

A RELATIONAL REALIST VISION FOR EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

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6. Morphogenetic Education with a Developmental Mission

This chapter, expressing education's developmental mission, presents the continuity between different levels of sociability and the impact of this continuity on curriculum planning and assessment strategies. It affirms and expands two points:

1. Curriculum planning occurs in the context of a networked socio-cultural ecology. By starting from relations of proximity, the design and application of learning from below means that the curriculum and assessment strategies adopted evaluate learning progress coherently from relations of proximity to all levels of this multi-dimensional ecology.
2. A curriculum that is co-created with the learner develops assessment strategies to document progress. The procedural mechanisms are designed to assist personal morphogenesis and not document achievement in reference to system-based status-roles. Adopting reflexive assessment practices within education's 'black box' also permits the system to adapt better to meet its developmental mission.

Curriculum Planning in the Context of a Networked Social Ecology

The reconstitutive process between sociability and *relational goods*, explored in previous chapters, is expanded in this section. It considers the idea of the curriculum as a *relational good* (a contextual resource) that produces *ASV* by regulating the interconnections between AGIL's referential and organisational axes. The idea is designed to meet students' developmental needs as a formalising contextual resource that organises teaching and learning. In terms of classroom practice, it

stabilises the learning environment by providing direction and enabling active learning.

The contextual curriculum, as a primary *relational good*, is produced in partnerships and requires sovereign participants at stage T2–T3.¹ The resulting curriculum is an emergent contextual resource that is developed within schools and in relations between teachers, students, and administrators. Emerging from these primary relations and, as an outcome of *morphogenetic cycles*, it organises networked associations, which are characterised as secondary relations. The way the curriculum develops in the morphogenetic interplay between primary and secondary *relational goods* depends on the mediation of *Relational Subjects*. Curriculum development from below implies the primacy of de-centralised relations of proximity.

Contrary to system-led research, school-based research occurs in partnerships between sovereign participants. School-based research is an aspect of *relational reflexivity* that evaluates the delivered curriculum (a stabilising social mechanism) and its impact on learning progress (the referential aspect (L) of evaluation). The development of the delivered curriculum considers the conditions of sociability — the mode of production of *relational goods* — to be central to evaluations of the curriculum's efficacy as an evolving mechanism. In directing learning, its development is reciprocally tied to lived relations based on trust and cooperation. Therefore, evaluation and curriculum development are in reflexive dialogue through research responsive to the diverse properties that constitute teaching and learning (Kelly 2005). In planning the

1 The curriculum as an adaptive, contextual resource is based on a three-fold distinction that operates relationally: the lived, planned (delivered), and experienced curriculum (Yancey 1998). The lived curriculum is the unique trajectory of learning at the start. Meanwhile, the planned curriculum outlines learning in syllabi, materials, and activities. The experienced curriculum denotes how the curriculum is planned and delivered in response to the learner's experiences. The nexus of these three strands — the lived, planned, and experienced curriculum — is the optimal place for learning (Yancey 1998:18). By taking the lived starting point — in the context of personal *morphogenetic cycles* — as the starting point, this model understands the experienced curriculum to affect the direction of the planned curriculum that optimises learning. Thus, contextually sensitive theories of practice are needed to maintain an alignment between the curriculum and the student's iteratively changing starting point (Yancey 1998: 8). As a primary *relational good*, situated pedagogy engages the student with the curriculum so that it is experienced (experienced curriculum) in ways that develop each starting point of a learning cycle (lived curriculum).

curriculum, there is harmony between its role as a secondary *relational good* and the concerns of those involved in making it a guide to enable teaching and learning.

The three-fold distinction of the curriculum — as lived, planned, and experienced — can be mapped to the different orders of social relationality (the processual or interactional and structural) (Donati 2021). At the processual or interactional stage (T2–T3), the curriculum is represented in its lived and experienced forms. The lived curriculum represents the starting point of the interactional stage of a learning cycle. The interactions that are responsive to the subjective access points of the learner are represented in the experienced curriculum. The relational order of structure is identified in the planned curriculum (stages T1 and T4) and is represented in pre-set and formalised syllabi. It guides teaching and learning at the beginning and emerges in a changed/reproduced social form in reflective adaptation to the teaching and learning dynamic in stage T2–T3. Below is an adapted diagram depicting Donati’s different orders of social relationality. It illustrates this dynamic view of the curriculum as an organisational mechanism that binds and responds to the dynamics of teaching and learning relationships (Figure 8).

