



IN FOCUS

Curriculum as a Way of Attaining Quality

1. Why Curriculum Matters?

Curriculum issues, either in an explicit or an implicit manner, are inextricably linked to current thinking and action on educational concerns and reforms around the world.

2. A Curriculum Vision

Experiences of educational reform almost all over the world have shown that curriculum is at the same time a policy and a technical issue, a process and a product, involving a wide range of institutions and actors.

3. Building up the Curriculum

The process of constructing the curriculum is unique to each national setting. It is a complex outcome of the opinions and solutions that key stakeholders propose for society's requirements and needs. There are no 'successful' international models to copy. (Full story on page 1)

The 2nd International Forum on Teacher Education in Shanghai

The Forum will take place in Shanghai, China, from 25 to 27 October 2006. This event is co-sponsored by the IBE and organized by East China Normal University (ECNU), among others. (Full story on page 8)



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IBE Community of Practice (COP) Annual Meeting in Shanghai

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The Fifth issue of IBE Working Papers on Curriculum Issues

Title: Curriculum developments for basic education in the Southern Cone of Latin America: Policy priorities and challenges of practice. In Spanish only (Full story on page 8)

Curriculum as a Way of Attaining Quality

1. Why does the curriculum matter?

Curriculum issues, either in an explicit or an implicit manner, are inextricably linked to current thinking and action on educational concerns and reforms around the world. Juan Manuel Moreno (2006) states that: 'Educational reform all over the world is increasingly curriculum-based, as mounting pressures and demands for change tend to target and focus on both the structures and the very content of school curricula'.¹ He also highlights the inextricably political nature of the curriculum debate which is marked by 'ideological clashes, conflicts of interest and a difficult process of consensus building'. When we discuss curriculum structures, we are contributing to the design of future national societies, their well-being and their development.

We are not advocating the idea that the curriculum is an all-encompassing panacea for what is happening in education. What we suggest is the on-going need for a close and careful look at how curricula are created and organized as a sound way of designing and implementing reforms linked to core definitions of what we wish and expect education's role to be in society. At least four issues arise as the most significant ones in current regional debates about educational and curricular transformations.²

1. How to foster the vision of education as a human right, as adequate and thorough citizenship education from childhood to the tertiary level covering cultural, political, economic and social aspects;
2. How to facilitate through education a balanced personal development that

could contribute to a happy, healthy and self-fulfilling life;

3. How to make education as a key element in economic and social policy a reality in promoting national development and in raising economic competitiveness; and

4. How to accept and move forward on education as an irreplaceable factor in improving the well-being of the poorest populations, in combating social exclusion and in contributing to closing the equity gaps in household income distribution.³

It is quite difficult to advance with improving the processes and the outcomes of educational quality without developing a comprehensive curriculum vision that justifies why and what it is relevant and pertinent (basic and needed) to teach children and young people according to an overall interpretation of societal expectations and demands. This interpretation is always subject to debate and controversial, and is deeply grounded in historical, ideological and political concerns and arguments. A good example is the passionate discussion about the objectives and the content of national history lessons in secondary education, particularly in post-conflict societies.⁴

When we approach the need for identifying and selecting issues to be included in teaching, we must face the long-standing problem of an overloaded curriculum and the notorious difficulty of cutting down on content when new educational reforms are introduced. Cesar Coll and Elena Martín (2006) stated, in a recent seminar organized by UNESCO's Regional Office for Education in Latin American and the Caribbean (OREALC), that 'curricula and school hours are

not elastic'.⁵ This pays no attention to students' expectations and needs as the central focus of the education system. Coll and Martín establish the distinction 'between what is basic and absolutely necessary and what is basic and desirable in the primary education curriculum'.⁶ Moreover, they point out that the 'absolutely basic' refers to core learning that is essential to fostering the personal and social development of the student, allowing them to carry out their life projects and facilitating social inclusion.

