‘THE SOUL OF A NATION’ – ‘ABDALLAH NADIM AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN EGYPT (1845 – 1896)

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Abstract – The historiography of educational reform in 19th century Egypt is driven largely by modernization approaches in which reformers are cast as ‘liberals’ and ‘westernizers;’ figures outside these paradigms tend to be overlooked. ‘Abdallah Nadim (1845-1896), a nineteenth century social reformer, experimented throughout his life with ‘educating the nation.’ He founded the first Islamic Benevolent Society school in Egypt and authored some of the most widely circulated articles on education and society of his day. In this paper we will review Nadim’s life history, examine the educational terrain of 1890’s Egypt with particular emphasis on girls’ education, and discuss a specific set of articles authored by Nadim on Muslim youth and European education. With his combination of anticolonial, proto-nationalist, conservative Islamic, yet ‘modern’ approach to educational reform, Nadim represents a populist – if neglected figure in Egypt’s educational history.

Introduction

‘Teachers…are the souls of nations’ (al-mualimeen…arwah al-ummum)¹
‘Abdallah Nadim ([6 December 1892] 1994b, 1:368)

‘Abdallah Nadim (1845-1896), a nineteenth century poet, journalist, revolutionary orator, school director, playwright, and perennial teacher, experimented throughout his life with ways of ‘educating the nation.’ He founded the first Islamic Benevolent Society school in Egypt and authored some of the most widely circulated articles on education and society of his day. Yet Nadim has been largely neglected in the orthodox – or modernization narrative of educational change in Egypt since he does not fit the teleological mold of ‘reformer’ as ‘liberal modernizer’ and ‘westernizer.’²

Unlike some of his more cosmopolitan contemporaries, Nadim was not conversant in a foreign language, never traveled to a non-Muslim country, and exhibited less than progressive attitudes towards girls’ education. Furthermore, he wrote caustic articles in the popular press against the khawaja (western foreigner) whom he accused of economically exploiting and morally corrupting Egyptians, Arabs, and Muslims.³ His unrestrained condemnation of the British occupation
landed him in permanent exile from his beloved Egypt in 1893. With his combination of anti-colonial, and, as we will discuss below, radical nationalist, conservative Islamic, yet contemporary approach to educational reform, Nadim hardly fits the modernist mold of reformer. Yet he merits serious scholarly attention for he was a tireless advocate of the spread of ‘new’ or ‘modern’ education among all segments of the population and at the forefront of the most popular political and social movements of his time. In other words, Nadim represents a certain pulse, what in Arabic would be called *ruh* or ‘soul’ of the nation.  

In order to locate the major influences on Nadim’s educational thought and action we will review his life history before succinctly examining Egypt’s educational terrain in the 1890’s. Finally, we will turn to a specific set of articles authored by Nadim in 1892 dealing with Muslim youth and European education and discuss how they were used to instruct Muslim girls and boys on their separate roles in forging a society characterized by a strong cultural identity, social harmony and national unity.

The education of a 19th century public intellectual

Throughout his adult life Nadim dedicated himself to public causes and straddled different social milieus. Due to his ability to utilize a variety of media to communicate with diverse audiences that spanned socio-economic, gender and age groups Nadim, who is often portrayed as an Islamic reformer (*salafiyya*), is probably better characterized as a ‘public intellectual.’ As we will discuss below, while many elements of his thinking were indeed influenced by Islam, he also incorporated artistic and intellectual tenets that arrived in Egypt via the Mediterranean by a group of Syrian Christians into his platform of social and political action.

Born the son of a peasant baker in Alexandria in 1845, ‘Abdallah Nadim was groomed from an early age to one day join the ranks of the Muslim scholarly class, the *Ulama*. He received a fairly conventional formal education for someone of his sex and social background; his father, a native of Sharqiya, served as his first Quran teacher before sending him to the local Kuttab where he learned rudimentary reading, writing and Quranic recitation. In 1855, at ten years of age, Nadim transferred to a *madrasa*, a religious high-school at Anwar mosque in Alexandria where he spent five years studying *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), grammar, logic and philology. By 1861 at the age of sixteen, Nadim abandoned formal studies because he found them socially irrelevant and monotonous (Delanoue 1961, 77). He pursued literary endeavors instead, and at the suggestion
of his teacher Sheikh Muhammad al-Ashri, got involved in poetry competitions at local literary salons (Osman 1979, 2).

