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THE CURRICULUM AT THE DECISION OF THE SCHOOL - A FACTOR OF PROGRESS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF STUDENTS

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The current social and economic dynamics recorded at the national level has determined the appearance of significant changes in the Romanian educational system. Thereby, schools and communities, especially those in rural areas, face a series of challenges aimed at the real needs of the beneficiaries of educational services. In order to improve and overcome such situations, schools and communities can benefit from specialized support, within the framework of implemented and accredited study programs or projects. They can be supported by the curriculum at the school's decision. It must be seen as part of the entire curriculum and not as irrelevant in relation to the national one in force or being in contradiction with it. The student needs to experience a coherent curriculum, and not a fragmented, deficient one. Thus, the curriculum at the decision of the school must meet the national one and blend together. Since then the traditional subject-based curriculum has emphasized knowledge and understanding. Because of that, the role of the curriculum in the decision of the school has addressed to those desired competences that are too little developed specifically or explicitly by academic disciplines. Examples of such skills may include personal development, preparation for adulthood and economic life, encouraging the responsible being, etc.

Keywords: *curriculum, school decision curriculum, competence, communication competence, student, learning.*

CURRICULUMUL LA DECIZIA ȘCOLII - UN FACTOR DE PROGRES ÎN DEZVOLTAREA COMPETENȚELOR DE COMUNICARE ALE ELEVILOR

Actuala dinamică socială și economică înregistrată la nivel național a determinat apariția unor schimbări semnificative în sistemul educațional românesc. Astfel, școlile și comunitățile, în special cele din mediul rural, se confruntă cu o serie de provocări care vizează nevoile reale ale beneficiarilor de servicii educaționale. În vederea îmbunătățirii și depășirii unor astfel de situații, școlile și comunitățile pot beneficia de sprijin specializat, în cadrul unor programe sau proiecte de studii implementate și acreditate. Acestea pot fi susținute de curriculum la decizia școlii. Acesta trebuie să fie considerat ca parte a întregului curriculum și nu ca fiind irelevant în raport cu cel național în vigoare sau fiind în contradicție cu acesta. Elevul trebuie să experimenteze un curriculum coerent, și nu unul fragmentat și deficitar. Astfel, curriculumul la decizia școlii trebuie să se întâlnească cu cel național și să se îmbine. De atunci, curriculumul tradițional bazat pe discipline a pus accentul pe cunoaștere și înțelegere. Din acest motiv, rolul curriculumului la decizia școlii s-a adresat acelor competențe dorite care sunt prea puțin dezvoltate în mod specific sau explicit de către disciplinele academice. Exemple de astfel de competențe pot include dezvoltarea personală, pregătirea pentru vârsta adultă și viața economică, încurajarea ființei responsabile etc.

Cuvinte-cheie: *curriculum, curriculum de decizie școlară, competență, competență de comunicare, elev, învățare.*

Today's Romanian school is in a continuous restructuration and reorganization. The school's role is to help students succeed in life, and this is conditioned by academic success. The changes that appeared in the evolution of Romanian society, and not only, are also reflected in the way education is organized and carried out, from the macro-educational level to the class time. Contemporary society is very different from the one in the last century, even more than that, society is in a continuous change, at an increasingly accelerated pace. In order to survive and be successful, the man of today's society needs adaptability to a constantly changing professional environment, the availability and ability to change the profession, knowledge of the everyday environment, a structured thinking and, last but not least, communication skills.

The Romanian education system is centered on skills training. The concept of competence is very different in the definition that have been attributed to it from various perspectives, by various authors. From a

broad, general perspective, competence is understood as „the cumulative result of an individual’s personal history and his interactions with the outside world. It is a person’s ability to exercise a responsibility or perform a task” [9, p. 190]. As results of learning processes, competences are defined in the perspective of the European Recommendation as a structured set of knowledge, skills and attitudes [10, p. 7].

