

Curriculum: Voices, Tensions and Perspectives

Alice Casimiro Lopes¹
State University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Ana Laura Gallardo Gutiérrez²
National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico

In memory of Bill Doll

In October 2016 took place the Colloquium *Curriculum – Society: Voices, tensions and perspectives* in Mexico City as part of the ten-year commemorative activities of the Institute of Research on University and Education of the National Autonomous University of Mexico. The call was promoted by 17 convening institutions from five Latin American countries and one non-governmental organization: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO).

As part of the publications program derived from this Colloquium, the *Transnational Curriculum Inquiry* edition arises. This volume brings together more than a dozen of Latin American academics, who undertook the task of reviewing and briefly expanding the papers they presented at that event with the intention of placing Latin American curricular thinking as an effervescent and dynamic field of knowledge with an eminently critical political commitment.

In this framework, the purpose of this edition is to problematize the Latin American curriculum issue, both from a regional perspective and the search of strengthening and enrichment of ties, dialogues, projects and exchanges within it, as in its connection with other regions of the world, in particular with the Anglo-Saxon thought and the approach to curriculum views in Central and Eastern Europe countries, as well as curricular studies in China.

In this sense, the idea of curricular conversation (Pinar, 2004) comes in this volume as a guiding thread, which allows its members to organize an urgent intercultural dialogue for curricular studies. This dialogue has the aim of *internationalizing* the critical views that emphasize on thinking about the relationship between the curriculum - society for a plural and diverse global context, providing recognition and exercise of the right to education as a public and social good before the onslaught of current neoliberalism in education.

From the perspective described above, this TCI issue is organized into four major sections. The first group gathers articles by Alicia de Alba, Alfredo Furlán,



TO CITE THIS ARTICLE PLEASE INCLUDE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

LOPES, A. C. & Gallardo Gutiérrez, A. L. (2017) Curriculum: Voices, Tensions and Perspectives.
Transnational Curriculum Inquiry 14 (1-2) <http://nitinat.library.ubc.ca/ojs/index.php/tci> <access date>

Daniel Johnson, Silvia Morelli, Bertha Orozco and Concepcion Barrón. All of them are referred to an epistemic theoretical reflection in the field of curricular studies approaching the need to relocate this dimension in the field of curricular studies discussion to observe the conditions of possibility of the production of knowledge in the current neoliberal context. This group of authors is also interested in historically recovering the constitution of the field and with it, the Latin American curricular thinking. They contribute with topics that introduce renewed views on the major problems facing the curriculum as a field of knowledge and political action, in addition to educational practices and processes.

In a second group, the papers of Myriam Southwell and Rita Angulo are presented. They develop their ideas based on the tensions established between the prescriptive nature of the curriculum and the multiple and complex relationships involved in curricular resignification processes, focusing on students as a determining factor in these processes and as absent from curricular policies that fail to address them as subjects of the curriculum.

For its part, Mario Yapu and Ana Laura Gallardo's articles make up the third section of the volume addressing the ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity issues as inherent factors in the constitution of Latin American educational systems. In these, the Bolivia and Mexico cases are analyzed as constitutive issues of the national curricula.

Finally, in a fourth section, can be found the texts of Marina Paulozzo, Leda Badilla Chavarria, Sugey Montoya Sandí, Sandra Zúñiga Arrieta and David Pérez Arenas. All of them gravitate around the relationship curriculum-evaluation, addressing topics such as accreditation of curricular programs, curricular change at the graduate level, as well as the impact of assessing bodies on curricular design.

As can be seen, this volume shows a broad and rich landscape in the most relevant discussions of curricular studies, which outline the guidelines of a necessary debate to rethink education in our time. This volume also shows the proclaimed hybrid character of curricular production in Latin America (Lopes & Macedo, 2014) and also in other countries (Pinar *et al*, 1996). We understand this hybridity, in Laclau's terms (1996), as articulation among identities not fully constituted. Equivalences are established by antagonisms to common enemies, such as neoliberalism, centralized and globally defined curricular policies. Nevertheless, the *differ* remains being produced: different theoretical options, different objects and different modes of research express different curricular demands. It is worth mentioning that this difference is also expressed in the same country. This leads us to problematize what Latin American curricular thinking means, as Daniel Johnson does in his article for this issue of TCI. In addition, what it means to link curriculum production to a specific country.