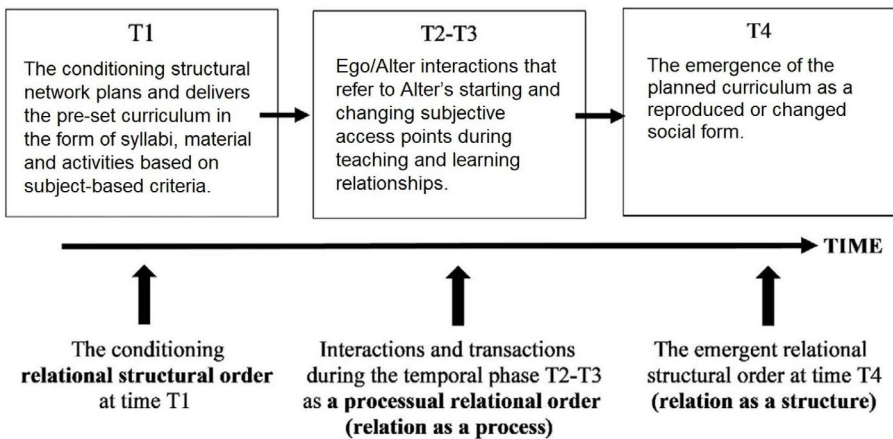


Fig. 8 The three-fold view of the curriculum as aspects of different orders of social relationality, adapted from Donati (2021: 56).

Planning Assessment to Buttress Learning

If assessment practice monitors and evaluates development, it becomes necessary to differentiate between *how* to assess and *what* to assess. The developmental question (the conceptual outcome) pertains to *what* to assess; however, *how* to assess (the outcome measure) is a strategic question regarding practices that best maximise the developmental principle (Astin and Antonio 2012). These two problems represent different facets of the AGIL compass — the conceptual outcome is the referential axis, and the outcome measure is the compass's organisational axis. In partnership with the student, what to assess will reference the subjective input point at the beginning of a learning cycle. The principle of development, when responsive to input points, frames assessment to bolster the learning process effectively. Such framing in developmental terms contrasts with system-based models that focus on outcomes before inputs.

Assessment strategies that attend to the referential axis are organised to evaluate learning in ways that put talent development first. The method discounts norm-referenced assessment because it is a model that is not focused on the internal dynamics of learning but seeks instead to measure outcomes to a performance curve without recourse to the learner's input point. Outcome measures disconnected from input points, in the form of one-off summative grades, do not offer insight into whether progress has occurred and what needs to be done inside the 'black box' of learning to scaffold learner development. Competitive assessment regimes that inherently seek to compare and select students are designed not to develop students but to sanction and restrict 'excellence' through an artificial credentialing process.

To re-discover the human-in-the-social, the educational aim is to develop *all* students. Learning should be evaluated in reference to the personal morphogenetic trajectory of each student and organised in ways that do not restrict progress in achieving learning criteria. Assessments that buttress development, therefore, are both criterion-referenced and self-referential. They are criterion-referenced in that they acknowledge inherited knowledge mediations; they are self-referential insofar as they do not restrict any learner from progressing to achieve these outcomes. This way, learners are not compared to each other, and

all, potentially, can achieve subject criteria based on individual learning plans. By contrast, the system-based mode of governance encourages the assessment *of* learning because its focus is to judge and select the right students that meet role expectations.

In the system-based model, the priority given to credentialing in a competitive assessment regime means institutions operate on the premise of sanctioned 'excellence' that treats students as a potential resource. Institutions therefore compete to enhance prestige and reputation by producing optimal assessment outcomes or selecting the 'best' students based on previous assessment outcomes (through selection, the aim is to produce optimal future outcomes). Based on a zero-sum competition, the 'reputation and prestige' institutional model is outcome-focused, that is, it aims to own artificially restricted 'excellence' as a resource to further its reputation and thereby access further resources.

When development is the mission of education, then an alternative system framework can be articulated — one that does not operate from an insular institutional logic of 'reputation and prestige' (Astin and Antonio 2012: 275). In this diverging framework, the climate is one of 'institutional transcendence', that is, it is defined as one in which 'excellence' is something that transcends what institutions do to enhance themselves. 'Excellence' is defined instead by relations that reference *all* students and start from individual input points to develop progress authentically. The absence of artificial selectivity means excellence is open to *all* in articulations of sociability defined by reciprocity at the inter-institutional level. Formulating this institutional transcendence, Astin and Antonio (2012) propose a cooperative system perspective in which institutions work together and contribute to one mission: talent development. Together, institutions contribute to social value by pooling resources, research, and innovative practices that effectively bridge the divide between student entry-point and sought outcomes:

When we operate from the narrow perspective of one institution or a single profession, we are concerned only with what happens to those students we admit; the rejected candidates are not of interest to us. On the other hand, when we view such decision problems from a larger system perspective, we concern ourselves with the fate of all candidates, winners and rejects alike (Astin and Antonio 2012: 226).

