

Innovation in education and Curriculum Reforms in Mexico¹

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Introduction: Innovation and educational reform

From the beginning of the nineties started in Mexico structural reforms within the different levels of the Mexican educational system, changes that spanned educational models, study plans and programs and the teaching and learning methodologies as well, with as purpose to train the students depending on the globalization's requirements. Some of the main matters that emerged in this new educational agenda were the need to improve the quality of the educational processes and results; the importance of replacing the traditional schooling model, confined to a space of time to learn and study, by a new model of permanent lifelong learning, and also the search for a greater flexibility of the curriculum organization. The role of the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) started to be emphasized, and also the explicit boost for the development of high level intellectual abilities and of the students' complex thinking possibilities to face the technological, economic and cultural changes, together with the search for a tighter link between the students and diverse settings of real and professional life with which they will have to cope.

Facing this panorama, the curriculum reforms, and above all in higher education, have been giving priority to the strenghtening of the tie between education and work, to boost continuing and distance education, to develop student mobility and interinstitutional cooperation programs, but most of favoring their flexible and competitive nature. That is why the mechanism that directs the curriculum reforms within the Mexican universities during the last decades articulates around the curricular flexibility and the development of professional abilities. This makes senseful the idea of redirecting the professional training towards the flexible competency-based curriculum (Barrón, 2011; Martínez, 2011). For her part, Torres (2003, p. 2) points out that "education that is given by means of the schooling system requires profound and comprehensive changes in all the orders, so the result is a new system and not a continuation (improved or not) of the old one"⁴. Therefore the author asserts that the exhaustion of the school system that new policies try to improve and its countless problems have promoted, not as an only factor, but as a relevant one, significant educational and curriculum reform processes, understanding as "reforms" the governmental and institutional processes that have been undertaken by the ministries or departments of education designed to improve public education, although we must admit that not all the reforms have brought about significant educational changes. In order to favor educational change, Torres states that it is necessary to incorporate the innovation as a dimension that is inherent in the system itself and to focus the curricular-pedagogical dimension in order to raise again profoundly the question of



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what, how and wherefore we teach, learn and assess, spanning in a wide way the educational and managerial processes. At this point the author emphasizes how important it can be to create innovating educational models and to lay down premises and conditions in order to achieve the required changes.

The Mexican institutions do give priority to the matter of innovation, but they usually interpret educational innovation in very diverse ways, and the way to express the educational models in their concrete projects is different as well. In that way, models that can be considered as innovative, such as the increase of curriculum flexibility, competency-based education, education based on problems and cases, project methodology, academic tutorships, learner-centered curriculum, amongst others, get a new meaning facing the needs, ideologies, interests and institutional views. This can be adequate if the starting point is the need to locate knowledge and proposals in their context, but unfortunately what has been prevailing is a vision of so-called changes that consist actually in the incorporation of the educational novelties of the moment that do not lead to a change of paradigm and neither to an essential transformation of the institution itself.

We also observe that frequently the main responsibility of the success of implementing the innovative educational models falls on the teacher, since in his hands is usually left the task to concrete the didactic change within the classroom, understanding this as a transfer that is rather mechanical and without appropriate support conditions, to teaching spaces that have not experienced changes by themselves (Díaz Barriga, 2010a). It's a well-known fact that the long-range educational reforms give rise to new demands for what regards to the teaching practice and that they usually leave aside the material conditions and the working contexts in which teachers are performing. Within the schools, the change tends to come to a standstill in view of the need of significant knowledge, contents that are linked to the social, economic, political and cultural realities, demands that are represent a hard job to put into practice.

In our country the reforms related to the educational domain always generate expectations of change and progress; nevertheless within the setting of school practices these reforms are considered as governmental actions in which teachers always are left out. It is important here to point out that the reform projects do not change the school funding mechanisms and processes *per se*. It is not enough to introduce institutional changes nor attempts to improve the managerial abilities; neither to adopt quality measurement and learning assessment systems, to incorporate new curriculum contents nor to implement bonus programs for the teachers, since everything would seem to indicate that this measures have not been enough until now in our country and that many things are missing to improve equity, teaching quality and, broadly speaking, to increase the educational system's internal performance.