For this discussion, the notion of disciplinary community has theoretical possibilities. In her presentation at the Colloquium, one of us (Lopes, 2016) problematized the possibility of nominating Latin American curricular community as a fullness identity. In her words, this imaginary construction – a Latin American curricular community – is not a question of nationality or space or place (where the social actor was born, where the social actor lives, where the social actor is located in a period of time, where he or she works). This is a discursive construction of a context. Every *self* is a sedimentation of many identifications that are impossible to establish once and for all. In this context, people are subjectified by a Latin American curricular field and it is not possible to control all differences and translations in this process.

If we agree with this discursive approach, the research of the curricular communities is not the research of those who assume some universities positions. It is not the research of groups linked to certain social movements, political parties,



associations of all sorts and other institutions are seen as social actors. Differently, it is important to identify curricular demands that create a Latin American curricular community and its subjects: demands for social development; demands for inclusive education; demands for emancipation; demands for equity and so on.

It is important to research the contextual demands, because they allow understanding which subjectivities are constructed (Costa & Lopes, 2015). There is no stable identity that allows to predict, assume, a given policy action. Once a particularity is raised as a condition of threat to the fulfillment of differential demands or to the realization of projects that allow us to suppose that same fulfillment, discourses are constructed and proven able to coalesce around different actors and social institutions.

In curriculum policies, we seek to construct the notion of curriculum demand: the demand in name of the curriculum field, the educational demands and those related to professional issues and career, which are not necessarily clearly separated. Through their enunciation, references are made to the curriculum tradition, to well-grounded pedagogical discourses, but the policy fight itself modifies both traditions and demands, which constitute other discourses in virtue of the contextual articulations (Costa & Lopes, 2015). Such discourses are always translations trying to contain a *differ* that cannot be completely contained (Derrida, 1982).

In this perspective, the Latin American curricular community is the set of subjectivities formed in provisional operations in the discursive (always political) community named Latin American. We construct what Latin American curricular community is, when we constructs Latin American curricular field. Without essences, without a set of fixed identities. There is a contingent antagonism to Neoliberalism, the idea of North, the colonizer and so on that creates an identity of Latin American curricular community. As all identities, the identity of Latin American curricular community is precarious, constantly dislocated. Just a name that subjectify us.

In this perspective, this TCI issue – with its authors and readers – is also an evidence of the Latin American curricular community and the possibility of its construction.

7

Notes

¹ alicecasimirolopes@gmail.com

² anag800@yahoo.com

References

Costa, H. H. & Lopes, A. C. (2015) *School subject community in times of death of the Subject*. European Conference of Curriculum Studies. Portugal, Porto, Universidade do Porto. p. 333-340.

Available: http://www.fpce.up.pt/eccs2015/tables/CurriculumStudies_E-Book.pdf

Derrida, J. (1982) *Margins of Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Laclau, E. (1996) *Emancipations*. London: Verso.

Lopes, A. C. (2016) Is there a Latin American curricular community? *Colloquium Curriculum – Society: Voices, tensions and perspectives*. Mexico, IISUE/UNAM.

Lopes, A. C., & Macedo, E. (2014) The curriculum field in Brazil since the 1990's. In Pinar, W. (Ed.). *International Handbook of curriculum Studies*. New York: Routledge.

Pinar, W. (Ed.) (2014) *International Handbook of curriculum Studies*. New York: Routledge.



Pinar, W. F.; Reynolds, W.; Slaterry, P. & Taubman, P. (1996) *Understanding curriculum*. New York: Peter Lang.