Frequently, the discussion around what to include in or to exclude from the curriculum is not associated with any analysis of the role of education in society, but more related to maintaining historical disciplinary identities and traditional forms and contents of knowledge organization, as well as to the strong influence of corporate interests. Cristián Cox (2006) refers to the 'cultural hardness of the organizational categories of knowledge and the isomorphism observable between such structuring and teachers' professional identity'.⁷

The upper secondary education reform in Argentina (1997 on-wards) is a good example of the problems and the bottlenecks that arise when an attempt is made to define curriculum categories based more on problems and ideas than on disciplines. When the moment came to introduce the curriculum change, the authorities were obliged to design a more traditional curriculum based on disciplines in direct response to teachers' determined defence of their historical disciplinary identities. Cecilia Braslavsky (late IBE Director, 2000–2005), who was in charge of this process of educational reform, considers that 'an attempt to change the frontiers

between disciplines also implies redefining teachers' positions and identities'.⁸

The problem is not only related to the redefinition of the traditional boundaries among disciplines in response to the changing epistemological nature of how knowledge is constructed, validated and finally applied in daily life, but also about how the new knowledge organization really affects the processes of teaching and learning in the classroom. For example, a social sciences syllabus would surely be a better way of sharing with students more comprehensive frames of reference in order to understand the world they live in than a traditional syllabus based on history and geography as separate and disconnected subjects. But it could also generate a lot of confusion and uncertainty if teachers and heads of department oppose the new syllabus and do not even try to understand it. This is what is called by Jacinto and Freites Frey⁹ 'resistance to face a reform'.¹⁰

A likely temptation is to return to the past, to a 'more comfortable and less troublesome' pre-reform stage as a reaffirmation of traditional teaching identities and knowledge boundaries. As far as the students are concerned, this may mean that the curriculum becomes increasingly remote from today's societal challenges and opportunities. On the contrary, we could try to be more in tune with epistemological changes in knowledge construction and development which present the urgent need, among other things, to include curricular changes in teachers' pre-service and in-service training based on common approaches, objectives and strategies.

Besides this, there is an increasing recognition - for example, in Latin America - that the reform proposals based on training teachers mainly through awareness-raising and information-sharing have had a very limited impact. In fact, they pay little

attention to the historical and cultural profile of teachers. Beatriz Avalos (2006) clearly states that: 'experience and research show that this type of training approach does not produce good results in terms of changes among teachers'.¹¹ We address this issue in the following section.

2. A curriculum vision

Essentially, when we discuss the challenge of achieving better levels of equity and quality as one of our main concerns, trying to understand and profit from their mutual implications and synergies, we are addressing the analysis of the curriculum visions that situate and inform the relationships between these two concepts.

Many times have we heard and read the argument that the attainment of high-quality education has been jeopardized by an explosive and quite chaotic process of universalizing enrolment in primary and secondary education. At least three issues should be taken into consideration here:

1. It is one thing to talk about the objectives and the content of quality education when it relates to the expectations and needs of the most advantaged students, and another to include all of them through the diversification of curricular pathways and teaching strategies. Inclusion, as a broad concept, supports an equitable high-quality education. UNESCO (2005) defines inclusion as a process of encouraging and responding to the diversity of students' needs through participation in learning, in culture and in communities, while reducing the exclusion that is generated from within and outside the education system.¹² This implies changes in the contents, approaches, structures and strategies that can lead to including all boys and girls, under the premise that the primary institutional responsibility is to educate

everyone.

2. The increase in enrolment rates, particularly at the primary and secondary levels, as a major indicator of concrete advances in the attainment of EFA goals, is an on-going testimony to the democratization process that enables educational equity to advance mainly through access to formal schooling. Nevertheless, it is very far from achieving the goal of providing similar opportunities for success to everyone, independent of their background. The agenda of educational change, in both developed and developing countries, is deeply influenced by the idea of giving each child a real chance of success. The idea of "No Child Left Behind"¹³ supposes indeed a renovating and a removing vision of how we understand and see children and youth culture, encompassing sound combinations of social and emotional learning and academic performance.

