

Teodora Popescu

THE BUSINESS ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

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TEODORA POPESCU

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LANGUAGE CURRICULUM**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BE – Business English
BELMA – Best European Learning Materials Award
BNC – British National Corpus
CLIL – Content and Language Integrated Learning
CMA – Critical Metaphor Analysis
CMA – Critical Metaphor Analysis
EAP – English for Academic Purposes
EFL – English as a Foreign Language
EGAP – English for General Academic Purposes
EGBP – English for General Business Purposes
EOP – English for Occupational Purposes
ESAP – English for Specific Academic Purposes
ESBP – English for Specific Business Purposes
ESL – English as a Second Language
ESP – English for Specific Purposes
EST – English for Science and Technology
EUROCLIC – European Network of Adminsitators, Researchers
and Practitioners
General English – GE
IDV – Individualism
IL – Interlanguage
IND – Indulgence
LSP – Language for Specific Purposes
LTO – Long-term Orientation
MAS – Masculinity
NA – Needs Analysis
NL – Native Language
PDI – Power Distance Index
SL – Source Language
SP-LT – Special-Purpose Language Teaching
TBS – Task-based Syllabus
TL – Target Language
TSA – Target Situation Analysis
UAI – Uncertainty Avoidance Index

INTRODUCTION

The present study came to life as a result of the scientific inquiry and classroom practice I carried out over a period of almost twenty years of teaching business English at tertiary level, before, during and after completing a PhD thesis in Business English language curricula. I have constantly, throughout these years, tried to combine theoretical investigations with practical applications, and whenever possible, I kept a record of the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data obtained as a result of my classroom research, and analysed it in order to improve my teaching performance and my students' learning experiences, or, as the case may be, to present the results on different occasions, such as conferences or round tables dedicated to the subject.

It is structured into four main chapters, which lead us along the path of business language curriculum, from the general, wider perspective upon curriculum to more hands-on, practice- and research-based approaches to business English.

The first chapter, *Curriculum. A history of the concept* focuses on the evolution of curriculum, from its birth to nowadays theory and practice. The main definitions, together an overview of the main theorists' models and philosophies are presented, although not exhaustively. Curriculum, as an overarching concept will by necessity include learning situations and experiences, as well as the design, implementation and evaluation of educational programmes. Types and components of curriculum are also described, with an emphasis on current challenges of the contemporary world.

Chapter two, *The language curriculum* deals with some aspects of what makes the difference between curriculum and syllabus, and addresses the historical typology of the language syllabus. Therefore, it describes, in turn, the formal, functional, situational / topical, lexical, skills-based, procedural, process and task-based syllabi, assessing their relevance to the process of language learning / teaching.

The third chapter, *The business language curriculum* tackles the subject of the business language education within the larger framework of English for Specific Purposes, a part of which it is indeed, functioning according to the ESP principles and methodology. It starts with an introduction into the history of ESP, continuing with a conceptual framework, including purpose, content and categories. The history of ESP is further analysed through the description of the main development stages up to the 21st century and present-day challenges. A special emphasis is placed on ESP course evaluation and the ways in which this can be achieved. Next, the chapter addresses the distinction between General English and Business English. Specific topics pertaining to business English are tackled, such as materials design, the interplay of culture and business language, or the metaphoricity of business English. Finally, a potential paradigm for the design and implementation of business language programmes is brought forth, drawing on the model already envisaged by Popescu as back as 2006, as a result of her doctoral research.

Chapter four, *Practical applications* concentrates on several hands-on aspects related to the business language curriculum, such as materials design with a focus on both skills and grammar and lexis knowledge, translation in the business English class, business dictionaries and glossaries, and last, but not least, CLIL applications for tertiary education.

All in all, the book is intended for teachers of business and ESP teachers in general, who need to keep up to date with the latest developments in the field (such as the use of corpus studies, CLIL or EAP methodological suggestions). It can be equally useful to MA students of English who want to expand their knowledge in the field of the business language subgenre.

Teodora Popescu,
Alba Iulia, 2017

CHAPTER ONE

CURRICULUM. A HISTORY OF THE CONCEPT

1.1 Definitions of curriculum

Curriculum represents a highly-debated concept nowadays, still in the focus of researchers, in particular educationalists, being used in conjunction with almost all basic concepts used in modern pedagogy: teaching, learning, instruction, assessment, etc. At national, European and international level there is a constant preoccupation for curriculum reform in all major areas of education. The need for commonly accepted principles across countries, triggered by the increasing mobility of individuals for study or labour purposes is felt by governments and educational institutions (schools, universities, life-long learning institutions, etc.) alike.

Therefore, research undertaken by all stakeholders, i.e. educationalists, practitioners, Ministries of Education decision-makers has contributed to permanent curriculum modernisation and reform. At European level, curricular reform is one of the top priorities, and the Erasmus+ programme encourages joint projects between different institutions within, for example, the Key Action 2 (e.g. Strategic Partnerships, Capacity Building projects, etc.).

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the etymology of the word **curriculum** is from New Latin (*currere*), meaning *running* or *course* (sg.: *curriculum*, pl.: *curricula*), having its ultimate root in classical Latin (from which also come words such as *corridor*, *courier*, or *currency*). It first appeared as such in the documents of Leiden (1582) and Glasgow universities (1633), but in time, it knew numerous re-formulations and re-definitions. The initial meanings of the concept were related to educational contents, study plan or programme (plan d'étude/d'enseignement), in relation to compulsory educational/learning route /path or students' learning

trajectory. All conceptualisations of curriculum along history represent an all-encompassing, painstaking endeavour carried out by theorists and practitioners in order to bring utmost relevance to educational processes, to ensure that essential, useful, mutually-beneficial and feasible aspects are adequately materialised.

