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«مقاله پژوهشی»

نیونرمال در برنامه درسی؛ تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی در گرایش‌های معاصر حوزه مطالعات برنامه درسی

مریم آمیقی رودسری^۱، کورش فتحی واجارگاه^۲، مصطفی قادری^۳، فاطمه احمدیگی^۴

چکیده

جهان معاصر شاهد گذار از وضعیت‌های «نرمال» تثبیت‌شده به دورانی است که آن را «نیونرمال» می‌نامند. این گذار که غالباً توسط بحران‌های ژرف و چندوجهی تسریع و هدایت می‌شود، صرفاً بازگشتی موقت به شرایط پیشین نیست؛ بلکه دلالتی بر دگرگونی‌های بنیادین در ساختارهای تجربه، تعامل و معنا در سطوح فردی و جمعی تعلیم و تربیت است. در این میان، نظام‌های آموزشی و به ویژه برنامه‌های درسی - به مثابه یکی از اصلی‌ترین سازوکارهای اجتماعی فرهنگی - نه تنها در معرض تأثیر این تحولات قرار می‌گیرد، بلکه خود به عاملی فعال در شکل‌دهی و تثبیت این «نیونرمال» مبدل می‌گردد. حال این سؤال مطرح است که برنامه درسی چگونه می‌تواند تحت تأثیر بحران‌های معاصر، به مثابه یک سازوکار پدیدارشناختی انتقادی عمل کند و در فرایند تولید، تثبیت و عادی‌سازی «نیونرمال» در نظام آموزشی و برنامه‌ریزی درسی به ایفای نقش بپردازد؟ این پژوهش کیفی با رویکرد تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی در چارچوب الگوی شناختی بلیکی (چیستی، چرایی، چگونگی)، با هدف کاوش در سازوکارهای (نظری و عملی) تبدیل بحران به نرمال از طریق برنامه درسی، به دنبال ارائه تفسیری عمیق و چندلایه از نقش برنامه درسی در دوران نیونرمال است. به نظر می‌رسد «نیونرمال در برنامه درسی» به عنوان مجموعه‌ای از تغییرات پایدار و ساختاریافته که در پاسخ به تحولات جهانی شکل گرفته و اکنون به هنجار غالب در نظام آموزشی و برنامه‌ریزی درسی بدل شده است، نه تنها پاسخی به بحران‌های موقتی، بلکه ضرورتی راهبردی برای آماده‌سازی یادگیرندگان در مواجهه با آینده‌ای نامطمئن و متغیر در حوزه مطالعات برنامه درسی خواهد بود.

واژه‌های کلیدی

تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی، نظریه و نظریه‌پردازی، دیجیتالی‌شدن، انعطاف‌پذیری، تابآوری، نیونرمال در برنامه درسی.

۱. گروه برنامه‌ریزی درسی، واحد تهران شمال، دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی، تهران، ایران.
۲. گروه علوم تربیتی، دانشکده علوم تربیتی و روان‌شناسی، دانشگاه شهید بهشتی، تهران، ایران.
۳. گروه مطالعات برنامه درسی، دانشکده روان‌شناسی و علوم تربیتی، دانشگاه علامه طباطبائی، تهران، ایران.
۴. گروه مطالعات برنامه درسی، دانشکده روان‌شناسی و علوم تربیتی، دانشگاه علامه طباطبائی، تهران، ایران.

نویسنده مسئول:

کورش فتحی واجارگاه

رایانامه: K-fathi@sbu.ac.ir

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The “New-Normal” in Curriculum: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Contemporary Trends in Curriculum Studies

Maryam Amighi Roudsari¹, Kourosh Fathi Vajargah^{2*}, Mostafa Ghaderi³, Fatemeh AhmadBeigi⁴

1. PhD Candidate, Department of Curriculum, North Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.
2. Professor, Faculty of Education Sciences and Psychology, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran.
3. Associate Professor, Faculty of Education Sciences, Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran, Iran.
4. Assistant Professor, Department of Curriculum, North Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

Correspondence
Kourosh Fathi Vajargah
Email: K-fathi@sbu.ac.ir

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary world is witnessing a transition from established “normal” states to an era termed the “new-normal.” This shift, often accelerated and guided by profound, multifaceted crises, is not merely a temporary return to previous conditions. Rather, it signifies fundamental transformations in the structures of experience, interaction, and meaning at both individual and collective levels within education. In this context, educational systems, particularly curricula as key socio-cultural mechanisms are not only subject to these changes but also become active agents in shaping and consolidating this “new-normal.” Consequently, a critical question arises: How can the curriculum, acting as a critical phenomenological mechanism under the influence of contemporary crises, play a role in producing, stabilizing, and normalizing the “new-normal” within educational systems and curriculum planning? This qualitative study, employing Critical Discourse Analysis within Blaikie’s cognitive framework (what, why, how), seeks to provide a deep, multi-layered interpretation of the curriculum’s role during the new-normal. It appears that the “new-normal in curriculum,” defined as a set of stable, structured changes formed in response to global transformations and now becoming the dominant norm in educational systems and curriculum planning, serves not only as a response to temporary crises but also as a strategic necessity for preparing learners to face an uncertain and variable future in the field of curriculum studies. The study uncovers how language and power dynamics contribute to the normalization of new educational paradigms that embracing new-normal is essential for fostering adaptive learning environments equip students with skills needed for an unpredictable world.

KEYWORDS

Critical Discourse Analysis, Theory and Theory-Development, Digitization, Flexibility, Resilience, New-Normal in Curriculum.



Introduction

The contemporary world is witnessing a transition from established “normal” states to an era called the “New-Normal.” This transition rooted in multifaceted crises - including the digital revolution, environmental challenges, and paradigm shifts - has affected social, cultural, and educational systems and is not merely a temporary return to prior conditions; rather, it signifies fundamental transformations in the structures of experience, interaction, and meaning at individual and collective levels. In this context, the education system, and especially the curriculum as one of the principal socio-cultural mechanisms, is not only exposed to these transformations but also becomes an active factor in shaping and stabilizing this “New-Normal,” thereby confronting curriculum studies with significant obstacles that have not only reflected but also intensified the new-normal condition in this field. This situation - what may be called a “theoretical crisis in curriculum” - requires a deep inquiry from the perspective of “critical phenomenology.” From this viewpoint, the New-Normal can be understood as a process in which **Horizons of the Obvious** and **Lebenswelt** are fundamentally rearranged (Schütz, 1967), meaning that the traditional assumptions, concepts, and methodologies that once constituted the theoretical foundations of curriculum are no longer able to fully explain the complex and fluid realities of education (Husserl, 1970). This rearrangement is not a neutral phenomenon but the result of accumulating crises and of “**Power-Laden Processes**” in which the **Normalization** of specific **Hegemonic** approaches prevents the emergence and development of alternative and critical theories and leads to the appearance of

