

Analyzing the Concepts of Metacurriculum of Moral and Art Education

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ABSTRACT

Metacurriculum consists of learning skills and strategies that are selected according to their values to help students in mastering the content, developing the thinking capacity and independent learning. There are many concepts that can be mentioned as a metacurriculum including moral and art education. The current study analyzes the metacurriculum concepts of moral and art education. The need to pay attention to the concepts of moral education and the neglected curriculum of elementary school art education is urgent and clear. By identifying these concepts, it can be claimed that the dynamicity of the curriculum can be maintained and be free from tradition and customs.

Keywords: Metacurriculum, Morality, Art

Introduction and Problem Statement

The task of educating the people of the society as a dynamic and fundamental factor is the responsibility of the education system. The importance of education and training practices is such that Rousseau considers it a life-saving ship (Fathi Vajargare, 2006) and Kant sees it as a tool for a humanization and begins his speech by emphasizing the importance of education (Naqibzadeh, 2006). One of the major challenges in curriculum studies is the integration and mix of the many and varied learning that students face at one level of education. In recent years, curriculum experts have presented various models for the integration of the different content areas in the curriculum. An important point that seems to be common to all of these patterns is to consider the issue as the axis of integration, but in the last few years, a pattern has been proposed by David Perkins, which he has called metacurriculum. In this model, he considers integration as the result of a blend of content-skills and believes that different disciplines also have their own learning methods and it is not always possible to generalize some kind of general thinking and learning skills to them. From Perkins' point of view, metacurriculum is not a curriculum separate from the formal curriculum, but a model through which the integration of skill-content takes place. It seems that if education is involved in the processes and how the learning and teaching system works, the curriculum works mainly in the field of educational needs and expresses the general outline of the educational content and the expected results. The curriculum provides a general decision for coordinating and directing the learning situation appropriate to students' learning and teacher teaching (Eskandari, 2008).

In this book, we are looking for a comprehensive study of this topic, considering the attractiveness and importance that the subject of "metacurriculum" can have. Despite the progress and development of art curricula and moral education around the world and its position and the placement of art and moral from the margins to the curriculum, Iranian elementary school curricula need to coordinate and pay attention to today's developments and perspectives so that they can achieve the proper consequences of moral and artistic education. Art has been still neglected in schools. Therefore, the current study tries to analyze the metacurriculum concepts of moral education and the neglected art curriculum in the elementary grade of Iran to invite the authorities and curriculum planners to rethinking and establishment of the constant

conversation between the practical area of norms that consequently, will lead to paying attention to the art curriculum of the elementary grade as well as moral education.

Curriculum

The curriculum provides a framework for decision-making that seeks to organize learning experiences by discussing goals, content, evaluation, and the like. Besides individual characteristics and any kind of discrimination, it is considered a significant factor in the lives of all members of society. However, there is no doubt that the emphasis on rational development is very important in the curriculum, and Klein's research showed that a significant number of parents, teachers, and students also considered personal, social, and professional development important. If these functions are to be really considered in the curriculum, some other things need to be added to the traditional subject matter, as well as the development of self-confidence, creativity, personal discipline, and the ability to think independently. In recent decades, attention has been drawn to other learning than intended in the curriculum, and in addition to intentional and guided learning, it is an essential and unavoidable part of school activities and this kind of curriculum was neglected part in the school's improvement and modification curriculum (Pour Zahir, 2008). Education experts have used a hidden curriculum or invisible curriculum to describe what is being learned and attitudes that are influenced by implicit factors in students, as well as its consequences. (Mehr Mohammadi, 2002). In the conceptual model, for example, theorists consider the curriculum as the process of interaction. In this model, they pay attention to the structure of the curriculum system, its context and environment, and to the process of self-construction. In addition, the conceptual model provides rules for free and standard interactions and activities to intervene in learning and guidelines for evaluation. Thus, most conceptual models in the curriculum ask how to develop learning opportunities to ensure the growth of individual independence in the curriculum process. Planning and implementing activities is common, meaning that everyone should be involved in planning and implementing it. Many curriculum projects begin with an educational introduction or field in which a project is underway.

