WEB CURRICULUM AND DISTANCE EDUCATION: CURRICULAR PATHWAYS MEDIATED BY DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

WEB CURRÍCULO E EDUCAÇÃO A DISTÂNCIA: CAMINHOS CURRICULARES MEDIADOS PELAS TECNOLOGIAS DIGITAIS

CURRÍCULO WEB Y EDUCACIÓN A DISTANCIA: TRAYECTOS CURRICULARES MEDIADOS POR TECNOLOGÍAS DIGITALES

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the characteristics, potentialities, and challenges of the Web Curriculum in the context of Distance Education (DE), in light of the transformations brought about by digital culture. This bibliographic research is based on academic works, scientific articles, and official documents, aiming to understand how curricula mediated by digital technologies can promote more meaningful, interactive, and inclusive learning. Initially, the evolution of the curriculum concept and its social function is discussed, highlighting the transition from traditional models to more critical and flexible approaches. Then, the specificities of DE and the curricular models that support it are explored, emphasizing pedagogical mediation and personalized learning. The Web Curriculum is presented as an innovative proposal, grounded in principles such as hypertextuality, authorship, and collaboration, aligning with active methodologies and the demands of networked society. The discussion reveals both the advantages and the challenges of this approach, including digital exclusion, teacher training, and assessment in DE. It is concluded that the effective implementation of the Web Curriculum requires public policies, adequate infrastructure, and continuous teacher development, as well as new pedagogical practices that value autonomy and authorship in digital culture.

Keywords: Web Curriculum. Distance Education. Digital Culture. Digital Curriculum. Educational Technologies.

RESUMO

Este artigo analisa as características, potencialidades e desafios do Web Currículo no contexto da Educação a Distância (EAD), à luz das transformações provocadas pela cultura digital. A pesquisa, de natureza bibliográfica, fundamenta-se em obras acadêmicas, artigos científicos e documentos oficiais, com o objetivo de compreender como os currículos mediados por tecnologias digitais podem promover aprendizagens mais significativas, interativas e inclusivas. Inicialmente, discute-se a evolução do conceito de currículo e sua função social, destacando a transição de modelos tradicionais para abordagens mais críticas

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e flexíveis. Em seguida, são exploradas as especificidades da EAD e os modelos curriculares que a sustentam, com ênfase na mediação pedagógica e na personalização da aprendizagem. O Web Currículo é apresentado como uma proposta inovadora, baseada em princípios como hipertextualidade, autoria e colaboração, alinhando-se às metodologias ativas e às demandas da sociedade em rede. A discussão evidencia tanto as vantagens quanto os desafios dessa abordagem, incluindo a exclusão digital, a formação docente e a avaliação na EAD. Conclui-se que a efetivação do Web Currículo requer políticas públicas, infraestrutura adequada e formação continuada, além de novas práticas pedagógicas que valorizem a autonomia e a autoria dos sujeitos na cultura digital.

Palavras-chave: Web Currículo. Educação a Distância. Cultura Digital. Currículo Digital. Tecnologias Educacionais.

RESUMEN
Este artículo analiza las características, potencialidades y desafíos del currículo web en el contexto de la educación a distancia (ED), a la luz de las transformaciones impulsadas por la cultura digital. Esta investigación bibliográfica se basa en trabajos académicos, artículos científicos y documentos oficiales, con el objetivo de comprender cómo los currículos mediados por tecnologías digitales pueden promover un aprendizaje más significativo, interactivo e inclusivo. Inicialmente, se aborda la evolución del concepto de currículo y su función social, destacando la transición de los modelos tradicionales a enfoques más críticos y flexibles. Posteriormente, se exploran las especificidades de la ED y los modelos curriculares que la sustentan, potenciando la mediación pedagógica y el aprendizaje personalizado. El currículo web se presenta como una propuesta innovadora, fundamentada en principios como la hipertextualidad, la autoría y la colaboración, en consonancia con metodologías activas y las demandas de la sociedad en red. El análisis revela tanto las ventajas como los desafíos de este enfoque, incluyendo la exclusión digital, la formación docente y la evaluación en la ED. Se concluye que la implementación efectiva del currículo web requiere políticas públicas, infraestructura adecuada y desarrollo docente continuo, así como nuevas prácticas pedagógicas que valoren la autonomía y la autoridad en la cultura digital.

Palabras clave: Currículo Web. Educación a Distancia. Cultura Digital. Currículo Digital. Tecnologías Educativas.