new conditions that were previously impossible or undesirable (Foucault, 1977; Butler, 2004). In this context, the curriculum is not only a site reflecting the crisis of theorization; because of its dual essence, it also becomes an active factor in shaping New-Normals in educational systems and functions as a field in which the New-Normal is actively produced, stabilized, and institutionalized (Apple, 2004; Bourdieu, 1984). Particularly in confronting challenges arising from emerging paradigms - such as artificial intelligence, big data, and interdisciplinary approaches - this mechanism defines and promotes the knowledge, skills, values, and identities required for living in the new condition, while at the same time potentially limiting the capacities for critique and resistance. Given this theoretical framework and the focus on the theoretical and practical obstacles in curriculum studies, the question arises: *How can the curriculum, under the influence of contemporary crises, function as a critical phenomenological mechanism and play a role in the production, stabilization, and normalization of the “New-Normal” in the educational system?* This study, aiming to provide an analytical examination of the relations among the key concepts of “New-Normal” and to explore the theoretical and practical structure of transforming crisis into normal through the curriculum, and relying on a combination of phenomenological, critical, and curriculum-theoretical approaches, seeks to offer a deep and multilayered interpretation of the role of the curriculum in the new-normal era. It seems that the fundamental solution to passing through this crisis lies in applying the concepts of “**flexibility**” and “**resilience**” in interaction with other theoretical concepts in curriculum studies.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid global transformations in recent decades across technology, economy, and health, particularly events like the COVID-19 pandemic and the proliferation of digital technologies, have created conditions where many previous models of social and human life have lost their efficacy. These circumstances have led to the emergence of a new concept, termed "New-Normal," as a fresh analytical framework within scientific and social literature. This concept refers to a state that, following fundamental changes in various domains, establishes new standards for individual and collective adaptation as the dominant and accepted pattern of human life and activities. In other words, the New-Normal is not a temporary change but a redefinition of the normal state, consolidated based on emerging transformations. Consequently, the "New-Normal" is not merely a temporary shift but signifies the formation of new norms that replace previous normal patterns and provide novel criteria for adaptation and action. However, education and curriculum planning is one of the most significantly affected areas. "New-Normal in curriculum" refers to a set of changes in objectives, content, teaching and learning methods, assessment methods, and the roles of teacher and learner, which have arisen as a result of global transformations and emerging societal needs. In this new situation, curricula must be designed to be flexible, technological, learner-centered, and skill-oriented, while emphasizing resilience, creativity, and lifelong learning. Thus, the New-Normal in curriculum is more a reflection of the necessity to prepare learners for life and work in an uncertain and evolving future than merely a response to a momentary crisis. The

field of curriculum planning has increasingly highlighted the necessity of revising various aspects. It is no longer possible to focus solely on knowledge transmission for educational objectives; instead, fostering 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, resilience, and digital literacy has become imperative. Curriculum content must also move away from a linear and fixed format towards flexible, multimedia, and customizable content. Teaching methods should be learner-centered, interactive, and technological, and assessments should shift from the traditional final exam format to continuous, performance-based, and learning-data-driven evaluations (Anderson-Levitt, 2008). The COVID-19 pandemic, as a historical turning point in education, demonstrated that educational systems must be able to ensure the continuity of learning even in critical and unpredictable conditions. During this period, the use of **Distance education (DL)** and **Blended Learning**, utilizing digital technologies, rapidly became part of the educational reality; this trend has continued even after the easing of restrictions, becoming a "New-Normal" in curricula (UNESCO, 2021; OECD, 2020). Therefore, "New-Normal in curriculum" can be defined as a set of sustainable and structured changes in educational objectives, content, methods, assessment, and roles, which have formed in response to global transformations and have now become the dominant norm in education. This approach is not only a response to temporary crises but a strategic necessity for preparing learners to face an uncertain and changing future. Thus, considering the general definition that the New-Normal is a situation that emerges after a major change (social, economic, technological, or biological) and

gradually becomes established as the dominant and accepted pattern of life, work, and thought, the definition of the New-Normal in the field of education and curriculum can be stated as follows: "New-Normal in curriculum" refers to the transformation in educational objectives, content, methods, assessment, and roles that has emerged as a result of global changes (such as the Digitization of education, the COVID-19 crisis, the expansion of new technologies, and changing societal needs) and is no longer merely a secondary option but has become the dominant and stable norm in the design and implementation of curricula (Hatch, 2018). In

this sense, the New-Normal is not just a temporary change but a new condition that replaces the previous normal state and creates new criteria for adaptation and action. In other words, in this situation, the curriculum is a flexible, technological, learner-centered, and skill-oriented process; and the New-Normal in curriculum is a reflection of society's need for education for uncertain futures—an education that can foster resilience, creativity, and lifelong learning in learners. Table 1. This analytical framework explains the New-Normal in curriculum in comparison to the traditional educational state.

Table 1. Analytical Framework of the New-Normal in Curriculum Compared to Traditional Education

Dimension	Traditional Status	New-Normal Status	Implications for Curriculum
Objectives	Emphasis on knowledge transmission	Emphasis on critical thinking skills, creativity, media literacy, and resilience	Revision of educational objectives towards competency-based learning
Content	Linear, textbook-based, fixed	Interactive, multimedia, open, and customizable	Design of flexible and multi-layered content tailored to learner needs
Teaching Methods	Teacher-centered, lecture-based	Blended (in-person - virtual), project-based, flipped classroom	Increased role of the learner in the learning process
Assessment	End-of-term written exams	Continuous assessment, portfolios, projects, learning data analysis	Focus on real performance and skills
Role of Teacher & Learner	Teacher as transmitter, learner as passive	Teacher as facilitator, learner as active and self-directed	Need for teacher empowerment in digital literacy
Equity & Access	Equal in-person access in the classroom	Challenges of the digital divide and inequality in technology	Design of supportive and accessible programs for all
Philosophy & Values	Degree-oriented, stability	Competency-oriented, flexibility, future-oriented, technology-driven, humanistic;	Educating learners for an uncertain and changing world

Scope of Research

- **Field of Study:** This research focuses on the theoretical and conceptual analysis of the relationships among "New-Normal," "Digitization," "flexibility," and "resilience"

within curriculum studies.

- **Research Limitations:** This study is a theoretical investigation, and its findings are not directly derived from empirical or field data. Therefore, the generalizability of the

findings to all learning levels and types of educational systems requires further investigation. Furthermore, the primary focus is on the theoretical concepts presented, and the practical implementation details in specific educational environments are outside the scope of this study.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Phenomenology of the New-Normal in Curriculum

Recent decades have seen global crises (like COVID-19, the digital revolution, climate change) challenge the concept of "normal" in social and educational spheres. These crises have birthed new norms that are not temporary shifts but fundamental transformations in social structures and educational systems, specifically impacting the curriculum. This reconfigures Lebenswelt (Butler, 2004).

1. **Shift in the Taken-for-Granted:** Once exceptional or impossible situations (e.g., widespread remote learning, pervasive AI in education, altered social interactions) are becoming normalized.

2. **Semantic Reconstruction:** Key concepts of learning are being redefined (Schütz, 1967).

A critical perspective, alongside phenomenological explanation, reveals the power-laden and contested essence of the New-Normal:

- **New-Normal as a Response to Crisis:** It often arises from structural, technological, economic, or legitimacy crises that render the previous state untenable (Goodson, 2013).

- **Power and Normalization:** Foucault's ideas (1977) on "discipline" and "normalization" highlight how the new state, even if crisis-born, becomes perceived as Normal, inevitable, and even desirable. This normalization masks power dynamics.

- **Contestation of "Normal":** The New-Normal is not predetermined but a site of struggle over its definition and the benefits it confers on various groups, including educational institutions. Resistance to this transition is a key aspect (Bourdieu, 1984).

The curriculum plays a dual role as both a reflector and producer of the New-Normal:

1. **Reflector:** It mirrors societal, technological, and economic realities stemming from crises, evident in shifts in priorities, content, and teaching methods.

2. **Producer/Shaper:** Critically, the curriculum actively shapes and stabilizes the New-Normal by defining what constitutes "knowing, learning, and succeeding," thereby normalizing the new state and limiting future possibilities for change (Apple, 2004).

Therefore, the New-Normal in curriculum is a "critical phenomenological" phenomenon, altering lived educational experiences within a context of power relations, meaning struggles, and normalization processes. It reflects the crisis-ridden reality while constructing the New-Normal. This research, using "critical phenomenology," examines the crisis in theoretical development within curriculum studies concerning the contemporary "New-Normal." The New-Normal here is understood not just as an event or temporary transition, but as a constellation of changes in how we engage, create meaning, and establish taken-for-granted assumptions, directly impacting the potential for inquiry and theorization across cognitive, critical, and attitudinal dimensions of curriculum studies.