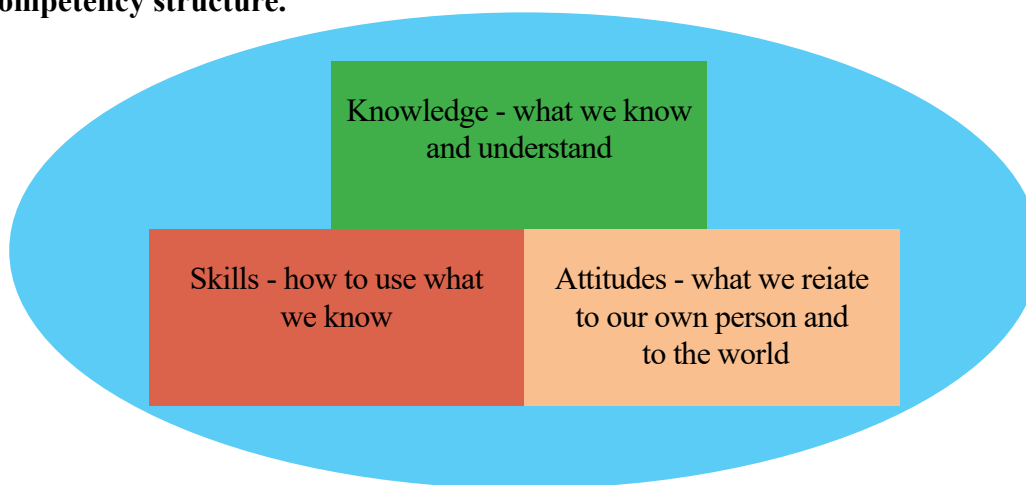
- **knowledge** - represents a set of factual information, concepts, ideas, validated theories that support the comprehension of a discipline or a field of knowledge;

- **skills** - represent the use of existing knowledge in order to achieve some results;

- **attitudes** – describe ways of relating to ideas, people or situations

The three dimensions are presented separately for theoretical reasons only, in learning processes, as well as in the manifestation of skills, they work aggregated together. A competence is manifested through a set of attitudes towards the associated task and which, through motivation and interests, engages the set of skills and knowledge, respectively the sets of cognitive, emotional and physical capacities that put into action specific behaviors, contextualized by the task and role. The order or hierarchy of the three dimensions does not seem to be important, it is stated in specialized studies, but the fact that they work together is beyond doubt, confirmed by psychology and neuroscience. The traditional human dimensions: cognitive (mind), physical (body) and emotional (soul) hold over time in this classical model of competence and argue for a holistic and integrative approach to learning in the classroom.

Fig. 1. Competency structure.



Communication competence can be understood as the most important function of communication [8, p. 37].

The sociolinguist Dell Hymes, studying Chomsky’s theses, talks about the concept of „communicative competence” for the first time, in 1966, attributing to it the ability to produce and interpret messages, as well as the negotiation of meaning in specific contexts.

In the view of researcher A. Pamfil, communication competence is the set of knowledge and capacities that the subject mobilizes in the comprehension situation. Also, in the definition of communication competence, the situations in which communication competence is expressed are also reviewed: comprehension of language, oral and written text; the production of language, oral text and written text [6, p. 223].

Daniela Roventă-Frumușani specifies, in this sense, a communication skill indispensable for success in communication, which does not coincide with the linguistic one, but requires knowledge of those rules that guide the use of speech in a certain social setting: „communication skill is the result of interaction : linguistic competence, socio-cultural competence, encyclopedic competence and generic competence” [4, p. 65].

Researcher Mina Maria Rusu believes that communication competence is defined „as a system of creative strategies that allow understanding the value of linguistic elements in context, developing the ability to apply knowledge about the role and functioning of language”. At the same time, communication cannot be approached outside of the social and, consequently, the integrative dimension of the process must also be taken into account [5, p. 718]. Therefore, communication competence is defined as the product of an interaction, of a relationship between individuals.

Curriculum at the school's discretion. According to order no. 3238 of February 5, 2021 for the approval of the Methodology regarding the development of the curriculum at the decision of the school, the CDS represents the educational offer proposed by the school, in accordance with the needs and learning interests of the students, with the specifics of the school and with the needs of the local community, and is made up of both optional disciplinary packages offered at national, regional and local level, as well as from optional disciplinary packages offered at the level of the educational unit. They are the so-called „optional”.

