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# Futures education: Curriculum and educational practices in Australia, Spain, and Chile

## Educación para el futuro: Currículo y prácticas educativas en Australia, España y Chile

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## ABSTRACT

The images of the future among young people have been conditioned by the stories present in the media, films, books, and also in school. Educational curriculums are made up of a selection of knowledge that privileges some ways of understanding the future over others. Young people often imagine a future that is in economic, social, and/or climate crisis. However, they also imagine a bright future for themselves, detached from the future they imagine for society. In this article, we present a qualitative analysis of the curriculums of Australia, Spain, and Chile, together with interviews with teachers from these countries. We investigate the presence and absence of futures education in these curriculums, their degree of development regarding futures education, and make a first analysis of the influence of futures education in schools. To do this we identify four dimensions: situate in time, anticipate, imagine alternative futures, and social action. The results show that, while the Australian curriculum explicitly includes education for the future, the Spanish and Chilean curriculum include it only tangentially. In addition, the socio-cultural context of schools and the will of the teaching staff are elements that determine the implementation of futures education in the school context.

## RESUMEN

Diversos estudios nos indican que las imágenes del futuro que tienen los jóvenes están condicionadas por los relatos presentes en los medios de comunicación, las películas, los libros y también en la escuela. Los currículos educativos incluyen una selección de contenidos que privilegian unas formas de entender el futuro por encima de otras. Los jóvenes suelen representar un futuro en crisis económica, social y/o climática. Sin embargo, estos imaginan para sí mismos un futuro brillante, totalmente desligado del futuro de la sociedad. En este artículo presentamos un análisis cualitativo de carácter descriptivo e interpretativo de los currículos de Australia, España y Chile, junto con entrevistas a docentes de estos países, para estudiar la presencia y ausencia de la educación para el futuro en sus planes de estudios, así como su grado de desarrollo, y hacer un primer análisis de la influencia de la educación para el futuro en las escuelas. Para ello identificamos cuatro dimensiones: situar en el tiempo, anticipar, imaginar futuros alternativos y actuar socialmente. Los resultados muestran que, mientras que el currículo australiano incluye de forma explícita la educación para el futuro, el currículo español y chileno la incluyen solo de forma tangencial. Además, el contexto sociocultural del centro y la voluntad del profesorado son elementos que determinan el desarrollo de la educación para el futuro en la escuela.

## KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Acting socially, curriculum, primary education, secondary education, futures education, critical thinking.
Actuar socialmente, currículo, educación primaria, educación secundaria, educación futura, pensamiento crítico.

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, several studies indicate that most of the population perceives that the future will be worse than the present (Franceschelli & Keating; 2018; Ipsos-Mori, 2020: 16). One of the possible explanations is the influence of hegemonic narratives about the future on citizenship. These stories, present in the media, in film productions, in literature, and even in curricular materials (Anguera & Santisteban, 2016; Gidley, 2004) depict a future of economic, social, and climate crisis. Studies carried out with young people support the same thesis. However, we must differentiate young people's expectations about the future of society and their personal future. In this sense, several studies show that, while young people agree that the future of society, or their generation, will be worse than the present, they have hopes in their personal future, disassociating it from the global future (Anguera & Santisteban, 2016; Arnett, 2000; Franceschelli & Keating, 2018). A study conducted by the Kairos future-foundation with 22,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 29 shows that, while 32% of young Europeans and 54.1% of young Americans consider that a bright personal future awaits them, only 8.1% and 17.9% respectively, think the same for their society (Galland, 2008). In the same vein, Patterson et al. (2007), and Patterson and Forbes (2012) show that young people consider that in the medium term they will have a stable job, a family, and a home. Even young people in serious difficulty are optimistic about their personal future and rely on hard work to achieve their goals (Evans, 2002; Franceschelli & Keating, 2018).