The Interplay between Learner Agency and Learning Criteria

External to the student's subjective input point is the pre-existence of learning criteria. As standards of excellence do not operate in a logic of achievement — to credential some learners — the learning criteria become part of the coordination and co-production of teaching and learning relationships. Two points are raised to affirm learner agency in this logic of coordination and co-creation:

1. The understanding of emergent personhood discussed in previous chapters implicates an 'in-gear' conception of freedom (Collier 1994). This means that the student's relative autonomy is always relational to the natural, practical, and discursive worlds.
2. Combining an 'in-gear' understanding of learning and returning with Freire's notion of the directive liberating approach, the teacher and student both have different roles in a problem-posing dialogical model.

Regarding the first point, an 'in-gear' conception of freedom follows an evolutionary and referential view of knowledge generation. It describes an understanding that the person develops through his or her interactions with the world. We are not free to choose, Collier argues, while disengaged from the world:

This metaphor, I hope, is clear enough: in-gear freedom is a matter of interacting causally with the world in order to realise our intentions; it is threatened by any view which denies the efficacy of our intentions in bringing about changes in the real world; out-of-gear freedom is precisely a matter of disengaging our choices from causal interaction with the world, to ward off the threat that the nature of that world might limit or determine them. One instance of an out-of-gear conception of freedom is expressed by Rorty [in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979)]: 'Man is always free to choose new descriptions (for, among other things, himself)' (Collier 1994: 98).

Student autonomy (that is, understanding and judgement) develops within interactions. These interactions occur in a pre-existing world, and inherited knowledge content is necessarily emergent from interactions in this world. At the same time, interaction is mediated and contested; therefore, students are encouraged to develop critical capacities through

a problem-posing dialogical pedagogy. Dialogue, according to Freire, represents an epistemological relationship in which the development of critical capacities is tied to its social relationality:

I engage in dialogue because I recognise the social and not merely the individualistic character of the process of knowing. In this sense, dialogue presents itself as an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing (Freire in dialogue with Macedo 1995: 379).

Moving on to the second point, the object of dialogue is built on the student's experiences while directing these experiences utilising the necessary tools and skills to apprehend the cognisable object of knowledge. Accordingly, two interrelated strands of Freire's directive liberating approach are brought together: the first strand is the directive role of the teacher that distinguishes between the responsibilities of teacher and student; the second affirms the importance of the student's starting point and the experiences brought into the learning process. The difference between directive and authoritarian education is that the former acknowledges the interchange between teacher and student in which both co-create the plan of learning and knowing; the latter is a top-down imposition that takes no account of student variation. Between these two strands, there is an interplay (co-direction) in which the teacher's authority directs learning but in a dialogical way. The liberating teacher uses authority within the limits of freedom (enabling learner agency) with students as co-directors of the curriculum (Freire in dialogue with Shor 1987a: 91).

In contrast to transmission models of learning and knowing, authority emerges from the relation itself and is not imposed on the student. Directive authority (control) is adaptable because it responds to the needs of students and their learning. The student must be directed to overcome naïve and common-sense assumptions to enable referential detachment and, thus, critical exchange with the object. In the second strand noted above — the freedom of the learner to co-create both learning and knowing — dialogue becomes essential to generate partnership in the moment of 'communication between the cognitive subjects, the subjects who know, and who try to know' (Freire in dialogue with Shor 1987a: 99).

Freedom implies an activated learner who participates in creating outcomes based on their developmental situation. Freire's directive

liberating approach thus connects dialogic inquiry to situated pedagogy: the teacher recognises the learner's subjective entry point at the beginning of a learning cycle. Pedagogy becomes situated in as much as it continuously seeks to present and represent the required material, considering the student's comprehension of daily experiences and how they relate to the object. In the descriptions of everyday life, subjective limits become access points for the teacher to enable a rigorous and critical understanding of reality (Freire in dialogue with Shor 1987: 106). The curriculum, therefore, is a script that continuously changes based on the dynamics of the situation, that is, the subjective trajectory of the student as they try to know in new ways.