3. Quality education deals with both processes and results along the different stages of an equity continuum — access to and completion of the compulsory schooling period through pertinent and significant learning that can lead to a worthy personal and social involvement in society. Quality should not simply be regarded as the sum of conditions and inputs that have proved to be relevant in improving the processes of teaching and learning, but should also highlight the importance of giving them significance and content within the framework of educational policy and a curriculum vision. We can agree, for example, that good school leadership is a potentially positive factor in improving educational quality, but for what objectives, under what conception of the curriculum and school, and by what content should it be fostered?

For example, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)

has been applying a practical approach that consists of learning from action to improve action. ADEA outlined a series of key factors in improving the quality of education and the students' outcomes — for example, the relevance of local planning and management, the principals' role, teachers' professional development, the importance of the language of instruction and direct financial support to schools.¹⁴

The impact that could be achieved through these factors is clearly linked to core definitions about why and what to teach in primary education, as well as to the educational and curricular framework that situate and support them.

Widespread involvement in the design and understanding of the curriculum could be a wonderful opportunity to set up veritable goals and objectives, as well as feasible strategies within a common educational policy framework. But it could also be, under a narrow-minded and prescriptive approach, an implacable obstacle to implementing change. Even during the process of educational reform, the way the curriculum is interiorized by supervisors, principals and teachers could lead to the continuation of practices totally contrary to the changes intended.

The prescriptive top-down approach is linked to a certain misunderstanding and underestimation of teachers' roles in educational reforms. Avalos rightly states that 'through their long teaching careers, teachers have developed their own opinion about what to teach and about "how things should be done".'¹⁵

They cannot be considered as mere executors of others' designs and plans, while their backgrounds, visions and feelings about educational and curricular reform are ignored.

Naively, we can convince ourselves that we are facing an implementation problem, and thus focus our efforts on carrying out teacher training programmes as a possible solution. However, in reality, we may have a restricted vision of the design process without much feedback and awareness of what is happening in the field. What are the visions, the attitudes and the practices of teachers, principals and supervisors? Consequently, one issue under discussion is the crucial relevance of how we construct and develop a curriculum vision with key stakeholders in order to foster and sustain substantial changes that allow us to focus on the issues of quality, efficiency and equity in an integrated way. This is, for example, a key aspect of the approach behind the draft Action Plan for the Second Decade of Education in Africa (2006-2015).¹⁶

Experiences of educational reform almost all over the world have shown that curriculum is at the same time a policy and a technical issue, a process and a product, involving a wide range of institutions and actors. The interfaces are complex, dynamic, controversial and non-linear in this vision of the curriculum as a continuous development of processes and outcomes.

A broad view of the curriculum, comprising values, skills, knowledge, attitudes and competencies, could help us to understand it as a complex and multidimensional process or, in a more comprehensive vision, as the hub of educational change. As suggested by Braslavsky (2002), the curriculum can be defined 'as a dense and flexible contract between politics/society and teachers'.¹⁷ To foster this conception, we could look for suitable and dynamic combinations of universal concepts that tend to support operational procedures (density), as well as clear and concrete opportunities to choose between options and to be able to implement them (flexibility).

We should also be aware of the existence of two possible situations that might oppose density and flexibility:

1. An education system with 'insufficient national guidelines' for curriculum management and evaluation — a good example is a badly conceived decentralization process that transfers 'everything' to the local levels as if they were all homogenous, and does not maintain a well-equipped national unit to lead and monitor.

2. A rigid, overloaded mass of disconnected procedures and rules that curtail school autonomy and the initiative of its actors — a good example is a highly centralized, ritualized education system where schools must ask for permission through a multitude of channels and rules to implement community activities.

Marc Demeuse and Christine Strauven (2006) state that a global vision of the curriculum should include: the learning outcomes to be achieved; the pedagogical and the didactic strategies connected with the teaching/learning process; the teaching materials for teachers and students; the disciplinary contents; the evaluation of the learning outcomes and what has been achieved; and the management of the curriculum.¹⁸

Under a comprehensive vision of the curriculum, teachers would be deeply involved in the curriculum change process as curriculum developers, including periods of co-design and of co-implementation, but mainly as key historical actors among others, in discussing what curriculum is most suited to society's expectations and demands. In any educational reform that expects to succeed, teachers are irreplaceable sources of legitimacy in the conceptualization and in the definition of the role of curriculum in society. This does not imply the mere

acceptance of their visions and their proposals. There is, in-deed, a need to acknowledge their role and make it public and clear to all the other key stake-holders as a critical foundation for the collective construction of curriculum change.