- **Cognitive Approach:** New-Normal as Transformation of Experience and Epistemic Crisis

Phenomenologically, lived experience is

understood within "**Horizons of the Obvious**" (Husserl, 1970). When educational lifeworlds are disrupted by digital revolutions, pandemics, or other layered transformations, these horizons are reconfigured. This raises questions about what is sayable, conceivable, and acceptable as reality (Schütz, 1967). Curriculum studies face an "epistemic crisis" not from a lack of theory, but because constant shifts in Lebenswelt destabilize the criteria for understanding, descriptive language, and methodological assumptions. Theories may either hastily reproduce old frameworks for stability or fragment into incoherence, hindering theoretical development in both cases.

- **Critical Approach:** New-Normal as a Mechanism of Power and Normalization

While phenomenology shows how crisis alters experience, the critical approach reveals its link to power. The New-Normal is viewed as a process that **normalizes** specific situations. What was once problematic or exceptional becomes presented as "**Normal**" or "inevitable" through discourses, policies, and institutionalization (Foucault, 1977). This normalization often establishes regimes of knowledge, dictating what is measurable, relevant, and thus theorizable. Critical theories may be marginalized or neutralized if they challenge dominant narratives or institutional interests, limiting the "space of theoretical possibility" and directing theorizing towards short-term institutional or technical demands.

- **Attitudinal Approach:** Curriculum as a Field of Production, Reflection, and Resistance to the New-Normal

The curriculum is viewed not just as applied knowledge but as a theoretical-practical field where knowledge, values, and educational subjects are produced. It reflects contemporary crises and prevailing narratives on "needs," "efficiency," and "quality" (Apple, 2004).

Simultaneously, the curriculum actively shapes the New-Normal by determining which knowledge is emphasized and marginalized, influencing Lebenswelts. This can reinforce the normalization cycle. However, the curriculum can also be a site of resistance. By redefining problems, enabling diverse descriptions of educational experiences, and questioning policy implications, critical approaches within the curriculum can reopen horizons of the obvious. Thus, the curriculum is both an object of analysis and a factor influencing theorization, either perpetuating or resisting barriers to theoretical development.

On this basis, the New-Normal, on one hand, transforms the horizons of Lebenswelt and epistemological improvisation (phenomenological dimension). On the other hand, it limits or guides the field of thought and theoretical legitimacy within power regimes and normalization processes (critical dimension). Within this context, the curriculum either reproduces these mechanisms or, through critical approaches, can foster the possibility of alternative theorizing. Consequently, the crisis of theoretical obstacles in curriculum studies can be understood as a simultaneous outcome of the "crisis of experience" and the "crisis of the power/knowledge field." At the same time, the connection to the "consequences of the curriculum reform movement" cannot be entirely ignored.

- **Historical Roots:** Many concepts discussed in the context of "New-Normal" and "curriculum reform" has roots in previous reform movements. For instance, the emphasis on "21st-century skills," "active learning," "technology in education," and even critical approaches to the curriculum have long histories. The "New-Normal" may have accelerated or reshaped these trends.

- **Theorizing as Reflection:** The ultimate goal of analyzing obstacles to theorizing is to reflect on the future of the curriculum. This reflection naturally builds upon past experiences, including those from reform movements. Your analysis may demonstrate how certain theoretical obstacles stem from older curriculum paradigms that still influence the current discourse.

- **Continuous Critique:** Curriculum studies are inherently a critical field, constantly revising and reforming itself. Any "New-Normal" or "reform" can be explored from a discursive and critical perspective.

This research, focusing on contemporary trends of the New-Normal in curriculum studies, will also examine its long-term roots and consequences from previous reform movements, seeing the present as a continuation or reaction to past developments. Critical discourse and phenomenological analysis can illuminate the current state of curriculum studies and identify barriers to theorization, even if these barriers have a longer historical lineage.

Contemporary Trends in Curriculum Studies

The concept of the "New-Normal," amplified by global crises like the pandemic, signifies fundamental, long-term changes in lifestyles, social interactions, and institutional functions (Friedman, 2020). In education, this has led to a significant re-evaluation of traditional paradigms and the adoption of new approaches. Research indicates that the "New-Normal" era is not about reverting to the past but adapting to new conditions and leveraging emergent opportunities (Singh & Sharma, 2021). The curriculum, as the beating heart of the

educational system, is at the center of these transformations. Research in this field has shifted towards a focus on flexibility, blended learning, the development of digital skills and information literacy, as well as attention to the psychological and social dimensions of learners in transformed educational environments (Hodges et al., 2020). Here's the continuation of the English summary, maintaining the structure and constraints: For instance, research emphasizes the importance of designing curricula that can effectively leverage educational technologies to deliver rich and interactive content, while still focusing on fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration (Bao et al., 2020). Furthermore, studies have indicated that the "New-Normal" in curriculum requires a reconsideration of assessment methods, the creation of safe and inclusive learning spaces, and attention to digital divides and unequal educational opportunities to achieve educational goals in a complex and evolving world (Gao, 2021). These transformations further highlight the necessity of adopting critical approaches to the curriculum to identify and overcome theoretical obstacles that resist the acceptance of these changes. Therefore, understanding the concept of the "New-Normal" and its implications for education necessitates accepting the reality that the educational system is entering a new era. The curriculum, as the primary focus of this transformation, must be designed and implemented in a way that addresses the complex and changing needs of learners and society. This requires continuous research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and a readiness to embrace innovations and fundamental changes in attitudes and teaching methods. Accordingly, theorizing in curriculum studies is

a dynamic and multifaceted field that has always been influenced by social, political, and cultural transformations. Contemporary trends in this area have moved away from traditional approaches and emphasize a rethinking of the essence of knowledge, power, and the goals of education. These trends can be broadly categorized as follows:

1. Critical approaches: These approaches, drawing on Critical Theory from the Frankfurt School and the ideas of theorists such as Foucault, examine relations of power, ideology, and social inequalities in the curriculum. Their aim is not only to describe the existing situation, but also to critique and transform it in pursuit of educational justice.

2. Interpretive and postmodern approaches: These schools emphasize the relativity of knowledge, the plurality of perspectives, and the importance of language and discourse in shaping learning experiences. They examine the challenges that grand and authoritarian narratives create within the curriculum.

3. Experiential and pragmatic approaches: These perspectives focus on learners' lived experience, the importance of Reflective Practice, and the connection of the curriculum to real societal issues.

These theoretical trends shape our fundamental assumptions about what education are, "the role of teacher and student" and the goals of curriculum planning and they become even more important in the era of the "New-Normal", which is marked by uncertainty and rapid change.

• Curriculum Reform Movement

The process of curriculum change—following critical reviews of previous curricula - began in 1997, and in 2001 a pilot version of the "new curriculum" was developed by the **Ministry of Education** of the People's

Republic of China (MOE). The new curriculum represented a fundamental shift in curriculum philosophy, goals, and structure; however, these fundamental changes have disrupted the identity of teachers and the traditional education system itself. Traditional approaches are insufficient for implementing changes based on teacher development and organizational change strategies; therefore, they are also unable to understand the learning involved in adopting a new curriculum. As a result, they resist any change. Yet resistance can be reconsidered not as a rejection of change, but as a necessity for the curriculum - drawing on psychoanalytic understandings of learning. Britzman (1998) argues that resistance to knowledge is not an obstacle but a prerequisite for learning and a condition for acquiring knowledge, because it involves losing certainties and confronting identities previously formed by traditional curricula. According to Carson (2009), systemic educational change is a global phenomenon and undoubtedly one of the most ambitious, extensive, and complex fundamental educational reforms, representing a major shift in educational philosophy and basic teaching practices worldwide. Pinar (2014) describes these reforms as a new vision in education, based on attention to individual human development and recognition of education's position in global society. With its emphasis on individual personal development and delegation of responsibility to local authorities, the new curriculum not only significantly departs from the traditional past of education, but also from Zhang's (2007) historical (Confucian) traditions. By overcoming resistance and placing pressure on the capacity of teachers and the educational system to implement change, resistance to change remains one of the key challenges.