Metacurriculum

According to Derick, Integrated curricula, because of their problem-oriented nature, develop higher-level intellectual skills, lack repetitive content, and are designed to function in the human brain. In recent years, curriculum experts have come up with a variety of curriculum organizations, including Schubert, J. Cobbs, Case, Martin Nipp, and Pauly Hall. One of the newest models for curriculum integration is presented by David Perkins called Metacurriculum. Contrary to its name, the metacurriculum is not a curriculum separate from the formal curriculum, but a model that integrates skills and content. Perkins argues that integrating curricula does not only mean linking different subjects but also intertwining the elements of the curriculum (including skills and content) in such a way that teaching them in relation to each other is far more effective than teaching them separately (Ali Asgari and Safaei Movahed, 2008).

Curriculum and meta-curriculum have fierce competition in terms of time and resources: If the metacurriculum is well designed, its integration with the curriculum will result in significant synergies. However, it should not be forgotten that the implementation of strategies such as decision-making and problem-solving requires raw materials which is content (Pinar, 2011).

David Perkins argues that the skills we teach students should be such that students use them to go beyond the level of available information and gain insight into key concepts. Other valuable skills, from Perkins' point of view, include "thoughtful learning," which means learning to make connections between subjects and is essential for insight and deep thinking (Uroles, 2014).

David Perkins introduces the meta-curriculum model. According to him, the curriculum consists of 6 key components, which are:

1. Levels of Understanding: Levels of understanding take the curriculum beyond the boundaries of the truth and include problem-solving, evidence collection, and exploratory learning in the curriculum.
2. Languages of Thinking: It is about doing literature exercises to nurture thinking in students. In conducting these exercises, teachers should use their broad vocabulary, introduce causal relationships in the classroom, use concept maps, and develop thinking culture in their classrooms.

3. Intellectual Passions: Emphasized open-mindedness, deep attention, and responsibility. The classroom should develop such attitudes in the context of the subject.
4. Integrative Mental Images: It refers to different types and forms of representation, which creates a kind of strong connection between different subjects. Examples of such representations include the use of metaphors, analogies, or concept maps.
5. Learning to Learn: Emphasizes that learning in students is a growing process and that teachers must try to keep its continuity.
6. Teaching for Transfer: Teachers are required to provide the necessary conditions for the transfer of learning from one situation to another (Ali Asgari and Safaei Movahed, 2008).

According to Perkins, since the metacurriculum is not a separate curriculum, teachers can easily include it into the routine activities of the classroom. To do so, teachers must develop the students' thinking beyond the boundaries of "mere maintenance of the truth". In this regard, he introduces the famous phrase "the less the more". This phrase means that the less volume of the content and the greater the emphasis on a deep study of the subject, the more effective the learning will be. In fact, the curriculum should equip students with strategies and skills that they can use to understand situations and solve problems. If we look at it from the integrative perspective, we can say that the development of skills and content teaching should have a parallel movement, because these skills play an important and necessary role in decoding and understanding the content. In this regard:

David Ackerman and David Perkins mentioned the advantages of the integration of the metacurriculum method that are as follows:

- The integration of curriculum with the metacurriculum makes students able to learn fundamental learning skills practically.
- Students will have access to more cohesive learning experiences (they will know why this kind of skill is taught; also, they will learn how to coherent their skills to a better understanding of the curriculum content).
- Teachers of various subjects will have a tool to cooperate in order to reach common goals without sacrificing any subject.
- The goals related to "Process" and "Content" will be integrated and there will be no competition.

Unfortunately, what most schools do is teaching curriculum content. Textbooks often provide students with historical facts, mathematical algorithms, and computational formulas, while general or specific disciplines of each discipline are often overlooked. What is now more neglected is the metacurriculum, which has a higher level of general and specific thinking patterns in each discipline. To develop such a mindset in students, special courses can be held to teach the art of thinking, but it should not be forgotten that such general skills cannot be used on a large scale and in the scope of the various areas of today's dense school curriculum. Many studies have shown that each subject needs a specific mindset to inject a thought into their body. The challenge facing education today is to compile, design, and revive the metacurriculum alongside the curriculum (Ali Asgari and Safaei Movahed, 2008).