For what regards to the teacher training experiences in order to carry out the prescribed educational innovations for curriculum, these use to be shown as completely unprecedented designs, without proceeding to the recovery of the pedagogical ideas that underlied to them, without offering their foundations that belong to the learning theories or the development on which they uphold themselves, or without bringing about a critical view to the educational research corpus that back them up with regard to their scopes and limits. In this way, in short experiences with a lesser impact and scope, the teachers use to receive "anemic" versions of the innovation models that they are supposed to implement within the classrooms, since the construction of explanatory



frames, and critical and diachronic views about them are not favored. In the international domain, important scholars about educational change (Carneiro, 2006; Fullan, 2001; 2002; Hargreaves y Fink, 2006) warn that in all educational reform lies the risk to develop a practical or technocratic focus that is completely lacking in ethical commitment and that this is leading to the standardization and damage of the teaching labor's professionalization, and to a loss of the educational priorities and the adoption without reflection of imported fashions. They particularly agree that change must be systemic and not only in the formal structures. Looking in depth about these matters, the experts had already asserted since the end of the nineties that the way in which innovation was set out in public schools was inappropriate and had nothing to do with the understanding of what entails a systemic change:

It is probable that the main problem in public education is not the resistance to change, but the presence of many innovations that have been ordered or uncritically and superficially adopted on a fragmented ground (Fullan and Hargreaves 1999, p. 23)⁵.

This means that the challenge is not only for teachers and that the problem cannot be limited to the conditions of the teaching profession or to the impact of their professional exercise. According to Hargreaves (1996) other factors should also be taken into account:

- The teachers' initial training and education to service.
- What refers to the features of the teaching careers and their situation in the labor market.
- The wages, together with the remuneration and bonus structure, and the retirement policies.
- The subject of generation change.
- The teacher's work and professional exercise organization modes.
- The confrontation processes between the labor unions and the educational authorities (which generally involve serious conflicts between the unions and the governments).

Generally speaking we can point out that all those problems are a constant feature within the educational and curricular reform processes. The official discourse, however, reduce them to a single supposition: the possibility to raise the quality of education if the teacher training's quality is improved, a supposition that is overruled by all the elements that are generated by any attempt of a reform.

It has been said that innovation involves "a process of creative destruction"⁶ (UNESCO, 2005, p. 62). But the very uncritical adoption of this premise makes impossible to recover the value of cumulative knowledge and to harmonise the innovation culture with some vision of educational change within a reasonable time and with the conviction that what we require are systemic transformations. Since "the innovation in history uses to be linked to research for technological development, conditioned to a great extent by the development of economy"⁷ (Martínez, Toledo y Román, 2009, p. 2), the discourse about innovation emerges from the pressure to translate the tenets of the new market economy into training strategies within the education institutions, above all in higher education. In this case, our universities do not respond to the "innovating business university" model, but, according to these authors,



they have been directing massively towards the technical and instrumental abilities at the expense of a sound general training. On the contrary, Lugo (2008) suggests that the notion of innovation in the educational domain must be placed into its sphere of restricted or specific scope, a qualitative one, and specially in the classroom practices, with and between the subjects, and about the development of the educational centers. On the other hand, the innovations must be dealt with not only as technical-pedagogical processes, but for what regards their political nature and their practical scope, that is why the study of its pedagogical, managerial and labor rationalities are very important (Ezpeleta, 2004).

We fully concur with de Alba (2007) when she states that if the national and regional development indices are analyzed the results of the university or educational reforms are meagre, and sometimes even negative. She believes that the focal point is that those reforms completely lack a social project and the idea that “innovation” produces by necessity, and regardless of the project with which it is linked, produces an improvement in society and education. The author questions the hegemonic discourse of the so-called knowledge society and in any case contends that it is necessary to achieve a plural conception of “knowledge societies”⁸, adding the epithets “critical innovation” and “alternative” globalization. Such an innovation will only be possible in so far as the existing strains that arise from the local and unique contexts, in the way of thinking and in the day-to-day dealing with curriculum.