Several studies argue that the hope in hard work to build a personal future disconnected from a socioeconomic structure in crisis is one of the narratives of neoliberalism, narratives that are on the rise and that weaken the sense of social relevance and favor individualization (Beck, 2007; Franceschelli & Keating, 2018; Galland, 2008; Hicks, 2004; Silva, 2013). While general trends in young people's images of the future are similar, studies tell us that these have certain variations from country to country (Galland, 2008; Ipsos-Mori, 2020; Stellinger & Wintrebert, 2008). These variations have historically been attributed to factors such as the cultural context or the socioeconomic conditions of each country, however, we also know that institutional narratives are a major factor in the construction of images of the future (Evans, 2002).

## 2. Futures education

Although education for the future has gained space in curriculums in different countries (Gidley & Hampson, 2005), debates on educational policies are still framed by the same belief system, as if we were preparing students to live in a future that reflects the same society in which we live right now (Giroux, 2013; 2017). The impact that the curriculum has on students to think about alternative futures has to do with the fact that the curriculums are composed of a selection of knowledge (Pinar, 2012). This selection necessarily favors some views of the past and present over others, which influences the way students think about the future. Futures education proposes that educational programs should not contain any element that is not justified by a future perspective. To do this, the curricular objectives must be projected towards the future and not towards the past, and the contents and competencies regarding citizenship must be designed so that they can be used in personal and collective life to build shared futures.

Through questioning the future, as well as through the analysis of emerging problems and their scenarios, it is possible to reflect on the present and open the possibility of new futures (Inayatullah, 2002; 2008; Poli, 2018). Future education proposes that children and young people are the ones who formulate and debate the possible futures, promoting contexts in which they are involved in the realization of alternative futures (Inayatullah, 2018). For this, one of the keys is for children and young people to become familiar with and use a variety of concepts and tools to develop the capacity for foresight and anticipation.

Futures education seeks to introduce changes in the way we think about the future, this involves awakening temporal consciousness (developing skills to critically analyze the past, present, and future), producing and imagining narratives of the future, and focusing on the ability to build future prospects to act in the present, thus ceasing to conceive the future as an abstract category so that it becomes an active social category (Gidley, 2004; Medina-Vásquez, 2020; Miller, 2018; Slaughter, 2012). Based on Inayatullah (2008) and Gidley (2004) we define four dimensions that allow us to identify the elements

of futures education: 1) situating in time; 2) anticipation; 3) imagining alternative futures; and 4) acting socially. The dimensions described above served to systematically analyze the presence and absence of futures education and how it is developed in the national curriculums of Australia, Spain, and Chile. They also allowed us to analyze teachers' narratives to understand how the curriculums are translated into educational practices.

### 2.1. Situating in time

The study of the past should include that of the present and future to prepare children and young people to actively participate in the construction of their personal and social future through the development of historical thinking (Pagès, 2019). In this regard, taking into account the challenges posed by current societies, Guldi and Armitage (2016) point out that it is necessary to establish a relationship between the past, present, and future as a guide to project those future paths that best suit students. In this sense, the first dimension we propose is based on the first pillar of future studies, proposed by Inayatullah (2008). This dimension seeks to understand our human temporality and establish relationships between past, present, and future to guide the construction and reconstruction of the images of the future. In future education it is essential to establish relationships between the three categories of human temporality, understanding the past as memory and remembrance, the present as the instant and the near history, and the future as the prospective (Santisteban, 2007). This dialectical relationship between the past, present, and future is fundamental to understand that the knowledge of the past allows us to live a personal and social reality that responds to who we are and what we want to be (Escribano, 2021).

### 2.2. Anticipating

Future education raises the need to solve the problems of the future through anticipatory actions that connect the future in an explicit way with the resolution of problems of the present. The moment we question the future and analyze emerging problems and scenarios, we can anticipate and imagine possible new futures (Wildman & Inayatullah, 1996). The second dimension is anticipation and it is based on the second pillar of future studies proposed by Inayatullah (2008). This dimension includes all the elements that allow problems to be identified before they are too big or difficult to solve. It also allows us to go beyond the immediate consequences of present problems, trying to anticipate their evolution in the medium and long term, in what Inayatullah calls the wheel of futures (Inayatullah, 2008). This dimension is also consistent with the idea of probable future originally proposed by Galtung (1982) and adapted by Gidley (2004). According to this author, the probable future is studied from the analysis of global and ecological trends, it is predictive and aims at making generalizations and extrapolations. Hutchinson (1992) suggests that isolated work based on the probable future often leads to reductionist ideas that pose a future in crisis and without alternatives.