One of the most important obstacles to the implementation of the metacurriculum program is the ideas that support the adequacy of the traditional model of education. It should not be forgotten that the integration of content-skills in the existing system of the high school curriculum will face several obstacles. Some of these barriers are cultural in nature and result from the culture formed by the curriculum over decades. Another part of the problem can be considered to be technical in nature, which is due to lack of expertise, limited time, and so on.

Moral Education Metacurriculum

Moral education is the process of laying the plots and applying methods to flourish, strengthen and create moral traits, behaviors and etiquettes, and correct and eliminate immoral traits, behaviors, and etiquettes in oneself or others.

Moral education in practice is. The meta-subjectivity implies that moral education in the field of curriculum planning does not require an independent curriculum. Also, in the field of educational activities or the above program and outside the classroom environment, there is no need to define specific

activities, but it is the consequence and result of many activities and experiences. Some of the codes in the experts' views indicate that moral is transcendental. "Ethics and moral education are interdisciplinary," says one expert. Other documents indicate the same meaning as well. The executive regulations of the schools approved in 2000 state that the "student council is formed to value the students' personality and dignity". According to the regulations of summer activities for students approved in 1991, "one of the goals of these activities is to improve the spirit of self-help, co-operation and responsibility". Even the expected function of the teacher's council is moral and in the executive regulations of schools (2000), it has been stated that one of the tasks of the teacher's council is "the participation in regulating the moral education and Islamic ethics of students". Morality is also considered in the expected function of the school council. "Promoting and expanding educational, Quranic and moral activities." In the newer perspectives found in more recent documents, this transcendental view of morals has been seen. For example, in the theoretical foundations of the document, the fundamental transformation of the field of education is defined as "religious, devotional and moral", which is not subject to a specific topic. In the National Curriculum Document, moral has also been seen as a basic competence, which means that it cannot be limited to a specific field of learning; the existence of independent moral goals in the macro goals of the formal and public education system shows that moral education should be the general action and general outcome of all school experiences, not just a few subjects. This category will have many consequences in the policies and programs of the formal and public education system (Hassani, 2016).

One of the topics that is clear is the concept of the essential need for moral education in the practical model. This topic is also mentioned repeatedly in the official documents and texts. In the executive regulations of the schools, it has been mentioned that "the school's staff and principles and students are the Islamic-moral models". In the article of the education ministry goals approved by the Islamic Parliament in 1987, it has been stated that "those teachers must be selected who own the good features" and the curriculum of the Islamic education in the elementary grade also states that "one of the most important roles of the religion teacher is to play the educational as a role model, and they must practice what they teach".

On the other hand, in general, the curriculum defined in the formal curricula of students during the 12 years of formal education, no curriculum is seen as morals. Also, in the educational activities that have been implemented in schools over the years, there are no programs called morals, even in the principles governing education in the general document of changing the education system under the principle of "attention to nurturing" that some activities are listed as a suggestion, moral education is not seen as a special activity. Or the activity that monitors this issue has not been considered, but it is thought that the consequence of these activities and in general, the overall function of the school is moral education (Hassani, 2016).

The general moral goals adopted and approved at different stages for the formal and public education system mainly have a part called moral goals, but when the goals are entered at smaller levels, especially at the level of curriculum goals, a special part called moral does not exist, but more or less its effects can be seen. Despite this, there is no specific order and logic from the stage of general and macro goals to the specific goals for curricula. The point of the study of goals is that morally and practically, morality covers a wide range of areas and covers all areas of life and even curricula. Moral codes are more or less considered in the list of goals of different social, political, physical, economic and cultural fields. For example, it is stated in religious goals (respect for Islamic figures); in scientific and educational goals (acquiring basic skills for life); in political goals (seeking justice, right-seeking); in social goals (respecting the rights of others, helping family members).

