

The Leading Constituents of a Successful Higher Education

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Abstract: *Many developed and developing countries have realized that education is the key to progress for centuries. The matter of schooling has always been on the top priorities and should be framed in accordance with the needs of learners. In the case of Morocco, a lot of efforts and reforms have been made by educational policy makers and managers to promote quality in education to achieve social progress. Effectively, the world has known a global change in various domains and particularly in education. To meet such changes and to adapt to the current situation, universities are trying hard to execute some substantial reforms to maintain and assure international quality standards, especially with regard to their curricula. This shift towards quality improvement has been imposed by social needs and globalization. It calls for new roles for teachers and new strategies concerning the methodology to be adopted in the English as Foreign language (EFL) classroom. This implies that the changes introduced in these new practices include the elaboration of new teaching programmes and new pedagogical approaches to carry out these syllabi at each level of instruction in the Moroccan Higher Education. Regarding the teaching of English in the Moroccan universities, the English department is the major body in charge of implementing and administering efficient syllabi. These bodies play an important role in designing programmes, preparing schedules, and arranging examination time. Indeed, these structures should be well structured and organized. Overall, the most recurring and influential terms used in this article are redefined in ways that match its theoretical framework.*

Keywords: Higher Education, Needs, Curriculum, Syllabi, reforms, quality.

This article attempts to define some key concepts of the educational system. It also explains the different views and perceptions that construct the educational sector in developing countries, and more specifically in Morocco, and delineates the basic theoretical foundation of the study. For the purpose of consistency, this article is referred to as clarifying the ground.

Clarifying the Ground

1) Higher Education

Generally speaking, the term HE includes colleges and tertiary studies. According to Sudha (2013), HE is more than simply an institution, it controls, monitors, and advances students' awareness and knowledge in relation to different domains and fields. Sudha's definition denotes that HE is a system whereby students develop and broaden their intellectual abilities, critical thinking skills, and adopt a broad or even a new vision of the world around.

Similarly, Barnett (1992) explained that there are four prevalent views of higher education:

- a) **Higher education as the production of qualified human resources:** This view is absorbed in labour market. Thus, higher education becomes input to the growth and development of business and industry.
- b) **Higher education as training for a research career:** Higher education is preparation for qualified scientists and researchers who would continuously develop the frontiers of knowledge.
- c) **Higher education as the efficient management of teaching profession:** Teaching is the core of educational institutions. Thus, higher education institutions focus on efficient management of teaching-learning provisions by improving the quality of teaching.
- d) **Higher education as a matter of extending life chances:** Higher education is seen as an opportunity to participate in the development process of individual through a flexible, continuing education mode. (p.5)

Notably, these four outlooks summarize considerably the definition of HE. If one goes through the procedures, the practices, methods, and activities implemented in universities in general, one may validate that the main objective of teaching and research construct the main features presented in the definitions stated above.

According to GOI (1966), HE should aim at promoting highly educated people in the sense that the system should take into consideration the knowledge, the academic abilities, the skills, and the attitudes that students need or lack in order to operate successfully and wherever they are. This implies that there should be an effective teaching and learning process so as to help students improve their imaginative, critical and creative abilities.

Equally important, HE can be advantageous and useful as it contributes to the development of the economic, educational, and social sectors of the country. In other words, higher education institutions (HEI) should graduate students that are knowledgeable, aware of the problems of the domains (economy, education, social, etc), and play a key role in finding solutions to pertinent problems of the workplace.

Today, knowledge, science and information constitute the main cornerstone aspects for the development of the country. This indicates that knowledge is of great importance and significance. In a brilliant analogy, Castells (1994) affirmed, "If knowledge is the electricity of the new informational-international economy, then the institutions of higher education are the power sources on which the new development process must rely" (p.16). Thus, in order to be successful and meet the needs of the global market, educational programs and research should be highly developed and relevant in the sense that they should focus on the 21st century skills and adopt the appropriate pedagogy in order to match with the requirements of this digital age.

2) Pedagogy vs Andragogy

Teaching methods have gone through various changes throughout the last decades. This has yielded to the spreading

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out of different teaching methods and approaches depending on the context of teaching, be it for children or adults. The coming paragraphs will explain the meaning of pedagogy and andragogy as two common methods of teaching but have different features.