The situated dimension of the teacher's directive role also requires the framing of the teacher's authority in reference to what students do. It seeks to cultivate self-directed learners whose critical exchanges with others are the *raison d'être* for transmitted knowledge that builds rigorously formed explanations. The teacher, in this process, is an artist who re-invents classroom practices and assessment strategies, considering the required competencies that underpin development. Planning of the curriculum's script is mapped to developing access points located inside the learning situation. The teacher makes the subject relevant to the student through the initial 'codification' of lived situations (the experienced curriculum) that are decodified as part of a prolonged critical investigation (Freire in dialogue with Shor 1987a: 115).²

Directive liberating education, in orchestrating prolonged critical investigations, encourages in-gear engagement with and changes in the real world. It is directed by the authority of knowledge (Collier 1994: 98) to facilitate studies grounded in everyday interactions in the world. Accordingly, the unsettling of received 'codifications' constitutes

2 Codification starts from the situation of the learner in the world. The teacher collaborates with students to create codifications of experiences from being in the world with others (these codifications are representations that can take different forms). According to Freire, 'generative themes' can be decoded from the original codifications created in co-investigation between the teacher and students. The critical investigation results in the recodification of the original codifications as part of a prolonged study (Freire 2000; Burstow 1991). When subject knowledge is connected to subjective access points, it gains relevance to the students' lived situations that are decodified into themes, utilising subject-based criteria as students mature to learn in new ways.

the *Relational Subjects* that transform existing relationships between students, teachers, schools, and society (Freire in dialogue with Shor 1987b). Collaborative relationships between students and teachers are part of a broader process in which the role expectations of both sets of agents are rethought and sealed in dialogue.

The Synergy between Criterion-Referenced Assessment and Ipsative Assessment

The previous section discussed the interplay between learner agency and the directive role of learning criteria. In this section, I seek to apply the implications of this interplay to an alternative assessment model that synergises criterion-referenced and ipsative assessment.³ This synergy aims to incorporate learning criteria inside the learning dynamics as it operates as a directive guide.⁴ Bearing in mind Freire's directive liberating education, the synergy involves the cooperation of teacher and student in planning learning goals. The partnership monitors learning progress — the ipsative dimension of assessment — and defines *which* outcomes are assessed (the referential axis of AGIL). The criteria provide guiding milestones on the *how* of assessment. Two points distinguish the synergy between criterion-referenced assessment and ipsative assessment:

1. Ipsative assessment is the value reference when evaluating learning. Criterion-referenced assessment can be coupled with norm-referenced or ipsative assessment. In the norm-referencing case, the goal of assessment is to promote the values of competition and selection in which learners are graded and categorised for credentialing. In the ipsative case, learning excellence is not relative to other students; instead, as will be clarified, the goal is for students to meet and creatively engage with learning criteria. How

3 Ipsative assessment is a learner-referenced development model that evaluates learning by comparing existing performance to previous performance (Hughes 2014).

4 Again, the system-based competitive assessment regime, de-focusing input points, is inherently designed to exclude some learners by utilising learning criteria as a measuring stick to categorise based on grade bands. As stated before, this approach, based on an ethos of achievement, is selective and does not seek to develop learners inclusively.

criterion-referenced assessment is used cannot be separated from the value reference of both learning and knowing.

2. Recognising student entry points upholds the human-in-the-social. The ipsative assessment model stresses the dynamics underpinning learning progress. These dynamics are environmental factors that guide students to become self-regulated learners capable of self-directed learning. As ipsative assessment is self-referential, *all* students can meet the learning criteria. The learning environment enables students to bridge learning gaps to meet the learning criteria determined by their different entry points (Astin and Antonio 2012). Thus, acknowledging inclusivity, the human factor always comes first when evaluating learning.

In learner growth, the authority of assessment criteria is in tension with liberty. However, from this tension (constraint), student freedoms can emerge (enablement). According to Freire, growth and maturity — part of personal *morphogenetic cycles* — are the effects of the self-discipline that develops between authority and freedom:

Dialogue means a permanent tension in the relation between authority and liberty. But, in this tension, authority continues to be because it has authority vis-à-vis permitting students freedoms which emerge, which grow and mature, precisely because authority and freedom learn self-discipline (Freire in dialogue with Shor 1987a: 102).

The authority of standards, this way, is identified in learning criteria that are woven into the fabric of learning. They exist as milestones and a long-term compass for the non-linear development of self-directed learning. Consequently, criterion-referenced assessment is compatible with an ipsative logic of progress. Criteria are not something to be attained but are a license from below to enable students the freedom to overcome a naïve understanding of the world and their place in it. When criteria are personalised, the performance is not defined in reference to standardisation and a competitive grading system.⁵ Standards are no

⁵ There is a difference between performance standards and externally set standardisation of learning outcomes. The curriculum is narrowed in an externally set standardisation of learning outcomes, and learners are set targets to achieve. Regardless of the learner's starting point, he or she is graded according to a pre-existing and externally set standard. Criterion-referenced assessment does not have to be imposed from above; instead, *how* it is designed and enacted is key to making it compatible with progress-driven assessment.

longer assigned universally to groups and instead relate to the student's work and awareness of assessment criteria that guide that work.

