as well as the educational practice makes it possible for teaching methods to penetrate the individual in the same way in which its results foster unique actions amidst the pluralizing field of Globalization. Consequently, this though becomes justifiable due to the fact that, an education that promotes experience/sense allows the subjective emancipation of the individual, since following this path today becomes a complex task of the utmost importance.

## **2. Reflections upon the Contemporary Basic Education Curriculum Regarding the Experience Discourse**

Although the task may seem easy, centralizing the formatting of a curriculum based on experience is an extremely complex object. Firstly, it is important to contextualize the meaning of experience as a meaningful word to be remembered throughout the text. According to Larrosa (2016, p. 18), experience is what promotes meaning, creates affective ties, “[...] Experience is what penetrates us, what happens to us, what touches us. Not what is going on, nor what happens, neither what simply touches. Every day a lot happens, but at the same time, almost nothing happens to us”.

Likewise, Benjamin (1892-1940) has previously observed that in contemporary life a desertification of experience is being experienced since one of the main characteristics of the contemporary world is, above all, the production of individuals focused on entering the job market. Also, due to the theoretical influence of the German intellectual, Larrosa (2016) initially points out that, presently, the experience is thrown out due to the excess of information, that is, even though anyone can access any topic swiftly, the one that knows everything is not permeated by such acquired knowledge.

According to Santomé (2011), the current society is made up of multiple information which, when added to the process of knowledge based on the policies of globalization, responds to neoliberal principles from which knowledge is presented profoundly directed to economic productivity and competitive markets. Some authors name this process “capitalistic knowledge”, a private form of knowledge that is at the service of production, distribution and marketing companies.

Therefore, due to the rapid access to information, the importance of time is exceeded. Currently, time is scarce and the frantic search for consumer goods and knowledge transforms the individual into a high production object who does not have any spare time, not even to read a good book. Furthermore, the fugacity of time promotes rapid access to information but, even though you can access any specific knowledge in fractions of seconds, nothing really happens, nor does it cause sense, characterizing it as fugacious as time itself (Larrosa, 2016).

According to Larrosa (2016), as a consequence of temporal fragility and instant access to information, the modern man is characterized as an opinionated being, a knowledgeable “object” that opines presumptuously about any subject. Consequently, giving superficial opinions based on supposed acquired knowledge that provokes no subjective effect whatsoever. School should, therefore, provide students with the opportunity to reflect upon the negative influences of society, so that younger generations are able to, above all, foster hope and confidence as to human relational potential.

The presented aspects characterize somehow the current society, since the current curricular basis (BNCC<sup>2</sup>) reinforces the predominance of a national level, that is, the curricular structure becomes a parameter for comparison and competitiveness before different international educational models. According to Masetto (2011, p. 4), the concept of curriculum is polysemic from which one can infer its contemplating “[...] A set of knowledge, expertise, skills, abilities, experience, events and values organized in an integrated way”, since it raises a concise professional training peered into a society contextualized by particular time and space.

Whereas, when addressing the conception of a curriculum that is organized through planned practices and activities, the possibility of emancipation of the subject is greatly tighten. Historically and traditionally the educational curriculum is thought of and formulated as a discursive practice, an activity of power, something that is established and that commands and builds reality thus producing senses and significances (Lopes, Macedo, 2011). Similarly, Larrosa (2016) states that the basic education curriculum guides and directs teaching, as it shapes and restricts the ways and methods of learning from something that is previously established. However, according to the Spanish intellectual, the current curriculum is not constructed from social contexts and does not seek to produce senses, thus becoming the opposite of what is built through experience.

In addition, it is worth highlighting that, according to Nussbaum (2015), the curriculum accompanies the economic movements of society, since education is considered by public policy operators an important tool for the growth of the GDP (gross domestic product) of a country. Hence, in a society where the capital and even the workforce are overvalued, individuals do not have time for leisure or even to read a book and, consequently, work or even capital, becomes a hindrance to the promotion of experience since, in order to be permeated by singular issues, at times, stop working for a minute makes it possible for an individual to feel the environment around him.