### 2.3. Imagining alternative futures

Imagining alternative futures involves deductively predicting possible futures (Gidley, 2004). While in everyday discourse we usually talk about the future, imagining alternative futures is about imagining a plurality of futures and understanding the worldviews and myths that underlie them (Inayatullah, 2008; Gidley, 2004; Milojevic & Inayatullah, 2018). Franceschelli and Keating (2018) show how, while young people may be optimistic about their abilities to shape their future, their creative potential to think about it is limited by the molds of the neoliberal society in which they live. From this perspective, imagining alternative futures requires leaving aside our certainties about the present and what the future will be like. Inayatullah (2020) argues that it is necessary that the approach of future education focuses on engaging citizens to create anticipatory democratic systems, thinking about the future to rethink and act on the present. In this sense, students must be prepared to be citizens in a society where the future is uncertain and not predetermined. By posing the challenge of facing a future full of uncertainties rather than certainties, thinking about alternative futures expands the creative potential to act on the present. By rethinking the present, we act on the alternative futures that are to come (Inayatullah, 2018). Hicks (2004) stresses the need for individuals and groups to be able to envision more hopeful and positive futures. In this sense, peace education can contribute to the development of empowering images of more hopeful futures.

## 2.4. Acting socially

The future is built from the decisions and actions we take. This necessarily implies thinking and acting on the present and assuming responsibilities to introduce transformation processes (Wildman & Inayatullah, 1996). These visions of anticipation are fundamental and give individuals and social groups optimism about the possibilities of change (Inayatullah, 2008; Santisteban & Anguera, 2014).

As a component of transformation in the study of futures, the social action dimension is conceived as an active process in which the future is constantly created through practice. From this perspective, understanding the future is a step after anticipation as, in addition to the will to act, there is the need to become aware and develop creative and metacognitive thinking skills to define and project the future in the direction of the desired objectives. In this phase of action, the future is directed towards the desirable, which makes the future different from the past or the present (Masini, 1994).

## 3. Method

This study aims at identifying the presence and degree of development of futures education in the curriculums of several countries. In this paper, we present the first results for Australia, Spain, and Chile, comparing them and identifying how they are characterized. To do so, the dimensions of future educations based on the proposals of Gidley (2004) and Inayatullah (2008) and developed in the theoretical framework are used. The data obtained from the curriculum analysis are complemented by interviews with teachers from the different countries studied. This qualitative data allows a first analysis of the educational reality of each one of the countries.

Table 1 summarizes the documents analyzed and details some of the characteristics of the teachers interviewed. We selected documents that are equivalent in the three countries and teachers who have a stable track record in primary or secondary education in the field of social sciences and a broad knowledge of the educational reality of the country.

**Table 1. Curricula analyzed and the interviewees' profiles**

| | Australia | Spain | Chile |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Curricula** | | | |
| Primary education | Australian Curriculum Foundation-10. | Royal Decree 126/2014 Primary Education Curriculum. | Curricular program of basic education and curricular bases from 1st to 6th grade. |
| Secondary education | | Royal Decree 1105/2014 Secondary Education Curriculum. | Curriculum of secondary education, curricular bases from 7th grade to 2nd year of high school and from 3rd to 4th year of high school. |
| **Participants** | | | |
| Primary education | Primary education teacher and principal of a public high school in South Australia. | Early childhood and primary education teacher. Quality coordinator of an educational center and teacher instructor at the university. | Basic education teacher with a specialty in History and Social Sciences. |
| Secondary education | Secondary education teacher in the areas of English, Humanities and Social Sciences. This participant worked on the design of the Australian curriculum. | PhD. in law, philosophy, and letters, and also a Geography and History teacher at the secondary education level. | Secondary school teacher in History and Social Sciences. |

In the first phase of the research, we analyzed the curricula based on a series of codes that we extracted from the dimensions of futures education (Table 2). They represent different characteristics within each of the dimensions analyzed. Considering these codes, we conducted a thematic analysis of the content of the curricula to study to what extent, and how, they include futures education.