According to Watkins and Mortimore (1999), pedagogy is defined “as any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another” (p.3). Moreover, it is also described as “the act of teaching together with its attendant discourse. It is what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decisions of which teaching is constituted” (Alexander, 2003, p.3). Besides, Leach and Moon (1999) go further and describe the pedagogical setting as “the practice that a teacher, together with a particular group of learners creates, enacts and experiences” (p.267). This definition adds to the previous one the participation of the two parties involved in the learning process. It states that there is a mutual relationship between teachers and learners who play a significant and an active role in the learning/teaching operation.

Another researcher explains that “pedagogy is a sustained process whereby somebody(s) acquires new forms or develops existing forms of conduct, knowledge, practice and criteria from somebody(s) or something deemed to be an appropriate provider and evaluator” (Bernstein, 2000, p.78). To this reason, he suggests two vital pedagogical models that teachers should be aware of in the teaching and learning process:

- a) **Performance model:** visible pedagogies where the teacher explicitly spells out to the students what and how they are to learn, with a recognizable strong framing or lesson structure, collective ways of behaving and standardized outcomes;
- b) **Competence model:** invisible pedagogies with weaker framing that result in an ostensibly more informal approach where the teacher responds to individual children needs, with hidden or unfocused learning outcomes. (Bernstein, 1990 cited in Westbrook et al., 2013, p.7).

From this quotation, we can glean that pedagogy is both act and discourse (Alexander, 2001). Undoubtedly, the understanding of teachers’ pedagogy is amply reported in the literature to be complex because there are other factors that affect practice such as the school environment, the teacher’s position in school, previous teaching experience, teacher training and teacher’s own experience of learning (McNamara, 1991; Brown & McIntyre, 1993; Bruner, 1999).

In short, an operative and effective pedagogical practice aims at augmenting the quantity of instructional time, handling classroom events, having a command of various teaching methods, knowing when and how to apply each method, and finally structuring learning objectives, the lesson process, lesson planning and evaluation. Equally important, an efficient pedagogical practice is the one that takes into consideration students’ needs and expectations: strengths and weaknesses (Voss, Kunter & Baumert, 2011).

In general, pedagogy is very vital, and it is mainly applied for children (paid- meaning ‘child’) (see Davenport, 1993). This implies that there is another construct that can be used for teaching adults called andragogy (andr- meaning ‘man’) (ibid).

Andragogy is a term that was known and linked with the name of Malcolm Knowles (1980). This latter advance in his book ‘*the Modern Practice of Adult Education*’ a theory that demonstrates the difference between learning in the childhood and in the adulthood. Knowles (1980) explains that andragogy is “the art and science of helping adults learns; whereas, pedagogy is the art and science of helping children learn” (p.43).

Considerably, Knowles advances different assumptions related to the andragogical model. He says that andragogy requires the following conditions:

- a) **The need to know** – adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it.
- b) **The learner’s self-concept** – adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives.
- c) **The role of the learner’s experience** – adults come into educational activity with both a greater volume and a different quality of experience from youths.
- d) **Readiness to learn** – adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real-life situation.
 - **Orientation to learning** – in contrast to children’s and youths’ subject-centered orientation to learning (at least in school), adults are life-centered (or task centered or problem-centered) in their orientation to learning.
 - **Motivation** – while adults are responsive to some external motivators (better jobs, promotions, higher salaries, and the like), the most potent motivators are internal pressures (the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life and the like) (Knowles, 1990, pp.57-63)

Central to these conditions is the notion of awareness, which is not the case for children. In actual fact, as shown in table 1, it summarizes the andragogical assumption of Knowles:

Table 1: The assumptions of andragogy. Adopted from andragogy –Adult Learning Theory

Knowles’ Andragogical Assumptions	
Concept of the Learner	During the process of maturation, a person moves from dependency toward increasing self-directedness, but at different rates for different people and in different dimensions of life. Teachers have a responsibility to encourage and nurture this movement. Adults have a deep psychological need to be generally self-directing, but they may be dependent in certain temporary situations.
Role of the Learner’s	As people grow and develop they accumulate an increasing reservoir of experience that becomes and increasingly rich resource for learning—for themselves and for others. Furthermore, people attach more meaning to learning

Experience	they gain from experience than those they acquire passively. Accordingly, the primary techniques in education are experiential ones—laboratory experiments, discussion, problem-solving cases, field experiences, etc.
Readiness to Learn	People become ready to learn something when they experience a need to learn it in order to cope more satisfyingly with real-life tasks and problems. The educator has a responsibility to create conditions and provide tools and procedures for helping learners discover their "needs to know." Learning programs should be organized around life-application categories and sequenced according to the learners' readiness to learn.
Orientation to Learning	Learners see education as a process of developing increased competence to achieve their full potential in life. They want to be able to apply whatever knowledge and skill they gain today to living more effectively tomorrow. Accordingly, learning experiences should be organized around competency-development categories. People are performance-centered in their orientation to learning.