1 INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, digital culture has promoted profound transformations in the ways of producing, accessing, and sharing knowledge. The emergence of digital information and communication technologies (DICT) has not only changed the modes of social interaction, but has also significantly impacted educational processes, especially with regard to Distance Education (EAD). This modality, previously marginalized, has consolidated itself as a legitimate and effective teaching alternative, especially after the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the digitalization of education on a global scale (UNESCO, 2021). In this scenario, it is essential to rethink school and university curricula in light of the new possibilities and demands of digital culture.

Digital culture, characterized by connectivity, interactivity and fluidity of information, redefines the relationships between subjects, knowledge and pedagogical practices. The curriculum, as a social and political construction, does not remain immune to these transformations. On the contrary, it is constantly pressured to reconfigure itself to meet the demands of a networked society, marked by the ubiquity of information and the need to develop digital, critical and collaborative skills (Almeida; Silva, 2011; Kenski, 2012). In this context, distance education emerges as a fertile field for the experimentation of new curricular forms, which break with the linearity and rigidity of traditional models.

The central problematization of this article lies in the understanding of the impacts of digital culture on the organization and mediation of distance education curricula. How do digital technologies influence curriculum construction? How does the concept of Web Curriculum fit into this constantly changing scenario? These questions guide the investigation, which seeks to understand how technology-mediated curricula can promote more meaningful, personalized, and inclusive learning. The proposal is to analyze the Web Curriculum not only as a technical innovation, but as a paradigmatic change in the way of conceiving teaching and learning.

The main objective of this study is to present the conceptual and practical characteristics of the Web Curriculum, discussing how it manifests itself in virtual learning environments and what are its pedagogical implications. In addition, it is intended to reflect on the challenges and potentialities of this curricular proposal in the contemporary educational scenario, considering the demands of digital culture. The analysis will be conducted from a critical perspective, which recognizes the contradictions and tensions

present in the implementation of digital curricula, especially in contexts marked by social and technological inequalities.

The relevance of the theme is justified by the growing expansion of distance education in Brazil and in the world, driven by public policies, technological advances and changes in student profiles. The need to reconfigure curricula to promote autonomy, accessibility, interactivity, and criticality becomes urgent in the face of an ever-changing educational landscape. The Web Curriculum, by incorporating the principles of digital culture, offers promising paths for the construction of more open, collaborative, and student-centered pedagogical proposals (Moran, 2015; Valente, 2015). However, its effectiveness depends on structural, political and formative conditions that still need to be consolidated.

The methodology adopted in this article is bibliographic research, based on academic works, scientific articles, official documents and academic productions available in open repositories. The selection of sources prioritizes reference authors in the area of education, curriculum and digital technologies, as well as recent studies that address distance education and Web Curriculum in the context of digital culture. This approach allows for an in-depth theoretical analysis, based on evidence and in dialogue with the main trends and contemporary debates on the subject.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CURRICULUM: CONCEPTIONS, SOCIAL FUNCTION AND TRAJECTORY

The concept of curriculum has historically been constructed from different theoretical and epistemological perspectives. The traditional approach, strongly influenced by the technical-rational model, understands the curriculum as a set of contents organized in a linear and sequential manner, with a focus on efficiency and measurable results (Tyler, 1974). This conception, centered on the logic of instruction and the standardization of educational objectives, has been widely adopted in modern school systems. However, criticisms of this view began to emerge strongly from the 1980s onwards, when authors such as Apple (2006) began to denounce the curriculum as an instrument for the reproduction of social inequalities. For Sacristán (2000), the curriculum should be understood as a social and cultural practice, which expresses disputes of power and values, and not only as a technical teaching plan.

The social function of the curriculum is directly related to its ability to form critical subjects who are aware of their role in society. By selecting and organizing certain knowledge to the detriment of others, the curriculum acts as a device of inclusion and exclusion, shaping

identities and school trajectories (Silva, 2009). In this sense, Giroux (1997) defends a critical pedagogy that recognizes the curriculum as a space of resistance and transformation, capable of promoting the emancipation of students. Moreira and Silva (1994) highlight the importance of considering hidden curricula and students' experiences as an integral part of the educational process. Thus, the curriculum is no longer just a prescriptive document and is understood as a field of symbolic and political disputes, which directly influences the formation of citizens.

In the Brazilian context, the curriculum has undergone significant transformations, especially with the implementation of the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), which proposes a competency-based approach. This change represents an attempt to align the curriculum with the contemporary demands of the knowledge society, promoting more meaningful and contextualized learning (Brasil, 2017). However, authors such as Pacheco (2019) warn of the risks of excessive standardization that disregards the country's regional and cultural diversities. On the other hand, Lopes and Macedo (2011) argue that the BNCC can be an opportunity to rethink the curriculum in a more democratic way, as long as it is implemented with the effective participation of educators. In this scenario, digital culture also imposes new challenges and possibilities, requiring curricula that are more flexible, interactive, and connected with the realities of students (Almeida; Silva, 2011).