The re-emergence of the term *curriculum* in the United States in the 20th century builds on this primary, restricted meaning of the educational contents, engrained in a space- and time-bound instructional situation. However, the underlying premise was to go beyond contents, plans and programmes/syllabi, which were considered as static, merely quantitative, objective-oriented and teacher-based and move towards a more student-centred approach, which is primarily based on the learners’ actual needs and capabilities.

According to Glatthorn et al. (2015), the term curriculum can be defined from both a prescriptive and a descriptive perspective, and they realise a summary of curriculum definitions considering these two important aspects, which pertain to the focus of the different curricular philosophies. On the one hand, there might be a prevalent attitude towards setting down / prescribing the directions for action, while on the other there may exist an emphasis on describing the action itself.

First of all, prescriptive definitions lay down “what ought to happen”, but most of the times they come in the shape of a plan or

“an intended programme, or some kind of expert opinion about what needs to take place in the course of study.”
(Ellis 2004, p. 4)

Table 1. Prescriptive Definitions of Curriculum
(from Glatthorn et al., 2015, pp. 3-4)

Theorist	Year	Definition
John Dewey	1902	Curriculum is a continuous reconstruction, moving from the child’s present experience out into that represented by the organised bodies of truth that we call studies [...] the various studies [...] are themselves experience — they are that of the race. (pp. 11–12)

Franklin Bobbitt	1918	Curriculum is the entire range of experiences, both directed and undirected, concerned in unfolding the abilities of the individual. (p. 43)
Harold O. Rugg	1927	[...] a succession of experiences and enterprises having a maximum lifelikeness for the learner [...] giving the learner that development most helpful in meeting and controlling life situations. (p. 8)
Hollis Caswell in Caswell and Campbell	1935	The curriculum is composed of all the experiences children have under the guidance of teachers. (pp. 66) Thus, curriculum considered as a field of study represents no strictly limited body of content, but rather a process or procedure. (p. 70)
Ralph Tyler	1957	[...] all the learning experiences planned and directed by the school to attain its educational goals. (p. 79)
Robert Gagne	1967	Curriculum is a sequence of content units arranged in such a way that the learning of each unit may be accomplished as a single act, provided the capabilities described by specified prior units [...] have already been mastered by the learner. (p. 23)
James Popham and Eva Baker	1970	[...] all planned learning outcomes for which the school is responsible. [...] Curriculum refers to the desired consequences of instruction. (p. 48)
J.L. McBrien and R. Brandt	1997	[Curriculum] refers to a written plan outlining what students will be taught (a course of study). Curriculum may refer to all the courses offered at a given school, or all the courses offered at a school in a particular area of study. (p. 59)

Second, the descriptive accounts of *curriculum* regard it from an experiential perspective, “not merely in terms of how things ought to be”, but also look at how things happen in real classrooms in a school (Ellis 2004, p. 5). The learning experiences are quintessential to learning and instruction, and learners are the main focus of education.

Table 2. Descriptive Definitions of Curriculum
(from Glatthorn et al., 2015, p. 5)

Theorist	Year	Definition
Hollis Caswell and Doak Campbell	1935	All the experiences children have under the guidance of teachers. (p. 66) Thus, curriculum considered as a field of study represents no strictly limited body of content, but rather a process of procedure. (p. 70)
Thomas Hopkins	1941	Those learnings each child selects, accepts, and incorporates into himself to act with, on, and upon, in subsequent experiences. (p. 169)
W.B. Ragan	1960	All experiences of the child for which the school accepts responsibility. (p. 62)
Glen Hass	1987	The set of actual experiences and perceptions of the experiences that each individual learner has of his or her programme of education. (p. 5)
Daniel Tanner and Laurel Tanner	1995	The reconstruction of knowledge and experience that enables the learner to grow in exercising intelligent control of subsequent knowledge and experience. (p. 43)
D.F. Brown	2006	All students' school experiences relating to the improvement of skills and strategies in thinking critically and creatively, solving problems, working collaboratively with others, communicating well, writing more effectively, reading more analytically, and conducting research to solve problems. (p. 779)
E. Silva	2009	An emphasis on what students can do with knowledge, rather than what units of knowledge they have, is the essence of 21st-century skills. (p. 630)

1.2 Main theorists

John Dewey

One of the forerunners of curriculum research was the American pedagogue and philosopher John Dewey, Professor of Education at Columbia University, Teachers College (among others), who set up a laboratory school, the first experimental, non-graded school in New York City that opened in September 1969, with an initial intake of 1000 students. In his influential work, *The child and the curriculum* (1902), he warns against the separation between the curriculum, seen as series of subjects studied in school and the child and his learning experiences, bringing forth three arguments:

1. the discrepancy between the *narrow but personal world of the child and the impersonal but infinitely extended world of space and time*;
2. the chasm between *the unity, the single wholeheartedness of the child's life, and the specializations and divisions of the curriculum*;
3. the divergence between the *abstract principle of logical classification and arrangement, and the practical and emotional bonds of child life* (Dewey 1902).