Source: <http://teachinglearningresources.pbworks.com/w/page/30310516/Andragogy--Adult%20Learning%20Theory>

Based on the earlier explanations, andragogy is a method used to teach adults and not children because the way of teaching is, thoroughly, different. Adults are more interested in learning what would help them in their experience and

their professional life; whereas, children are more directed, guided and restricted to the explanations of teachers. For this reason, table 2 will summarize the difference between pedagogy and andragogy:

Table 2: Andragogy vs Pedagogy

	Definition	Focus	Authority	Importance of Grades
Andragogy	The methods and practices used in teaching adults.	On independent, self-directed, and/or cooperative learning among adults.	Adults have control over much of their learning experience. Can often seek out new or different learning experience, at will.	May be very low
Pedagogy	The methods and practices used in teaching, especially of children.	Dependent on the teacher's method and understanding.	Teacher controls the learning experience for children, and much of what is taught is based on rigid curricula.	High

Source: Adapted from https://www.diffen.com/difference/Andragogy_vs_Pedagogy.

Overall, on the one hand, pedagogy is meant to use a particular style or method of teaching that is usually allied to teaching children and which is mainly referred to as teacher-centered approach in which the teacher is the center and the authority of the class. On the other hand, andragogy was created to refer outstandingly to the art and science of teaching adults. One can assume that in andragogy, adults may have a significant amount of knowledge and considerable intellectual abilities in making educated choices in their learning experiences and learn successfully and productively when the teacher is only a facilitator and monitor of the class.

achieving performance excellence (West, 1994; Larouz, 1996).

Notwithstanding, Ricteric (1983) clarified the concept of language need remains ambiguous. For him needs are defined as "being something like the gap between what is and what should be" (p.3). To put it differently, the term 'needs' is too vague to pin down; it is for this reason that there should be a cooperative work between students and the institution in the sense that students should make clear what they have experienced before and what have learnt after in order to determine their weakness and strength.

In Morocco, many teachers believed that pedagogy refers to the methods of language teaching in general. Indeed, the term 'andragogy' is scarcely used in the context of higher education. Given the fact that needs of university students fluctuate between the needs of young children and those of adults, an efficient teaching method is one that takes into consideration students' needs at various stages of their education.

Literally, any type of teaching curriculum is planned to answer the WH questions: what, where, how and why. A communicative curriculum will place language teaching within the framework of this network between some specified purposes, the methodology adopted to reach the intended purposes, and the evaluation of the methodology applied in the learning process. In this respect, Breen and Candlin (2001) suggest some purposes in language teaching: communication as an overall objective, learners' contributions to the curriculum and to the process of teaching and learning, the roles of teachers and learners, and finally the evaluation of the curriculum and students' progress.

Now that we have defined the concepts of pedagogy and andragogy, let us move and clarify the meaning of needs analysis which is considered as one of the most important cornerstones in syllabus design and curriculum development.

3) Needs Analysis

Many surveys and approaches to 'Needs Analysis' have been conducted in language teaching and learning. Actually, the term 'Needs Analysis' (NA) first emerged in India in the 1920s, when Michael West proposed the notion to refer to two interrelated concerns, namely, what learners will be expected to do with the language in the target workplace, and how learners might best master the language in question

Since the 1960s, curriculum development is commonly based on the three fundamental trends: "improving teaching methods, adapting the teaching to the type of learning public or school and training the learner on how to learn" (Holec, 1985, p.263). Essentially, any organization and system 'Needs Analysis' is associated with "the theory of the nature of language from which the categories of language employed in the procedure is derived" (Tarone & Yule, 1989, pp.12-20). Stated differently, to ensure a highly

communicative learning, there are many variables that come into play and which should meet the learners' specific needs so as to boost their motivation: involvement of the learner in the first place taking into account his/her background knowledge, the degree of his/her motivation, and the nature of the content or material to use. Equally important, the role of the teacher in the teaching/learning process is supposed to be not only positive and dynamic but he/she should also act as facilitator, an information provider manager, a counselor, etc so as to underpin students' motivation, maximize the learning outcomes, and satisfy the needs of the job market, which can be resulted in a highly communicative performance.