Curriculum issues are neither endogenous nor exogenous to any person and to any institution. The curriculum expresses and reflects the values, the attitudes, the expectations and the feelings of a society towards its well-being and its development. It is also a complex mix of different stakeholders' visions and interests, which may often be contradictory to each other. It is controversial in both political and in technical terms, and we should recognize this conflictual nature.

Under widely different formats and structures, the curriculum encompasses foundations, visions, objectives, contents, inputs, processes and outcomes mainly related to ways of conceptualizing, organizing and implementing the processes of teaching and learning. A comprehensive vision of the curriculum can lead us to a better understanding of how to address critical issues of educational quality as part of the curriculum agenda and within a vision of education as public policy.

It should be recalled that the curriculum can be viewed as both a product (the 'what') and a process (the 'how'). Both aspects are equally important. Quality learning needs, as prerequisites, both sound curriculum documents that reflect a society's vision of what and how students should learn, and innovative implementation strategies that lead to a friendly learning environment and inspired teaching and learning practices. When we speak of curriculum development as a process, we refer to five dimensions (Gimeno & Pérez, 1993): (a) what is prescribed and regulated within the political and administrative realm; (b) what is designed for teachers

and students; (c) how it is organized in a school setting; (d) the curriculum as implemented; and (e) the curriculum as evaluated.¹⁹

3. Constructing the curriculum

The process of constructing the curriculum is unique to each national setting. It is a complex outcome of the opinions and solutions that key stakeholders propose for society's requirements and needs. There are no 'successful' international models to copy. Instead of importing and buying models, we should focus on finding out the delicate equilibrium between global society and national needs. As Cox (2006) indicates, if such a balance is not attempted, 'is there not the risk of content (globally referred or aligned) without context (national socio-economic realities)?'²⁰

On the one hand, there is a clear tendency towards a certain universalization of curriculum concerns and issues. This is related, among other aspects, to the globalization process and its expectations and requirements, as well as to the need to respond to them. There is an increasing recognition of the relevance of common core issues — for example citizenship, environmental and HIV&AIDS education — leading to significant similarities in the structure, contents and methods of new curricular proposals (Meyer, 1999).²¹ There is also an increasing awareness that implementing change to the curriculum results in similar challenges in different world regions, as outlined by the IBE.²² Braslavsky (2004) noted that education systems are built more in relation to an imagined than a real society, and that the imagined forms of progress are quite similar throughout the world.²³

On the other hand, we can note the emergence, the development and the consolidation of national

and local identities. This is associated with a growing self-esteem built around native cultures, languages and knowledge — for example, the cases of African countries in general and of indigenous people in Latin America. This raises questions about a curriculum vision that does not tackle multiculturalism and respect for diversity as opportunities to facilitate and advance through a process of inclusion, while improving educational quality. It is much more than a problem of establishing the right of each person to an education based on diversity, of making knowledge relevant and of highlighting local realities and cultures. It primarily implies that diversity is a socio-pedagogical working tool that could lead to inclusion through the application of a multitude of didactic strategies.

For example, the debate in Africa about the role of native languages in education is linked to a double objective (not always aligned with each other) of consolidating national and local identities, and of facilitating children's access to core competencies and knowledge in their mother-tongue. The bilingual model is now being questioned. Among other factors that justify this reappraisal, Adriaan Verspoor (2006) mentions insufficient teacher training, poor teaching materials in African languages, lack of cultural relevance of the programmes and absence of clearly defined national linguistic policies.²⁴ As an alternative to the bilingual model, an 'additive' one is proposed which combines the use of African languages as instructional media for a six- to eight-year period and the international/official language to provide an education of good quality. This is quite a promising challenge. The additive model must find ways of introducing students to universal knowledge and skills based on the revalorization of native cultures and languages, while at the same time reflecting global realities.