In need of a profession and income, Nadim took up work in the government-run European telegraph service as a telegraph operator. When he was transferred from his original post in Benha to Cairo at the residence of Khedive Ismail’s mother, new educational opportunities opened up to him. He took advantage of being based in Cairo to attend classes at the venerable al-Azhar university but abandoned them before receiving any certificates (ijaza, pl. ijazat). He criticized the university for being archaic, corrupt, unclean, and in dire need of reform. What troubled him more than the stagnant mnemonic pedagogical methods, the outdated curriculum and the appalling health and sanitation conditions, was the political apathy of both students and teachers. Nadim reproached the Azharites for their lack of social and political involvement since, as the future judges and teachers, it was especially incumbent on them to strive for a high degree of social awareness. Nadim lamented that they lived ‘in holes underground inhabited only by others like them in their horrible isolation.’ He observed that

‘every person working for al-Azhar neglects the world and what’s in it. They do not read political or scientific newspapers and do not know anything about the kingdoms of the world. They do not read world geography and have no idea about what is taking place between kingdoms and sects, nor about wars and the [political] situations of nations. They do not master any profession – neither agriculture nor the basics of trade. They do not try to understand inventions they hear about nor do they seek ideas to engage with.’

(Nadim [14 February 1893] 1994b, 2:608)

Like his contemporary Muhammad ‘Abduh, Nadim called for the comprehensive reform of al-Azhar. In numerous articles, he proposed that al-Azhar, in keeping with its medieval past as a forerunner of scholarship and learning, (re)incorporate scientific subjects into its curriculum such as math and calculus and add subjects such as mechanics, engineering, civil law, history, ethics and personal hygiene to allow the university to ‘correspond to the development of civilization and have a link to generations of the future rather than [just] the present or past’ (Nadim in al-Jamie’e 1980, 389). He also proposed higher teacher salaries and more stringent health and sanitation standards. Many of these reforms were eventually implemented with Law 8 for al-Azhar of 1896 after Muhammad ‘Abduh became Grand Mufti of Egypt and rector of al-Azhar.

In contrast to the apathy of al-Azhar, the politically engaged study circles of the famed Sayyid Jamal al-Din Afghani (who lived in Egypt from 1871 to 1879)
held far greater appeal to Nadim. Afghani, who propagated novel scientific, religious and oppositional political ideas – at the core of which were resistance to British imperialism – exerted a tremendous influence over Nadim and a group of like-minded young intellectuals and artists (Keddie 1972 and 1983, 19). Afghani called upon his students to launch newspapers and expand schooling for boys and girls since, he argued, education would ultimately prove the most effective means of combating colonialism (Cole 1993, 149). Afghani also introduced Nadim to the freemasonry movement in Egypt where he would mix with a cross-section of the elite. As Juan Cole points out, Masonic lodges in Egypt ‘provided a venue for the interfacing of Syrian Christian immigrants, Muslim Egyptian notables, and Ottoman-Egyptian notables’ (1993, 53). The young Muslim Masons were from among the most privileged segments of society: they were typically ‘liberals and radicals... [who] sprang from an indigenous rural notable background’ (Cole 1993, 148). Unlike his fellow Masons, Nadim’s social origins were far more humble. Furthermore, while Nadim’s ideas about economic and political independence could be characterized as ‘radical’ or at least radically nationalist, he could hardly be characterized as ‘liberal’ especially when it came to women’s issues (see below).

As for Nadim’s professional life, it was colored by a high degree of instability, partly as a result of his legendary temper. After a quarrel with his supervisor at the telegraph company he was forced to leave Cairo in search of other employment. He secured a position in the rural Delta as teacher of a village head’s (umda) children, but his volatile temper got the best of him and he found himself again without work. He worked alternatively in agriculture and then commerce at a haberdashery which doubled as a literary salon for local poets. Although successful as a literary center it proved unprofitable, and Nadim’s next search for employment led him further in the literary direction as a poetic entertainer.