In addition, language teaching should provide learners with opportunities to enhance their intellectual abilities and capabilities in the classroom. This means that NA is of great importance and should be taken into consideration while establishing a suitable and convenient syllabus and implementing teaching techniques.

According to several scholars, NA plays a crucial role in the design of any language course (Munby, 1978; Richterich & Chancerel, 1980; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989; Tarone & Yule, 1989; Robinson, 1991; West, 1994; Allison et Lam. (1994); Seedhouse, 1995; Jordan, 1997; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Iwai et al. 1999; Finney, 2002). Basically, Iwai (1999) affirms that the term NA "embodies the activities that are engaged in collecting information. These activities and information underpin developing a curriculum that will meet the needs of a specific group of students" (p.6). In other words, the pieces of information obtained are related to the learner's objective needs: age, language, educational background, on the one hand and subjective needs: the learners' attitudes, wishes and preferences, on the other hand (Nunan, 2000).

Moreover, NA is a medium conducted to identify the learners' necessities, needs and lacks in order to develop courses that can satisfy students, facilitate the learning process and be successful. So, NA is

a process for identification and defining valid curriculum and instructional and management objectives in order to facilitate learning in an environment that is closely related to the real-life situations of the student. It brings into sharp focus the settings and roles that learner is likely to face after he finishes his formal education (Fatihi, 2003, p.39).

Furthermore, many scholars and authors have discussed the meaning of 'needs'. They can, simply, mean 'wants or desires' (Berwick, 1989, p.55), 'students' study, job requirements or objectives' (ibid, p.57), or 'the means of learning' (Widdowson, 1981, p.2).

It should be acknowledged that there are basic questions that should be taken into consideration in the procedure of NA. Starting with the 'what' and 'why' questions, in addition to the ambiguity of the definition of 'needs', there is also the difficulty to differentiate this term with other vague terms such as necessities, lacks and wants. Veritably, the term

'need' is considered as an umbrella term that may include various and diverse explanations and meanings.

The first dissimilarity of 'needs' is 'necessities'. This type of needs is related to the target situation; that is to say, what the learner has to know in order to be successful and perform efficiently in the target situation. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) delineate that these necessities are "objective needs which can more or less, be assumed to be general from an analysis approach" (p.55). It seems that the identification of such necessities is easy, but the way to develop the course objective(s) is complex because it needs a rigorous program that ensures continuity in the teaching operation, so that the course objectives move on from the initial to the end step, achieving a coherent, well balanced, and practical outcome. In the same vein, Tarone and Yule (1989) elucidate that it is worthy to determine test requirements in a way they identify "practical and useful learning goals, providing beneficial wash-back and wash-forward effects at the end the scale" (p.4). On the whole, necessities may consist of special requirements, such as: assisting a lecture or conference, speaking in general (e.g. conversation) or simply in writing (e.g. letter).

As for the second dissimilarity is 'lacks', determining only necessities is not enough. In order to ascertain learners' lacks, one should first have an idea of what the learner knows already. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) maintain that lacks are "what the learner already knows and the demands of the target situation" (p.55). Therefore, "it is lacks which determine the syllabus rhetorical structures that are not included in the syllabus simply because they exist, but if knowing how to handle the particular rhetorical structure can help in the reading process" (Alderson, 1980, p.136). Indeed, it should be assumed that adopting this type of approach in NA is called 'Deficiency Analysis' as it founds the basis of the language syllabus (Jordan, 1997). As maintained by Songhori (2008), "it provides data about both the gap between present and target extralinguistic knowledge, mastery of general English, language skills, and learning strategies" (p.11).

The third distinction is 'wants', according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), wants are "how the learner understands his/her own needs" (p.55). This type of 'needs' seems to be personal and differs from one person to another in the sense that each one is likely to better recognize his/ her needs; it is for this reason that they are described as subjective needs. Richterich (1984) notes "a need does not exist independent of a person. It is people who build their images of their needs on the basis of data relating to themselves and their environments" (p.29). This implies that being aware of 'needs' is a salient feature of the English for Specific Purposes situation. Additionally, awareness is a complex concept since it is a matter of perception; the latter cannot be uniform rather it may vary depending on one's attitude, background knowledge and personal point of view.