**Table 2. Codes linked to the dimensions of futures education**

| Situating in time | Anticipation | Imagining alternative futures | Acting socially |
|---|---|---|---|
| Change and continuity<br>Development<br>Future<br>History<br>Past<br>Period<br>Present<br>Sequence<br>Time | Anticipate<br>Changes<br>Imagine<br>Predict<br>Challenge<br>Risk<br>Sustainability | Alternative<br>Degrowth<br>Futures<br>Imagine<br>Utopia | Social action<br>Decide<br>Participate<br>Transform<br>Vote |

In the second phase of the research, we selected six social sciences teachers, since, after a first quantitative survey, we determined that it is in this area where more elements of future education are identified. The criteria for the selection of participants are as follows:

- Choice of one primary education and one secondary education teacher for each one of the countries.
- A notable career in primary or secondary education in the field of social sciences.
- Broad knowledge of the educational reality of the country.

In addition, priority was given to those teachers to whom we had access and who were predisposed to participate in this research. At all times, the research with participants has been done based on the ethical regulations established by the corresponding countries, as well as the universities of the authors of this study. In this phase of the research, we used semi-structured interviews that were built based on the results obtained in the first phase of the investigation. The questions posed to participants, which serve as the driving axis of the interview, are the following:

1) Beyond the official curriculum, do you think that in the day-to-day of schools, the past and the present are analyzed with a critical perspective and with a projection toward the future? How is it carried out?

2) Do you think students are being taught to anticipate potential future problems? What kind of problems?

3) Do you work in the classroom with the premise that there are possible, probable, and preferable futures? In what way?

4) Are participation, action, and social transformation encouraged in schools? What lines of action are promoted?

5) Do you think that your country's education system is committed to education for the future? Do you think this type of education takes place in most schools?

The analysis of the responses was also carried out based on the codes and dimensions used in the first phase. Finally, the results obtained for the three countries were compared using the dimensions of futures education as a structuring element of the study, identifying, and making a critical analysis of the similarities and differences between them. The results obtained allow us to make a first approximation to the case of futures education for the curricula of Australia, Spain, and Chile, in addition to offering a first vision of the situation of education on the future in various countries of the world, which should lay the foundations for further studies in these and other countries.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Situating in time

For the Australian national curriculum, we identified elements that denote a study of the past and the present with a critical perspective and with a projection toward the future. An example of this is found in the very preamble to the Humanities and Social Sciences learning area: "[t]he humanities and social sciences have a historical and contemporary focus, from personal to global contexts, and consider challenges for the future" (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], n.d.: 17). The teachers interviewed suggest that in primary and secondary education the analysis of historical time is developed from a critical perspective depending on the socio-cultural context of the school. While in schools where most students are white and middle class, a sense of conformity to the current state of the world predominates, in multicultural schools, with indigenous students and students from other countries, there is a greater interest in analyzing the past and imagining a new future, although they claim that "the analysis is occurring too slowly for schools to meet the demands [of society]." (Australian primary school teacher).

The situation in Spain has different nuances. The curriculum focuses on the preparation of students for the exercise of citizenship, so they can participate in the economic, social, and cultural life of the country and adapt to situations of change. As in Australia, it is in Social Sciences, Geography, and History where this preparation is developed, although from an uncritical perspective, promoting "[...] the ability to temporarily order some historical facts and other relevant facts using the basic notions of succession, duration, and simultaneity" (Royal Decree 126/2014: 22). This approach remotely allows for the establishment of relationships between past and present and does not explicitly develop future education. Teachers who were interviewed support the same thesis and point out that it is not usual

to reflect on the past in secondary education, in addition, "what is sought is precisely to flee from the present" (secondary school teacher from Spain). On the other hand, in primary education, strategies such as "thinking routines [...] make students have a critical thinking that helps them in their future and analyzes the past" (primary school teacher from Spain).

