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***Teaching and Learning Road Map for Schools:
Global and yet Local!!***

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The main question:

What is a viable theoretical scheme that can guide school curriculum deliberations, maintaining both a global and a local quality OR which curriculum theory has the power of being adopted universally and the versatility of being adapted locally? Can the notion of “Glocal” coined in the field of sociology (2010) be regarded as a meaningful and relevant notion in the field of curriculum?

The genre of inquiry:

What is being discussed could be a candidate for a form of curriculum inquiry referred to as speculative essay by Short (1991). My reading of this genre of inquiry considers as candidates new or expanded schemes that can make additions to the conceptual asset of the field and contribute to its growth, thereby, assisting the practitioners use more powerful lenses to see through and beyond the existing interpretations of curricular phenomena and to, thus, initiate leaps forward.

A point on the importance and originality of the subject of discussion:

Thus understood, the critical issue of curriculum globalization and localization enjoys and is supported by a theory that is not external to the field; ie: borrowed from disciplines such as economy, political science or cultural studies. Rather an internally formulated or indigenous theory, initiated and expanded in the field of education (curriculum studies) enters the scene and guides the deliberations in this rough uneasy road. This is a sign, also, of the living character of any field of academic study and its well being, indicating that the curriculum field, as a case in point, has not exhausted its potentials to offer solutions to new problems (Via Schwab, 1969).

The main argument:

The curriculum theory supporting the development of teaching-learning road map in the era of globalization is the focus of this paper. The author argues that there is a viable curriculum theory that can be applied both globally and locally in different societies or that can potentially cater to need for human beings that espouse global and local identities at the same time.

The theory being considered for this purpose is cognitive pluralism, first offered by Elliot Eisner (1994). **Cognitive pluralism** is based on a philosophical view about an essential human

characteristic. Human beings as homosapiens, distinctively capable of inventing symbol systems to facilitate meaning making and meaning sharing or to quench the never seizing thirst for understanding and communicating-offered by Suzane Langer (1976). The importance of symbol systems is also eloquently captured in phrase by Goodman (1978). He suggests that “there are as many worlds as there are ways to describe them”. Cognitive pluralism is also said to be consistent with a psychological view of human intelligence, namely multiple Intelligence or MI, espousing the existence of several talents or forms of intelligences comprising the whole of human intellectual capacities, all awaiting nourishment and enrichment through education - put forward by Howard Gardner(1983,1999).

This theory, it is argued, can provide a viable or defensible universal framework for macro curriculum decision making at the school level which at the same time also leaves a fair amount of discretionary space for local /cultural interventions when it comes to very significant micro level decisions that leads to actual curriculum products. The theory of cognitive pluralism, in other words, is the embodiment of the idea of curriculum being global and yet local. It must be noted that the author is not aware of any discussions put forward by Eisner with respect to cognitive pluralism that would cast this theory’s potentials within the framework adopted here, that is, globalization and localization of curriculum. This could be regarded as another aspect of the originality that might be attributed to this paper.

Further explanation:

The key concept here is suggested to be **forms of representation**, each embracing a particular form of thinking or being rooted in one such possible form of thought, meaning or understanding. Humans to be fully educated need to become indiscriminately and, of course, relatively conversant in all these forms of representation enabling them to engage in effective encoding and decoding within each mode.

What specifically are these forms of representation? There has been many attempts by educational theorists to classify them using different terminologies to be sure. The classifications are meant by each presenter to be inclusive and comprehensive, exhausting the known types. Therefore, they manifest a considerable amount of overlap. To name just a few by way of example, one could refer to the following three that seem to be the more famous and more widely circulated:

- Paul Hirst’s “forms of knowledge” (1969, 1972, and 1993): They are: Mathematics, physical/ natural sciences, humanities, history, religion, literature/art, philosophy and ethics.
- Elliot Eisner’s “ways of knowing” (1985): They are: Aesthetic, scientific, intuitive, interpersonal, narrative, formal, practical and spiritual.

- Philip Phenix's "realms of knowing" (1964): They are: Symbolics, empirics, esthetics, ethics and synnoetics.

What seems to the author to be a fair account that represent basic forms of representation are mathematical, empirical. Artistic/aesthetic, verbal, historical, moral and spiritual forms of representation.