The importance of innovation on the curriculum actors

Unlike in the nineties, decade in which the Mexican higher education institutions, and mainly the universities, focused on the design of innovating and flexible curricular proposals, emphasizing the matter of curriculum development, since the eighties and until now (2000-2012) what prevails is the interest to provide a detailed account of the different actors’ perspective about the practices that have been brought about from the implementation of those proposals. This concern could be considered as a part of what Ruiz (2001) calls the logic of consumerism. In order to understand this statement the author lays down three levels of curricular analysis: 1) the deconstruction logic; 2) the translation logic and 3) the logic of consumerism.

The first level, called deconstruction logic, includes the study of the formal and actual dimensions of curriculum. The second level intends to characterize the underlying logic that allows to *translate* the whole of interests, decisions and visions on which the institution leans with regard to the professional training, on a formal and actual level. And finally the third level that deals with the logic of consumerism is directed to the characterization of the ways in which the teachers and students interpret and give a meaning to the study plan within practice. This last level tries to know the curriculum practice and, therefore, to fathom the curricular reality, aiming to characterize the day-to-day life within the classroom during the follow-up of the study plan (Bárceñas, 2010; Bellido, 2011).

In the diverse researches that have been carried out during this decade about the opinión and the daily experiencia of the curriculum actors, category that includes teachers and students, authorities, curriculum designers, amongst others, with regard to the implementation of innovating curricula (flexible, competence-based, learner-centered curriculum, etc.) we find the expression of a diversity of meanings and significances that allows to unveil how complex can be the implementation of a far-



reaching reform. The following is a quick review of some of those studies in order to illustrate the reality of innovation when an educational and curriculum reform is implemented. In a study carried out in a major public university of the Veracruz state researchers achieved to detect a lack in the theoretical and conceptual understanding and in the appropriation of the innovations by a substantial part of the teachers, amongst all the professors with hourly contracts that have not been able to get involved in the collegiated training or program-designing processes. A new strain can be appended to this panorama, *i. e.* the adoption of the competence-based education model, for what regards to the teachers' training and for the training of students enrolled in the different undergraduate degree courses. The teacher consider that they do not have at their disposal the appropriate infrastructure nor the minimal conditions to guarantee the transformation process of teaching within the classroom. A possible factor of resistance to change has been the diversification of the roles and academic responsibilities that subverted their working status (Díaz Barriga, Martínez y Cruz, 2011)

Connected with the former, some studies have oriented towards the analysis of the teacher's new role as a *guest professor* in the business world, a figure that is starting to gain strenght within the academic and business communities, amongst which we can refer to the works of Martínez (2006), Pedroza (2004) and Díaz-Villa (2005). Although the need for cooperation between the enterprise and the university is not new, it is essential to keep talking through the intentions of today's and tomorrow's university in order to be able to make proposals and to put forward alternatives to define a kind of cooperation in which none of the two parts is a subordinate of the other. Part of the dilemman be reduced to the attempt to articulate entities with different organizational times, rythms and structures and with autonomy of their own. The universities are not going to modify radically their educational models, since as Follari states, "the university should no meet mechanically the demands of markes; but it does have to accept that the notion of *social criticism* must be immanent to the professional practices to which the students are trained"⁹ (Follari, 2010, p. 1). The educational institutions should bring about a series of research options and interventions that are socially significant in view of the apparent dissociation between the academic and the labor world.

Other researches inform about reform processes that result complex and never really exempt from contradictions and important strains, where the actors' social and institutional position and the institutional determinants are taken into account to explain the acceptance of or resistance against curriculum and the innovating proposals. Amongst those researches we can refer to the study about curriculum in the general high school competence-based curriculum at the Universidad de Guadalajara carried out by Andrade (2011) and Rautenberg's analysis (2009) of the subject's and the institution's role in the most recent curricular change processes at the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional.

A significant strain has been generated due to the association of curricular flexibility with an instrumentalist vision in which curriculum is seen as subordinated to the demands of know-how, something that results in an unresolved conflict between the theoretical and practical knowledge (Barrón y Gómez, 1999; Barrón, 2011). This conflict impacts particularly on the teachers, who face numerous contradictions in a curriculum oriented to know-how whereas they have been trained to teach disciplinary contents or matters. The same can be said about the competence-based curriculum



approaches, which privilege the knowledge based on the action directed to resolve problems and not the acquisition of declarative information.