A Network of Reflective Institutions that Document Learning

The emphasis on subjective developmental points has practical implications at the level of inter-institutional cooperation. As discussed above, institutional transcendence entails a developmental mission that replaces the 'prestige and reputation' approach existing in education (an ethos that seeks to exploit rather than develop talent (Astin and Antonio 2012)). If the long-term goal is to build self-reliance in learning, it is necessary to continuously document key entry points and exit points in each learning cycle. This documentation informs and is informed by school-based research, acting as a repository of practices that effectively bridge these two points to buttress personal growth. The focus on changing developmental points implicates an assessment regime whose responsive practices scaffold the learner towards freedom through the self-disciplined continuous mastery of the underlying *raison d'être* of the object studied. Inter-institutional cooperation at the system level entails reflectivity and adaptation in response to the efficacy of practices in making this scaffolding effective. The documentation of entry and exit points is accompanied by further documentation of what occurs within the noted interplay between authority and liberty to produce personal development from one to the other.

In order to sustain self-disciplined learning, it becomes vital that institutions share a longitudinal cross-institutional database that documents the student's perspective within learning cycles (Astin and Antonio 2012). Documentation of the student's perspective ensures that the learning process is planned coherently and does not miss vital developmental stages. Specifically, such a database allows visibility of the student's grasp of underlying criteria of critical investigations prior to the start of each learning cycle. The incorporation of criterion-referenced assessment into classroom learning provides milestone guidelines and a reference point for the documentation of progress. Documenting individual learning also ensures that resources can be deployed to impact progress in coordination between institutions.

Reflective institutions are part of broader societal governance in which there is interdependence between *primary, secondary, and generalised forms of sociability* to produce *relational goods* at every level. As part of relational societal governance, the dynamic between personal, collective, and social reflexivity results in a repository of research-based strategies that potentially transform teaching and learning. The outcome of this reflexive process is a reflective inter-institutional system perspective whose interconnected networks coordinate to develop talent and contribute to expanding the parameters of sociability. An inter-institutional database of learning documentation enables each student to participate actively in the planning of their education, regardless of their distinctive input points. The following section focuses on strategies at the *primary level of sociability* and the different ways situated assessment practices can be incorporated into classroom relations to stimulate learning in a coherent and connected way.

Structured Learning through Mentorship

Learning is multi-dimensional and non-linear.⁶ As such, it requires a curriculum that provides structure to education but does not use criteria to measure this learning. The non-linear nature of development means that learning involves an inventiveness by which students are expected to arrive at solutions from the fundamental principles of investigation. Cultivating an ethic of discovery — the underlying *raison d'être* of the object studied — enables a capacity to be aware of monitoring and self-evaluating progress (learning *how* to learn). The idea of learning criteria that guides developmental milestones requires long-term mentoring. Mentors act in relationships to support students to reflect on how they think as, for example, sociologists. Mentorship is a directed invitation to students to explore the inner craft of the intellect embedded in the context of a 'relationship-based cognitive apprenticeship' (Gleibermann, n.d.: 4).

6 Non-linear learning criteria are understood and applied differently by individual learners (situated pedagogy). Starting from the student's perspective implicates the planning of learning in ways that are artistically applied in the classroom within teaching and learning partnerships.

Such an apprenticeship develops the reflective capacity of the mentee in a structured and systematic way. To be self-aware of the cognitive processes of learning means starting from the fundamental epistemological foundations that form the basis for building tools and strategies to approach the object of experience (Worley 2018). For example, the relational approach is the epistemic framework through which the *morphogenetic paradigm* is developed; the application of its methodological strategies and tools is guided by the epistemological conditions of sociology as a knowledge system. Without having been inculcated into a systematic way of thinking, the learner cannot provide justified explanations on adopting strategies and how they were utilised in the process of thinking.

A coherent learning plan should start by mentoring meta-cognitive skills in the shape of learning criteria that provide the foundation of the student's cognitive apprenticeship. The goal is to develop his or her capacity to regulate and understand internal cognitive processes in ways that nurture independent and active learning. Again, as Freire argues, there can be no autonomy without concomitant direction that develops in relationships. The enablement of students' freedom emerges from these relationships, but students need first to be directed or constrained to develop the inner craft to utilise this freedom. Only then will they become aware of what constitutes progress as learners. The inner craft that explains the object, in communication with others, stresses the structure of the subject (Bruner 1999).