Another question that should be pointed out in NA is 'when'. At what time in the course should the process of NA be put into practice? 'Needs' might be applied before, in the beginning, during the process of learning and teaching and finally at the end of the course. This illuminates that the NA

procedure should be an ongoing process. That is, it is a never-ending quest, following the rapid changes of globalization and advances in technology, where new and urgent needs are imposed and required 21st century skills (communication skills, computer skills, problem-solving skills, collaborative learning skills, critical thinking skills, etc).

As far as the question 'who' is concerned, it entails who is responsible for the issue of focusing on language needs? According to Hoadly and Maidment (1980), there are three major factions which are involved in the process of NA as explained in figure 1:

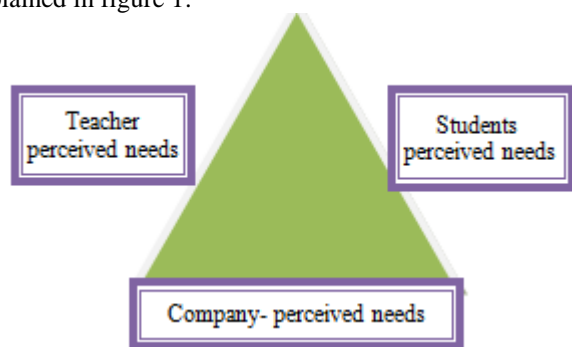


Figure 1: Needs Analysis Triangle

Source: Hoadley-Maidment, E. (1980) in *Analysing Student Needs*

In the 'Needs Analysis' Triangle (above), there are three main constructs: "teacher, student and sponsor which interact in a comparative way [...] anybody can identify language needs" (Hoadly & Maidment, 1980, p.32). Their model simply suggests that NA uses several informants and resources (Allen & Spada, 1983). As stated by Porcher (1983), the necessity for this multitude of resources contributes to the reliability of the findings. Other researchers give more importance to the learner as the most concerned informant (Robinson, 1991). Nunan (1988) argues that in NA:

- a) Learners come to have a more realistic idea of what can be achieved in a given course.
- b) Students develop greater sensitivity to their role as language learners.
- c) Self-evaluation becomes much sharper.
- d) Classroom activities can be seen to relate to learners' real-life needs.
- e) Skills development can be seen as a gradual, rather than an all-or-nothing, process (Nunan, 1988, p.5)

What is important is that NA is a cooperative process between trainers and trainees (West, 1994).

The question of 'how' NA carried out is also an issue. There are several ways to carry out a needs analysis in scope, "ranging from major scientific surveys to informal tools put together by an individual teacher for and with his/her class" (Richerich, 1983, p.9). In the same vain, Berwick (1989) differentiates between inductive methods (i.e. observations and case studies from which courses can be generalised) and deductive methods (i.e. questionnaires, surveys or other data-gathering instruments which provide various forms of information as the basis of course design) (pp.56-61). Defacto, Jordan (1977) provides some of the inductive and

deductive methods used in order to collect data for a NA procedure: pre-course placement/ diagnostic tests, entry tests, classes' observation, questionnaires, structured interviews, final evaluation/feedback, among others. Overall, the type of data to be gathered by NA may vary depending on the instrument used as well as the purpose of the survey (van Hest & Oud-de Glas, 1990).

In short, NA is a very crucial step in the process of designing a course. It has the advantage of stating the objectives clearly, setting the appropriate content that matches with the specified needs and the most adequate procedures to be followed in this learner-centered approach. It should be noted that curriculum and course designers are not the only ones that are responsible for selecting and designing the content and the methodology of every course. Teachers and students' attitudes and perceptions play also a focal and significant role in the content of a particular course which might also determine its successfulness or failure. This indicates that "needs should be regularly re-checked, and objectives modified as appropriate throughout the duration of the teaching programme" (Lilley, 2002, p.6). As Brindley (1989) proposes, the analysis of needs should be an ongoing process and not something applied only at the beginning of a course. Afterward, Graves (2000) identifies that there are "three-time frames for gathering information: pre-course, initial and ongoing. They are complementary, not exclusive" (n.p.).

It is worthwhile to point out that NA as well as syllabus planned on a needs basis have received much criticism. Nunan (1988) states that contemporary critics "have generally failed to appreciate the significant shift which has occurred over the years, and still tend to equate needs analysis with the sort of narrow-band ESP approach which typified the work of people such as Munby" (p.44). Nevertheless, it has proved to be very efficient to carry on the process of designing courses with taking into account learners. It is a sound strategy to start by determining the objectives to be attained, and to develop the relevant material (such as Information and Communication Technology) so as to motivate learners and create a favorable environment which is closely related both to their real-life situations and the workplace.