In several studies the emphasis is put on the factors that predetermine or hinder the change or the expected innovation. Hence situations such as the resistance to change, the ineffectiveness or obsolescence of the educational legislation facing the needed innovations, the gap, contradiction or conflict in the teaching tasks and in the labor and academic administrative aspects, the lack in forecasting the resources and infrastructure required by change amongst other, appear as important factors. Rautenberg (2009), starting from an assumption that has been accepted since a few decades, asserts that “the curricular change is more than a technical construction game”¹⁰, since it must be conceptualized and analyzed, as a social project, from the point of view of the institutional micropolitics. The change in the curriculum structures means a “disturbing intervention” action since it mobilizes imaginaries, spaces of power, ways of participation and position within the institutions. This author identifies at least four stances: the teachers who are part of the “expert” group and who join the proactive group of change; the group of people who do not join the working team but do not offer resistance to change; the group who offers resistance to change and links up to block out the change; and finally the group who shows some willingness to the curricular reform but only accepts it from their own project and interests.

On the other hand, and in line with the hegemonic discourse of the access to globalization and to the knowledge society, it seems that to innovate is equivalent to introduce cutting-edge technologies and, in the case of education, to incorporate the ICT to the educational act. This entails the risk of a technocratic perception, since “curriculum innovation is not a synonym of incorporating virtual educational experiences; in any case, its objective will be to favor creativity in a society that requires alternative ways to understand and settle its major problems”¹¹ (Herrera, 2005, p. 118). This is why for this author what should be retrieved in the project of innovating university is a humanism that puts ethics, science and culture before the market’s rules.

The need for systemic changes within the curriculum structures

Even though during the last decades we have heard about the proliferation of the flexible and the competence-based curriculum, and also about the promotion of the cognitive abilities and the specific domain competences, the reality is that the logic that prevails in the curriculum design is still the positivist way of thinking that leads to a unidisciplinary cutback in the courses. In the reforms of basic and higher education the learning units keep being disciplinary and thematic and the adoption of inter- or transdisciplinary look is very infrequent. In some cases what we find is a kind of hybrid between the disciplinary curriculum structure and the inclusion of courses that subscribe the logic of the so-called transverse contents or axes or the approaches of the so-called student-centered learning focusing curriculum (Díaz Barriga, 2010b). And this conflicts with the logic of competence-based learning and with the possibility to carry out the acquisition of the so-called “transverse” contents of curriculum, where subjects such as environment, values, civility, digital literacy and education for life stand out. This is why a remaining issue is the rethinking of the knowledge epistemology that underlies curriculum and, in that direction, the curriculum “innovation” still has not achieved its task. But at the same time curriculum makers have not understood yet at what extent this change in the knowledge epistemology is needed to transcend the encyclopaedist



curriculum, and this is one of the factors that has generated more confusion amongst the curriculum program designers, and not to say amongst the teachers and students, who are used to a kind of schoolwork that follows the logic of subject matters of the concerned discipline.

We start from the consideration that we need a systemic way of thinking or look in the educational processes that have as purpose innovation, since it is only in this way that we will be able to understand their complexity. Otherwise it is difficult to understand the key aspects and incidences, the relations between elements and agents, the dysfunctional situations, and above all the points from which a deep transformation can be achieved. This means that the premise is that we have to change our fragmentary and slanted visions to attempt to build explanatory approaches and to achieve an intervention process based in a general overview that is necessarily holistic, social, ecological and humane.

When we talk about systemic change we think about promoting processes that can lead to structural changes that may in turn have an impact on the whole system, since the ultimate goal is the transformation of the system as a whole for the benefit of the individuals and groups that are involved in it. Although it is true that the origin of the systemic focus was in biology, cybernetics and cognitive science, today the notion of systemic change has expanded to other domains with a clear psycho-social, sociological and organizational character and branchings to the domain of education. According to Meadows (1999), a little change can give rise to a transformation that impacts the composition of the whole system, and one of the discoveries has been that probably the best strategy to promote the changes is to work with networks, with the participation of driving groups that can be able to generate new political, social or economic structures on the basis of changes that are noticeable in the mentality and social practices of individuals.