The Ipsative Dimension of Structured Learning

Structured learning that references the relationship between the learner and his world is necessarily emergent from relationship-based interactions. The focus on input points — the subjective organisation and re-organisation of experiences — means that the goals of structured learning shift in line with a learner's progress. The re-organisation of experiences is an active and reflective act based on interactions with the environment. Thus, education is embedded in the dialectic between oneself and the world — the dialectic has implications for both the student and the world that generates experiences. The dialectic also

means continuity with the daily life experiences of learners (an 'in-gear' view of learning in the world).

When education starts with the student, mechanisms intended to bring about pre-set learning outcomes become inadequate. They cannot sustain learning beyond one-off summative assessments and the underlying pedagogy of teaching to these outcomes. Without concern for interaction, learning becomes disconnected at the personal level and develops into random criteria without a coherent interconnectedness between its different elements. Outcomes designed without regard for input points and interactions lead to a passive and sterile education disconnected from the learner and his or her world (Rodgers 2002: 847).

A student's experiences offer situated access points in the context of long-term development, that is, the organisation and re-organisation of subjective experiences. These access points provide relevant themes that teachers can use creatively. The responsive nature of situated pedagogy means teaching becomes an artistic process that utilises changing access points to continuously re-represent the material. In response to the learner's perspective — the ipsative dimension of assessment — learning outcomes are evaluated and revised according to progress. The goals evaluated at an outcome point are ipsative when they are progress-defined in reference to the individual student (Hughes 2014). Student participation, therefore, is tied to the subjective experiences they bring into learning. Directive liberating education is authentic insofar as it makes use of development points that license the learner to develop within progress-defined and criterion-referenced learning outcomes. The artistic teacher does not deliver learning; instead, he or she mentors active students into new perceptions and creative learning. Taking account of the subjective input points of each student redraws the curriculum and its learning outcomes in partnership with teachers and administrators.

Structured Learning Requires the Formation of Assessment Literacy

The idea of structured learning that is self-referential in its design and application highlights the importance of developing assessment

literacy to connect these two dimensions. Assessment operates at two interconnected levels (Hughes 2014):

1. The student's awareness of assessment criteria.
2. The evaluation of work produced considers meta-level subject skills found in the assessment's aims and criteria.

Specifically, the development of meta-cognitive capacities is fundamental to the self-reliant student who understands what constitutes progress and how to sustain this progress. Practices that promote talent development, therefore, should incorporate assessment literacy into the dialogics of classroom activities. The student's perspective to self-regulate learning is continuously observed, reviewed, and renewed in morphogenetic growth cycles. Incorporating assessment practices into learning means its design and application constantly seek to further learning in the systematic and coherent way described above. An assessment regime that seeks self-aware learning will scaffold the student towards greater self-reliance. The student's growing literacy to evaluate progress constitutes deep learning and promotes greater autonomy. Through this coherent approach, teacher dependency can be curtailed, and the learner becomes an active participant in setting his or her own goals. Again, criteria effectively enter the work produced when the student appreciates how these criteria guide their progress. The instrumentalism of pre-set learning outcomes, disconnected from the learner, promotes dependency through disjointed learning — the learner is rendered passive when assessment universally judges a cohort and does not guide personalised learning.

Mentoring the student to reason from fundamental principles ensures a structured direction sustained through an awareness of deep systematic learning. The integration of this two-level approach to assessment also means a learner-directed curriculum. According to Hughes, the aims and objectives of a learner-directed curriculum should be aligned with assessment practices that respond to the changing starting points of the student. As assessment literacy grows, the learner is then capable of connecting the curriculum's pre-set requirements to personal goals and interests:

Assessment should be deliberately or constructively aligned with curriculum aims and objectives. This avoids mismatch between learner

position and aims/objectives. In a learner directed curriculum the learner undertakes projects and activities with pre-set requirements but have scope for learners to set their own goals according to interests and starting points (Hughes 2014: 48).

Incorporating Assessment Literacy into Assessment Practices

Developed in partnership with the student, the teacher's incorporation of assessment literacy into assessment practices is a *meta-reflexive* activity. The goal, as stated above, is to maintain harmony between the learner's position and the curriculum's aims and objectives (the criteria that guide development). Assessment is intrinsic to learning cycles and is bound to personal morphogenesis to ensure long-term harmony. It is thus embedded in each stage of the process — at the beginning, stage T2–T3 and, finally, when evaluating outcomes. Pre-assessment, therefore, provides an avenue to ascertain past experiences and a perspective on how they may shape future changes.

As post-assessment reflection is retrospective, it can be incorporated simultaneously into formative pre-assessment when it looks forward to the next cycle. The reflective movement from past to current experience is central to a personal morphogenetic reorganisation of experience. It encourages referential detachment (the foundation of meta-cognitive skills), establishing cognitive distance through the internalisation of learning criteria as meaningful milestones integral to directing learning progress. Putting assessment literacy at the centre of assessment activities requires qualitative forms of assessment that can evaluate deep learning that includes *cognitive and affective outcomes*. These different forms of learning are interconnected and are not reducible to one-size-fits-all standardisation.