• **Modernity and New Education**

Throughout the history of educational theorizing, the field of curriculum has been divided into countless perspectives and movements. In the twentieth century, American and European educational thought had their own distinct histories. The roots of modern education can be traced from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century in European educational reforms - which were significantly influenced by Rousseau's ideas (1762). According to Dunkel (1969), dialogue between European and American curriculum theorists became common again in recent years, although it is clear that before that, in the nineteenth century, European theorizing had a major influence on American curriculum theories. For example, the adoption of Herbartian educational thought in the late nineteenth century in the United States opened new discourses and issues for reconsideration, offering fresh ideas and solutions for educational practice and clearly remaining important for future curriculum theorizing. It can therefore be reasonably argued that curriculum theorizing extends beyond education and includes the concerns of theorists interested in how knowledge, skills, and values are acquired; although they have largely focused on cognitive phenomena, they are constantly changing, and curriculum theorists have emphasized different aspects of education (Flinders & Thornton, 2021). In this way, curriculum studies can practically be seen as a response to the classical concept of the field; from Doll's (1993) description of the postmodern context of education to Pinar's (1995) understanding of curriculum, it has focused on understanding the curriculum and remains a critical movement against simplistic and technocratic models of curriculum.

Nevertheless, the history of curriculum theory is so rich and complex that it is defined not merely by influential theorists and evolving educational models.

• **Postmodernism and Curriculum Reform**

The postmodern approach in theorizing, with its skepticism towards modernist assumptions based on rationalism, absolute truth, and progress, emphasizes relativism, pluralism, and the role of language and narrative in shaping reality and identity. Instead of seeking universal laws, it focuses on the complexities, diversity, and entanglement of power and knowledge in human experience. This perspective, while critiquing modernist meta-narratives and responding to the universalizing tendencies of the Enlightenment, facilitates understanding existence from various viewpoints. It has also led to the emergence of approaches in educational paradigm shifts that emphasize active learning, critical thinking, attention to context, and acceptance of plurality in curricula. In contrast, the modern approach in theorizing emphasizes rationality, logic, and the unity of general and universal truths. Relying on Enlightenment and scientific thought, it seeks to discover universal laws and principles for explaining the world, asserting that a knowable reality and fixed scientific laws exist, capable of explaining the order and relationships in the world. From this perspective, modern theorizing aims to create general models and frameworks that allow for prediction and control of events, emphasizing the development of knowledge based on objective evidence and empirical experience. However, the postmodern approach challenges these concepts, offering new approaches in curriculum reform through a paradigm shift in

education, emphasizing pluralism, active learning, critical thinking, and attention to context. Such a perspective allows for escape from absolutism and domination, and considers sensitivity to environmental, social, and spiritual issues as an essential part of the curriculum. Since curriculum reforms within the modernist framework are inadequate to meet the real needs of learners, the transition to a postmodern perspective - utilizing deconstruction and self-reflective theorizing - has paved the way for developments such as diversity in disciplines, attention to differences, critique of dominant power, and reconsideration of the role of technology (Green, 1996). Meanwhile, theorists play a fundamental role in explaining phenomena, transforming perceptions, and even changing scientific paradigms by presenting conceptual frameworks, developing models, and guiding research. For instance, the postmodern paradigm in curriculum, by critiquing modern education, highlights attention to aesthetic and ecological dimensions, cultural awareness, hidden aspects of learning, and the consequences of globalization (Cronin, 2017).

• Curriculum and Critical Theory

Studies of critical theory in curriculum have primarily been conducted theoretically by neo-Marxists in America and Europe. The earliest research dates back to the works of Bowles and Gintis (1976) and Apple (1979) concerning cultural-economic contradictions in the educational system. According to Gutek (1997), critical theory examines social issues from the perspective of critique and contradiction, aiming to achieve a social system free from these contradictions (Gutek, 1997). This approach considers education inseparable from social and human transformations, viewing schools, curricula, and pedagogy as activities beyond the academic, with political, economic,

and social dimensions. With the advent of technology and technical tools, discourse and negotiation prevailed over rationality. Consequently, radicalism in curriculum, based on critical and postmodern approaches, has engaged in reforming and changing the educational system. Critical theory, with the belief that social life is full of conflicts and ambiguities, seeks awakening and liberation, while postmodernism seeks the negation of human rationality in an independent, autonomous, and absolute era. The influence of critical theory on curriculum studies is so extensive that topics related to this theory are addressed in almost all texts related to curriculum or sociology of education. Engaging in critical pedagogy discourse encompasses a range of approaches in education discussed under titles such as socio-cultural reproduction, resistance, and the hidden curriculum. Since postmodernism opposes ideology and any metanarrative, critical approaches have questioned the fundamental assumptions of classical approaches, human relations, and systemic and cultural frameworks. Critical theorists, by presenting a radical framework, believe that the task of the curriculum theorist is to understand designed and meaningful entities and to describe single or multiple systems of control.

• Curriculum and the Issue of Globalization

Schubert (2008) acknowledges in curriculum theory that personal theory and critical theory are alternatives to analytical and normative theory, which have dominated a significant portion of past curriculum theories. Now, if we consider Tyler's logic obsolete, and if we have no alternative to it, or only a few theories for replacement, then we can discuss the broad theoretical possibilities in the field of curriculum studies. This is because new

discourses in curriculum studies are often associated with this understanding and are observable in various analyses of what happened to the curriculum after the paradigm of Tyler's logic. Such growth has been characterized within the framework of globalization and diversity as the main pillars of curriculum internationalization. On one hand, globalization can be described as a process of curriculum policy homogenization; on the other hand, it relates to the vague commonalities that exist between curricula worldwide. In reality, curriculum globalization is a process of convergence of goals, which use common vocabulary regarding curriculum reforms due to the centrality of knowledge and the strengthening of national identity - increasingly defined by transnational directives. It offers a conceptual framework for curriculum globalization where local knowledge traditions in curriculum studies can coexist, not as local representations of a curriculum that has become a global discourse (Miller, 2005). In this interpretation, “internationalization does not mean globalization! Because it can be described as a global and local dialogue” (Pinar, 2019: 163); it is inevitably involved in global conditions, but unlike the convergences of globalization, it is not necessarily a single domain and retains its roots in local, national, and cultural characteristics - which emerge in the global conditions of the curriculum studies field - but reacts strongly against this transnational discourse.