In this logic Fullan (2001; 2002) studied a decade ago the dynamics of educational change and asserts that the educational changes, to achieve being put into practice, must be systemic, *i. e.*, must take into account not only the formal structures, but also the actors and the academic and administrative processes and must have as result new ways to interact, to think and to participate. We consider that the transformation process that leads to innovation is a complex socio-cultural process that takes time and requires the willingness of the curriculum actors. This is why we assert that the educational institution is not going to change as long as the individuals who make it up do not change, and so aspects such as the culture of the educational organization can turn out to be either the main obstacle or the greatest facilitator of change. The former intends to say that one of the problems that are faced by the innovation strategies that are adopted within the curricular reform processes is that they focus the innovation itself without taking into account the understanding of culture, strategies, norms, roles, practices, etc. and the way in which the educational institution will respond to the demands of innovation.

We can thus identify a set of challenges in the academic sphere and for what regards to the management of the curricular projects that claim to be “innovating”. Particularly within the framework of the current institutional and curriculum practices of higher education institutions we observe the need to carry out an in-depth analysis of the participation, harmonization and decision processes that are generated around the pedagogical and curricular administration, coping domains such as the following ones:



- With regard to the legal field: the absence of a regulation at the university level able to mark the academic and administrative guidelines for the development of the benefits of curricular flexibility, competence-based education and or the implementation of tutorships, to name but a few of the innovating elements around which a real legal vacuum has been detected in the university legislation, or important contradictions when trying to put it into practice. So it will be necessary to legislate, for instance, about the structures of flexible curriculum or competence-based education or by fields of literacy, and not only about the traditional disciplinary subject areas, or it will be indispensable to welcome new teaching figures that were not taken into account in the former system. This means that it will be necessary to adapt the administrative proceedings and to define precisely the academic policies according to the innovating educational models and to count on a comprehensive institutional program that ascertains the applicable legal frameworks and the assessment and selfassessment mechanisms as well with the concerned academic units.
- For what regards to the innovating models based on academic tutorships we can highlight the need to count on an institutional tutorship program that has been developed specifically for the characteristics of the flexible or competence-based curriculum structure or able to meet the demands of other ways to organize curriculum that differ from within the institutions and involve like we already said the systemic transformation processes, thus it can be reduced to offer workshops and single training courses for teachers who can act as tutors.
- About the students and the flexible curriculum models we can point out that it is necessary to understand first their logic and to learn how to make decisions that help to build their own academic trajectory amongst the wide range of options that are available. Nevertheless one of the main operation problem that has been documented is the overcrowding of the classgroups; therefore opening a greater spectrum of possibilities for the students increases the costs for the universities, demanding new classrooms and new teachers, a situation that can be very difficult for the increasingly scarce public budgets.
- With regard to the academic organization, it is not yet clear what would be the appropriate ways of academic organization would be (of collegiate bodies, of individuals; administrative and managerial) in order to respond to the manifold feature of the flexible or competence-based curriculum approach, or other anticipated innovations (for instance the training in real settings outside the university campus or the increasing incorporation of virtual or distance educational experiences). It is important to mention here that, within the context of an institution that is still under construction, great difficulties can be faced, such as the concurrence of processes like the formation of the academic-administrative instances, the construction of identity of the different subjects, the strenghtening of the relational dynamics, amongst other.
- Concerning the mobility: however the students' and academic staff's mobility is considered by the UNESCO one of the most useful factors to improve the quality in higher education in this century and the international organization's opinion is that this element is essential to the curricular flexibility, some limitations can be observed. Amongst them Portillo and

Contreras (2009) spot: a) the lack of socialization of the diverse agreements with national and international institutions amongst the university community and in its operation; b) the fact that mobility is almost reduced to postgraduate studies and does not really help to develop institutional projects; c) for what regards to the mobility of the academic staff, the most influential factors are the institutional and personal ones. The institutional factors have to do with the administrative hurdles (related to tabs, academic profiles and the the grant of a scholarship) and with the fact that the human resources use to be limited. The main academic mobility can be observed amongst the professor-researcher category; amongst the personal limitations that impact students and members of the academic staff we can mention family problems and the fact that they could be performing other jobs than the academic one, their weakness in other languages, the fear for change and a great job or academic uncertainty.