The Chilean case is similar to the Spanish one. The aspects related to this dimension are worked from an uncritical perspective. An example is found in one of the learning objectives of 1st grade, which promotes teaching to "sequence events and activities of daily, personal, and family life, using relative categories of a temporary location, such as before, after; yesterday, today, tomorrow; day, night; this year, last year, next year" (p. 153). This is also the case for the learning objectives of 5th grade, among which we find "representing and interpreting chronological sequences and events of the past through timelines, distinguishing periods" (Chilean Ministry of Education, 2019: 168). The teachers interviewed show their concern about this situation in primary and secondary education. They affirm that "the labor burden and the pressure of standardized tests leave little and nothing to generate instances of criticism of reality" (primary school teacher from Chile). They agree that if initiatives to study the past, present, and future critically occur, they have their origin in the teaching staff.

### 4.2. Anticipating

The elements that we consider typical of this dimension of analysis have little presence in the curricula analyzed. The national curriculum in which we most identified the presence of this dimension was the Australian curriculum, especially in the areas of Humanities and Social Sciences and Technologies. This curriculum aims at developing the capacity to make informed predictions about the future, for example, in the inquiries and skills to be developed in the seventh year: "discussing the consequences of decisions (for example, economic, business, civic or personal decisions), considering alternative responses and predicting the potential effect of those responses" (ACARA, n.d.: 140). Regarding Technologies, we also found the idea of predicting. For example, in the content descriptors for the years 9 and 10 of the Design and Technologies branch we found the objective of "constructing scenarios of how the future may unfold (forecasting) and what impacts there may be for society and particular groups, and back casting from preferred futures" (ACARA, n.d.: 716). However, the teachers interviewed consider that the opportunities to anticipate future events are limited since the development of other skills and the learning of other contents such as language and mathematics are considered more important. In addition, they limit themselves to making predictions about financial and environmental problems, or even about the academic path and the profession that students will have in the future.

In the case of the Spanish curriculum, the dimension of "anticipation" is not present in any of the areas and subjects. As in the previous dimension, only curricular elements related to the environment and sustainable development are present, both in primary and secondary education, which, to a certain extent, implies prevention and anticipation. However, the purpose of these contents is that students understand the idea of sustainable development and its implications and there is no development of competencies to anticipate or predict problems and make sustainable development effective. The teachers interviewed consider that "this preventive work from my point of view is not yet addressed" (secondary school teacher from Spain) although they affirm that they do carry it out in a personal capacity. In addition, as in the case of Australia, it is limited to "environmental, social education ... and above all [to preparation] for professions that have not yet been invented" (primary school teacher from Spain).

Similarly, the Chilean curriculum does not include objectives or contents that, explicitly, allow this dimension to be developed. We could only find some related ideas. For example, concerning democratic education, it is worth highlighting the learning objective 3 in the 3rd grade which proposes "[r]eflect personally and in groups on risks to democracy in Chile and the world, such as the phenomenon of political disaffection, inequality, corruption, drug trafficking, violence, among others" (Chilean Ministry of Education, 2019: 61). The concept of assessing risk implies anticipating possible threats to Chilean society and democracy. The teachers interviewed agree that "possible future problems related to our future as a society or the problems that directly concern students in their daily reality (gender, migration, environmental, etc.), [...] are not addressed from an institutional point of view" (primary school teacher

from Chile). However, they affirm that in the day-to-day school "the problems that are discussed are those relevant to their local and global reality; politics, citizenship, feminism, economy, environment, gender, etc." (high school teacher from Chile). They argue that working from problems "makes students glimpse what of the above is happening in their context or may eventually happen" (high school teacher from Chile).

### 4.3. Imagining alternative futures

The third dimension of futures education is the least present in the national curricula analyzed. However, its presence shows how many educational systems focus on futures education, how they incorporate it tangentially, and how they omit it. The Australian national curriculum explicitly incorporates futures education by translating the idea that there are possible, probable, and preferable futures, especially in the areas of Humanities and Social Sciences and Technologies. In the HyCS, the idea that there are multiple possible futures and that we must act in the present to project ourselves into the future is continually present. One of the most explicit paragraphs is found in the inquiries and skills to be developed for the 4th grade:

forecasting a probable future and a preferred future relating to an environmental, local government or cultural issue (for example, developing a futures scenario of what oceans will be like if humans continue to allow waste plastic to enter waterways, and a preferred scenario of what oceans would be like if plastics were to be replaced by degradable materials) (ACARA, n.d.: 86).