Hence, the conflict between the child and the curriculum – the child, as an affective, emotional entity, and the curriculum, as an impersonal, logical entity, comprising compartmentalised subjects according to pedagogical objectives. The proponents of the curriculum claim that *the life of the child is egoistic, self-centred, impulsive*, and therefore his experiences are *confused, vague, uncertain, at the mercy of the moment's caprice and circumstance*. The solution would be then to *ignore and minimize the child's individual peculiarities, whims, and experiences*. The child was simply considered as an immature being, who needed help in order to grow up, a superficial being who needed to reach depth, by receiving and accepting knowledge. *His part is fulfilled when he is ductile and docile*. (Dewey 1902)

On the other hand, supporters of the child as the centre of education propound that the ultimate aim of school should be self-realisation, self-fulfilment and not knowledge or information transmitted to the child, since the educational process is an active one, with emphasis on personality and character, with

contents / subject-matter regarded simply as spiritual food. Learning, as an active process, involves organic assimilation of knowledge filtered from within the child himself.

The answer to this ideological war is actually to understand the child and the curriculum as two limits that define a single process. The process of learning should be a continuous reconstruction, smoothly moving from the child's current experience out into that provided by the organised bodies of truth.

The laboratory school created by Dewey was based on some important principles, which even nowadays underlie the humanistic, student-centred philosophy of educational currents:

1. school is meant to educate children towards co-operative and mutually benevolent integration and growth into the community;

2. all educational activities should pay heed to the instinctive, impulsive, inner-driven activities of the children, and not to the imposition of structured, logical, outward subject matter.

According to his approach, children should be able to create their own learning experiences, able to discover their own powers, exercise their capacities and realise their attitudes. In summary, John Dewey remains as an important figure in the history of curriculum development, given the following dimensions:

- Curriculum represents a comprehensive, dynamic, both retroactive and proactive reality;
- Curriculum is a two-way interactive process between educators and learners;
- Curriculum foreshadows a bridge between the learner (the child) and education (the curriculum).

Franklin Bobbitt

The second major scholar to be taken into account is Franklin Bobbitt, who, through his major works: *The Curriculum* (1918) and *How to make a Curriculum* (1924) laid the foundations of scientific research on structured curriculum. According to him, curriculum represents a series of both directed and undirected experiences which children and youth must have through the attainment of the total range of human abilities, habits, systems of knowledge, etc., that one should possess (Bobbitt 1924, p. 43).

Only by performing specific activities, for any social class, will individuals acquire the abilities, habits, attitudes, values, and forms of knowledge needed by humans. He further states that the profession of educationalists entails the practical task of defining innumerable specific objectives; and then of identifying the *countless pupil-experiences that must be induced by way of bringing the children to attain the objectives* (Bobbitt 1924, p. 282).

Bobbitt's actual goal was to make society more efficient in dealing with the challenges it faces by educating its members for the roles they have to assume, regardless of their profession, i.e. workers, teachers or lawyers. Following his theory that a school's main purpose was to prepare children to assume their roles as productive adult citizens, Bobbitt studied adult activities and clustered them around ten major fields of experience:

- 1) language activities;
- 2) health activities;
- 3) citizenship activities;
- 4) general social activities;
- 5) spare-time activities;
- 6) keeping oneself mentally fit;
- 7) religious activities;
- 8) parental activities;
- 9) unspecialised or non-vocational activities;
- 10) the labour of one's calling, with just this last one not actually being covered by the school curriculum (Bobbitt 1924, pp. 8-9).

Ralph W. Tyler

Curriculum has long been considered as an ends-means dichotomy based on a very much debated work on the subject, the well-known book by Ralph W. Tyler, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*, which appeared in 1949, and for quite a long period dominated the approaches towards curriculum theory.

According to him, the main questions educators should strive to address, in order to construct a principled curriculum are:

1. Which educational goals should the school strive to achieve?
2. What educational experiences can teachers provide that are likely to achieve these goals?

3. How can such educational experiences be successfully organised?

4. How can we conclude whether these educational purposes are being achieved? (Tyler 1949, p. i)

Tyler considered that it is essential for educators to first establish clear-cut purposes, which need to be subsequently translated into educational objectives, and therefore he proposes the following strategy to adopt in the curriculum evaluation processes, because objectives represent the most important “criteria for guiding all the other activities of the curriculum maker” (Tyler 1949, p. 62):

1. Establish broad goals or objectives;
2. Classify the goals or objectives;
3. Define objectives in behaviour terms;
4. Identify situations in which achievement of objectives can be pinned down;
5. Develop or select measurement techniques;
6. Collect performance data;
7. Compare performance data against behaviourally specified objectives.

Tyler stressed that the elaboration of objectives has to take place before the curriculum designer can continue with “all the further steps of curriculum planning” (1949, p. 62).

Hilda Taba

Hilda Taba furthered the theorisation of curriculum in *Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice* (1962), in which she advanced a theoretical base for curriculum development. According to her, there was “a strong tendency to assume that the theoretical foundations of our current curriculum are sound and that the difficulties occur chiefly in translating theory into practice” (Taba 1962, p. v). She identified a lack of systematic vision about curriculum planning, denouncing “little discussion of the methodology of designing curricula and less clarity about the elements that may constitute a design” (Taba 1962, p. 2).