Furthermore, it is argued, that schools are liable to move in this direction to fully discharge their educative responsibilities, otherwise fulfilling their obligations only partially leading to **"semi—literate" individuals** at best, hence another key term. Still another key idea is captured in the phrase that **"curriculum is a mind altering device" (Bernstein, 1971)**. This critical phrase is meant to highlight the nature of curriculum as an effective cultural device or artifact, affecting the capacities potentially accessible to individuals throughout his or her entire life. It makes a great deal of difference, it is stressed, what mental or meaning making capacities they have been afforded and which ones they are deprived from or as the phrase signifies, how their mind is being altered by the education system. The affordances and deprivations literally define how his or her mind has been programmed which, then, directly determines the scope and the depth of meaning and experiences made available to the individual. Eisner has extended this argument to conclude that there is a strong political desire that ultimately determines this scope in every educational system. The term he uses is "politics of method" that could be safely translated here to mean "the politics of forms of representation".

The global façade of the theory:

Macro structure decisions defined as decisions immune to time and context specifications (Eisner, 1994) are suggested to be universally informed by the theory entertained here. Deciding, in other words, the shell of the curriculum or its overall architecture. This set of universal decisions call for respect and fair treatment of the full spectrum of modes of representation. It must be explained that such articulation of the global façade of the curriculum based on cognitive pluralism rests on the justification given for the proposition referred to earlier, that is, respect for the full spectrum of forms of representation. Because forms of representation are defined as the shared capital and a connecting thread of humanity. To state the same proposition in a different way, the curriculum theory in mind furnishes a more a less "global map of cognition" to guide curriculum development initiatives.

A Caveat is in place though. Contrary to what appears to be the case, the theory does not foreclose or predetermine the general organization or the actual structure of the curriculum, usually discussed within the dualistic choices of integrated versus discipline based curriculum. The curriculum initiated on the proposal being argued here, can benefit from both structures. This aspect is one which in fact should be decided upon at the local level and is not an example of the macro, universally shared decision. Obviously if an education system opts for the integrated mode, that system is much more likely to come up with actual curriculum that enjoys

a higher degree of locality. A discipline based or a subject centered curriculum, on the contrary, represents a mode that if adopted will yield a structure very similar in different contexts.

The local façade of the theory:

Micro decisions defined as decisions sensitive to time and context (Eisner, 1994), including selection of purposes and content (Walker, 2003) or culture content (Beauchamp, 1975) and culturally informed teaching and learning methods. For example culturally decided arts programs, science programs, technology programs, moral and spiritual programs, language programs etc.. To state it more clearly, the “content map” as well as the “teaching map” are drawn locally with sensitivity to cultures and contexts.

Is cognitive pluralism the only theory with such potential?

There are a number of curriculum theories that have claims to that effect. For example “Rational Humanism”, calling for a liberal education argues that the framework is rooted on a view of the genuine needs of human species. The needs are universal and not culturally bound, but can be fulfilled through different choices of content selection and content organization that are more and less culturally determined (Adler, 1982 and Hutchins, 1953).

Still another example of curriculum theory with a rather sound educational basis is what is referred to as “progressivism” (Dewey, 1938) or experientialism (Schubert, 1996). This framework of thought considers reconstruction of experience in a never ending cycle of attaining worthwhile or educative experiences revolving around social problems as the essence of education and the main characteristic of an educated person.

The alternative theoretical frameworks, on one hand, indicate the richness and variety with which the field of curriculum studies is blessed with, manifested in a multitude of theoretical formulations that can be used as the basis of curriculum deliberation. On the other hand, however, the merits of each alternative is open to judgment through which the more viable and plausible option or combination of options identified. Such evaluation, needless to say, can differ depending on the criteria one employs for this purpose. The writer resorts to the following four criteria and suggests that cognitive pluralism is the more advantageous framework to treat the issue of global versus local character of curriculum.

- **Exigency**, a major portion of human civilization, subsumed under arts will be taken out of dark and placed under the light of education. Cognitive pluralism sheds vital light on this sphere
- **Feasibility**, relatively speaking, especially when compared to alternatives such as progressivism
- **Equity**, fair curriculum made responsive to individual and group differences, far more attentive to this requirement than alternatives like rational humanism.

- **Urgency, could also be called timeliness**, qualities such as imagination, ingenuity and creativity become highlighted, badly needed in a knowledge and technology driven societies literally pronouncing their survival or demise.

Final appraisal:

Is it a tall agenda or an impossible pursuit on the part of educators and education systems? The implementation is heavily dependent on devotion to quality education and corresponding stretch of efforts currently exercised and a stretch of resources currently spent by the education system. Nevertheless, since the proposed conception is rooted in a just and sound reasoning which is hard to negate, is certainly worth striving for. I see it as a fundamental moral obligation to the generation who's destiny is trusted to us too.

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