Moral education is not a process that can be restricted in the school in the context of curricula and in the classroom, but it is something that happens and is done in all school conditions. In other words, the occurrence of moral education is not limited to learning experiences in a particular classroom. It can be seen in other documents as well. The General Document of the Education System states that "what is taught in all subjects, especially the humanities and social sciences, must ensure a balanced moral, intellectual, emotional, social and political development."

Plurality of Value Concepts

Value concepts are widely applied in the education system. Wherever morality is mentioned, moral virtues and valuable concepts are introduced. This is evident in the formulation of general and partial objectives, as well as in the determination of the content, but the point that is important and should be discussed here and the evidence presented is the expansion of these concepts. In the macro goals of the elementary grade approved by the Higher Education Council in 2000, 23 moral topics with value concepts are applied including honest, trustworthy, polite, kind, committed, modesty, prudence, respect, obedience, courage, patient, tidy, hopeful, joyful, appearance beautification, generosity, friendly, affection, help, asking for forgiveness, discipline, preservice, Islamic dress. Furthermore, the value concepts in the general goals of the education approved in 1998 is more general but the same variety. These concepts are cultivation, edification, piety, praying, obligation and independence, confidence, dignity, honor, coexistence, discipline, lack of unemployment, lack of vanity.

Among the guidelines of the elementary grade curricula, such a variety yet inconsistency can be seen. This scope includes morality in the individual dimension and personality traits, morality in the social dimension as well as value concepts surveilling the tasks and features. In addition, such a scope of the concepts includes different levels of simple value concepts such as cleaning to the honor and confidence. Evidence as an approach is the presence of a large number of moral concepts in the list of goals approved at the macro level, as well as the existence of value and moral concepts at the level of the objectives of the curriculum. Such a perspective to moral educations is like providing an education package of traits (moral values) of a dominant view. According to such a perspective, the education system tries to inform students with the value concepts which are wide and extent (Hasani, 2016).

Content

Another element in the moral education curriculum is the delicate and important element of content. regarding the content of the moral education curriculum, the features of the metacurriculum must be mentioned; as was mentioned on the topics of the quiddity of moral education. Being transcendental implies that moral education is not presented as an independent subject in our educational system, but has a wide range and scope, which in principle includes all curricula and even metacurricula activities; therefore, morality is transcendental. Explaining that the spirit and theme of the Iranian curriculum system from the earliest years of formation to the present day is the spirit of the subject-oriented or discipline-oriented, that is, separate and independent subjects form students' learning experiences. The list of the subjects indicates a discipline-oriented approach in all the grades and in subjects such as mathematics, science (chemistry, physics, geology, biology), Persian Literature, Quran, Religion, social studies (history, geography, and social skill) are the main educational titles that students have studied or experienced for educational progress. The structure of curriculum planning, the organization responsible for curriculum planning, i.e. the Organization for Educational Research and Planning, also fits this dominant spirit. In this office, there is a number (more than twenty) groups corresponding to the subjects that are responsible for planning and writing each subject, such as the science group, which includes four subgroups of sciences (chemistry, physics, geology, biology) or mathematics and the like, but along with this spirit that governs the Iranian curriculum system, discipline, there is some evidence indicating dysfunctionality of the subject orientation the disciplinary approach to responding to needs and achieving approved goals, that is, despite such a structure and conditions for achieving goals such as moral goals, integration approach can be seen. Accordingly, the integration of experiences related to moral education can be seen in various subjects such as social studies and the Qur'an, Persian literature, science, religion and even art.

Therefore, the main topics on the content which are selecting and organizing the content is the subject to the integration approach. Regarding the first topic, i.e. choosing content, the obtained evidence shows that

many themes and value concepts are mentioned in the documents and the sources which are the same as the moral education content.

Another topic is the distribution of this package of traits in the grades and curricula and different school activities; that is to say, the vertical and horizontal relationship between the value and moral concepts. The studies show that there is no discipline ruling it. Among the planning groups in the elementary grades, there is no pre-foundation coordination for a plan with more priority for the value concepts. The coordination of organization was not mentioned among the planners by the experts and at a higher level, the decision-maker unit (Higher Education Council) did not consider such an approved framework. Based thereon, selecting and evaluating the content to the goals approved by the higher council have not been defined principally; that is to say, it is not involved seriously in the competency and tastes of the curriculum planners in selecting the content of the moral education. This coordination is not seen in the documents at the level outside the approved curricula and in the action aimed at the school level, i.e. the same training programs (Hasani, 2016).