The troublesome equilibrium between global and national reali-

ties could be addressed by a historical approach of a genealogical nature, as defined by Braslavsky. Cox (2006) outlines Braslavsky's concept implying the use of tradition (traditional type), the examples of other nations or cases (exemplary type), criticism (critical type) and interpretation and creation to build future realities.²⁵ This historical framework could be a way of giving pertinence, meaning and content to core universal competencies that are frequently designed and defined in highly abstract terms with no clear links to national and local realities. How do we describe and apply competencies facing the challenges of concrete situations?

Moreover Braslavsky (2004) suggested the possibility of moving towards developing a 'glocal' curriculum,²⁶ which can embrace certain trends that seem to be increasingly universal. She mentioned:

1. Global comprehensiveness — core subjects such as mathematics, languages and sciences aimed at promoting an Education for All, the teaching of

English as a foreign language and the incorporation of transversal themes related to worldwide concerns (for example, to sustainable development).

2. The progressive openness of the curriculum structure to activities that are defined at the school and local levels.²⁷

3. New approaches in teaching disciplines, such as the resolution of mathematical problems in daily-life contexts, and the communication approach in mother-tongue instruction.

4. An increased concern for some instructional hours on religious education. A study carried out by Jean-François Rivard and Massimo Amadio (2003) indicated that in half of seventy-three countries under analysis, religious education appears at least one time in the instructional time for the first nine years of schooling, either as a compulsory or an optional course.²⁸

5. The emergence of multicultural education as a

cross-cutting theme which can be approached through a group of disciplines or even all of them under different formats (compulsory/elective). This is also often linked to the renovation of learning strategies and methodologies (for example, negotiation skills and peaceful handling of conflicts).

Curriculum conceptualization around universal concerns and issues, based on competence approaches, could provide clues in looking for an adequate equilibrium between global and national realities, insofar as we understand that the set of resources we can mobilize in developing competencies — for example, values, attitudes, knowledge and skills — for tackling situations are processes of historical and social construction whose intention and meaning are defined by institutions and actors in a dynamic way.

NOTES

1. Moreno, J.M. 2006. The dynamics of curriculum design and development: in school knowledge in a comparative and historical perspective. In: Benavot, A.; Braslavsky, C., eds. *Changing curricula in primary and secondary education*, Ch. 11, pp. 195–209. Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre.

2. The IBE's worldwide Community of Practice in Curriculum Development (2005 onwards) has carried out during 2006 a series of regional seminars (Africa, Asia and Latin America) centred on the issues of Basic Education that are contributing to the progressive build-up of an inter-regional agenda based on common problems and challenges; see: www.ibe.unesco.org/cops/workshops/COPs/Workshops.htm

3. For example, in relation to Latin America and the Caribbean, a good discussion on equity, development and education can be found in: World Bank. 2003. *Inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean: breaking with history?* Washington, DC: World Bank. (Ch. 9: Policies on assets and services. 9.1 Education.)

Concerning European education

systems, Denis Meuret thoughtfully discusses the complex relationships between equity and efficiency based on PISA results (2000 and 2003); see: Meuret, D. 2005. *The equity of educational systems: a better construction of the concept*. Geneva: IBE. [Original: French.]

4. The IBE has produced a series of country case studies (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Guatemala, Lebanon, Mozambique, Northern Ireland, Rwanda and Sri Lanka) that examine 'the role of educational policy change in social and civic reconstruction and the re-definition of national citizenship within the context of identity-based conflicts'; see: Tawil, S.; Harley, A., eds. 2004. *Studies in comparative education: education, conflict and social cohesion*. Geneva: IBE-UNESCO.