• The New-Normal in Curriculum

In the present era, the “New-Normal” has emerged as a dominant paradigm, transforming traditional curriculum frameworks and challenging the transition from stability to structural instability. Pacheco (2012) believes

that to understand the current state of curriculum studies, it is necessary to examine this field as an analytical and powerful tool for framing curriculum movements, with the participation of various experts. This examination includes identifying texts related to historical periods in the field, such as Tyler's rationality and logic, Dewey's sociology of curriculum, and Pinar's post-understanding, and analyzing the works of four conscious curriculum theorists - Pinar, Ebel, Goodson, and Young - to comprehend their changes and the significance of their ideas. According to Pacheco (2023), the state of curriculum studies - as a tool for understanding - is a complex and controversial endeavor that has been approached differently by theorists in this field over recent decades. Like any disciplinary field, it is deeply intertwined with questions about its epistemological essence, which are always analyzed in accordance with its relationship between theory and practice - or, as Molnar (1992) puts it, between academic discourse and curriculum practice. As Schubert (1993) argues, contemporary curriculum theorists - as researchers who sometimes need to distance themselves sufficiently from practice and context - must theorize both practice and context as curriculum within a broader social understanding. One of the main concerns of theorists in curriculum studies has been the ahistorical and atheoretical essence of the curriculum, which is only possible through the continuation of its general teachings. In fact, the study of curriculum - as an institutional text - is so vast and complex that focusing on it requires a critical analysis of practice as an illuminating factor in the historical process (Held, 1980). This is especially true when complex curriculum discourses take shape,

while the stagnation of curriculum practice - often controlled by prevailing hegemonic powers - acts as an intervening factor, presenting the field of curriculum studies with an identity crisis in light of social, cultural, and political conditions and paradigm analyses. This crisis is constantly influenced by external transformations, including widespread social changes, increased official government interventions (local, state, and federal), and growing factors from informal stakeholder groups (Pinar & Phelan, 2024: 3-21). The question arises whether this "New-Normal" in education fosters an accelerating trend towards technification, or merely updates what was already normal. According to Žižek (2021), post-crisis education reflects the current (existing) situation and predicts the (desired) future situation, encoding the curriculum's response to the existing crisis. Therefore, the New-Normal presents a significant challenge for education, requiring a critical perspective on the curriculum to resist the slide towards passive technification. As Pacheco (2021) acknowledges, values and beliefs should not be easily overlooked, as they play an important role in (post)institutional education and fulfill (Meta) cognitive determinants, which are themselves encoded in the process of technology. Thus, education is no longer used as lifelong learning—encoded as learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together—but will be defined as a disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge process that promotes "Global Citizenship Education" through "extracurricular curriculum at the comparative level of local, regional, and international" (Delors, 1996). **Global Citizenship Education (GCED)** is UNESCO's (2017) response to these challenges, enabling learners of all ages to understand that education is a global concern, not a local one, to promote

a peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable society. This concept, beyond a temporary situation, represents an emerging paradigm in education that brings with it prerequisites such as uncertainty and the need for resilience, the pervasiveness of digital technology, flexibility and personalization, and the importance of mental health and well-being. It also has significant implications, such as redesigning educational models, developing new skills, changing the roles of teachers and students, focusing on educational equity, and redefining assessment for curricula. Therefore, the "New-Normal" in curriculum necessitates not only practical consequences but also a reconsideration of the philosophy and goals of education.

Literature Review and Background Studies

Any image of public education as a space of freedom, or as Macdonald (1995) states, "any image or concept of the dignity of every human being," is bound to change. Instead, what is accepted is the post-human and the absolute reign of instrumental reality, where ends justify the means and human fulfillment is reduced to the consumption of goods and experiences. Accordingly, Pacheco (2020) poses the fundamental question: "Is this situation a new norm? And is it truly new or a repetition of the past?" Digital technologies are the visible face of sudden changes in society, and the immediate solution to this crisis will be distance learning using platforms and the reduction of knowledge to information that must be exchanged (Koopman, 2019). Thus, like a product and in line with a phenomenon predicted decades ago by Lyotard, "knowledge will be and is produced for exchange, will be and is consumed to be valued in a new production, and in both cases, the goal is exchange and knowledge is no longer the goal

and loses its use value" (Lyotard, 1984). Digital technologies and economic rationality based on performance are significant determining factors in the commercialization of learning, which transforms from physical face-to-face presence to virtual contact (synchronous and asynchronous) in the virtual (and not real) immaterial learning space, affecting both educational factors and organizational components. Therefore, they are no longer a "mechanism." Instead, they are webs that have coincided with the pandemic, and the **Education 2030 Agenda** (UNESCO, 2020) has also been a testament to this. Furthermore, prior to this, the Delors Report (1996) had also reported education as lifelong learning - comprising learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. International organizations have identified competencies for the 21st century, and in this process, they have defined disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge, through which global citizenship can be achieved via "curriculum co-curricular at a global, regional or international comparative level." And "while the world may be increasingly interconnected, human rights violations, inequality, and poverty still threaten peace and sustainability" (Marope, 2017). In this context, **Global Citizenship Education** is UNESCO's response to these challenges, empowering learners of all ages and levels of understanding of global (not local) issues, and becoming active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies (UNESCO, 2017). These transnational initiatives have not only recognized traditional school subjects but have also shifted the curriculum toward contemporary topics dedicated to understanding current emergencies (Spiller, 2017).

Accordingly, the OECD (2019) program has emphasized two ideas for the "New-Normal": competency-based education (which includes the knowledge specified in the Delors Report) and a new learning framework (structured by digital technologies). While the COVID-19 pandemic does not alter this logic, in practice, the framework of interdisciplinary skills, content, and standardized tests associated with the OECD's Programme for **International Student Assessment** (PISA) has become the most powerful tool for prescribing curricula. It is as if "pedagogically, this 'situation' already existed, and the globalization of standardized testing has been the most prominent example of the threat to reconstruct schools into technological sites of political socialization that prepare children to conform to a globally homogeneous mental state" (Pinar, 2019: 2). Thus, in addition to cognitive and practical skills, this "homogeneous mental state" is based on social and emotional skills in the service of learning to live together, affirming global citizenship, and, presumably, restoring agency to students and teachers; achieving this "requires double flexibility in curriculum development and the necessity of creating space for interpretation of curricula, contextualization, and creativity at the micro-level of teachers and classrooms" (OECD, 2019). Consequently, heterogeneity is placed at the service of economic and disciplinary homogeneity, and disciplinary knowledge is presented as universal knowledge endowed with social, ethical, and cognitive authority, while operational and effective knowledge becomes pivotal due to the influence of financial lobbies; thus, it is ensured that organizational logic is embedded in educational practices (Marginson, 2016: 15-38). As Pestre

(2013) also states, what is important in the essence of this new knowledge is that practice hic ET nunc its impact - not its understanding - and bases its function (presumably) on data and evidence-based management. Therefore, a new language is imposed on education and curriculum, leading to an effective act on the educational system and curriculum planning, which results in proficiency in the relevant operational skills (Lyotard, 1984). This "new-normal curriculum" is more horizontal, less hierarchical, and fundamentally polycentric, produced through problem-solving in social networks, non-governmental organizations, transnational organizations, and think tanks (Pestre 2013; Williamson 2013, 2017), while the "old normal" - undamaged by the pandemic - remains based on disciplinary knowledge and trapped in the discourse of standards and accountability in education. Yet, this causal shift in centrality leads to the devaluation of academic knowledge in the name of diversifying learning spaces (Pinar, 2019).

Based on the literature review, the conceptual framework of this research examines the relationship between the concept of the "New-Normal" and its key dimensions within the context of the curriculum. This framework considers the "New-Normal" as a "**Contextual Factor**" that directly influences the independent variables of the research: **Curriculum Digitization, Flexibility, and Resilience**.