Metacurriculum of Art Education

One of the functions of education is to try to develop and flourish the artistic and aesthetic talents of students. Because art, in its most stable and original manifestations, refers to the deep and fundamental ideals, cognitions, skills, feelings, and values that human beings rely on to achieve their true and original transformation, which is to turn freely and consciously to value.

In order to change the position of arts from the margins to the main core of the education, many efforts must be made to take advantage of the benefits and consequences of the art education in the education systems so that such a change in the curriculum from the margin to the main core of the educational system can lead to the results that prepare the students for living in the today's society; therefore, considering and codifying an art curriculum that fits the modern life's characteristics of the students and help them in experiences is very important; thus, recognizing and explaining the curriculum that neglected the art in the elementary school of Iran can contribute to the transformation of the art curriculum position and return what has been eliminated from the education system's instruction due to the tradition and custom and revive the art curriculum of the elementary grade.

Regarding the attention to art in the school curriculum, Eisner considers one of the most important steps for the actual reform of educational systems to be a reasonable and appropriate position for art in the curriculum, as if art education should become an essential part of the school curriculum. In addition to the three basic skills (reading, writing, and arithmetic) that are officially recognized, art should be emphasized as the fourth basic skill in the curriculum, and its historical and traditional insecurity and isolation should be removed.

Similarly, considering the studies done on the status of the art curriculum or considering the neglected curriculum of art can increase its importance; in a study entitled "An analyze and critic on the art curricula of elementary grade in the past and present" with a descriptive and comparative approach, the art curriculum has been investigated.

The results of the study showed that the new curriculum of Iran as the art education approach; however, there is still lack of coordination in the designed implemented and the results of art curricula; for example, the skills are considered but the foundations of the visual arts; calligraphy has been eliminated and the possibility to integrate it with other skills has been neglected; furthermore, other issues such as appropriate learning with any subject, the considered time, providing learning opportunities, enrichment of the learning resources, in-service training of teachers, a real and meaningful environment are neglected.

In a study entitled "educational needs of teachers and students in the art curriculum in the elementary school", the needs of teachers and students in the art education has been investigated and by studying the

teachers' view and observing the art classes of the elementary grade, the results, deficiencies, and other neglected issues on the art curriculum at the implemented level were determined among which are holding more and complimentary in-service training, providing access to the art education books, providing appropriate spaces for exhibiting the artworks of students that are considered as necessities obtained from this study. In a study entitled "Investigating the role and position of art subject in the elementary school from the perspective of elementary teachers of Tehran", perspectives of 92 teachers of the 6th Education District of Tehran were investigated. The results showed that teachers believe in the role of art in strengthening and growing the creativity and self-esteem of students, however, art teaching methods in the elementary school, in particular, has been more of selective and giving models for painting and sometimes, free and subjective painting. Teachers consider the most important barriers of teacher art as the lack of adequate training for themselves, appropriate educational space and various learning resources for art education (Hemmati, 2005).

Furthermore, a summary of the results of qualitative research was presented in a study entitled "Challenges of applying art education in elementary school: what teachers explain". In this study, experiences of 19 elementary teachers of Australia on the art education have been investigated; this study showed that the experiences of teachers can form their teaching method in the area of creative arts in the curriculum of the elementary grade. All the teachers believed that the limited time allocated to this important area in the elementary and high schools do not prepare them in this regard. They are worried about the required knowledge and skills for teaching creative arts; in conclusion, teachers were more confident in teaching visual arts and less confident in teaching music (Rebecca et al, 2009).

The perspectives of 10% of elementary school teachers about the art education in England were investigated in a study entitled "Is there a place left for the art? Studying art in elementary schools". The results of this study indicated three points as first: the national attention to the main subjects resulted in disregarding the subjects out of the core curriculum; second, the defined and decisive schedule for subjects such as reading and mathematics has left less time for the art education and third, the pressure of the performance tables for the school imposes pressure on the art education. The teachers who participated in the study wanted a desirable art education for the children and required support for its continuity (NAEA, 2003).