For the area of technologies, creating preferable futures is one of the central ideas. The preamble states that "[a]s students progress through the Technologies curriculum, they will begin to identify possible and probable futures, and their preferences for the future" (ACARA, n.d.: 625). The teachers interviewed agree that this dimension is taught in schools, since it is part of the Australian curriculum not only in Humanities and Social Sciences but also in Technology and Natural Sciences. They consider that it would be desirable to include in this proposal the development goals of the United Nations as the backbone of this dimension, since it would be "a perfect framework to unite the different parts of the school and try to make children understand sustainable development" (secondary school teacher from Australia). However, they also try not to convey an overly pessimistic view of the future.

In the Spanish curriculum, no elements that allow teachers to educate towards imagining alternative futures were found in any of the areas or subjects. However, interviewed teachers suggest that in primary education " learning through challenges helps to see different paths and different solutions to the same problem" (primary school teacher from Spain) since at this educational stage "the necessary tools are given to be able to face their future through critical thinking, creativity, originality [...]" (primary school teacher from Spain). On the other hand, in secondary education, the teacher interviewed reassured that, generally, this dimension is not addressed.

Finally, for the Chilean case, the presence of this dimension is scarce in the curriculum. We highlight an objective that seeks to develop such work, such as objective 7 of the 3rd grade: "[d]istinguish political, economic and socio-cultural relations that configure the territory at different scales, proposing alternatives to advance in social and environmental justice" (Chilean Ministry of Education, 2019: 61). In such frameworks, in addition to the process of distinction that students are asked to do, they are required to formulate alternative proposals in order to transform spaces of social and environmental justice, all of which should be led by faculty. Similar to other dimensions, the development of this dimension depends on the teaching staff. In the interviews, Chilean teachers consider that developing this type of content "starts from the personal motivation of the teacher" (primary school teacher from Chile). For this task, they have resources beyond the curriculum, for example, "textbooks" and "training instances" (secondary school teacher from Chile) that focus on helping to "redefine and rethink the world in which we live" (secondary school teacher from Chile).

### 4.4. Acting socially

The Australian national curriculum includes concepts linked to this dimension such as acting, participating, and deciding, especially in Humanities and Social Sciences, but also in all other areas, to a lesser extent. The idea of participating is initially linked to the community: "[h]ow can I participate in

my community?" (ACARA, n.d.: 75), and as the courses progress it expands to more global dimensions by promoting "the capacities and dispositions to participate in the civic life of their nation at a local, regional and global level and as individuals in a globalised world" (ACARA, n.d.: 341). In the area of Technologies, decision-making is also addressed generally: "[s]tudents are given new opportunities to clarify their thinking, creativity, analysis, problem solving, and decision making" (ACARA, n.d.: 696), although it does not delve into how these objectives are put into practice. In the Australian curriculum, the learning objectives linked to this dimension are shortly described and leave room for deinstitutionalized and critical forms of participation. The teachers interviewed say that schools talk a lot about "the voice of the students" (high school teacher from Australia) although they consider that the student leaders may "not be representative of the body of students" (high school teacher from Australia). There are also students and faculty initiatives of social participation in the form of protests and demands.

In the case of the Spanish curriculum, the learning objectives focus on teaching students to participate in the future in the society of which they are part. A minimalist vision of democracy is proposed, limited to participation through voting. In addition, no content or methods are explicit that allow students to develop skills for action and social transformation. An example of this is found in the primary education curriculum in which the objective is defined as "[p]articipate in group activities adopting a responsible, constructive, and supportive behavior, respecting the basic principles of democratic functioning" (RD 126/2014: 23). In the same vein, the teachers interviewed agree that institutional actions such as the constitution day holiday, or the working women's day, are encouraged in a very global way. In addition, the democratic functioning of the schools is promoted with the election of class delegates, participation in the school board, and, sometimes, meetings of delegates are held with a member of the school management. Finally, social transformation is only conveyed punctually through service learning.