Taba further states that curriculum planning should take into account the societal and cultural patterns and demands, the learning process, the development of the individual, and the specific characteristics and unique contribution of the various disciplines. (Taba 1962)

Along the same line with Tyler's four questions on curriculum design, Taba proposes a seven-step model of curriculum development processes:

1. Diagnosis of needs;
2. Formulation of objectives;
3. Selection of content;
4. Organisation of content;
5. Selection of learning experiences;
6. Organisation of learning experiences;
7. Identification of what to evaluate and how to do it. (Taba 1962, p. 12)

Hilda Taba considers that curriculum development entails "expertness of many varieties", among which "technical skills in curriculum making, mastery of intellectual discipline, the knowledge of social and educational values, which underlie educational decisions", along with an awareness of these educational decisions and human engineering (Taba 1962, p. 480).

Lawrence Stenhouse

Another curriculum theorist was Lawrence Stenhouse, the author of *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development*, published in 1975. His approach was a process-based one, and he identified three main elements, i.e. planning, empirical study and justification.

Planning is based on the following principles:

1. Principle for of content selection – decision on what will be learnt by and taught to learners;
2. Criteria for the development of teaching strategies - how the content is to be learnt and taught to students;
3. Principles for the making of decisions regarding the didactic sequence;
4. Principles according to which to diagnose individual students' strengths and weaknesses and distinguish the three general principles described above, in order to address individual cases.

Empirical study consists of the following:

1. Principles according to which to analyse and evaluate the students' progress;
2. Principles according to which to study and assess the teachers' progress;

3. Guidance as to assessing the achievability of implementing the curriculum in different school environments, pupil contexts, learning environments as well as peer-group situations;

4. Information on the different effects in diverse contexts and on various pupils as well as an understanding of what caused such variation.

As far as *justification* is concerned, an expression of the intention or purpose of the curriculum that should be accessible to critical scrutiny is needed (Stenhouse 1975, p. 5).

According to him, a curriculum is any attempt at communicating the important principles and characteristics of any “educational proposal in such a form that it is open to critical scrutiny and capable of effective translation into practice”. (Stenhouse 1975, p. 4)

1.3. Curriculum studies nowadays

Before proceeding to any further statement regarding curriculum nowadays, I will concentrate on the fact that even to date, there is no commonly accepted definition of curriculum, as different authors have different approaches. Portelli (1987) identified more than 120 definitions for the concept, each focusing on different aspects that the authors had in mind, from either a narrower or broader perspective. According to Marsh (2009, pp. 5-9), there can exist six main directions for defining curriculum:

1) Curriculum represents the permanent subjects which epitomise essential knowledge;

2) Curriculum signifies those subjects which are most useful for daily existence;

3) Curriculum means all planned learnings for which the school assumes responsibility;

4) Curriculum represents all the learning experiences through which students can acquire general skills and knowledge from a range of learning sites;

5) Curriculum denotes what the students create from working with a computer and its numerous networks, including the Internet;

6) Curriculum indicates the critical questioning of formal authority and the quest for complex understandings of human situations.

However, the author identifies both benefits and shortcomings of each of the above-mentioned groupings.

What is to be remembered is that there exist mainly two directions. The traditional, narrower perspective, which dominated the educational disciplines until mid-19th century viewed curriculum as overlapping the educational contents, substantiated in school and university programmatic documents which aimed at planning instruction contents and laid down relevant information on educational processes and learning experiences provided for learners: curricula, school and university syllabi, etc.

Later on, the wider, modern perspective gained ground, which views curriculum as an all-encompassing, holistic concept, approached from a global and systemic angle on the educational process. While preserving the idea of learning trajectory, as intellectual and emotional endeavours that schools challenge learners with, curriculum is no longer understood traditionally, but as in-depth turning to account of learners latencies.

At present, curriculum can be seen as both theory and practice, encompassing the multifaceted and multidimensional interdependences between the following elements: educational ends, teaching contents, instructional strategies, and assessment strategies.

Curriculum represents the entirety of educational processes, direct and indirect learning and training experiences designed and outcome-based construed by the school, through educational syllabi in order to ensure the moral, professional and social development of children. It includes the school educational offer and epitomises the system of direct and indirect learning and training experiences offered to learners and undergone by them in formal, non-formal and informal contexts. It embodies the interactive reality revolving around educators and learners, with tangible effects, realistically anticipated as impacting upon the latter category and the process itself.

1.4. Learning situations and experiences integrated in the curriculum

Curriculum design entails envisaging and structuring of learners' effective learning, an activity that necessitates the foresight of learning situations in which learners will get involved and the prompted learning experiences that they will undergo.

The learning situation constitutes a key component of curriculum, a pedagogic context arrived at through conjugated, convergent and combined pursuit of the following features:

- 1) learning and training goals articulated in an objective manner;
- 2) learning contents seen as stimuli;
- 3) the learning task;
- 4) learners' knowledge, skills, abilities and competences involved in the learning task;
- 5) teaching-learning methodology;
- 6) assessment methodology;
- 7) material resources of the learning environment;
- 8) contextual traits of didactic communication and relational context engendered by the learning task;
- 9) time resources.

A well-designed and structured learning situation from a logistic, psycho-pedagogic and teleological point of view, centred on educational ends may trigger in the learner constructive, positive and desirable learning experiences.

The learning experience is another component of curriculum pertaining to the personalised means of internalising the learning situation, to the personal feelings generated by a learning situation, feelings which can be objectified in changes of cognitive, affective or psycho-kinetic structures. It represents more than a personal reaction to a learning situation; faced with the same learning situation and learning task the learners have different learning experiences, shaped by their own personality traits and subjectivity.

An official curriculum cannot anticipate the large repertoire of individual learning experiences, but can plan learning situations suitable for the objectives at hand, with a view to induce or generate positive, successful, beneficial learning experiences.