The possibilities to flexibilize academic actions also implies new regulation mechanisms for the educational practice, mechanisms that lead to a better understanding and new formulations of the university regulation, mainly for what regards to the monitoring and authorization of the actions coming from the study plans. In this sense, Martínez (2006) thinks that currently the universities have entered into internationalization processes of the subjects and complete degree courses where the portability of the academic credits is an essential elements and where they are trying to achieve common organization, structure and curriculum credits calculation systems. This starts to determine the regulation of matters such as the enrollment and qualification requirements, the professional practices, the assessment and accreditation mechanisms, amongst other, towards the adoption of common global models. Our opinion is that this is going to establish significant limits to the educational institutions' possibilities to make up and operate freely their study plans and programs and, generally speaking, to the profession regulation criteria at national level.

In order to conclude this section it seems important to us to reflect on the analysis carried out by Casimiro Lopes and Macedo (2011), since they offer an interesting point of view to understand what is hindering the systemic change is our educational systems. These authors state that the concepcions about educational policies are prevailing when trying to direct the practice since the seventies, and that these use to privilege the administrative intervention, although they still defend a separation between the project and the practice. And for what regards to the curriculum policies, this brings about that the school practice always remains out of the decision making spaces.

Conclusions

Diverse experts about education agree with what we have been asserting throughout this paper: the educational reforms that have been taking place in our country during the two last decades have been backed up on the discourse of the entrance to globalization and have been subject to the “rush of change”. To this regard Kumar (2011), who analyzes the evolution of curriculum studies in Mexico, states that it is precisely in the nineties when a new period begins, characterized by the globalization processes of the reforms and curriculum models, and also by the neoliberal notions of innovation and accreditation. Pinar (2003; 2011), on the other hand, asserts that the curriculum studies have reached a stage of internationalization



with significant strains between the global, national and local areas, and Mexico in no exception about it, although the author presents a set of circumstances of its own.

We personally found in our analysis of the curriculum production related to the matter of curricular innovations during the first decade of our twenty-first Century (2000-2012) that when we talk about the curriculum reforms the emphasis is still put on the curriculum planning or curriculum development processes and that the logic of projects centered on the authorities and the experts has not been overcome yet, although at the same time a greater participation of the actors in the curriculum implementation processes can be observed, and in some cases it has even been possible to document in the educational communities the occurrence of resistance or even boycott processes to the curriculum projects that are perceived as centralized or issued by the authorities (Díaz Barriga, 2012). At the same time, in the field of curriculum studies carried out by university academic staff we can observe a significant interest in the analysis of meanings, processes and curriculum practices in which the actors (teachers and students) are involved about curriculum, a fact that has given rise to the postmodern and post-structuralist theories about curriculum (Kumar, 2011). Nevertheless we also find that the main interest of the conceptual construction of the curriculum field, the research work about its historical retrieval or about the construction of identities amongst the curriculum actors, are questions that can be circumscribed to the work that has been carried out in certain circles of university researchers, but that they have a poor impact on the curriculum reform projects, particularly on those that are implemented in basic education.

In the analysis of the texts about curriculum and the curriculum reform projects that have been expressed in our contexts we find an important strain between the claim to favor curriculum innovation processes as a motor for educational transformation by means of the prescription of a series of models that orient and give sense to the curriculum reform processes and the fact that they still lack mechanisms to push forward systemic change processes within the educational institutions. We do not find enough information about the processes and conditions that make possible or obstruct these transformations. The training of teachers, a key factor in the possibility to transform curriculum and teaching, is still a pending issue.

The results of our analysis reveal that, with a few small exceptions, the way to work is following a centralized curriculum logic that is designed in a “top to bottom” and “from the outside in” approach that has characterized the curriculum changes in our educational system since the seventies. Many of the curriculum innovations will still emerge as a vertical implementation approach, or even as impositions of the authorities or experts on the actors (teachers and students), who often do not achieve to understand them nor to appropriate them for themselves in order to make them meaningful in their daily life. Only in few cases the authors understand innovation as the need for an in-depth change in social paradigms and practices of an educational community, that must be the result of the reflection and appropriation of all the people involved in the process.