According to Nussbaum (2015), the apocalyptic aspect of this troubling operation begins in the disposal of the humanity subjects from the curricula of basic education. Subjects focused on critical and subjective training such as arts, philosophy, history and even geography, are considered by the current curriculum, as unnecessary for the labor market. In a way, subjects related to the field of science, are seen as analogous to market production, indicating that science is supported, from the perspective of profit.

As a result, it is possible to confirm that, for a long time, the field of education has been comprised by the relational perspective between science and technique, and that this dyad was responsible for raising a point of view, from which the teaching has been positive or even rectifiable. None the less, due to the outbreak of social needs, it has become possible to question the pairing between theory and practice, considering that the previously mentioned perspective referred to the political and critical possibilities in the field of education (Larrosa, 2016).

Therefore, only from this pairing is it possible to insert the word “experience” but, it is advisable to be careful, and above all, cautious, since the expression is used, here, to foster the emancipation of the subject through the curricular formative of educational institutions. In a way, individuals who work in the field of education were, a priori, formally considered as technical subjects who neglected each and every expression of their students.

According to Larrosa (2016, p. 16), “[...] People who work in education are appointed as technical subjects who apply, with greater or lesser efficacy, the various pedagogical technologies produced by scientists”, therefore this issue can be regarded as the educational discomfort of the century, since the scientific reproduction

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<sup>2</sup> In 2017, the National Council of Education, approved the Common National Curricular Basis (BNCC), a document that aims to guide what is taught in every Brazilian school, encompassing all basic education phases, from child education to elementary school.

mechanizes education. Moreover, it is necessary to think about experience by exploring possibilities, indicating other paths, or even contextualizing a new meaning to the political curricular action.

So, would we be questioning the need for a curriculum that promotes experience in the students? The answer is an emphatic yes! Not only a curriculum but, above all, a public policy that is currently formative and discards all possibilities of communication between teacher and student. In a way, the curricular verticality is violent as, in the current curricular model, inciting what is necessary to “learn” for the labor market and the social context is a task for the teacher.

Thus, Nussbaum (2015) questions the contemporary teaching policies since most of them only accompany the economical flow of a country. However, the theme of experience is widely distinguished from the economy, seeing that it has nothing to do with the financial production of a country but, above all, with the subjective and singular production of the individual, which is totally opposite to the pluralizing capitalistic world. Therefore, it is possible to say that the curriculum is composed of multiple words, methods and contexts where, each one it occupies the place of an applied technique or even, of a praxis emptied of meaning and with no discourse.

In this sense, it is necessary to reconsider issues that involve the constitution of curricula from the common curricular basis (BNCC) by reflecting on the *modus operandi* of how this base is established as well as its practice effectively. Currently in Brazil, we find a curricular basis that proposes and determines teaching through a way of learning that is focused primarily on skills which seek to qualify and ensure employability to individuals (Carvalho, Silva & Delboni, 2017).

Therefore, teaching is, today, particularly based on subjects, since it only allows the teacher an extremely decisive learning process. The curricular method does not enable great power of knowledge inasmuch as it relinquishes any singularity from the individual (Iarrosa, 2002).

Hence, we must consider that the construction of a curricular base, crosses political and economic issues, and so, the interests are permeated by relations of knowledge and power. Whereas these relations and practices constitute the various social fields and penetrate institutions (Foucault, 1998). Thus, the constitution of a curricular basis or its form as it is composed, as well as its purpose in terms of teaching, is also related to a governmental policy, since it determines both learning and what to learn in relation to the subjectivation processes involving the establishment of the subjects.

As a result, it is presumed that the current proposal of BNCC is deeply determined by the state which a priori represents a frantic search for rationalization and or even standardization, transforming the main goal of schooling into an object based purely on professional skills. This practice, encloses but does not include students within the learning process, eliminating almost entirely the possibility of living their own experience.