When we refer to the CDS carried out by the teaching staff, we are talking about the optional ones offered at the level of the educational unit, which have as a benchmark the learning needs and interests of the students, the human and material resources of the school, the local cultural, social and economic context.

Principles of curriculum design for optional subjects. The development of the document is based on the following principles:

- The principle of selection and cultural hierarchization - the harmonization between the field of interest expressed by the student's (parent's) option and the amplification, diversification of the fields of knowledge.

- The principle of alignment/coherence - symmetrizes the school process at the level of curricular areas, profile.

- The principle of functionality/individualization of the curriculum - respecting the characteristics of the student's age, interest, motivation.

- The principle of equal opportunities - ensuring equivalent opportunities. o The principle of flexibility - ensuring individual pathways, possibility of individualizing education.

- The principle of social connection, including professional insertion - preparation for a specialization upon exiting the system in accordance with the labor market.

- The principle of compatibility with benchmarks / trends / orientations / European standards in education.

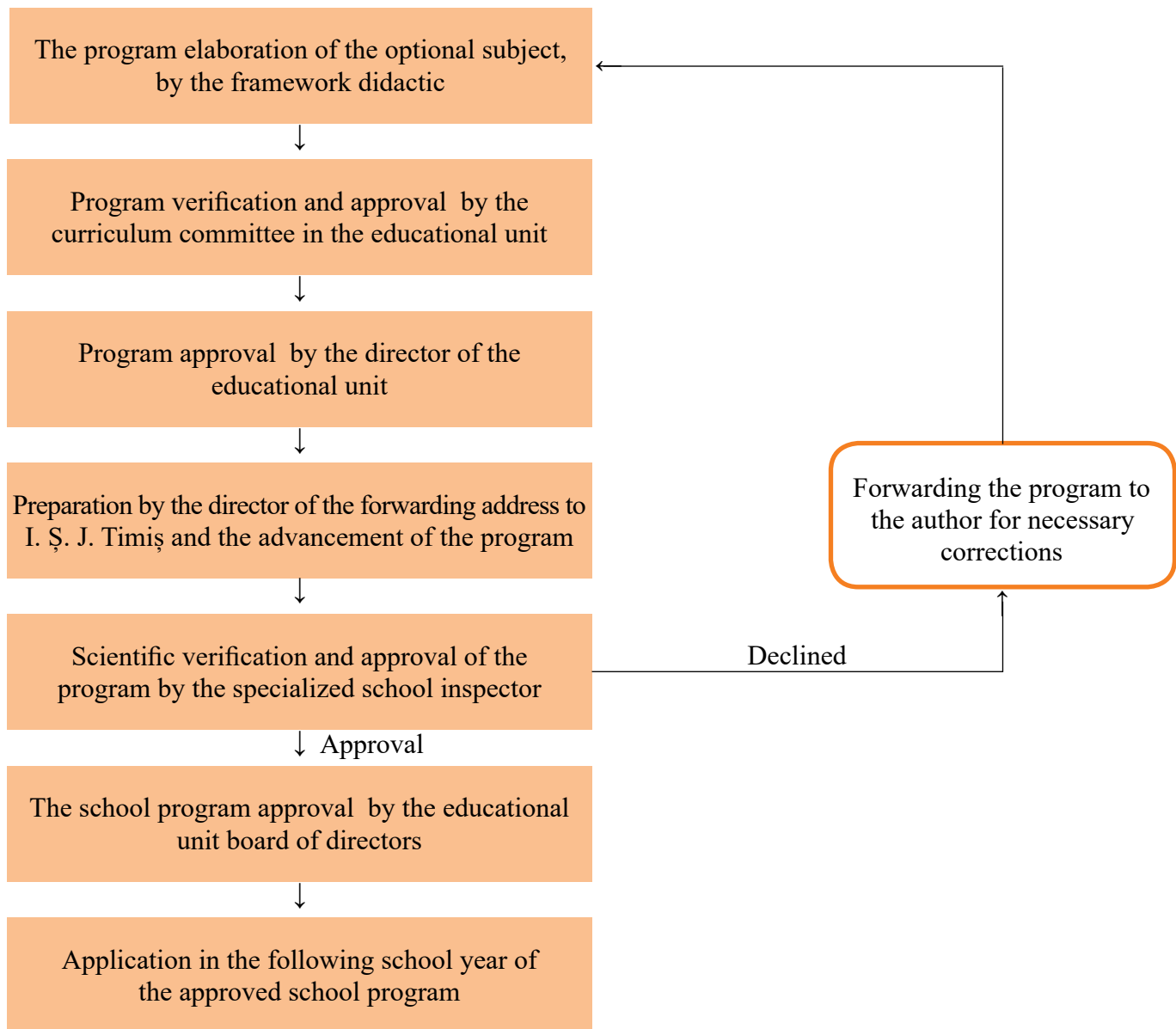
- The principle of decentralization of the curriculum - taking into account the particularities, traditions, regional and local opportunities.