From a pragmatic perspective, the main challenge of the curriculum is the transposition, the translation of tasks into relevant learning and training experiences (Bocoş & Chiş 2013).

Conjuring up a learning experience marks a new evolution in the curriculum conceptualisation process. The source of elaboration of the learning experience does not only consist of knowledge or culture structures, but also of the needs, interests and aspirations of the education beneficiaries, and in the organisation of learning what really counts is not only what is being learnt, but also how it is being learnt. Moreover, in order to outline that learning is not just a medley of unrelated, disconnected experiences, and that education is more than a collection of educational, teaching-learning activities, the concept of metacurriculum was introduced. This helps the learners to get schooled and develop a set of values and competences and to help them make sense of their experiences.

1.5. Educational programmes from a curricular perspective

Metacurriculum is also what we find in *The Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century Learning: The treasure within*, which offers a global perspective on nowadays education, seen from multiple perspectives. Delors stresses the fact that “the importance of the role of the teacher as an agent of change, promoting understanding and tolerance, has never been more obvious than today” (Delors 1996, p. 119), as teachers find themselves looking for new perspectives. The author further contends that “one of the main functions of teacher education, both pre-service and in-service is to equip teachers with ethical, intellectual and emotional wherewithal to develop the same range of qualities in the pupils, as society demands” (p. 221). He considers that the whole vision on curriculum as a whole should be revisited, starting from the assumption that an individual never stops learning throughout their life. Life-long education rests on four pillars, i.e.: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be. All these four learning types interweave so as to contribute to the full rounding of an individual.

1) *Learning to know*, by merging a sufficiently wide-ranging general knowledge with an opportunity to work in depth on a rather limited number of subjects. This pillar can also be referred to as to learning to learn, in order for an individual to take advantage of the opportunities education can provide throughout life. It entails the acquisition and mastery of knowledge instruments.

2) *Learning to do*, with a view to acquiring not only an occupational skill but also, more roughly, the competence to cope with various situations and work in teams. It can also mean learning to do in the context of young peoples' different social and work experiences, which may be informal, following the local or national context, or formal, comprising courses, mingling both study and work. It refers to transversal competences, such as connecting to the environment.

3) *Learning to live together*, through developing a better understanding of other persons and gaining an appreciation of interdependence – by implementing joint projects and learning how to manage conflicts – while paying heed to the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace. It refers to the ability to empathise, to do teamwork, to perform collaborative management, etc.

4) *Learning to be*, in order to better develop the individual's personality and to be able to perform with ever-increasing autonomy, judgement and personal responsibility. In this respect, education must take into consideration all aspects of an individual's potential, such as: memory, reasoning, artistic sense, physical capacities as well as communication competence. It helps an individual fulfil their individuality and capabilities, contributing to self-actualisation and autonomy.

Formal education systems are likely to underscore the acquisition of knowledge to the disadvantage of other learning types; however, it is critical now to comprehend education in a more encompassing manner. Such a novel vision should inform and steer future educational reforms and policy, in relation to both contents and methods.

These guidelines are extremely relevant to modern educational approaches to educational policy orientation.

From a structural and functional perspective, the following questions have to be addressed when designing a curriculum:

- To whom is it addressed? Or Who are the learners / instructional subjects, what are their age characteristics, their individual traits, their hopes and opinions? etc.

- Why? or What for? do they have to follow the designated programme – questions addressed by the educational objectives aimed at.

- What exactly needs to be taught / learned? or What exactly needs to be improved? Questions that pertain to the learning contents, to their selection and classification in accordance to a well-defined scientific and didactic logic.

- How exactly will be teaching and learning carried out, what type of activities the learners will be involved in – these are all questions in correlation with the strategic decisions of instruction, i.e. the articulated set of methods, organisation forms adequately combined in given situational contexts.

- Under what spatial, temporal, material and human circumstances will an activity be carried out at its fullest efficiency? When designing a curriculum it is essential to foresee the time necessary to follow through the programme, the necessary spaces and physical conditions, as well as the human resources needed to implement the programme.

- How are the effects, results and progress achieved evaluated, the efficiency of teaching-learning situations, which leads to the necessity of conceiving objective assessment strategies, methods and techniques, in close connection with the educational objectives pursued and with the contents at hand. At the same time, the educational objectives, as well as competences aimed at by the syllabi, their contents, the textbooks and other teaching materials and curricular support will be evaluated.

Considering all these aspects, it can be safely stated that from a curricular perspective, the value of an educational programme will depend on:

- the agents of action – learners and educators;
- educational objectives aimed at;
- the instructional-educational contents delivered;
- the instructional strategies used;
- spatial, temporal and material conditions, i.e. the context and environment;
- the evaluation strategies used.

From an action-oriented perspective, one can outline four main tasks in elaborating and carrying out an educational programme, i.e.:

- 1) establishing educational objectives;
- 2) selecting learning and training experiences which will contribute to the attainment of these objectives;
- 3) organising learning experiences in order to maximise their cumulative effect;
- 4) evaluating the efficiency of the educational programme through checking progress.

Therefore, in the elaboration of the curriculum, there exist four fundamental questions, practically correlated with the four tasks / basic components mentioned above:

- Which are the educational objectives pursued?
- Which are the relevant learning experiences?
- How is it best to organise learning experiences?
- Which are the identification and results assessment methods?