5. Coll, C.; Martín, E. 2006. *The curriculum at debate: the curriculum: the current debate, basic learning, competencies and standards*. Santiago de Chile: OREALC-UNESCO. (Document presented at the second Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Regional Project of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean /PRELAC). See:

www.unesco.cl/esp/sprensa/noticias/207.act

6. Ibid.

7. Cox, C. 2006. Cecilia Braslavsky and the curriculum: reflections on a lifelong journey in search of Quality Education for All. In: Benavot, A.; Braslavsky, C., eds. *School knowledge in comparative and historical perspective: changing curricula in primary and secondary education*, pp. 245–258. Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre. (Chapter 14.)

8. Braslavsky, C., ed. 2001. Los procesos contemporáneos de cambios de la educación secundaria en América Latina: análisis de casos en América del Sur. En: *La educación secundaria. ¿Cambio o inmutabilidad? Análisis y debate de procesos europeos y contemporáneos*. Buenos Aires: Santillana.

9. Cited in: Avalos, B. 2006. *The curriculum at debate: curriculum and teachers' professional development*. Santiago de Chile: OREALC-UNESCO. (Document presented at the second Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Regional Project of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean/PRELAC). See: www.unesco.cl/esp/sprensa/noticias/207.act

10. Based on the educational reforms taking place in Argentina, Chile and

Uruguay, Jacinto and Freitas Frey describe three ways of facing a reform: i) passive acceptance (adherence to the letter but not to the spirit); ii) creative adaptation (the new and the old are introduced in appropriate ratios into the school context); or iii) resistance, as mentioned in the text. See: Jacinto, C.; Freitas Frey, A. 2006. *Ida y vuelta: política educativa y las estrategias de las escuelas secundarias en contextos de pobreza. Estudios de casos en América Latina*. Buenos Aires: IIEP. (Prepared for the *International hand-book on school effectiveness*, in press.)

11. Avalos, 2006, op. cit.

12. UNESCO. 2005. *Guidelines for inclusion: ensuring access to Education for All*. Paris: UNESCO.

13. The educational reforms currently underway face the challenge of giving to each child a real opportunity of attaining a high quality and pertinent education during the compulsory school period. For example, this is one of the great concerns that informs processes of educational change in countries such as: a) China — at an international seminar held at Geneva (6–8 July 2005 organized by IBE with the objective of setting up the worldwide Community of Practice in Curriculum Development) Zhou Nan-Zhao outlined the profound changes in the Chinese curriculum based on the challenges, among others, of transforming teaching and teacher-centred education into learning and learner-centred education, as well as the college-bound cognitive learning into multi-dimensional learning for higher learning, for the world of work and for responsible citizenship. b) France, where the importance of providing conditions and opportunities through a common cycle of compulsory schooling is central to the development of each student in terms of successful educational results, continuing training, building up his/her own personal and professional

future and being able to succeed in life (Orientation law about the future of the school, 2005 [in French], see: www.loi.ecole.gouv.fr). In the recent neighbourhood riots (*banlieu*), one key issue still under discussion is whether society and in particular the State through its schools' network, provides pertinent schooling opportunities to children and youth people living in socially deprived areas. c) The United Kingdom whose White Paper on Secondary Education establishes that 'our aim is to transform secondary and post-secondary education so that all young people achieve and continue in learning until at least the age of 18' (White Paper on 14–19 Education and Skills, 2005, see: www.dfes.gov.uk).

14. ADEA, Vespoor, A. 2006. La lettre de l'ADEA. Volume special V18N1 Biennale ADEA 2006. Paris: ADEA.

15. Avalos, 2006, op. cit.

16. African Union. 2006. *Report of the Decade of Education in Africa (1997–2006), Re-vised draft, May 2006*, p. 65, Addis Ababa: African Union.

17. Braslavsky, C. 2002. *The new century's change: new challenges and curriculum responses*. New Delhi: COBSE-International Conference.

18. Demeuse, M.; Strauven, C. 2006. *Développer un curriculum d'enseignement ou de formation. Des options politiques au pilotage. Introduction*, p. 9–28. Bruxelles: De Boeck.

19. Gimeno, S.; Pérez, G. 1993. *Learn and transform teaching*. Madrid: Morata. [In Spanish.]

20. Cox, 2006, op. cit., p. 245–258.

21. Meyer, J. 1999. *Globalization and the curriculum: problems for theory in the sociology of education*. Lisbon: University of Lisbon. (Presented at the International Symposium, University of Lisbon, November 1999.)