General Goals of Art Education

According to the principles ruling the art education as well as "discipline-oriented art education" in the elementary school, the goals of the curriculum of this grade can be defined. Based on this perspective, it can be said that in the elementary school, art and cultural contexts must be considered while determining the general goals and basic orientations so that based on which, the appropriate mechanism for the realization of these general goals be provided; therefore, the general goals of the art curriculum of the elementary grade are as follows:

1. Training the aesthetic sense;
2. Training the sense of discovery and creativity;
3. Introduction to the art history of Iran, world and appreciating own cultural heritage;
4. Value the artistic expression in life;
5. Empowering students to express themselves in diverse artistic ways;
6. Empowering students for value judgment of different artworks and achievements of themselves and others. In addition to having the required part (single status or determined), the art curriculum has some semi-determined or selective (multi-status) and non-determined or optional (open or not determined). Thus, the desired model of art curriculum is comprehensive and can pay attention to other aspects such as students' needs and interests considering their differences which require two conditions: first, teachers must have professional competency and the second, the adequate learning opportunities must be provided

for students; in this regard, the modern communication and information technologies can serve the art curriculum along with other local, regional and provincial institutions and units so that based on which, the art curriculum be able to achieve its goals and earn its unique and original identity. Regarding the content areas in the art curriculum of the elementary school, in this model, 6 areas are considered including painting, calligraphy, volume arts, theater, music, and dance.

Conclusion

The challenge that education faces today is to develop, design, and revive the metacurriculum program alongside the curriculum. Curriculum professionals and designers need to keep in mind that in addition to facts, a useful and appropriate mindset is also important in any subject. The link between the curriculum and the metacurriculum will provide students with the mindset to better understand the issues and learn about their connection to real life. The objectives of teaching and learning are: teaching to understand, helping students to understand how to apply the available knowledge to solve unforeseen problems, developing a culture of thinking in the classroom so that students' critical and creative thinking develops and their mental strength increases. Due to the fact that in centralized systems of curriculum, including Iran, any change in curriculum or existing books is very difficult, teachers can use and develop this model to teach thinking skills, along with content training. Other important aspects of Perkins' view include his balanced focus on general thinking skills and skills in a particular field. Most people have always complained that general thinking and learning skills cannot be applied to all subjects in the same way. That's why Perkins' balancing point of view can be very instructive. One of the concepts discussed in the curriculum is morality; moral education is a widespread phenomenon in all aspects of school life. All school experiences can and do have the potential to become a moral education opportunity. From this point of view, one should be sensitive to all the mechanisms of the school and to its effects on the moral life of the students. In any case, moral education is not a specific mission and responsibility of the formal and public education system, and other institutions participate in it. School, family and the media are three serious pillars in achieving this. That is to say, the full responsibility for moral education is not primarily the responsibility of the formal education system, but this responsibility is distributed among all elements. This category is both descriptive, that is, it reflects the reality of the complexity of how moral education occurs, and it also prescribes the distribution of this responsibility among all institutions, according to their roles and tasks. Also, in the case of art education, instead of emphasizing the practical aspects, one should try to establish a connection between phenomena and events through "form and format". According to the requirements of today's life, education and training are obliged to train people's senses and sensitivities. Students must learn how to see, hear, interact, and move forward. They need to understand how the environment can shape their feelings and actions. On the other hand, the arts teach students that problems can have more than one solution, and questions can have more than one answer. Through the arts, it is understood that good deeds are done in different ways.

Suggestions

1. Introducing teachers and educators to the nature of the curriculum in order to make them aware of the benefits of this model.
2. Helping teachers to apply metacurriculum activities (including general and specific skills) in educational activities
3. Efforts to change the curriculum culture in high school, the core of which is content
4. Diminishing the mere emphasis on the final evaluation and increasing the attention to the evaluation of the process, which focuses more on the skill and process (Ali Asgari and Safaei Movahed, 2008).

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