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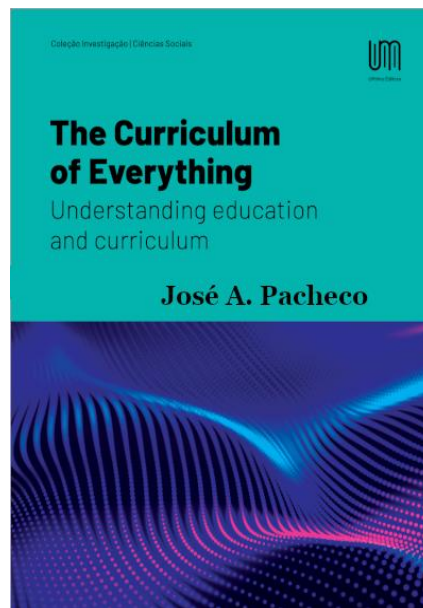
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Reviewed by Raj Kumar Baral
George Washington University
United States

This review critically engages with **José A. Pacheco's** *The Curriculum of Everything*, examining its contribution to contemporary curriculum theory in the context of digitalization, datafication, artificial intelligence, and post-pandemic educational change. Drawing on the traditions of curriculum as complicated conversation and *currere*, I explore Pacheco's central concept of digital subjectivity and its implications for teaching, learning, and educational experience. The author argues that curriculum is a site where knowledge, power, technology, and subjectivity intersect, reshaping learners and teachers within conditions of networked individualism, surveillance, and algorithmic governance.

While recognizing the book's significant contribution to debates on digital culture, curriculum, and human agency, this review also identifies limitations, including its limited attention to pedagogical application, curriculum design, and diverse global perspectives. I argue further that Pacheco's work offers a timely provocation for rethinking curriculum beyond techno-centric models and toward a more reflective, ethical, and human-centered educational future. Through this reading, the notion of a curriculum of digital subjectivity emerges as an important framework for understanding education in the digital age.



¹ This book is available without cost via Open Access at https://cied.uminho.pt/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/8_JAPacheco-1.pdf

José A. Pacheco is a prominent scholar and professor with a specialization in sociology at the University of Minho, Portugal. This book was published in November 2023 by UMinho Editora, University of Minho and is available without cost via Open Access.² Although it has not yet been formally reviewed in any academic journal, it has been referenced in various discussion notes and reflections on some educational platforms.

I assume that this review is intended for a broad audience, including educational researchers, curriculum theorists, independent scholars, schoolteachers, and administrators. Given this audience, the academic content and interpretation approach will blend theoretical insights within a framework of complicated conversation. Such a conversation may constitute a curriculum in which academic knowledge, subjectivity, society, and historical moment, drawing from Michel Foucault, truth (knowledge), power (procedures), and subject (constitution of its modes of being) become reciprocally reconstructed (Pinar, 2004, p. 28). My presentation may also include elements of *currere*, interwoven with autobiographical and lived experience (Pinar, 2004, p. 70). This self-reflexive dialogue characterizes curriculum as a complicated conversation, one that becomes meaningful only when it is threaded through academic knowledge (p. 276). Pacheco conceptualizes curriculum not as a fixed body of content but as a reflective and ongoing dialogue among learners, teachers, and knowledge traditions. For him, curriculum acquires meaning when these conversations are informed by disciplinary and academic knowledge, enabling critical engagement with educational and social realities.

Digital Subjectivity is a central concept in this book, particularly in the context of curriculum theory, in the changing educational landscape following the COVID-19 global pandemic. Accordingly, my entire interpretation, personal reflections, and subjective positioning will primarily focus on a theoretical overview of digital subjectivities and their practical implications for teaching and learning processes, classroom engagement, and multicultural classroom dynamics.

The book has one introductory chapter, six body chapters, and one concluding chapter. The book begins with a quote from William Pinar: “From that past we might find our way to a future foreclosed by the present” (p. 13). And it concludes with a quote from Fernando Pessoa: “I always live in the present, I don’t know the future and no longer have the past” (p. 171). These two intellectuals converge on the concept of presenteeism in curriculum studies, exploring its classical meaning in relation to self and subjectivity, as well as its manifestation in the contemporary digital world.

The concluding chapter, entitled “Concluding – Disquietude study,” also references Fernando Pessoa (1888–1935), the great Portuguese poet, writer, and philosopher who authored *The Book of Disquiet*. Pacheco has also borrowed Pessoa’s word, “Disquietude,” for the title in the concluding

² https://cied.uminho.pt/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/8_JAPacheco-1.pdf

chapter. The term suggests that the curriculum is never a finished project. New social realities, cultural perspectives, and forms of knowledge constantly challenge existing understandings. Therefore, a sense of "disquietude" keeps educators engaged in ongoing inquiry.

The entire book is academically influenced by the ideas of William Pinar (across all chapters), Michel Foucault (in most chapters), and Fernando Pessoa (in the concluding chapter). The author engages with the works of these intellectuals throughout the book to interpret the self and subjectivity, with a particular focus on Digital Subjectivity. This exploration is founded in the current global scenario of networked individualism, characterized by connectivity, digitalization, datafication, the metaverse, and artificial intelligence.