22. The series of regional seminars carried out by the IBE from 1998 onwards on curriculum development and capacity building have allowed many significant commonalities to be identified between different world regions regarding curriculum design, management and evaluation. See IBE-UNESCO. 2005. *A community of practice as a global network of curriculum developers: framework document*. Geneva: IBE-UNESCO.

See: www.ibe.unesco.org/COPs.htm.

23. Braslavsky, C. 2004. *Desafíos de las re-formas curriculares frente al imperativo de la cohesión social. Reforma Curricular y Cohesión Social en América Latina. Informe Final del Seminario Internacional organizado conjuntamente por la Oficina Internacional de Educación y la Oficina de UNESCO para Centroamérica en Costa Rica (5 al 7 de noviembre del 2003 en San José, Costa Rica)*, p. 36–47. Ginebra: OIE/UNESCO.

24. Verspoor, 2006, op. cit.

25. Cox, 2006, op. cit., p. 255.

26. Braslavsky, 2004, op. cit., p. 36–47.

27. An IBE study (2002) about instructional time in twenty-three countries revealed that fifteen of them include a portion of time allocated to diverse options, to elective disciplines and to the planning of school activities. IBE-UNESCO. 2002. *A review of time allocated to school subjects: selected cases and issues*. Geneva: IBE-UNESCO. (ABEGS-IBE collaboration on time-related factors in schooling.)

28. Rivard, J.F.; Amadio, M. 2003. Teaching time allocated to religious education in official timetables. *Prospects, Quarterly review of comparative education*, vol. 3, no. 2, p. 211–221.

IN BRIEF

The 2nd International Forum on Teacher Education in Shanghai

The 2nd International Forum on Teacher Education will take place in Shanghai, China, from 25 to 27 October 2006. This event is co-sponsored by the IBE and organized by East China Normal University (ECNU), the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, UNESCO Asia-Pacific Network for International Education and Values Education, among others.

In the worldwide campaign for EFA, there has been a shift of emphasis to improve quality of education while continuing efforts to ensure equal access. Accordingly, the central theme of this International Forum is defined as "Teacher Professional Development for Quality Education for All: Policies, Research, Innovative Practices and Capacity Building", catering for the broad interest of educational policy makers, teachers, teacher

educators, research scholars and all other educational personnel interested in EFA.

The IBE is invited to perform a keynote speech on "Teacher capacity building through and for curriculum change".

For more, please click [Shanghai Forum](#).



Courtesy of ECNU

Practice Annual Meeting in Shanghai

[Papers Archive](#)

On 30 October, a one-day IBE Community of Practice (COP) annual meeting will be held. Participants include focal points from all UNESCO regions and selected Chinese experts.

The meeting will be focused on three main objectives:

1. revise the activities carried out through the COP in 2006;
2. discuss possible lines of activities for 2007; and
3. outline inter-regional cooperation activities (elaborate a thematic agenda) regarding the relationships between curriculum change and teacher professional development.

For more, please click [COP Annual Meeting](#) .



Courtesy of ECNU

The Fifth Issue of IBE Working Papers on Curriculum Issues

The IBE Working Papers on Curriculum Issues series is intended to share interim results of ongoing research and to increase access to a range of unpublished documents, reports and exploratory studies produced at UNESCO/IBE, by IBE partners or members of the IBE network on curriculum development.

These Working Papers are disseminated to a wide audience of both academic and non-academic people and institutions for purposes of information and discussion. Also, they give education and policy actors the opportunity to make use of a “work in progress” in a timely manner. They have been approved for circulation by UNESCO/IBE but typically have not been formally edited or peer reviewed. Therefore, feedback on these documents is warmly encouraged.

The fifth issue is now available:

Curriculum developments for basic education in the Southern Cone of Latin America: Policy priorities and challenges of practice (IBE Working Papers on Curriculum Issues N° 5, October 2006)

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