For the Chilean case, we could only find this dimension in some objectives for the 3rd and 4th grades and exclusively in the area of education for citizenship. For example, objective two of 4th grade suggests to "[p]articipate in a co-responsible and ethical way in the search for strategies and solutions to challenges, problems and conflicts in various scales, which involve harmonizing development, democracy, equity, and sustainability" (Chilean Ministry of Education, 2019: 62). Objective eight of the 3rd grade is worth mentioning: "[p]articipate in different school instances of democratic exercise, recognizing the need to socially organize life in community, in order to strengthen a healthy coexistence that protects fundamental freedoms and the common good" (p. 61). The little presence of this dimension in the curriculum is critically analyzed by the teachers interviewed, who consider that: "the decisions of the students are not binding for the structuring of school norms. [...] Starting from this reality, what can be taught about participation, action and social transformation is only an empty discourse that lacks application (primary school teacher from Chile). In the same vein, they consider that the time they have and the curriculum itself are limiting elements to promoting this dimension.

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

The results show that the curricula analyzed privilege some stories about the future over others, since they are made up of a selection of contents with an underlying ideology (Pinar, 2012). While the Australian curriculum promotes the study of the past and present with a projection into the future, in Spain and Chile the curriculum does not include a critical treatment of history or the present, perhaps because the recent past of both countries is a controversial issue. Similarly, the proposal to anticipate future problems is explicitly developed in the Australian curriculum while in the Spanish curriculum it is only addressed tangentially, from the study of the environment and sustainable development.

In the case of Chile, the promotion of futures education is only done timidly, anticipating the possible risks to its democratic system. Thinking about alternative futures is an idea that was only identified in the Australian curriculum, especially focused on technology and environmental issues. For the Chilean curriculum, this perspective is present tangentially, promoting that students propose alternatives in favor of social and environmental justice. On the other hand, in the Spanish curriculum, this dimension is not present. Finally, participation and acting socially are part of the curriculum of the three countries studied. In Australia, participation is promoted from the local to the global, although the curriculum offers few tools

to put it into practice. In Spain and Chile, the type of participation is based on democratic institutions and, at school, on the established decision-making and assembly bodies, as well as on specific service-learning initiatives.

In Spain and Chile, it is up to teachers to adopt a critical perspective and encourage students to establish relationships between present, past, and future (Pagès, 2019). The teachers interviewed suggest that, in the classes in Australia and Spain, prediction is taught by focusing on the labor market, reflecting a neoliberal ideology in educational practices, which can contribute to young people detaching a global future in crisis, from their academic and professional future (Beck, 2007; Franceschelli & Keating, 2018; Galland, 2008; Silva, 2013). On the other hand, in Chile, relevant present and future social problems are discussed, only due to the initiative of some teachers. Finally, in Australia, participation actions that are not institutionalized are promoted through demonstrations and protests. However, it depends largely on teachers and the social context of the school.

The analysis of the curricula made it possible to identify clear variations between them, regarding future education (Galland, 2008; Ipsos-Mori, 2020; Stellinger & Wintrebert, 2008). We highlight the scarce presence of future education in the curricula of Spain and Chile, while in Australia, its presence is explicit and is one of the backbones of its curricular proposal. These variations are relevant because they impact the creation of images of the future of young people (Evans, 2002). In some cases, curriculums are limited to treating the future from an environmental perspective and for sustainable development, as indicated in the study by Hicks (2002), without offering young people effective ways of social transformation, which can lead to discouragement, hopelessness, and imagining a future in crisis (Anguera & Santisteban, 2016). There is evidence to suggest that the role of teachers is decisive in understanding the presence and absence of future education, its degree of development, and the nuances it acquires. New avenues of research are opening up in this regard, which should allow us to understand what the development stage of future education in schools is, thus to decide, together, what future we build.

## Authors' Contribution

Idea, J.C; Literature review (state of the art), J.C., C.E, R.S., J.M; Methodology, J.C; Data analysis, J.C., C.E., R.S., J.M; Results, J.C., C.E., R.S., J.M; Discussion and conclusions, J.C.; Writing (original draft), J.C., C.E., R.S., J.M; Final revisions, J.C., C.E, R.S., J.M; Project design and funding, J.C., C.E.

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