The government inspector of Lower Egypt, Shahin Pasha King, having heard of Nadim’s linguistic bravado, employed him in 1875 to work in his Tanta home as a colloquial poetic entertainer, or udabatiyya, (pl. udabati). His main duty was to provide verbal entertainment at the Pasha’s parties and compete with other udabati (Taymur 1940, 6). Unlike the more revered and serious man of letters, the adib, the udabati implies an almost clown-like master of wit and verbal virtuosity akin to the ‘fool’ of the renaissance period. They often dressed in comical clothes and exaggerated their gestures for maximum entertainment and comic effect. However, with the popularity of more politically minded udabati such as Nadim, Ya’qub Sanu‘ and Bayram al Tuni, the popular art form was raised to a higher level and became a form of legitimate social criticism (Osman 1979, 5). Performing as an udabati allowed Nadim to hone certain oral proficiencies such as quickness of wit and the ability to deliver spontaneous crowd stirring
monologues, skills he would utilize in later roles as revolutionary orator, political journalist, and teacher.

Following his stint in the Delta Nadim returned to Alexandria on Afghani’s urgings to collaborate with Adib Ishaq and Salim al-Naqqash on their papers, *Misr* and *al-Tijara*. Prior to their careers in journalism, the two Syrians were involved in the first Syrian theatre troupe to perform in Egypt. They even dared to use female actresses in their plays, a complete anomaly for Egypt at the time. Through his contacts with them, Nadim developed a keen interest in both journalism and theatre which he would put to use in his next national endeavor (Sadgrove 1996, 131 & 145).

In 1879, in a move that would leave a lasting legacy on Egyptian educational and associational life, Nadim founded the first Islamic Benevolent Society in Alexandria (IBSA) for the primary, albeit not sole purpose, of opening the Islamic Benevolent Society School of Alexandria (*Madrasat al-Jamaiyya al-Khayriyya al-Islamiyya bi al-Iskandariyya*). The school’s program of studies was loosely modeled on the government school curriculum with the exception that more time was devoted to the Arabic language, Arab and Egyptian history, and Islamic studies (Al-Hadidi 1962, 87). Almost certainly modeled after the Islamic Benevolent Society of Beirut (*Jam‘iyat al-Maqasid al-Khayriyah*) (Ciota 1982, 45), IBSA’s activities also included a hospital, student hostel, library and fund that provided stipends for widows, and scholarships for orphans and the poor to attend the society’s other schools for boys and girls (*al-Asr al-Jadid* in al-Jam‘e’e, 479-484).

Under the guidance of Nadim who taught composition, literature, oratory and drama, the Alexandria school emerged as an engaged arena in the public domain. On July 22, 1879, just three months after the school’s opening, Nadim initiated a public weekly oratory seminar. Nadim and his students performed speeches on a range of religious, cultural and political issues, the contents of which were often published on the front pages of newspapers *Misr*, *al-Tijara*, and *al-Asr al-Jadid* (Tawfiq 1954, 49). Among the specific topics discussed were the glorious past of the East, the reasons why western societies began developing faster than eastern societies when human nature is the same (because governments of the West are more liberal whereas in the East they are despotic), and the social advantages of spreading benevolent societies in Egypt (Delanoue 1961, 84). The seminar soon evolved into a Friday party in which famed orators delivered speeches and participated in lively debates that were attended by a cross section of the Egyptian public from orphaned students to the Khedive and his Son Abbas (Amer 1996, 423).

The school’s theater troupe also gained renown for its performances at Alexandria’s Zizinia theater. Among the troupe’s plays were two which were authored and acted in by Nadim, *The Nation and Good Fortune* (*al-watan wa tala’*
tawfiq) and The Arabs (al-Arab). The Nation and Good Fortune, which deals with the evils of corruption and injustice and calls for social reform and solidarity among Egyptians, has been cited as one of Egypt’s first nationalist plays (Sadgrove 1996, 145-154).