In the mentoring process, self- and peer-review activities can be used to differentiate rather than standardise learners. Actuating practices that focus on assessment literacy means giving students a voice in evaluating their work and the work of others; this empowerment is an essential factor in motivating long-term learning (Hughes 2014). It allows the student to think about how he or she is thinking and to apply these skills in the completion and evaluation of his or her work. The enablement

of activities that enhance assessment literacy can be incorporated into and change the nature of assignments (Tanner 2012). Promoting self-evaluation changes the focus of assignments towards a teacher-directed ipsative assessment approach.

Activities that connect criterion-referenced and ipsative assessment vis-à-vis assessment literacy through applying criteria are necessarily reflexive. Below are examples of ipsative-based activities that show strategies that potentially promote this reflexivity and can be incorporated into assignments:

1. Keeping reflective journals: Reflective journals or diaries, monitored by teachers, allow students to write down their thoughts on *how* assessment criteria were used to produce assignments. A journal is a flexible self-review strategy that can be incorporated into assignments. It encourages students to document explicitly how the meanings ascribed to their experiences are transformed through relationships and interactions formed in their learning environment (Tanner 2012). Students' reflections on *how* they are learning also plays an essential role in adapting the curriculum to align with their progress. For example, teachers can modify the curriculum and teaching direction by identifying points of confusion.
2. Demonstrating long-term development through work portfolios: Maintaining a documented archive of assignments is an essential strategy in ipsative assessment. The long-term work portfolio is intrinsically connected to changing starting points in personal morphogenesis. The inclusion of reflective journals within portfolios also adds a meta-cognitive dimension to the documentation of work produced. Documentation of long-term learning strengthens a dynamic curriculum and responsive teaching.
3. Peer-reviewed activities: Different strategies can encourage students to share evaluations. For example, teachers can mentor students to emulate the teacher's role as facilitator. In this role, the student demonstrates an awareness of the evaluation criteria by interacting and prompting learning direction with other students (Worley 2018). Such acts of facilitation produce reflective partnerships and incorporate assessment strategies into classroom practice. Working collaboratively, students systematically evaluate their learning, for example, by encouraging each other to make their pre-suppositions explicit in order to show deep and systematic learning (Yancey 1998). Students led to think about their thinking in this way may

then demonstrate how the learning criteria guide their learning actively and coherently.

4. Connecting learning between course modules: Deep learning is systematic and starts from a meta-cognitive reflection on *how* to think within a subject. For example, there is a continuous need to make general pre-suppositions explicit when adopting an analytical framework, research methods, and techniques in sociology. Without clear connections between theoretical and empirical modules, learning becomes disjointed. Nurturing assessment literacy through reflection, however, builds awareness of how underlying criteria — the basis of assessment literacy — produces analytical interconnections within and between disciplines.

Based on the identification of subjective access points, the contextually sensitive approach to assessment maintains learning continuity and builds on the changing experiences of the learner. It emerges from interactive relationships that instil an ethic of discovery. The student is inculcated with habits that enable him or her to witness their learning (Yancey 1998). Feedback is focused on developing learner agency and the ability of students to demonstrate *how* they are learning and producing works. The interactive dynamic is oriented toward developing active learners that learn coherently and interactively:

As they learn, they witness their own learning: they show us how they learn. Reflection makes possible a new kind of learning as well as a new kind of teaching. The portraits of learning that emerge here point to a new kind of classroom: one that is coherently theorised, interactive, oriented to agency (Yancey 1998: 8).

Instead of grade bands, long-term cognitive, affective, and behavioural changes mark progress and are recorded in a cross-institutional database. The teacher employs this database to align assessment strategy and feedback to the learner's changing starting point.

The coherent planning of learning according to subjective developmental points ensures student agency is acknowledged. When the assessment is also oriented towards a student's agency, his or her long-term self-directed development becomes possible through a meta-cognitive realisation (self-awareness) of how he or she changes as a learner (the lived curriculum). This realisation entails being reflective

through retrospectively examining experiences and what was done in each assignment to fulfil the learning criteria (Tanner 2012).

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I built on the idea of a relational continuity between different organisational levels of sociability (the structural axis of AGIL). Mapping the educational context onto the referential axis of AGIL, I proposed the need to acknowledge continuity in the development of the self-reliant learner and *Relational Subject*. The planning and delivery of the curriculum were presented as a strategy to organise learning based on how the student experiences it. As a contextual resource, the curriculum is both a *primary and secondary relational good* as part of a networked. Bearing in mind the stratified reality of a networked reality, a three-fold distinction of the curriculum was posited — the lived, delivered, and experienced curriculum. The delivered curriculum acknowledges relationships of proximity and adapts in response to them; in its lived and experienced form (a *primary relational good*), the curriculum is guided by its delivered format.

