

Third mission of higher education as an approach to promote resilience in precarious times? A conceptual framework for analysing curricula

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Third mission of higher education

- ✧ Higher education (HE) institutions have historically engaged to perform
 - a first mission, *the transmission of knowledge*, through teaching, and
 - a second mission, *research alongside teaching*;
 - In addition to these, a **third mission**, *a societal interaction and social impact*, has been increasingly emphasised nowadays as a means **to contribute to societal development** (e.g., Pinheiro, Langa, & Pausits, 2015).
- ✧ The third mission has been articulated (in HE policies) with wide-ranging concepts such as entrepreneurial university (EC & OECD, 2012) and co-creative university (e.g., Mamica, 2021).
- ✧ To sum, the third mission of HE is a multidisciplinary, complex and evolving phenomenon contextualised frequently through national and regional policies, and through commercial aspects (see a review by Compagnucci & Spigarelli, 2020; Schnurbus & Edvardsson, 2020).

Curriculum in higher education

- ✧ Curriculum is *an intentional and dynamic process* that explicate and put into practice the intentions, values, and principles in relation to learning, knowledge, individuals' competencies, and society with cultural and political purposes of education (Annala & Mäkinen, 2011; Barnett & Coate, 2005; Bender, 2008).
- ✧ HE curricula are expected to include today more and more interaction and collaboration with different stakeholders and society, for example, to develop students' competences and generic skills in work and life (see e.g., Jääskelä, Nykänen, & Tynjälä, 2018).
- ✧ Pedagogical research is active at HE level, however, there is scarce research on curricula, especially from the perspective of societal impact (cf., Tight, 2019).

Method

- ✧ We aim to construct a conceptual framework for research on curricula from the third mission perspective
 - ⇒ by reviewing the studies (n = 150) on the topic published since year 2010 in curriculum and higher education journals (25)
 - ⇒ the repeated research topics, issues, and concepts were identified
 - ⇒ a three-level conceptual framework of third mission in HE curriculum was composed

Third mission in HE curricula: Value level



What kind of societal change / development HE promotes?

Some questions for curriculum work in terms of well-being:

- *How do a degree program promote the well-being of individuals / community / nation / worldwide (e.g. key contents)?*
- *What kind of educational practices (pedagogy, guiding and counselling, services, modes of actions) support the well-being of students / learning communities?*
- *What kind of novel connections related to well-being a curriculum can offer?*

Third mission in HE curricula: *World of work and societal service level*



What kind of relationship between education and working life / society is purposeful and influential?

Some questions for curriculum work in terms of stakeholders:

- *Who are the main stakeholders that should be attend the curriculum work?*
- *What kind of skills students need to successfully collaborate with stakeholders?*
- *In what ways this collaboration will be implemented?*

Third mission in HE curricula: Individual level



How does the demand of societal impact (in education) challenge expertise and professionalism?

Some questions for curriculum work in terms of generic skills:

- *Which generic skills are emphasised in a specific domain in question?*
- *How the aim 'to promote students' generic skills' has been integrated with the contents of curriculum?*
- *What would be the best practices and pedagogical means to promote students' generic skills?*

Conclusion and discussion

- ✧ The proposed three-level framework of third mission in HE curriculum
 - re-structures the concept of societal impact that appears as fragmented in the curricula literature
 - emphasises intertwined aspects related to third mission, each of which, would need, however, attention in the curriculum work in HE institutions
 - serves as a tool in evaluation and development of the curricula of degree programs.
- ✧ For example, HE curricula can be realised as *connected curricula* (see Fung, 2017) through which new forms of research-based education and multiple connections between faculty, students, and society can be actualised and developed.
- ✧ To our mind, these dynamic and evolving activities and practices will promote the resilience of educational system to respond challenges and unexpected crises (such as COVID-19 pandemic) in precarious times.

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Kiitos!

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