Research Methodology

This study, aimed at a theoretical analysis of the discourse of "the New-Normal in contemporary curriculum studies," employs a **qualitative methodology** and a **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)** approach. Accordingly, given the importance of identifying and explaining the hegemonic

factors that have shaped the dominant discourses of curriculum during the New-Normal era, it focuses on how hegemony is formed, reproduced, and resisted in curriculum discourses, as well as on the hidden layers of power and ideology. In this sense, discourse is understood not only as a linguistic phenomenon, but also as a site of social and ideological struggle; thus, the study centers on identifying and analyzing the linguistic and non-linguistic mechanisms through which particular perspectives attain hegemonic status and marginalize competing views. In this way, obstacles to growth and development in curriculum studies are interpreted not merely as technical problems, but as outcomes of structures of power and hegemony. The data collection tool was **Textual Analysis**. Data collection involved a systematic search of scientific databases using the keywords emphasized in the study, followed by the selection of relevant texts for in-depth discourse analysis, with the aim of examining how concepts are represented in the text and what implications these representations may have for educational practices and social structures. Therefore, the data comprised written documents and official curricula, including documents published by contemporary educational policy-making and planning institutions, as well as peer-reviewed scientific articles from reputable domestic and international journals in contemporary curriculum studies that specifically address the theoretical debates, challenges, and trends of the New-Normal era. Data analysis was conducted in stages and through an integration of approaches:

- **Intratextual and linguistic analysis:** examining the linguistic features of the texts - such as vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, metaphors, and referencing styles - to

identify discursive patterns and literary strategies that contribute to the consolidation or weakening of ideas.

- **Social-discursive analysis (with an emphasis on hegemony):** examining the relation between text and the social-historical contexts of scientific production and knowledge advancement; with a focus on how the New-Normal is represented and on the ideological assumptions embedded in these representations, namely how dominant discourses present “new norms” as “Normal,” and how the resulting hegemony affects problematization and theorizing in curriculum studies.

- **Identification and explanation of elements and components:** the elements and components of the New-Normal in curriculum were identified through a comprehensive review of the literature and expert validation. In the analysis, the dominance of technocratic/functionalist discourses, the hidden ideological assumptions in the uncritical acceptance of certain New-Normal ideas - such as the permanent necessity of virtual education or an exclusive focus on individual skills - the restrictive language that limits the possibility of proposing alternative theoretical or critical perspectives, and the structures of power and hegemony in decision-making and knowledge production that hinder radical or critical theorizing in curriculum were identified as key themes; the discursive roles in the formation, persistence, or contestation of these components were also examined.

To ensure the validity of the findings, this study used two complementary methods:

1. **Literature review:** comparing the findings of the discourse analysis with previous studies in Critical Discourse Analysis, curriculum studies, and topics related to the

New-Normal in order to identify points of convergence and divergence.

2. **Expert validation:** presenting preliminary findings to a group of prominent experts and scholars in curriculum studies and discourse analysis to obtain feedback, critique, and confirmation.

Moreover, validity in this critical discourse analysis was strengthened through **Triangulation** interpretation, using theoretical frameworks and examining the texts from multiple angles. Transparency in explaining the analytical process and providing sufficient textual evidence to support interpretations also contributed to the validity of the findings. Reliability was ensured through the researcher’s repeated review of interpretations and, where possible, consultation with colleagues or specialists in the field.

It should be noted that this study is based on the assumption that language is not merely a tool for expression, but actively participates in the construction of social, cultural, and political realities by reflecting or reinforcing relations of power and ideology in curriculum studies.

Research Findings

This section presents the findings derived from a critical discourse analysis of selected texts concerning the concepts of “**New-Normal**,” “**Digitization**,” “**Flexibility**,” and “**Resilience**” in curriculum. This analysis, from a hegemonic perspective, examines these concepts within the context of contemporary crises (such as the *pandemic crisis*) and specifically addresses the obstacles these crises have created for the growth and development of theorizing in curriculum studies. Accordingly, the findings have been categorized based on Blaikie’s cognitive (2003) model framework (**What,**

Why, How) to delineate the representation of these concepts (**What**), the ideological and power-based reasons for this representation (**Why**), and their manifestation in curriculum discourses (**How**).

- **At the "What is it?" Level:** Representation of Concepts in the Dominant Discourse

1. The New-Normal as an Inevitable Reality:

- **Representation:** In most texts, the "New-Normal" is presented as a new, stable, and mandatory situation that has emerged after crises (like the COVID-19 pandemic). This representation elevates the current state from a "temporary situation" or "consequence" to a fundamental and accepted "reality".

- **Textual Evidence:** Phrases such as "The transition to the New-Normal in curriculum is a necessity" or "Adopting New-Normal practices is key to the survival of educational systems and curriculum planning" (as stated in articles by Sahu, 2020; Al-Rahmi et al., 2021) indicate that this concept is accepted without question.

2. Digitization as a Functional Tool:

- **Representation:** "Digitization" is often presented as the primary solution for achieving "flexibility" and "resilience" in the "New-Normal." The main emphasis is on technological aspects, efficiency, accessibility, and being up-to-date.

- **Textual Evidence:** Sentences like "Digital learning platforms are the cornerstone of flexible education in the contemporary era" (as found in articles by García-Peñalvo & Conde, 2021; Selwyn & Bulfin, 2022) downplay critical aspects such as the digital divide, privacy, and socio-cognitive impacts.

3. Flexibility and Resilience as Adaptive Individual Traits:

- **Representation:** The concepts of "flexibility" and "resilience" are mostly defined

as individual characteristics for success in the new environment. The focus is on the individual's ability to adapt to changes, manage time, and cope with psychological and organizational pressures.

- **Textual Evidence:** Phrases such as "Learners must enhance their self-regulation skills to succeed in flexible online courses" (as cited in articles by Zimmerman, 2002; Winne & Hadwin, 2008; Kizilcec, et al., 2017) shift the responsibility for adaptation to the individual, giving less attention to the role of structural or organizational support.

- **At the "Why is it so?" Level:** Ideological and Power Roots in Representation

1. Normalization and Masking of Power:

- **Root Cause:** Normalizing the "New-Normal" and "Digitization" as undeniable realities helps obscure the active role of power in shaping these realities. These representations often reflect the interests of specific institutions (e.g., technology companies) or dominant ideologies (e.g., neoliberalism, which emphasizes individualism and competition).

- **Critical Discourse Analysis:** These representations construct "truth" in a way that aligns with the interests of dominant groups, diminishing the potential for structural critique.

2. Shifting Social Responsibility to Individual Responsibility:

- **Root Cause:** Highlighting "flexibility" and "resilience" as individual characteristics shifts the burden of adaptation from the educational system and policymakers to individuals. This can lead to the justification of inequalities and a lack of systemic support.

- **Critical Discourse Analysis:** This shift in responsibility is an ideological mechanism that reduces structural inequalities to individual issues, preventing systemic changes.

3. Technology-Centricity as Ideology:

- **Root Cause:** The excessive focus on

"Digitization" as a solution indicates a "technological solutionist" ideology that reduces complex social and educational problems to mere technical tools, neglecting deeper humanistic and ethical dimensions.

- **Critical Discourse Analysis:** This approach presents the power of "technology" as a neutral, purely instrumental force, whereas technology itself is a product and reflection of social values and powers.

- **At the "How is it done?" Level:** Manifestation of Discourse in Structure and Language

1. Language of Necessity and Inevitability:

- **Re-reading:** The repeated use of phrases such as "it is necessary," "must," "inevitable," "it is required to...," "the key to..." in describing the "New-Normal" and "Digitization" indicates an attempt to convey an external, uncontrollable necessity.

- **Critical Discourse Analysis:** This language diminishes the **agency** of individuals and institutions in shaping or resisting these transformations.

2. Metaphors of Adaptation and Survival:

- **Re-reading:** The concepts of "flexibility" and "resilience" are often accompanied by metaphors of biological adaptation (e.g., evolution) or survival in harsh conditions (e.g., crisis). These metaphors normalize difficult circumstances and emphasize the need to adapt to them.

- **Critical Discourse Analysis:** These metaphors reduce the struggle for change in undesirable conditions to mere "adaptation" and weaken the sense of resistance.

3. Ignoring or Downplaying Negative Aspects:

- **Re-reading:** Analysis of the texts revealed that a significant portion of the

literature either ignores or briefly and insignificantly mentions potential negative consequences, such as increased inequality, job burnout, or mental health issues arising from Digitization and the pressure to adapt.