In brief, the research reported in this section shows that NA is a key factor in the development of effective curricula. As described previously, the issue is crucial when seeking at exploring students and teachers' perceptions of the course design and their relation to students' needs.

4) Curriculum vs Syllabus

The terms 'curriculum' and 'syllabus' are difficult to distinguish and sometimes create confusion. These two words mean different things. 'Curriculum' is very broad; whereas, 'syllabus' is very narrow. Because of this bewilderment of these two concepts, it is deemed important to clarify the distinction between them. The paragraphs below will give more details about 'curriculum' and 'syllabus'.

The definition of 'curriculum' is intricate and complex. Importantly, 'curriculum' is a concept that "links the macro

(officially selected educational goals and content) with the micro (the act of teaching and assessment in the classroom/school), and is best seen as a series of translations, transpositions and transformations” (Alexander, 2009, p.16). Another definition is provided by Richards and Plat (1993), they claim that ‘curriculum’ is “the educational purpose of the program, the content teaching procedures and learning experience, and some means for assessing whether or not the educational ends have been achieved” (p.94).

Moreover, ‘curriculum’ is a very general concept that “encompasses philosophy and value systems, the main components of the curriculum: purpose, content and evaluation, and the process whereby curricula are developed, implemented, and evaluated” (White, 1993, p.19).

All the above definitions yield to conclude that “curriculum is the philosophy, the aims, management, the design and the implementation of a whole program” (Graves, 1996, n.p.).

Prominently, there are four models of the ‘curriculum’ that are globally known:

- a) **Content-driven curricula:** *the key concept is discipline, which means accepting a given selection, organization, and timing of knowledge in the pedagogical relationship between the teacher and the taught in order to cover the curriculum knowledge which is transmitted in a situation where the teacher has maximal control (Bernstein, 1975, n.p.).*
- b) **Process-driven curricula:** *students have more discretion over what is learnt compared to individual teachers, who have to collaborate with colleagues from other disciplines. (Ross, 2000, n.p.).*
- c) **Objectives-driven curricula:** *are structured around sets of expected learning outcomes, which are written by specifying the kind of behaviour as well as the Pedagogy, Curriculum, Teaching Practices and Teacher Education (Tyler, 1949, n.p.).*
- d) **Competence- or outcomes-based curricula:** *are structured around sets of learning outcomes that all learners are expected to be able to achieve successfully at the end of their learning experiences (Botha, 2002, n.p.).*

Overall, ‘curriculum’ is generally the encoded version in the official textbooks and which is used as a point of reference for teachers in order to orient and guide them so as to improve the quality of education in general. Hence, ‘curriculum’ is a principal issue for the “well-being and effectiveness of higher education” (Barnett & Coate, 2005, p.7). No matter how you interpret and define curriculum (teaching-learning experiences, contents, objectives, courses, etc.), it is one of the cornerstone matters in higher education (Hyun, 2006).

After defining curriculum, it is also necessary to refer to ‘Hidden Curriculum’. Because of time and space, we will not go in detail in this issue; we will give quickly and briefly some broad definitions to ‘hidden curriculum’. This type of curriculum is one of the current debateable and controversial curriculum issues. “Many hidden curricular issues are the result of assumptions and expectations that are not formally communicated, established, or conveyed within the learning

environment” (Alsubaie, 2015, p.125). A ‘hidden curriculum’ conveys “the unspoken or implicit values, behaviors, procedures, and norms that exist in the educational setting” (ibid). Given that these views are implicitly written, ‘hidden curriculum’ is “the unstated promotion and enforcement of certain behavioral patterns, professional standards, and social beliefs while navigating a learning environment” (Miller & Seller, 1990 quoted in Alsubaie, 2015, p.125).

In addition, Vallance (1973) defines the term ‘hidden curriculum’ as “the unstudied curriculum, the covert or latent curriculum, the non-academic outcomes of schooling, the by-products of schooling, the residue of schooling, or simply what schooling does to people” (quoted in Kentli, 2009, p.85). Moreover, Martin (1976) argues that ‘hidden curriculum’ can be found in the social structure of the classroom, the teacher’s authority, and the rules governing the rapport between teacher and student (ibid).