Curriculum of Digital Subjectivity

In the current digital time, the subject is a barcode, the cave where his shadow is virtual data. (p. 174)

One of the most meaningful quotes from Pacheco highlights how information technologies have shaped a new mode of subjectivation. According to Pacheco, today's rationality of datafication is based on competencies of understanding the globalized and colonized world in its new territorialities of big data.

The author interprets digital subjectivity within curriculum studies in the changing context of networked individualism, examining the interplay between individual intelligence (subject) and collective intelligence (cyberspace). This analysis references the shifting dynamics of contemporary connectivity, digitalization, datafication, surveillance societies, the metaverse, and artificial intelligence. The author argues that curriculum is a socially, culturally, ideologically, politically, and economically constructed phenomenon with significant interconnection between knowledge, power, technology, as well as subjectivity within schooling, education, and curriculum. Given the influence of technology, the barcode and surveillance economy (p. 9), the author expresses strong concern regarding the protection of critical thinking, individuality, autonomy, human agency, and democracy, and the protection of humanness.

Pacheco argues that digital software has confined individuals in "networked individualism" as the "gig workers" (p. 40), leading to the programming of subjectivity. Furthermore, digitalization following the COVID-19 global pandemic is not only reshaping subjectivity into digital subjectivity but also promoting economic and geopolitical division. This technological shift, according to the author, is physically and emotionally disconnecting human beings, which will impact the mental health of individuals and have long-term effects on social life as well.

The latest dynamics of digital culture are limiting personhood to the datafication of individuality. The author discusses how curriculum shapes and is shaped by the subjectivity of learners and educators.

From Knowledge Providers to Facilitators: AI, Education, and Evolving Subjectivities

I asked ChatGPT about the changing meaning of subjective narratives by posing the following question:

In this age of a highly technologized or digitalized world, shaped by individual (subject) and collective intelligence (cyberspace), connectivity, digitalization, datafication, surveillance societies, the metaverse, and artificial intelligence, how is the subjectivity of teachers and students being reshaped?

ChatGPT responded:

The subjectivity of teachers and students is being reshaped within emerging educational paradigms through shifts toward personalized, data-driven learning, platform-mediated interactions, and algorithmic feedback systems that reconfigure roles, agency, and relational dynamics. Teachers are increasingly seen as facilitators or curators of digital content rather than sole knowledge providers, while students become co-creators of knowledge whose identities and learning paths are continuously influenced by analytics, AI, and networked participation—blurring the line between human intention and machine mediation in educational experiences.

According to the subjectivity of ChatGPT, the new digital subjectivity has changed the role of the teacher to that of a facilitator rather than a knowledge provider. Students become co-creators of knowledge, and their identities and learning paths are shaped by analytics, AI, and network participation, with mediation occurring between human intention and machine mediation. Therefore, the similarity I see between the digital subjectivity of AI and the author's concerns appears even more relevant in today's context.

Subjectivity and lived experiences hold significant value in the field of curriculum studies. However, learning is contextual and is shaped by personal and collective identity, educational context, culture, and culture of the self or self-perception. Self-perception plays a crucial role in shaping educational experiences, interaction, and learning.

The Internet—and the Internet of Things or the Metaverse Internet (of everything)—as a source of information and knowledge is intensely variegated and is now profoundly changing the canonical question of the curriculum. (p. 16)

Pacheco emphatically emphasizes the concept of the “curriculum of things,” arguing that digital technology, as tangible things or objects, significantly shapes subjectivity, curriculum, learning environments, and learning (pp. 42–65). The author interprets digital subjects as “things”/ “matters” within the curriculum, which are constructed through data and algorithms. This construction shapes the subjectivity of the learner, and the

author expresses concern that children in this age may lose control over their own learning due to datafication, globalization, and decoloniality within the context of digital learning. The central concern of the book is the possible harm to human agency in such hyper-connected learning environments.

The author discusses curriculum as a political agenda, highlighting the political dimensions of curriculum design and implementation, as well as the implications of the presence and absence of concepts in educational content and representation. He argues that the absence of political and ethical engagement creates a false sense of neutrality, thereby positioning curriculum as a site of ideological struggle and as a political act. Furthermore, the author elaborates on the concept of “complicated conversation,” emphasizes the importance of critical thinking, and advocates for a curriculum of “cosmopolitan citizenship” and global awareness (pp. 89–123).

Pacheco introduces the terms “inquiry” instead of “study,” and “new imaginaries” to represent a thoughtful learning model through digital reflexivity (pp. 124–151). To address the subjective experience, the author proposes a reimagining of the curriculum and proposes new concepts like “reinvented imaginaries” and “slowness study” as alternatives to traditional educational models (pp. 124–151). The author argues that digital learning should not only be confined to efficiency, but it should support “reflection” or “imagination” of the learner. In this context, William Pinar summarizes the intent of the author, defining “slowness” (in the meaning of Pacheco), as a form of political and psychological resistance, advocating for reflection, dialogue, and human-centered education rather than a techno-centric future (p. 12).