For curriculum to document learning development in reference to the lived experiences of the student, the planning of teaching and learning needs adaptive mechanisms that reflexively respond to its internal dynamics (the ‘black box’ of sociability) to produce *ASV*. Within the ‘black box’, the lived curriculum — as a primary relation good — connects the interactive dynamics at stage T2–T3 with its morphogenetic outcomes. The result is a license from below to make use of de-centralised relations of proximity so as to guide the emergent features of the curriculum as a stabilising mechanism (delivered curriculum) within processes of sociability.

If the delivered curriculum guides and provides the learning outlines, assessment monitors and evaluates development. Two assessment dimensions need to be distinguished — the procedural dimension looks at *how* to assess outcomes, and the conceptual pertains to *what* to assess. First, the procedural dimension is an adaptive strategy designed to maximise learning development. The conceptual dimension, meanwhile, is tied to the student’s changing input points in each morphogenetic learning cycle. Strategies are designed using to monitor and document

learning. This documentation provides pathways within the 'black box' that enable the adaptation of practices to ensure they effectively scaffold the learner towards greater self-reliance.

In system-based modes of assessment, the curriculum is pre-given, and externally determined standards are imposed on students regardless of their input point. Such competitive assessment aims to exploit talent — based on distinguishing standardised performance levels and identifying 'excellence' — rather than to develop capabilities. This model, in seeking to credential learners for pre-given status-roles, sets students up to fail. When standards are incorporated into the personal development process, however, they do not artificially restrict the achievement of outcomes. On a system level, institutions can further the mission of talent development. They do this by coordinating their activities to produce ASV through pooling resources, research, and innovation that effectively bridge the divide between the learner's entry-point and exit point in each personal *morphogenetic cycle*.

An 'in-gear' view of the emergence of subjective access points means the path between entry-point and exit-point requires attention to the constraints in the natural, practical, and discursive orders. Personal maturity and growth must be directed considering prior 'codifications' of investigated objects. Hence, due to the interplay between learning standards, the directive liberating approach is a situated pedagogy that understands the authority and direction of criteria to be enacted within the dialogic inquiry. Adapting to the student's experiences — represented in his or her changing access points — entails a view of the curriculum as a script that varies based on collaborative dynamics that enable students to know in new ways.

Furthermore, an in-gear and relationship-based view of learning recognises personal reflexivity in its relationality to the natural, practice, and discursive realities that generate the object of critical investigation. As learning is to be evaluated in reference to the epistemic relations generated from these realities, the pre-existing criteria that emerge from these relations should be woven into teaching and learning. Integration of criterion-referenced assessment into the learner's development implicates an interaction with ipsative assessment and the documentation of personal growth in reference to the authority of received mediations. Consequently, the directive role in educational

partnerships monitors learning progress in a non-linear way (the ipsative dimension) to ascertain *which* outcomes are assessed (AGIL's referential axis).

The authority and directive role of criteria, enacted within formative assessment activities, enables self-discipline. In turn, self-discipline underpins the capability to self-monitor development and evaluate progress in a self-referenced way. Nurturing the inner craft of the subject within relationship-based cognitive apprenticeships leads to a coherent and structured learning environment that connects subject knowledge to the meta-cognitive skills needed to undertake projects and activities. When pedagogy is situated and responsive to learners' access points, education is a verb in which activated students orchestrate their own study. Self-awareness of assessment literacy promotes and is part of developing deep learning and self-reliance. Moreover, promoting deep learning and greater autonomy harmonises the learner's position with the curriculum's aims and objectives, setting the direction of learning partnerships. The reflexive skills needed for referential detachment — the starting point of critical investigation — are milestones integral to the aims and objectives of the learning process.

Connecting the curriculum to evaluation requires forms of assessment activity that allow for the demonstration of deep learning. This chapter proposed different activities that align criteria-referenced and ipsative-referenced forms of assessment. In the context of structured and deep learning, a focus on assessment literacy is presented to align both assessment forms. Activities such as keeping reflective journals, peer-reviewed undertakings, and connecting learning between course modules are attempts to sustain joined-up and integrated learning. Thus, changes in *cognitive outcomes* — subject knowledge and its criteria — generate *affective outcomes* (self-reliance and self-discipline). When standards are self-referenced, the student, in active partnership, demonstrates agency in how they are learning (the referential axis of AGIL).