2.2 DISTANCE EDUCATION AND MEDIATED CURRICULUM MODELS

Distance Education (EAD) has been consolidated as a strategic educational modality to expand access to education, especially in contexts of geographic and social inequality. Its main characteristic is technological mediation, which allows the flexibility of learning time and space, favoring student autonomy (Moore & Kearsley, 2011). This flexibility, however, requires specific curriculum planning, which considers the particularities of the modality and the needs of the subjects involved. Belloni (2009) highlights that distance education cannot be seen only as a transposition of face-to-face teaching to digital, but as a pedagogical practice with its own identity. Peters (2001) argues that distance education represents a new form of organization of pedagogical work, marked by industrialization and the rationalization of educational processes.

The curricular organization in distance education demands a structure that favors active and meaningful learning, even in environments mediated by technologies. Models based on modules, learning paths and thematic units are common, as they allow greater

personalization and adaptability of training paths (Litto & Formiga, 2009). In addition, the integration of digital resources — such as videos, forums, infographics, podcasts, and interactive learning objects — expands the possibilities of engagement and understanding of content (Valente, 2015). According to Moran (2015), pedagogical mediation in distance education must be intentional and interactive, promoting the collaborative construction of knowledge. In this sense, the role of the teacher is also transformed, requiring skills to act as an instructional designer, content curator and learning facilitator.

Despite the potential, technology-mediated curricula in distance education face significant challenges. One of the main ones is the guarantee of the quality of learning in large-scale contexts and diversity of student profiles. Kenski (2012) warns of the risk of superficiality in the training processes when the use of technologies is not accompanied by a consistent pedagogical proposal. Another challenge is the maintenance of the pedagogical bond and student engagement, which can be weakened by the absence of face-to-face interactions (Moore, 1993). In addition, the assessment of learning in distance education requires differentiated strategies that value the autonomy, authorship, and active participation of students, going beyond traditional tests (Silva, 2020). Thus, the curricular models in distance education must be constantly reviewed and improved to ensure their effectiveness and relevance in the context of digital culture.

2.3 WEB CURRICULUM: CONCEPT, PRINCIPLES AND IMPLICATIONS IN DIGITAL CULTURE

The concept of Web Curriculum emerges as a response to the transformations caused by digital culture in education, proposing a new way of thinking and organizing the curriculum. Unlike the traditional, linear model centered on the transmission of content, the Web Curriculum is conceived as a networked, dynamic, interactive and constantly updated construction (Almeida; Silva, 2011). This curricular conception values hypertextuality, authorship and collaboration, characteristics of the internet and contemporary social practices (Moran, 2015). According to Santaella (2013), we live in a culture of convergence, in which subjects not only consume, but also produce and share information, which requires more open and participatory curricula. In this sense, the Web Curriculum breaks with the logic of centralization of knowledge and promotes the decentralization of knowledge, favoring the collective and contextualized construction of learning.

Among the fundamental principles of the Web Curriculum are the personalization of the training path, student autonomy and the appreciation of teacher and student authorship. Hypertextuality, for example, allows students to navigate through different learning paths, constructing meanings based on their experiences and interests (Lévy, 1999). This non-linear logic challenges the traditional structure of the curriculum and demands a new role for the teacher, who starts to act as a mediator, curator of content and facilitator of knowledge networks (Kenski, 2012). In addition, peer collaboration, enhanced by digital technologies, becomes a central element in the construction of knowledge, promoting more dialogical and democratic pedagogical practices (Freire, 2020). The Web Curriculum, therefore, is not only a technological adaptation, but a pedagogical proposal that resignifies the role of subjects and educational practices in the digital age.

The operationalization of the Web Curriculum is strongly associated with active learning methodologies, which seek to engage students in a critical and participatory way. Strategies such as the flipped classroom, project-based learning, and mobile learning are examples of approaches that dialogue with the principles of the Web Curriculum (Valente, 2015). These methodologies favor the construction of meaningful, contextualized and interdisciplinary knowledge, aligning with the demands of the network society. According to Bacich and Moran (2018), the pedagogical use of technologies should go beyond instrumentalization, promoting learning experiences that stimulate creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration. In this context, the Web Curriculum presents itself as a powerful proposal for the formation of autonomous, critical subjects capable of acting ethically and responsibly in the digital world.