Except for positive and desirable experiences pursued, curriculum can be associated with unplanned learning experiences, as well as negative effects on modelling learners. However, the nature of the curriculum is essentially determined by planned learning experiences, which aim at achieving positive effects in the learning process, training and informing learners.

The experience gathered so far has proved that a cumulative, summative, linear manner of meaning-enrichment of curriculum is no longer representative for the dynamic and action-oriented character of modern curriculum. At present, a modern curriculum needs to address the following questions:

- What is worth being taught / learned / evaluated?
- To what extent?
- In what succession?
- Alongside what other elements?
- On the basis of which previous experiences?
- On the basis of which current experiences?
- Under what conditions (spatial, temporal, material)?
- Through which educational activities?
- How will the new acquisitions be materialised (abilities, competences, behaviours, personality traits)?
- To what extent do the new acquisitions tally with the learners' expectations?

Since curriculum can come in all shapes and sizes (as concept, as project, as process, as product, as design, as potentiality, intent, document, action, plan, field, structure, configuration, fact, etc. a generic triad of curricular instances was brought forward, encompassing all above mentioned cases:

a) curriculum as representation – covering the theoretical and conceptual approaches, structural analyses of the curriculum and the study of curricular fields;

b) curriculum as representation of action, as action project – an illustration correlated with the design and implementation of study programmes, of curricular documents, of different learning materials;

c) curriculum as action proper – an illustration which positions us on a practical-operational level which reveals that a curriculum represents an educational reality, its implementation entailing the fulfilment of effective actions, instantiated in learning experiences. (Ungureanu 2000)

Hence, curriculum can be viewed as a concept-construct, as a mental construct forecasting a would-be reality, rather than a notion better or less reflected by an existing reality.

The identity of the concept can be defined and analysed through a multidimensional approach to curriculum, i.e. through three perspectives:

a) Functionally, curriculum engenders educational ends to be attained, through which it orients, organises and manages the instructional and learning processes;

b) Structurally-functionally, curriculum includes fundamental components, such as: educational ends, instructional-educational contents, teaching and learning strategies, evaluation strategies, instruction time;

c) From a product-oriented perspective, curriculum get objectivised in teaching programmes, syllabi, manuals, documents and support materials, etc.

The three perspectives on curriculum analysis can be corroborated with the two complementary dimensions of curriculum, considered, from a larger perspective, as a project / action plan: the design / vision perspective and the structural perspective (Wiles & Bondi 1984).

a) The design / vision perspective is shaped by the functional analysis perspective and is given by the system of ideas and outlooks on the process of moulding human personality, thanks

to the realisation of some philosophical understandings of the role of education played in this process.

b) The structural perspective is given by the role / mission of the curriculum to transpose values appropriated at the level of society into educational ends and beneficial learning and training experiences. The elaboration of learning experiences goes through a cyclical process, in which the analysis, design, implementation, evaluation and regulation stages are contingent and permanently interweaving. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out continuous monitoring of these processes, to evaluate results, to carry out ameliorating pedagogic research so that their quality level is satisfactory.

From a structural perspective, curriculum represents a system of planned didactic activities aimed at attaining some desirable impact on learners. These actions are to be put into practice, while the instructional-educational process is the hands-on activity of translating the project / the plan, of the intention into action, i.e. of implementing a study programme of a certain extent.

Therefore, curriculum needs to be approached from two perspectives:

a) as intention, objectified in the project / working plan which will guide through the educational action;

b) as practical realisation, considering that the project is applied in educational practice.

Nevertheless, it is important for a curriculum developer to take the following principles into account, regardless of the approach: a clear philosophy must be adopted, as well as a set of all-encompassing objectives that shape the entire curriculum alongside the decisions that impact each aspect of the curriculum. The curriculum designer needs to create structures both within and between levels and assure an articulated and coherent transition from one level to another.

1.6 Types of curriculum

According to various classification criteria, there exist several types of curricula (Cristea 2002, p. 78). Among such criteria, mention should be made of:

- design paradigm (philosophy of education, theory of education, policy of education) – discipline-based curriculum, interdisciplinary structure-based curriculum, competence-based curriculum, complete learning-based curriculum, student-centred curriculum);
- realisation manner – explicit curriculum, implicit curriculum, hidden curriculum and absent curriculum;
- research strategy (fundamental research – general curriculum, specialised curriculum, hidden curriculum, informal curriculum and applied research – formal curriculum, written curriculum, taught curriculum, learned curriculum, tested curriculum, recommended curriculum);
- generalisation degree (general curriculum, specialised curriculum)
- organisation degree (formal curriculum, non-formal curriculum, informal curriculum);
- degree of compulsion (compulsory curriculum, optional curriculum, elective curriculum);
- type of project build-up (basic or main curriculum, complementary or additional curriculum).

I will focus in the following on just a few of the types of curriculum mentioned above.

Goodlad and al (1979) brought forth a few key distinctions as to types of curriculum planning. Goodlad identified five such categories of curriculum:

- a) The *ideological curriculum*, representing the ideal curriculum as envisaged by theorists and practitioners – a sort of curriculum of ideas meant to reveal sound knowledge.
- b) The *formal curriculum*, by which is understood the curriculum officially approved by state and local school management – the authorised curriculum serving the society's interests at large.
- c) The *perceived curriculum*, or the curriculum of the mind, by which we mean what teachers, parents, and other stakeholders believe the curriculum to be.
- d) The *operational curriculum* embodies the observed, witnessed curriculum born out of class observation, of the processes seen to take place in reality in the school environment.
- e) The *experiential curriculum* encompasses all the learning experiences undergone by learners.