- The principle of combining disciplinary approaches with multi-, pluri-, inter- and transdisciplinary approaches.

The choice and construction of an optional opens new perspectives for teachers' creativity, at the level of school practice, they orient their design starting from clearly defined objectives, which they will pursue over time, relying on the circulation of contents accessible to students, by applying some strategies teaching focused on their needs, interests, skills and abilities.

Table 1. CDS design criteria.

The design of the curriculum for the optional discipline must also be ordered according to the following requirements:
Ensuring continuity at the level of classes and education cycles;
The actuality of the information taught and its adaptation to the age level of the students, focusing on the student;
Focusing on the formative aspect;
Transdisciplinary correlation - interdisciplinary, in particular, crosscurricular correlation;
The delimitation by class of a compulsory level of preparation of the students for the optional course and profiling the possibilities in learning and obtaining new performances;
The clear focus of all curricular components on the final results – specific skills expected in the optional course.
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The clear focus of all curricular components on the final results – specific skills expected in the optional course.

Fig. 2. Stages of the development process - verification - approval of school programs.

In the process of training skills in the school environment, communication has a very important role. Communication is the primary tool of man in the process of his socialization. The theoretical foundations regarding communication have established a well-organized structure, this fact being demonstrated by the researches of the last decades, and the concerns in this field continue to produce special results. The ability to communicate is not a natural process or a skill we are born with. We learn to communicate. Any communication involves creation, exercise and exchange of meanings that we can find in the structure, design framework and application of a curriculum at the decision of the school. These meanings are represented by signs and codes.

Over the years, the student must become a person capable of orienting himself in life through effective communication in different situations, able to express his attitude towards ethical and aesthetic values, prepared to independently acquire knowledge and skills, required - a personality with a set of knowledge, communication attitudes formed on school courses [5, p. 68].

Thus, the essential purpose of education is to prepare students for life after leaving school, to help them build mental, emotional, social and strategic resources to enjoy challenges and to deal with uncertainty and complexity [12, p. 58].

Well designed, such a course can provide solutions to some of the current challenges of the teaching-learning-assessment process and at the same time develop students' communication skills by:

- the reorganization of school knowledge through integrated approaches, open to the equalization of the learning acquisitions acquired by students in the formal environment, but also in the non-formal one;
- the acquisition by the students of some complex acquisitions, which derive from the fields of key competences, but also from other referential systems that open the school world to real life;
- transferability of competences and their implications on teaching-learning-evaluation;
- offering a way of generating learning contents, which takes into account variables such as students' interests, performance level, differentiation and personalization of learning, didactic resources available to the school, flexible ways of approaching school time.
- the development of practical steps that facilitate active participation in solving group tasks, capitalizing on the potential of each student, giving him the feeling of his usefulness in the teaching-learning evaluation process.

In conclusion, a CDS course will shorten the path from the theoretical approach to the practical implementation of the acquired notions, in a new integrated framework, it will create added value by directly contributing to the development of the existing curricular framework, by supporting the integrated approach and by promoting key and professional skills, for the future integration of students in society.

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