Therefore, it is important to think of education as where the production of subjects takes place, where social and affective relations establish, both in the educational context and the ways of subjectivation, a place deeply related to the institutional normativeness and procedures (Guattari, Rolnik, 2010). It is also necessary to think of the educational environment as a place beyond its purely physical space but, above all, where subjectivities are built and produced, since social, political, economic and historical issues are reflected upon as permeant and part of this process. The notion of subjectivity, from a view that perceives not only the individual but also relates the social context and its relations, shapes and builds ideas from institutions (Souza, 2005).

Likewise, it becomes necessary to consider the devices of subjectivation that the school, as a place that produces subjectivities, is providing its students from this curricular logic. In particular, is there production of subjectivity in a place that does not provide or allows desire, affection, feelings, and that has no interest in

reflection or criticism, but that, on the other hand, stabilizes, standardizes, regularizes and distances the subjects from the possible critical and creative awareness of their own learning?

Education has been built through educational practices that are submitted to information, to the production of knowledge, and to the emphasis on knowing, not on promoting reflection towards learning processes. Experience is, on the contrary, precisely based on this moment, this process, this event, not only the act of going through it. The learning process can be built, experienced and shouldn't be treated merely as a means of reproduction, it cannot be considered the reproduction of knowledge. It is thus, important to think of learning as a place where there is the need of an implication, of actually being there and attending it, which requires relationship and interaction with others and, therefore, not as a movement in the field of information or content, but related to the body, to sensitivity, to time (Gallo, 2012).

This way, it is necessary to think critically about the school curriculum, to question and problematize its intentions, as well as to propose another curricular practice, different from the one we are immersed in. Thus, considering the notion of curriculum from experience means placing both education and the educational context before another scope, proposing something new, singular and creative. The learning process is beyond methods and techniques, where there is no possibility of planning it, it simply happens and, therefore, every subject lives and experiences it their own unique way and time.

Meanwhile, if learning is related to interpersonal contact and the way we are approached by others, it is important that we consider this process as a reciprocal and interdependent relation. That is, from the understanding that the learning process cannot be based on the teacher holding the knowledge and the student being merely passive; on the contrary, it is contemplating learning from a horizontal setting, where everyone is involved. Learning happens through this relationship, education must be understood as something that regards the process of existence and involves the differences, the singularity (Lima, 2013).

However, considering the curriculum in basic education from the experience outlook concerns in taking apart many issues that are already seen as stagnant in education, it means being able to reflect critically upon the place the school occupies within our society. Furthermore, it concerns planning the role of the student within this context, as well as the role of the teacher, in other words, it consists in providing education with another place and sense by proposing the construction of something new from that which involves and fosters the will to learn. It means being able to see the relationship between teacher and pupil from a panorama that can be built collectively, where there are no distinctive dividing lines but something that can be experienced, something that addresses experience itself.

### **3. Final Considerations**

Finally, we may think of this discussion about the current curriculum and its relation to the lack of experience as extremely important and necessary. So what are the experiences and subjectivities that have been built and produced in the context of basic education? Is it possible to experience the learning process in the current context, where time, desire and the affections of subjects cannot be noticed?

After the theoretical development on the concept of curriculum and experience, it is possible to conclude that experience is what touches, summons, penetrates, permeates and happens to the individual. However, to what extent has this been happening in schools? According to what has been discussed, the school has become merely focused on obligation, training and information, a place direct only to the production of knowledge.

Thus, the school itself can change this context, in view of that due to its extremely important role in the lives of the subjects, besides being a place aimed at the absorption of content and instruction; it is also responsible for the shaping of individuals. Therefore, it is important to consider the school as the promoter of experiences, since developing an object of study that is indeed part of students' lives, goes beyond disciplines and content, it is, thus, enabling the construction of something deep that can affect them is of paramount importance in the current volatility.

The curriculum that involves experience creates opportunities for the unexpected, taking into consideration the action of learning and creating an innovative proposal. As a result, experiential learning promotes a complex and subjective process, through which these mechanisms permeate and penetrate the subjects of education. Lastly, by reflecting upon this issue it becomes clear that, on the encounter with the other, or even via social relations, a methodological possibility broadens the curricular scope as it stresses the current disposal of this object.

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