Glatthorn et al. (2015, pp. 6-17) offer an alternative classification, as follows:

a) the *recommended curriculum*, recommended by academics, professional associations, and different local and national commissions; it also comprises the curriculum requirements set by policymaking groups, such as, for example, education ministries. It resembles Goodlad's "ideological curriculum," in that it represents a curriculum that emphasises "oughtness," formulating the skills and concepts that ought to be highlighted, in line with the perceptions as well as value systems of the available sources.

b) the *written curriculum*, chiefly meant to ensure that the system's educational goals are appropriately translated into practice; it is therefore a curriculum of control. Basically, the written curriculum is in fact more specific and more comprehensive as compared with the recommended curriculum, revealing a rationale that upholds the curriculum, the general aims that are to be achieved, the specific objectives which need to be attained, the succession in which those contents should be addressed and studied, and the types of learning activities that will be carried out.

c) the *supported curriculum* represents the curriculum as it is reflected in and shaped by those resources allotted in order to support and deliver it. In this case, four types of resources are most important:

- the amount of time allocated to a certain school subject at a certain level or grade (e.g. How much time should we allot to one subject at a particular grade?);

- the time allocated by a teacher as part of the overall subject distribution to certain aspects of the curriculum (e.g. How much time should I devote to the first learning unit?);

- human resources allocations as reflected in and deriving from class-size decisions (e.g. How many English teachers do we need in secondary school if increase the class size to 35 students?);

- the textbooks or other learning materials offered by the school management for free to be used by students (Can we still use the English manuals for one more year?).

d) the *taught curriculum*, or the delivered curriculum, by which we mean a curriculum that an outsider sees as being performed, what happens while the teacher teaches. It is based

on teachers' designing, planning, and decision making, as to which compromises will best benefit one teacher and one particular class.

e) the *tested curriculum*, representing the set of learnings which is evaluated through teacher-made classroom tests; through locally-developed, curriculum-referenced tests; as well as through nationally or internationally standardised tests.

Out of the above, four types of curricula, i.e. the *written*, the *supported*, the *taught*, and the *tested* ones constitute elements of the intentional curriculum, by which we understand a set of learnings which the school system consciously lays down, as opposed to the hidden curriculum, which does not represent a result of conscious intention.

f) the *learned curriculum*, which encompasses all the changes in values, perceptions, and behaviours that take place as a result of learning experiences. As such, it comprises what the student understands, acquires, and remembers from both the hidden curriculum and the intentional curriculum.

From the point of view of the realisation manner, Cristea (2002, pp. 79-80) identified four types of curriculum: explicit curriculum, implicit curriculum, hidden curriculum and absent curriculum.

1) The *explicit curriculum* equates the official, formal curriculum (c.f. Goodlad's "ideological curriculum" or Glatthorn et al.'s "recommended curriculum"). It is set down based on macrostructural pedagogic ends (the educational ideal, educational goals) that characterise the personality paradigm and overall development guidelines of a given educational system and of the microstructural pedagogic ends (general and specific objectives) that set forth the value criteria for the elaboration of school curricula and syllabi, in keeping with age peculiarities, school subject areas, educational / instructional forms and dimensions.

In practice, the explicit curriculum promotes two curricular subtypes:

a) a main curriculum, representing the basic (core, nucleus) curriculum that creates and supports the fundamentals of permanent training and development of the learner;

b) a complementary curriculum, extending, deepening, enlarging the main curriculum, in optional or elective organisational structures (with specialist, area-targeted

objectives, in upper-secondary education), propounded to minimum extent (5-10%) in primary and lower secondary education and to a larger extent (up to 30%) in upper secondary education.

2) The *implicit curriculum* is the result of a set of informal situations and influences occurring in school and out of school, as part of the explicit curriculum and outside it. The content of the implicit curriculum (also termed informal curriculum) is dependent upon a set of information which can increase over time, permanently connected with the school and classroom environment, classroom management, teachers' educational style, organisational culture of the school, interpersonal relations, the system of punishment and reward, family /community /friends' customs, traditions and beliefs, leisure time patterns, secondary effects of the explicit curriculum, etc.

3) The *hidden curriculum* (also called obscure or subliminal curriculum) constitutes a variant of the implicit curriculum which concentrates the psychosocial effects of the education system and process in its entirety. This type of curriculum is characterised by a propensity towards dissimulation of intentions at the level of organisational structures (educational stages and levels, training routes and specialisations) and of the triad teaching-learning-assessment (lesson planning, implementation and development).

Therefore we witness such phenomena as "reproduction of socio-cultural inequalities", subtle brainwashing of both children and parents, early and forced upon orientation (through manipulation of the complementary curriculum), centrally- or locally-controlled ideologisation, censorship and strengthening of the manipulative power of opinions, etc.

4) The *absent curriculum* represents the effectively or virtually unrealised part of the formal, explicit curriculum, as a result of limitations born along the design process or the implementation of the teaching-learning-assessment activity. Under certain circumstances, this type of curriculum signals, as a matter of fact, the existence of exaggerations or redundancies at the level of planning documents, compensated for by the teacher through elimination or avoidance at the time of operationalising the lesson objectives.

On the other hand, from the perspective of continuous professional development, the absent curriculum is a good opportunity for teachers to attend various training courses.

1.7 Curriculum components

Traditionally speaking, the components of the curriculum are the following:

1) *Curricular policies*, by which we understand a given set of rules, criteria, or guidelines meant to control curriculum development and implementation.