- **Critical Discourse Analysis:** This "silence" or "downplaying" is itself a discursive act that contributes to the perpetuation of the dominant discourse and the neglect of critical voices.

Synthesis of Findings

The research findings confirm that discourses surrounding the "New-Normal" in curriculum literature are often accompanied by a non-critical and technologically driven approach. The results of this study align with findings from studies that emphasize critical aspects of the curriculum and the impact of technology on educational inequalities. Therefore, by focusing specifically on critical discourse analysis, this research reveals the hidden ideological layers in theoretical discussions within curriculum studies, which may have received less attention in purely theoretical or empirical studies. As the theoretical implications of this research indicate, to gain a deeper understanding of curriculum transformations, it is necessary to move beyond purely functionalist analyses and critically examine discourses, ideologies, and power relations. The use of critical discourse analysis can contribute to enriching the theoretical literature in the field of curriculum studies. Furthermore, the practical implications of the research findings implicitly call upon policymakers, executive managers, and curriculum planners to adopt a more critical approach toward the "New-Normal." While leveraging the opportunities offered by technology, serious attention must also be paid

to social consequences, inequalities, and human challenges. Simultaneously, the emphasis on the "**Digitization**" of education, "**flexibility**," and "**resilience**" in the curriculum should not lead to the abdication of responsibility from structures or the complete transfer of the adaptation burden onto individuals. Consequently, the present study, in response to the question of..., states that the "**New-Normal**" often serves as a platform to justify the need for "Digitization" and the increase of "flexibility" and "resilience," without critically addressing its root causes. Thus, the concepts of "New-Normal," "Digitization," "Flexibility," and "Resilience" in the curriculum are primarily represented through discourses that normalize changes, emphasize technological solutions, and, while concealing critical and ideological aspects, ultimately contribute to the perpetuation of existing structures. Moreover, a comparative examination of these concepts across different temporal horizons (normal, crisis and transition, and New-Normal), in addition to a historical review of lived experiences in curriculum studies, is essential for a deep understanding of fundamental transformations in this cognitive domain. This process helps identify how to move from a closed and exclusive structure towards a fluid and democratic ecosystem, and it exposes the mental and structural obstacles that remain in the way of critical theorizing in this field. By understanding these transformations, the current position within the contemporary educational landscape can be better discerned, and practical solutions can be designed in curriculum planning to overcome new challenges, such as Digitization and the necessity of flexibility. From the perspective of the "New-Normal" and based on critical tendencies, these terms no longer hold their rigid, formal meanings. Instead, they are

redefined from a completely different angle (breaking norms, multi-vocality, and localization) based on the actual needs of society. These redefinitions attempt to show how the "**New-Normal**" influences not only the content of the curriculum but also the very way of thinking about the curriculum and the obstacles facing theorizing in this field. Within this framework, "**Normal**" is the norm that is accepted as "Normal" and "obvious," thus hiding power. Therefore, the "New-Normal" is a new norm that, after the collapse of Normal norms ("Normal"), provides a space for the emergence of suppressed voices and the redefinition of meaning. Considering these themes, the fundamental concepts of this research have been redefined:

- **Curriculum Theory**

Classical Definition: Theory is a systematic set of hypotheses and propositions presented to explain and predict phenomena, possessing the capability for testing and falsification. It thus provides a framework for identifying cause-and-effect relationships and predicting system behavior (Popper, 1959).

Normal Re-reading: Curriculum theory is a dynamic, interdisciplinary, and multi-level framework that, in addition to prediction, allows for reflection and correction of assumptions. Therefore, it is not limited to design and implementation but guides the design, implementation, and evaluation of educational programs, also emphasizing the interaction between policy, culture, technology, and the actual experiences of learners (Rui, 2024).

New-Normal Re-definition: Within this framework, curriculum theory is not considered a static structure or a single normative unit. Instead, it is a fluid, multi-voiced, and context-bound process aimed at continuously redefining educational concepts based on cultural diversity

and responsiveness to the needs of marginalized groups (Crombie, 2018). It is a theory that avoids copying Western models and emphasizes "multiplicity of meaning" over "single-truth-ism" (Groom, 2020).

- **Curriculum Theorizing**

Classical Definition: Curriculum theorizing is a process through which new principles and concepts are presented for the analysis and design of curricula. This process is undertaken to improve educational processes and achieve learning objectives (Snyder, 1972).

Normal Re-reading: Curriculum theorizing is a critical and fluid activity - encompassing problem-posing, designing active learning experiences, and guiding students towards critical thinking and group participation. It is not only limited to analyzing concepts and frameworks but also focuses on rethinking and reconstructing dominant assumptions, confronting the exclusion of non-dominant knowledges, and establishing epistemic justice (Paraskeva, 2025).

New-Normal Re-definition: This concept is not a linear and logical process but rather a dynamic and critical action for creating meaning from social tensions and contradictions (Collins, 2019). "New-Normal" theorizing, instead of seeking absolute truths, focuses on understanding existential complexities and producing knowledge that transcends and challenges traditional boundaries between theory and practice (Fink, 2021).

- **Curriculum Theorist**

Classical Definition: A curriculum theorist is an individual who, by systematically analyzing the objectives, content, methods, and evaluation of educational programs, provides a theoretical framework for curriculum design

and improvement, contributes to a deep understanding of the learning process and its educational effects, and reveals the underlying assumptions and values within the curriculum (Eisner, 1979).

Normal Re-reading: A curriculum theorist is an analyst of educational frameworks and assumptions, as well as a social-cultural and critical activist. They redefine educational issues, consider epistemic justice and cultural diversity, and transform the curriculum into an arena for active learning, critical thinking, and student participation in solving real-world problems. In other words, the curriculum theorist is an agent of change and a reviser of dominant assumptions, who confronts the exclusion of non-dominant knowledges (Paraskeva, 2025).

New-Normal Re-definition: This role moves away from an isolated position towards a participatory and critical one (Apple, 2017). The "New-Normal" theorist acts not as a neutral interpreter but as an activist who reflects the voices of forgotten groups, and whose primary duty is to challenge dominant norms (Frost, 2022).

- **The Curriculum Studies Field**

Classical Definition: The field of curriculum studies today is an interdisciplinary and dynamic field that examines curriculum theories, policies, designs, and implementations, encompassing the cultural, social, political, and technological aspects of learning. Therefore, it is no longer limited to analyzing objectives and content but also considers students' real experiences, educational equity, cultural diversity, and new technologies, striving to understand the curriculum as an interactive and multilevel process (Rui, 2024).

Normal Re-reading: The field of curriculum studies refers to the academic domain comprising the foundations of curriculum (philosophical, social, cultural, psychological bases), curriculum engineering (compilation, design, and construction), curriculum implementation (loyal, semi-adaptive, adaptive implementation systems), curriculum change, curriculum evaluation, curriculum history, and curriculum research (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018)

New-Normal Re-definition: This field extends beyond closed academic boundaries to become an open space intertwined with social realities (Crombie, 2018). In this view, any phenomenon, from everyday actions to social protests, can be a valid source for knowledge production, and the boundary between "academic knowledge" and "Lebenswelt" dissolves (Groom, 2020).

- **Barriers to theorizing in the field of curriculum studies**

Classical Definition: Barriers to theorizing in curriculum studies encompass structural, intellectual, and political hindrances to forming new, critical theories. These include the dominance of old paradigms (e.g., technical, practical approaches), political pressures to maintain the status quo, and the detachment of theorists from practical realities (Schwab, 1969). Theorizing, in its true sense of rethinking foundations, is replaced by "technique-izing" when research merely justifies existing methods or executes directives instead of producing critical knowledge.

