
PRESENTATION

There is a growing consensus in professional and social media that educational reforms have reached their limits and the much desired “transformation” of educational systems is not happening. This seminar aims at shifting the focus of the debate to the underrated and the most conserved, fundamental unit of educational paradigms: curriculum.

In general, the curriculum tries to answer questions such as: what and when to teach, how to teach, and what, how and when to assess. The curriculum designs and plans the academic organization and activities that will take place in a given time and context.

Our vision of the world determines philosophical foundations of the curriculum and closely correlates with a particular model of the society desired or envisioned and the purpose of education for it. Educational activities then get specified in learning objectives, skills and competences – both major-specific and higher-level learning outcomes. The content and learning materials, a set of teaching methods appropriate for achieving desired outcomes, as well as assessment criteria and practices consistent with them.

Given that nowadays it is very difficult to envisage how our society will evolve and which will be the people’s future learning needs, we could consider that a modern curriculum should educate for dealing with this systemic lifelong uncertainty.

The very nature of knowledge is changing, too: it is becoming more fragmented and distributed; most of it is being constructed through collaborative contributions in open source scenarios. Thus, it is becoming more and more difficult to merely transmit it as content. If accepted that content is not the same than knowledge, and that some kind of mediation is needed to transform information or content into new knowledge, then content cannot be anymore the central point of the curriculum. This calls for a balance between the current practice of early specialization and a consideration of the growing role for general education – an emerging trend resonant with liberal art college education.

In this changing learning environment, pedagogical methodologies are in particular need for innovation – so much that some people call for “disruptive pedagogies”: a buzzword that is worth of good debate.

As for the current general assessment methods, they have a grading purpose, so testing is the most utilized assessment technique. With a resonance to the growing PISA tensions, there is an intensive search for new quantitative indicators that could advance schools to a more prestigious position. In this context, formative assessment is clearly undervalued and deserves a thoughtful discussion about its role the new curriculum.

SUGGESTED TOPICS

- Which parts of curriculum need to undergo the most radical changes?
- Can real innovation in the curriculum development be incremental? Which areas of it deserve a rupture?
- From the developmental and biological perspective, how the long-life learning stages can be optimized?
- What are the basic skills/competencies that modern curriculum should cover?
- Rethinking the Pre-K12 education: alternative schools and new developments from various countries
- The shifting role of and the current trends in general education: which competences can be taught within this part of curricula?
- Learning with technology: how early and how much of computer use is right for effective learning?
- What should we know and take into account from cognitive studies and neuroscience into the educational practice and in curricular design in particular?
- "Teach to the test" policies are increasingly rejected by educators. What are new approaches to follow the outcomes of learning? What are alternative forms of assessment that better inform us about a polymorphic reality of learning results?

CALL FOR DEMOS

Even though traditional curricula approaches are limiting the potential of people's learning, there are notable examples of teacher- and school-led innovation, evolving technology-enabled pedagogy and personal learning in every country around the world,. The very nature of knowledge is changing, and pedagogies should evolve in order to take better advantage of the affordances that technology provides. Objectives and competencies, nature and weight of content, methodologies for teaching and learning, and assessment methods and techniques should be rethought to make educational systems better serve the interests and needs of the citizens. Sometimes they even go ahead of research, thus marking new directions. We encourage you to showcase your innovative project or experiment in educational practice, even if it is in process of development yet. This could be a good opportunity to make an informative and relevant case out of it, to share your results, successful practice, but also your doubts.

Accepted demos will have **20 minutes to demonstrate the case** and then will be followed by **20 minutes of discussion** with other speakers and participants.

We expect the presentations to be specific and practical, rather than theoretical or analytical, and address any level of education.

In particular, the seminar organizers are keen to receive proposals that:

- Are based on or supported by research (or not!)
- Demonstrate an experimental or alternative approach to coursework, curriculum, assessment, etc (see *Suggested topics*)
- Are related to issues of social inclusion and development
- Stimulate and provoke a good discussion

Format requirements for Demo Proposals

- A text document with an Executive Summary of the proposed presentation, including the essence of the innovation and reference to the main topics of the (max. 2 pages).
- You may include any references or links to additional reading materials at the end of the document.
- Provide a short bio of the author/s.

Submission deadline: Proposals should be sent by email to catedraunesco@uoc.edu by September 30.

Submissions will be reviewed by a panel of faculty peers.

Notification of acceptance and additional information will be provided before the end of October.