During his tenure at the Alexandria School (1879-1881) and far beyond it, Nadim campaigned for the spread of private, philanthropic initiatives in schooling. He especially appealed to wealthy notables to support such endeavors and chastised those who didn’t donate to projects that would serve the country. In an article from 1881 he writes:

‘Why don’t we cooperate in building schools in a country that has been dominated by ignorance? Why don’t we open schools when we know they are the basis on which we build [our society] and they are the most important means by which our children acquire knowledge and proper upbringing?’ (Nadim [11 September 1881] 1994, 208).

A number of Islamic and Christian Benevolent Societies were subsequently founded in different parts of the country for the purpose of establishing primary schools.¹¹

His directorship of the Alexandria school was short-lived due to political intrigues with members of the highest echelons of government. After being expelled from IBSA, Nadim transferred his energies into editing his periodical al-Tankit wa al -Tabkit (Raillery and Reproach) (1881) which represented a new, populist genre of political satire that only one other writer of the time, Ya‘qub Sanu‘ engaged in.¹² Many of its articles are written in colloquial Arabic in the form of a dialogue between two people representing ‘symbols of the average Egyptian’ (Marsot 1971, 9).

At the urgings of General Ahmad ‘Urabi, the leader of a proto-nationalist social revolution in Egypt, Nadim abandoned al-Tankit in 1881 to start al-Ta‘if (The Wanderer) a fervently Islamic revolutionary tract which portrayed the British in religious terms as ‘infidels.’ The language and revolutionary fervor reflected in al-Ta‘if was evidently so vitriolic that Mohamed ‘Abduh who was responsible for press censorship at that time, ceased its publication after only one month (Rida in Osman 1979, 48). Nadim also served as the most galvanizing revolutionary orator, sometimes appearing by ‘Urabi’s side, other times venturing out on his own where he would deliver stirring speeches to rapt audiences in villages, city streets, army barracks, mosques and even wedding parties (Osman 1979, 43-53). Despite the momentum being gained by the Urabists, the revolution was ultimately crushed and led to what would be forty years of British Occupation (1882-1922) and a temporary lull in the press.¹³
Along with other leaders of the ‘Urabi revolution Nadim was arrested, but in absentia. Rather than turn himself into the authorities he opted for the life of a fugitive and wandered the countryside in disguise for nine years. The events of the previous years took a physical toll on Nadim. Commenting on his appearance, he observed that he had aged prematurely – or been ‘crowned with the whiteness of old-age instead of the color of youth. Looking at me you would say I am 70 years old, but I’m 39’ (Nadim in Galal 1997, 142).

On finally being captured in 1891 by a government spy, Nadim was exiled to Jaffa, Palestine. The following year the new Khedive ‘Abbas Hilmi II (1892-1914), who had previously worked with Nadim as the General Chairman of the Islamic Benevolent Society in Alexandria, pardoned him on the condition that he not partake in any political activities. Nadim promptly returned to Egypt and with the help of his brother Abdel Fatah who applied for and received a publication license, started the weekly periodical *al-Ustaz* (The Professor) in August 1892. Through *al-Ustaz*, as we will review below, Nadim was able to return to the three public roles at which he excelled: writer, teacher and political orator.

Despite his vow to the Khedive, Nadim was unable to abstain from politics, especially when it came to the British occupation. Among the articles in *al-Ustaz* were ‘bitingly satirical articles against the British occupation.’ British Consul General Lord Cromer, whose policy in principle was to maintain a non-interventionist stance towards the Egyptian press, eventually demanded Nadim’s exile (Goldschmidt 1968, 311). Nadim was sent again to Jaffa and following an unsuccessful attempt to illegally re-enter Egypt through Alexandria, eventually settled in Istanbul. At Afghani’s recommendation Sultan Abdülhamid II offered Nadim a position at the Sublime Porte in the Press Bureau as the General Inspector of Publications, but it was short-lived (Keddie 1972, 379). He quickly fell out of favor with the court because of differences with Abu’l Huda al-Sayyadi, the Sultan’s Chief Counselor against whom he composed a satirical attack in verse replete with vicious caricature illustrations entitled *Al-Masamir* (*The Nails*).14 Nadim was discharged from his position and except for the camaraderie and financial support of his friend Afghani, found himself alone in Istanbul with no real source of income. In 1896, at fifty-four years of age, Nadim died of complications from tuberculosis. He was buried at the cemetery of the Sublime Porte and at his grave Jamal al-Din Afghani eulogized him with the following words:

‘There are people whose memories end with the end of their lives, but this man, on whose grave we now stand, was the wonder of his time. God bless his soul. He was a very Egyptian person. He was a man of principle who gave his soul to his nation (*umatihi*) and he died as a martyr for its sake.’ (Jamal al-Din Afghani in al-Juindi 1997, 189-190)
Muslim youth and European education

Two major currents run through Nadim’s platform of political and social action: the necessity to spread education throughout the Muslim population; and the need to rid the country of foreign domination. Cutting across these two concerns is the issue of Muslim/Egyptian youth and European education. The whole question of what constituted education for the changing times, who should be privy to it, fund, and regulate it, and what its content, method and objectives should be, was hotly debated. Ottoman officials, members of local government, social reformers, Christian missionaries, Muslim clerics, and, from 1882, the British mandate government harbored contesting visions about the sociopolitical and cultural objectives of schooling. While the British mandate government wanted to limit local educational development as a form of political control, Christian missionary groups endeavored to spread schooling as part of their mission civilatrice. Indigenous reformers, on the other hand, aspired for Egyptian officials and local notables to exert greater efforts in funding and spreading civil (as opposed to traditional religious) primary schooling as a means of controlling the intellectual development and political socialization of the youth.

To be sure, foreign schools far outnumbered Egyptian government primary civil schools. According to the 1893 statistics from the Ministry of Public Instruction, there were nine Egyptian government primary schools for boys with a total of 2461 students compared to 108 primary schools run by Christian missions with some 7133 students. Muslims students were increasingly being integrated into foreign and Christian missionary schools. The situation for girls was even more dramatic. In 1890 only a single Egyptian government primary school for girls, as-Sayufiyya, existed alongside a total of 95 denominational – mainly Christian – primary schools for girls. Enrollments at as-Sayufiyya were never very high and in the first year reached 298, a large proportion of whom were white slave girls belonging to families in government. That number decreased to 206 by 1880 (Ali 1995, 84-85). The curriculum consisted of Quran, Turkish, drawing, needlework, piano and laundry (Heyworth-Dunne [1939] 1967, 375). A Swiss education advisor in Egypt at that time, Dor Bey, argued that enrollment levels might rise if government schools for girls were limited to elementary education and concentrated on subjects that were suitable for housewives (Ali 1995, 85); for the most part his views circa 1890 were echoed in the Arab press.

The table below on Primary School Students in Egypt by religion and sex between 1893-94 lists the total number of students in government, foreign, and modernized kuttab (pl. katatib) schools. As the table indicates, Muslim boys received the highest proportion of primary schooling overall. Most striking about these figures is the extent to which Muslim girls lagged behind other groups in society in terms of the degree to which they received a formal education. Note that
among the total Christian student population 28% were girls, whereas Jewish girls represented an even higher 42% of the overall Jewish student population. Muslim girls, in contrast, constituted only 2% of Muslim students and a mere 1% of the overall student population in Egypt.

TABLE 1: Total primary school students in Egypt by religion and sex: 1893-94

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of Group</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Muslim</strong></td>
<td>160,690</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>157,843</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>2847</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christian</strong></td>
<td>32,532</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>23,370</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>9162</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jew</strong></td>
<td>3368</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>1426</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>196,590</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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It is within a context of extremely low participation of Muslim girls in formal schooling, a government policy which neglected girls’ schooling, the dominance of Christian missionary schools, in addition to a British mandate policy that deliberately impeded national educational development, that Nadim wrote about Muslim youth and European education in a series of articles in his enormously popular weekly *al-Ustaz* (*The Professor*).