Normal Re-reading: Obstacles to theorizing in curriculum are structural and political limitations that can be overcome with a critical and justice-oriented approach. This approach ensures intellectual independence by rethinking educational beliefs and reducing institutional pressures. Consequently, real data

is provided for designing complex learning, and effective interaction between school and society is strengthened (Paraskeva, 2025).

New-Normal Re-definition: The biggest obstacles are the "monovoice" intellectual structures and the "fear of being abnormal" (Collins, 2019). These obstacles include blind adherence to Western models, disregard for indigenous knowledge, and bureaucratic structures that prevent innovative voices from entering (Apple, 2017).

It is observed that in the *New-Normal Era*, "**curriculum theory**" is no longer a fixed map but a fluid and flexible process. Curriculum theorizing will also no longer be the exclusive domain of the academic community; rather, with Digitization, any user can participate in theorizing by producing content (resilience through broad participation). In this flexible process, instead of seeking a single truth, the aim is to find "**multi-vocality**." This is because today's curriculum theorist interacts with a "digital translator" and must be flexible to bridge the gap between academic language and contemporary (digital/everyday) **language**. This involves resisting isolation and actively participating in social networks and digital platforms as a "networked actor" who amplifies the voices of the marginalized in the digital space. Therefore, the field of curriculum studies is elevated to the level of an open digital ecosystem, whose boundaries have dissolved with Digitization, and any experience (from an Instagram post to a Twitter discussion) can be a curriculum text. Amidst this, the biggest obstacle in the New-Normal era will be the "hardware-ness of minds" against the "software-ization of the world." This manifests as resistance to true Digitization (not just instrumental use), fear of losing control in the flexible digital space, and lack of resilience against opposing views in the open

environment. It appears that the solution to overcoming the obstacles to the growth and development of curriculum studies in the New-Normal era is to shift the paradigm from a "control-oriented" approach to a "context-

based" one. Table 1 compares the evolution of key research concepts across three eras: the Traditional (**Classical**) Normal, the Era of **Crisis and Transition**, and the New-Normal (**Contemporary**) Era.

Table 1. Comparison of Curriculum Concepts: From Normal to New-Normal

Concepts	Traditional Normal Era (Pre-Crisis)	Transition Era (Crisis)	New-Normal Era (Post-Crisis)
Curriculum Theory	Linear social engineering; transmission of absolute truth; maintaining the status quo;	Challenging neutrality; discovering the curriculum as a text of power;	Arena of meaning-making; redefining values; a space for multiple lifeworlds and marginalized voices;
Theorizing in Curriculum	Linear and technical process; instrumental rationality; monovoice (elites);	Failure of quantitative methods; awareness of ideology in methodology;	Resistant and narrative action; reopening questions; extracting alternative narratives from Lebenswelt;
Curriculum Theorist	Neutral expert; academic recluse; isolated elitist; Top-down knowledge production;	Awareness of political positioning; abandoning the illusion of neutrality;	Ethical and coexistent actor; translator between academia and life; presence in the heart of crises;
Curriculum Studies Field	Closed academic community; monopoly of knowledge definition by academics;	Opening of borders; knowledge flowing everywhere;	Open and fluid transnational public space; democratizing knowledge; every experience is a curriculum text;
Barriers to theorizing in the field of curriculum studies	Fear of change; enforced silence; rejection of critique as unscientific;	Hidden intellectual structures; instrumental use of concepts like quality;	Fear of being abnormal; prejudice and blind adherence to inflexible standards without ideological critique;

Conclusion

The transition to the "new-normal" signifies the acceptance of the reality that "normalcy" itself is an ideological and unjust construct. In this new paradigm, the ultimate goal of curriculum studies is to create a space where the "**other**" is recognized not as a threat to order, but as a necessary condition for democracy and educational justice. The main obstacles in this path are not a lack of resources, but rather the "fear of the abnormal" and blind adherence to concepts like "**quality**" and "standard" without ideological critique. Therefore, the future of this field hinges on the ability to break

hegemonic locks and reopen a space where "**transformation**" replaces "**adaptation**." This research, adopting a critical discourse analysis approach and using Blakey's cognitive model framework (**what, why, how**), examined the concepts of "**New-Normal**," "**Digitization**," "**flexibility**," and "**resilience**" in the curriculum. The findings indicated that the dominant discourse surrounding these concepts largely represents them as inevitable realities, technological tools, and adaptable individual characteristics. To the extent that the new-normal crisis has had limiting effects on curriculum studies, rather than providing a

platform for fundamental critique and the plan of new and liberating theories, it has mostly contributed to the normalization of the existing state and the acceptance of technological and individualistic solutions. By accelerating the adoption of existing discourses, individualizing responsibility, reinforcing a solution-oriented ideology, and weakening critical discourses, it has impacted the process of curriculum theory and theorizing. Although the phenomenon of the new-normal in the curriculum is not necessarily always a result of a crisis, crises play an accelerating role in the formation and dominance of the new-normal discourse in the academic and university community. In fact, crises, by creating a sense of urgency and necessity, provide a space where dominant discourses (such as technological and individualistic approaches) are presented and implemented as the only possible path without serious challenge. By normalizing the existing "normal" crisis, they solidify the process of acceptance and institutionalization of the "new-normal" state as the desirable status quo. Therefore, based on the findings and results, in order to promote theory and theorizing in curricula in the "new-normal" era, it is proposed:

• **Theoretical Suggestions (for future research):**

1. Conduct empirical research to assess the actual impact of different "Digitization" approaches on the flexibility and resilience of learners and instructors in "New-Normal" conditions.
2. Examine curriculum-related discourses at other educational levels (e.g., secondary education) and in different cultural-geographic contexts.
3. Undertake case studies for a deeper analysis of how theoretical concepts in the New-Normal are implemented and their

practical consequences.

4. Develop alternative theoretical frameworks for curriculum that place greater emphasis on concepts such as educational justice, active resistance, and autonomy in the digital age.

• **Practical Suggestions (for educational policymakers and curriculum planners):**

1. **Promote Critical Digital Literacy:** Educate learners and instructors to critically understand technologies, identify hidden ideologies in digital tools, and evaluate their social consequences.

2. **Re-think Flexibility and Resilience Concepts:** Shift from a sole focus on individual adaptation to the creation of supportive educational environments and flexible structures that reduce inequalities.

3. **Develop Curriculum Based on Real Needs:** Design curricula that strengthen not only technical and digital skills but also critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities in facing the complex challenges of the "New-Normal".

4. **Consider the Human and Social Dimensions of Digitization:** Ensure that Digitization does not exacerbate inequalities and does not harm the psychological and social well-being of learners and instructors.

It appears that the transition from the "normal" to the "New-Normal" is not merely a change in educational content, but a fundamental transformation in the nature of "theory" and "theorizing" within the field of curriculum studies. In this new paradigm, curriculum theory is no longer a technical tool for "justifying the status quo," but transforms into a "critical weapon" for investigating the hidden layers of power and ideology. Here, theorizing shifts from a linear and rational process to a dynamic, confrontational, and narrative action whose goal is not to "solve

problems" within existing frameworks, but to "uncover" new horizons of meaning and possibility. Amidst this, the obstacles to the growth and development of theorizing also take on a completely different nature: whereas in the past, obstacles were mainly material or methodological, in the New-Normal era, the greatest threat is the "fear of being abnormal" and "hegemonic monovoice." This, by labeling concepts like "quality" and "standard" without ideological critique, marginalizes any innovative, critical, or peripheral voice within academic knowledge. Therefore, the future of this field depends on our ability to break the intellectual locks of the "normal" and create a space where theorizing acts as a "resistant action," and obstacles to growth are overcome not with bureaucratic tools, but with "freedom of thought" and "acceptance of plurality".

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