2) *Curricular goals* which represent the overall, long-term educational outcomes which the school system aims at achieving through the implementation of its curriculum. It is worth mentioning in this context that goals are expressed in much more general terms than objectives.

Brown (2006), as cited in Marsh (2009, pp. 19-22) identified, as a result of a survey among education stakeholders, the following skills deemed as necessary to be developed by school in general:

- a. Critical-thinking skills;
- b. Problem-solving strategies as well as effective decision-making skills;
- c. Creative-thinking processes;
- d. Efficient oral and written communication competence;
- e. Basic literacy, mathematics, and writing abilities;
- f. Knowledge of when and how to apply research to solve problems;
- g. Effective interpersonal skills;
- h. Technology skills;
- i. Acquisition of good health and hygiene practices and habits;
- j. Understanding and acceptance of various cultures and ethnicities;
- k. Knowledge of how to manage personal finances;
- l. Willingness, strategies, as well as ability to further learning.

Much to our distress, in real life, educational policies are not always in sync with goals, and these goals are not always correlated to fields and programmes of study.

3) A *field of study* is a systematic and clearly delineated set of learning experiences usually provided over a period of several

years (e.g. 4 years – primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education, etc.). In most school curricula, the above fields of study correspond to the standard school subjects: Language and communication, Mathematics and sciences, Man and society, etc.

4) A *programme of study* represents the overall set of learning experiences provided by a school to a given group of learners, typically over a period of several years and usually encompassing several fields of study. This programme of study is often laid down in a policy statement which demarcates which subjects are compulsory and which are elective, together with their respective time allocations and if it is the case, with credits.

5) *Courses of study* are subsets of both a programme of study as well as of a field of study. It represents a set of organised learning experiences, as part of a study field, provided over a given period of time (e.g. a year, or a semester) for which the student typically receives ratings, grades or academic credits. A course of study is commonly given a title as well as a grade level or number label.

6) *Units of study* represent subsets of one course of study. They are a structured set of interrelated learning experiences provided as part of one course of study, typically lasting from one to three weeks. Most units are organised around one single all-embracing concept, such as Myths and legends; Famous personalities; Birthday party, etc.

7) *Lessons* are a collection of related learning experiences ordinarily lasting from 20 to 90 minutes, centred on a rather small number of objectives. A lesson is a didactic programme, based on a system of “structured actions” (Cristea 2002, p. 213), in accordance with the general and specific objectives of the educational process, appropriately operationalised at microlevel. Cristea (op. cit.) proposes a tridimensional model of the lesson:

a) the functional dimension referring to the general and specific objectives of the educational activity, set forth in educational policy documents (programmes and courses of study), which are in fact a reflection of curricular goals, derived from the educational ideal;

b) the structural dimension pertaining to the pedagogic resources involved in the activity, i.e. material (available didactic space and time, available teaching and learning materials and equipment), informational (study programmes, electronic and

print reference materials) and human resources (teachers' pedagogic skills, students' abilities);

c) the operational dimension referring to the design and implementation of the concrete objectives of the activity, derived from the general and specific objectives of the lesson, paying heed to classroom characteristics, through unlocking the pedagogic creativity of the teacher in order to fully turn to account the existing resources (contents-methodology-instructional environment) and the assessment means necessary in a given didactic context.

As a transition to the next chapter, I will in the following introduce the theory of a specialist in language pedagogy, Hans Heinrich Stern (1983, pp. 435-436), according to whom, curriculum theory deals with:

1) the underlying ideological and philosophical assumptions of curriculum, or as he calls it, curriculum philosophy;

2) the conceptualisation of three main components of curriculum:

a) purposes and content,

b) instruction,

c) evaluation;

3) curriculum processes:

a) systematic curriculum development,

b) the implementation of curriculum in educational institutions,

c) curriculum evaluation.

The three main components in 2) above are reminiscent of Stenhouse's own curricular elements: planning, empirical study and justification (see above).

When addressing curriculum philosophies, Stern (1983, p. 436) makes reference to Eisner and Vallance's (1974) five key orientations:

1) the school curriculum should develop *cognitive processes*. The school's main function is not to merely transmit a predetermined content but to equip children with enquiry skills, to develop their cognitive abilities, to help them to learn how to learn.

2) *self-actualization* or *curriculum as consummatory experience*. In Eisner and Vallance's point of view (1974, p. 9), schooling should provide the child with something *hic et nunc* and through the mediation of the curriculum, school 'should

enter fully into the child's life'. A curriculum should bear relevance at any given stage of the child's growth, rather than offer him experiences which will only prove useful when he is a grown-up.

3) *social reconstruction / relevance*, an orientation which focuses on the needs of the society which are to be met by education and curriculum.

4) *academic rationalism*, which lays emphasis on the heritage of classical scholarship and on a 'common literacy', embedded in the content of the curriculum, to be found at its very core.

5) *curriculum as technology*. Within this stance, values are neither questioned nor consciously set. Conversely, the focus is on the appropriate identification of goals and means.

To conclude, the complex realities of curriculum never cease to arouse interest and debate, given the multifaceted approaches and interpretations: sociological (sociocultural constraints and determinations at play in a society), psychological (interrelations established during the learning process between students' inner resources and the curricular framework), pedagogical (interrelations established between educational goals and educational practice), epistemological (pertaining to scientific content which encompass science fields corresponding to a curricular subject).