2.4 DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND TEACHER TRAINING IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

The integration of Digital Information and Communication Technologies (DICT) in the Distance Education (EAD) curriculum requires a critical and reflective approach on the part of educators. DICT should not be understood only as auxiliary tools, but as structuring elements that reconfigure the teaching and learning processes (Kenski, 2012). For Valente (2015), the pedagogical use of technologies demands a change in the teaching posture, which goes beyond instrumentalization and promotes innovative and student-centered practices. In this sense, Almeida and Silva (2011) argues that digital culture imposes new challenges to teacher training, requiring the development of skills that articulate pedagogical, technological and communicational knowledge.

The role of the teacher in distance learning is multifaceted and goes far beyond the simple transmission of content. He acts as a curator of information, mediator of knowledge, instructional designer and facilitator of learning experiences (Moran, 2015). This performance requires technical mastery of digital platforms, but, above all, pedagogical sensitivity to promote meaningful and personalized interactions. Freire (2020) reinforces the importance of critical mediation, in which the educator recognizes the student as an active subject of the educational process, capable of building knowledge in dialogue with the world. Belloni (2009) highlights that teacher mediation in distance education must be planned intentionally, considering the times and rhythms of the students, as well as the specificities of the virtual environments.

Teacher training to work in distance education must contemplate both technical and pedagogical aspects, promoting the development of digital skills integrated into educational practice. According to Tardif (2014), teaching knowledge is made up of multiple dimensions — experience, academic training, disciplinary and contextual knowledge — that need to be articulated in continuing education. Valente (2015) proposes that training programs include practical, reflective and collaborative activities, which allow teachers to experiment and re-signify the use of technologies in their practice. In addition, Kenski (2012) emphasizes that training must be continuous and contextualized, following the rapid technological transformations and the emerging demands of digital culture. Thus, teacher qualification becomes a decisive factor for the effectiveness of technology-mediated curricula in distance learning.

2.5 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CURRICULA IN DISTANCE EDUCATION IN GLOBAL CONTEXTS

The analysis of curricular models in different countries allows us to understand how distance education has been incorporated in different contexts, revealing both convergences and cultural, political and technological specificities. In countries such as Finland, the integration of digital technologies into the curriculum is guided by principles of equity, personalization, and phenomenon-based learning, which favors the adoption of innovative practices also in distance education (Sahlberg, 2015). In Peru, public policies have sought to expand access to digital education in remote regions, with a focus on teacher training and the production of contextualized content (UNESCO, 2021). In Kenya and Cambodia, initiatives supported by international organizations such as UNESCO and the World Bank

have promoted the use of mobile technologies and open platforms to ensure the continuity of learning in contexts of vulnerability (World Bank, 2020; UNESCO, 2022).

The global guidelines proposed by multilateral organizations such as the OECD and UNESCO have directly influenced the formulation of curriculum policies in developing countries, including Brazil. The OECD (2020) advocates a curriculum focused on life skills, with an emphasis on problem-solving, collaboration, and critical thinking, elements that dialogue with the principles of the Web Curriculum. UNESCO (2021), in turn, proposes a new social contract for education, which values inclusion, social justice, and sustainability, guiding the construction of curricula that are more open and responsive to digital transformations. In Brazil, the Quality Reference for Distance Higher Education (CNE, 2007) and the BNCC (Brazil, 2017) reflect these influences, while facing challenges for their effective implementation in a scenario marked by structural inequalities.

The presence of digital technologies in the curricular models analyzed reveals different levels of maturity and pedagogical appropriation. In contexts such as the Finnish one, DICT are integrated in a transversal and critical way, promoting students' authorship and autonomy (Pietarinen et al., 2017). In developing countries, although there have been advances, challenges persist related to infrastructure, teacher training and the production of materials appropriate to local realities (Trucano, 2016). In Brazil, successful experiences of distance education in public and private universities demonstrate the potential of the Web Curriculum, but also highlight the need for public policies that guarantee connectivity, continuing education and institutional support (Valente, 2015; Kenski, 2012). Thus, the comparative analysis reinforces the importance of considering sociocultural and economic contexts in the formulation of digital curricula, avoiding imported models that disregard local specificities.

3 DISCUSSION

Distance Education (EAD) and the Web Curriculum have significant advantages in the contemporary educational scenario, especially with regard to the democratization of access to knowledge. The flexibility of time and space allows students from different geographical and social backgrounds to access formal education, overcoming physical and logistical barriers (Moore & Kearsley, 2011). This characteristic is particularly relevant in countries such as Brazil, where regional inequalities still limit access to quality face-to-face education. In addition, distance education enables the continuity of studies in emergency situations, as

occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, evidencing its strategic importance (UNESCO, 2021).