We thus can conclude that from the point of view of the educational authorities the discourse of curriculum innovation does not have as main focus the understanding of curriculum or its actors, and neither the implementation of advanced pedagogical models, since the most important factor is the pressure to translate the postulates of the new market economy to training strategies in the educational institutions, situation that is even more obvious in higher education. To this regard several studies like Martínez’



(2011) point out that our universities do not respond to the “innovating entrepreneurial universities” but that have on the contrary taken an unreasonable direction towards the technical and instrumental abilities or competences at the expense of a solid general training. Our country, like other nations, is facing the preponderance of the rational and technological approaches, of the “entrepreneurial way of thinking” or the “corporative vision”, most of all for what regards to the long-range educational reforms and projects. Although there are not enough studies about this particular matter, this global trend seems to be affecting a lot on the restructuring of the teaching function and to be leading to the hegemony of the standardized evaluations and of the accountability, competence and performance approaches.

The purpose of this paper has been to describe the situation that rules in Mexico, but the discussion that has been opened by Pinar (2003; 2011) shows clearly that the entrance of curriculum studies to the stage of internationalization and to the policies of international organizations about curriculum reveals aspects that coincide with what happens in other countries, not only in Latin America, but also in Europe or in the Anglo-Saxon world. According to Pinar, who collects the analysis of curriculum studies in 29 countries (so diverse as Argentina, Brazil, China, Japan, Mexico, France and Zimbabwe, amongst others), the main concern is the increasing trend to unify and validated starting from a hegemonic perspective the way of thinking and the policies of the educational and governmental organizations. Increasingly the curriculum projects are subject to the imposition of the great corporations’ or industrialized nations’ economic logic and interests. If we take as reference the authors proceeding from diverse countries who take stock of the orientation of curriculum in their countries, we can find some convergent key points:

- There are relatively few studies about the history of curriculum, at least if we compare these with the works directed to the intervention or definition of curriculum policies.
- In several countries the authors talk about a lack of differentiation and contradictions between the academic and intellectual field of research and curriculum theories and the activities and proposals that arise from the “official educational organizations”.
- We apparently face the prevailing of the rational and technological approaches, of the “entrepreneurial way of thinking”, above all for what regards to the long-range reforms and projects, and this is a vision that pervades many educational systems, of course with due exceptions, since at the same time we can notice the presence of experiences that point to other directions.
- Nevertheless, diverse countries inform the increasing adoption in many of the curricular reforms of the above mentioned entrepreneurial view about education that includes the restructuring of the teaching function, the hegemony of the standardized evaluations and the approaches of accountability, competence and performance.
- The strain between the *what* question (critical discourse) and the *how* (technical discourse) is still present everywhere.
- Nowadays, in a rather academic domain and together with important field studies, we can observe the emergence of a postmodern and post-structuralist studies and, above all, of discourses that stress the multiculturalism, the gender and racial problem about curriculum, and also the proliferation of many



approaches related to the matter of construction of identities by means of the curriculum and, in a broad sense, of diverse actors' educational experiences.

Notes

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⁴ In the original document: “la educación que se imparte a través del sistema escolar requiere cambios profundos e integrales en todos los órdenes, no más de lo mismo ni simple mejoría de lo existente”.

⁵ In the original Spanish version: “Es probable que el mayor problema en la educación pública no sea la resistencia al cambio sino la presencia de muchas innovaciones mandadas o adoptadas acrítica y superficialmente sobre una base fragmentada”.

⁶ In the original Spanish version: “un proceso de destrucción creadora”.

⁷ In the original: “Dado que “la innovación en la historia se reconoce vinculada a la investigación para el desarrollo tecnológico, condicionada en gran medida al desarrollo de la economía”

⁸ In Spanish “sociedades de conocimientos”, with double plural.

⁹ In the original version: “la universidad no tiene por qué responder mecánicamente a las demandas del mercado; pero sí debe asumir que la noción de *crítica social* debe resultar inmanente a las prácticas profesionales para las cuales se forma a los estudiantes”.

¹⁰ In the original version: “el cambio curricular es más que un armado técnico”.

¹¹ In the original version: “la innovación curricular no es sinónimo de incorporar experiencias educativas virtuales; en todo caso, su objetivo será potenciar la creatividad en una sociedad que exige modos alternativos de comprender y resolver sus grandes problemas”.

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