Is the pandemic creating a new normal in education or simply accenting what is already becoming normal, namely, an accelerating tendency towards greater technologization? (p. 152)

Reflecting on the post-COVID-19 global pandemic, the author argues that the pandemic reinforced inequality and techno-centrism, and in such cases, education must adopt the “new normal” in a changing context by developing a “humanized post-pandemic curriculum” (pp. 152-171).

Pacheco further offers brief reflections on the challenges and uncertainties in the contemporary education landscape and encourages ongoing critical engagements in curriculum practices with their social impacts. He argues that the curriculum should address the uncertainty and complexity (disquietude) of the present and promote ethical and critical curriculum practices based on social justice.

The author critiques the prevailing emphasis on standardized testing and rigid learning outcomes, arguing that these practices suppress creativity and subjectivity. Instead, he advocates a “curriculum of slowness and reflection” rather than speed and performance (pp. 124–127).

A significant concern for the author is the growing trend of “Digital Coloniality,” which describes how Western knowledge systems dominate and marginalize alternative ways of knowing (pp. 70–73). Consequently, the author calls for decolonial approaches within the curriculum that prioritize diverse worldviews.

This is highly intellectual book and presents challenges for readers to understand without a foundational understanding of theoretical, technical, and terminological concepts such as post structuralism, critical theory, individual intelligence (subject), and collective intelligence (cyberspace), the “Curriculum of Slowness” (pp. 124–127), “Digital Subjectivity,” “Digital Coloniality,” and “Reinvented Imaginaries” (pp. 66–72, 124–128), as well as the “New Normal” (p. 156). The author critiques techno-centrism in education but does not provide clear practical guidance with concrete frameworks for contemporary educators of this age.

Pacheco primarily engages with critical theory and poststructuralism but does not include the ideas and reflections on pragmatic, progressive, or deconstructionist curriculum traditions. Similarly, there is a strong emphasis on digital subjectivity. However, the discussion overlooks contemporary issues of collective curricular goals such as equity, civic knowledge, curriculum of science and technology education, early childhood education, and assessment policy. The author's call for disconnection from the hegemony of colonial thought appears to be an appeal for epistemic refusal. However, from an Asian perspective, the analysis seems to focus primarily on the refusal of Euro-American epistemic frameworks, despite its decolonial aspirations. Such an approach risks overlooking the fact that every region of the world and every civilization possesses its own rich epistemic treasury rooted in indigenous knowledge traditions.

Most importantly, the author has insufficiently focused on curriculum design with pedagogical insights, despite acknowledging that curricular conversation is inherently a pedagogical issue as well. As a result, the book lacks a clear guide in terms of application in classroom practice. For instance, while the concept of a “curriculum of slowness” (p. 127) is compelling, the author does not provide concrete suggestions for how such a practice might be implemented within standardized or institutional settings.

Pacheco has focused on digital technology, neoliberal ideologies, and the post-pandemic educational landscape. The author challenges the traditional understanding of curriculum as a fixed, measurable, and hierarchical structure. It further appeals to rethink curriculum as a dynamic, relational, and deeply subjective space through subjectivity, experience, and reflection, and shows the big concern that digital capitalism and algorithmic governance are reshaping learners into “digital subjects” (pp. 66–68), where education is being tracked and managed through data and algorithms.

Despite the limitations, this book is thought-provoking within the field of curriculum studies. It gives valuable insights for rethinking education from a humanized perspective in this digital and technocentric world, not only as the process of knowledge transformation but also as the space of subjectivity, ethics, and resistance. This book is a must-read for all curriculum scholars, policymakers, and teachers.

Reference

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About the Reviewer

Raj Kumar Baral is a Nepalese scholar, author, and researcher specializing in curriculum studies, comparative education, and knowledge systems. He is the author of the *Shiksha Vimarsha (Education Discourse)* book series (Volumes I–III). He has authored and edited numerous publications on indigenous knowledge systems, subaltern studies, educational equity, and the educational experiences of Indigenous Peoples, Dalit communities, women, and children in Nepal. His scholarship also examines issues of conflict, peacebuilding, and social justice through critical and decolonial perspectives. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction at The George Washington University. His doctoral research focuses on developing an Interfaith Reparative Curriculum for early childhood and primary education that fosters peace, inclusion, and global citizenship by integrating shared scientific, humanistic, and spiritual values across the world's major religious traditions. His broader research interests include curriculum theory, comparative philosophy of education, decolonizing knowledge systems, interfaith education, peace education, spirituality, and transformative learning.



About the Author

José A. Pacheco, PhD in Education (1993) in the specialty of Curriculum Development, University of Minho, is a Full Professor in the Department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology at the Institute of Education, University of Minho, Portugal. His research interests are focused on Curriculum Theory, Curriculum Politics, Teacher Training, and Evaluation. Presently, he is the director of the Ph.D. Science Education Program of the University of Minho, an effective member of the Research Centre on Education of the University of Minho, and a member of the Advisory



Board of the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education. He coordinated (2013-2022) two research projects on school external evaluation, financed by national funds through the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT).

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