Another positive aspect of Web Curriculum is the personalization of the training path, which respects the different rhythms, styles and learning interests of students. Hypertextuality and non-linear navigation allow the student to build their own learning path, promoting greater autonomy and engagement (Lévy, 1999). This approach favors student protagonism and stimulates the development of skills such as self-regulation, criticality, and the ability to solve complex problems (Valente, 2015). In addition, the use of multimedia and interactive resources enriches the learning experience, making it more meaningful and contextualized (Moran, 2015).

Accessibility is another strong point of distance learning and Web Curriculum, especially when associated with public policies for digital inclusion. Students with disabilities, workers with flexible schedules and people in situations of reduced mobility find in distance education a real opportunity to access education (Belloni, 2009). The possibility of adapting content and interfaces to the specific needs of users expands the reach of pedagogical proposals and contributes to the construction of a more inclusive education. However, this potential is only fully realized when there are investments in infrastructure, teacher training and the development of accessible materials (Kenski, 2012).

Despite the advantages, the challenges of distance learning and the Web Curriculum are significant and cannot be ignored. The digital divide is still a reality for millions of students, who face difficulties in accessing the internet, adequate equipment, and environments conducive to study (UNESCO, 2022). This inequality compromises equity in access to the digital curriculum and requires robust public policies to ensure connectivity and inclusion. In addition, teacher training for the pedagogical use of technologies is still insufficient in many contexts, which limits the effectiveness of curricular proposals mediated by DICT (Valente, 2015).

Another important challenge is the assessment of learning in virtual environments. The transposition of traditional evaluation models to digital often does not contemplate the specificities of distance learning, such as student autonomy and the diversity of training trajectories. It is necessary to develop evaluation strategies that are more formative, processual and integrated into the daily learning routine, valuing authorship, participation and the collective construction of knowledge (Silva, 2020). In addition, student engagement in

virtual environments requires active methodologies and meaningful interactions, which are not always prioritized in more traditional distance learning models (Moran, 2015).

Finally, the teaching practice in the context of the Web Curriculum requires a reconfiguration of the role of the teacher, who starts to act as a designer of learning experiences, mediator of knowledge and promoter of student authorship. This performance requires pedagogical, technological, and communicational skills, as well as an ethical and reflective posture in the face of transformations in digital culture (Freire, 2020; Kenski, 2012). Curriculum planning must go beyond the simple digitization of content, incorporating principles of interactivity, collaboration, and contextualization. Thus, the Web Curriculum presents itself as a powerful proposal, but it depends on structural, political and formative conditions for its effective implementation.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present research aimed to understand the characteristics, potentialities and challenges of the Web Curriculum in the context of Distance Education (EAD), in the light of the transformations caused by the digital culture. Throughout the study, it was possible to identify that the Web Curriculum represents an innovative proposal for curricular organization, which breaks with the linearity and rigidity of traditional models, promoting a more interactive, personalized and collaborative learning. Digital culture, with its networked, hypertextual and participatory logic, requires more flexible curricula that are responsive to the needs of contemporary subjects, which makes Web Curriculum a relevant and necessary pedagogical alternative.

The main findings of the research indicate that, although the Web Curriculum and Distance Learning offer significant advantages — such as flexibility, accessibility, personalization, and encouragement of autonomy — their effectiveness still faces structural, pedagogical, and formative challenges. The digital divide, the fragility in teacher training and the difficulty of institutional adaptation are obstacles that need to be faced through consistent public policies and investments in infrastructure and training. In addition, teaching practice needs to be resignified, with the teacher assuming the role of mediator, curator and designer of learning experiences, capable of critically integrating technologies into the curriculum.

In view of this, it is urgent that educational institutions and public managers recognize the importance of a digital curriculum that goes beyond the simple digitization of content, promoting meaningful, inclusive, and contextualized learning. Continuing teacher training, the

production of accessible materials and the guarantee of connectivity are fundamental elements for the consolidation of the Web Curriculum as a pedagogical proposal. As future research paths, it is suggested to carry out case studies on concrete experiences of implementation of the Web Curriculum, the analysis of the impact of artificial intelligence on curricular personalization and the investigation on the construction of digital curricula in basic education. Such investigations can contribute to the theoretical and practical advancement of the area, strengthening the construction of a more democratic education and connected with the challenges of the twenty-first century.

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