The ‘hidden curriculum’ is the implicit values, unwritten and unofficial lessons that students learn in school. It constitutes the overall effect of the interaction between all the components of the ‘curriculum’. Besides, Jerald (2006) states that the ‘hidden curriculum’ is “an implicit curriculum that represents attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors, which are conveyed or communicated indirectly” (quoted in Alsubaie, 2015, p.125).

Understanding the meaning of the ‘hidden curriculum’ also implies recognizing its components. Cornbleth (1984) suggests that there are various elements that form the hidden curriculum, such as “teachers, students, society, knowledge, and awareness” (ibid). In order to tackle this issue, Myles (2011) reveals that it is vital “to equip or provide teachers with methods or strategies to help their students realize the hidden curriculum through making opportunities for students to practice or apply one rule of the hidden curriculum once every day” (ibid, p.126).

To be brief, ‘hidden curriculum’ is not frequently if not to say never used in education. It is a significant curriculum in schools because it may have a strong impact on students. Though, “it can be issue of the school’s staff, especially teachers who do not use this type of curriculum effectively and positively” (Alsubaie, 2015, p.127). Indeed, schools and teachers should prepare many courses about the importance of the ‘hidden curriculum’ and how it can provide teachers with knowledge and skills (ibid). Hence, schools should reconsider the significance of the ‘hidden curriculum’, considering its advantages in order to develop students’ behaviour.

In short, on the one hand, while the concept of ‘curriculum’ refers to the official courses and activities in which teachers and learners react actively and productively with the ultimate goal of developing a high-quality education as required by the national and the global market, it is also conceived of in this study as serving the objectives of the ministerial guidelines. On the other hand, the ‘hidden curriculum’ construct refers to the implicit gains that are not mentioned in the curriculum due to the activities and experiences students go through in the learning process.

After pinning down the term ‘curriculum’, it is deemed important to clarify the concept of ‘syllabus’ as it is also a focal issue in education. According to Lee (1980), a ‘syllabus’ means “essentially a statement of what should be taught, year by year – through language – syllabuses often also contain points about the method of teaching and the time to be taken” (p.108). The term ‘syllabus’ is also defined by Dubin and Olshtain (1997) as “a more detailed and operational statement of teaching and learning elements which translates the philosophy of the curriculum into a series of planned steps leading towards more narrowly defined objectives at each level” (p.28).

What is needed in the Moroccan university is a ‘syllabus’ that fulfils a set of norms agreed upon in the related research. It needs to include primarily the topics to be enclosed, the suggested reading materials, the undertaken methods in the teaching process and finally any pertinent information related to the course design. Kuther (2015) states that a ‘syllabus’ is a document that a professor writes and distributes to provide students with an overview of a course. The syllabus is usually distributed on the first day of class. It is used as a guide to the course; students should consider the advantage of a syllabus as it provides them with a plan for the whole semester. In general, a syllabus contains several parts, such as information about the course, contact information, required readings, course components, participation, class rules/ guidelines/ policies, attendance policy, and course schedule (<https://www.thoughtco.com/course-syllabus-decoded-1686476>). In general, a ‘syllabus’ presents a synopsis of the objectives of the course so that students will be aware of the planning of the course and the dates of assignments and exams.

In a nutshell, it becomes obvious to identify the ‘curriculum’ and the ‘syllabus’ as two separate concepts. While, a curriculum includes the courses, a syllabus is a description of the course being studied based on an outline. It clearly illustrates the elements that are dealt with in a course. In short, a curriculum is mainly maintained for a course; whereas, a syllabus is chiefly used for a subject. Essentially, both the curriculum and the syllabus determine the structural objectives of education (Zohrabi, 2011). These objectives usually elucidate the language elements or skills the students might learn during the program (Brown, 1995). An effective curriculum and syllabus design aims at improving the quality of education, saving teachers’ time and energy, determining the required course materials, ameliorating the efficiency and the effectiveness of the teaching-learning processes, guiding and motivating students’ attention, involving students in the teaching-learning operation, evaluating students’ progress and teaching materials and methods (Zohrabi, 2011).

On the whole, in the Moroccan context, the curriculum has gone through several shifts throughout the last two decades. Following the 2001 reform, higher education curricula have been described in the National Charter (1999) in terms of the principles and values to be adopted and a series of guidelines that address the milestones of the syllabi.