‘Educating the nation’ by reaching the masses

*Al-Ustaz* (1892-3) was marketed as a *Journal of Science, Instruction and Entertainment* (*‘ilmiyya, tahdhibiyya, fakahiyya*) (Hartmann 1899, 63). Like its forerunner *al-Tankit wa al-Tabkit*, its circulation surpassed all other daily and weekly publications of the time.22 The titles *al-Ustaz* and a series of articles therein entitled *Madrasat al-Banat* (Girls’ School) and *Madrasat al-Banin* (Boys’ School), were deliberately chosen by Nadim the teacher, who recognized the
educational, didactic, and political potential of print-media to influence public opinion. Furthermore, he acknowledged the importance of directly reaching Muslim youth and incorporating them into the nation’s cultural, social and political projects. 

In order to communicate with as wide and diverse an audience as possible, Nadim continued to champion language reform in journalism. As in the past, he wrote in three radically different literary styles that reflected the different educational, professional and social backgrounds of his readers: high, literary Arabic for the educated elite; simple standard Arabic for semi-educated readers; and colloquial Arabic for his unlettered audience (al-Jamie’e 1984, 380). A writer from the period recounts how newspapers were reaching larger audiences of men who would ‘gather in the streets in a circle while a half educated man or a schoolboy standing in the center would read to them’ (Sharubim 1898, 25 in Osman 1979, 14). Girls and women, however, remained largely outside the ‘reading’ public.

By using the pure Egyptian vernacular for the articles of the Girls’ School, Nadim demonstrates his inclusive notion of ‘public.’ Rarely did literate intellectuals engage in direct communication with illiterate or barely literate rural and urban girls and their mothers. Other male writers concerned with girls’ education from that period, such as Qasim Amin (1865-1908) for example, addressed a primarily educated male audience (Amin [1899]1992). Even the women’s press in Egypt which was launched in November 1892 with the publication of al-Fatah (The Young Woman) (three months after the release of the first issue of al-Ustaz) was by and large directed to literate, middle-class urban women (Baron, 1994). Muslim girls constituted an almost invisible social category and were not only ignored by public intellectuals, but direly underrepresented in schools.

The collection of articles below which were written in 1892 can be conceptualized as virtual schools for Egyptian Muslim youth. The articles deal with urgent social issues such as the increasing encroachment of European culture and threats to national culture and identity, changing gender roles, the efficacy of new schooling, the importance of preserving an Islamic identity, and the place of non-Muslims in Egypt’s future. There are also a number of articles in this series dealing with the science of hygiene and modern housewifery, however due to a lack of space will unfortunately not be treated here.

The lessons of the Girls’ School are written entirely in colloquial Egyptian Arabic, whereas the articles of the Boys’ School, presumably because they are directed to educated boys, are written in the second level, a simple, standard Arabic with occasional colloquial phrases. All the articles of the Girls’ School and Boys’ School are set up as conversations between two and sometimes three people.
with one person clearly serving as the teacher and the other(s) the student(s). The use of dialogues as a mode of instruction was a common style in the *adab* or Islamic behavior manuals which Nadim was undoubtedly familiar with (Metcalf 1984, 4-11). Due to their rich detail, translations of a selection of the dialogues are provided below. Nadim, a skilled communicator, at times eloquent, often witty, sarcastic, bombastic, paternalistic, and earnest, merits being read in his own words. To read Nadim allows us to discern how he grappled with pressing issues of his day and to experience his rhetorical techniques for swaying public opinion.

The opening article of the *Girls School* (Nadim [1 November 1892] 1994b, 1: 246-251) consists of a conversation between Nafisa, a naïve school girl, and Zakia (which literally means clever or smart), an urban Muslim woman who represents an indigenous voice of reason and moderation. Zakia asks Nafisa about what she learns in school and comments extensively on the edification of each subject to Nafisa’s overall moral education. They begin with a discussion of language and it soon becomes clear that while Zakia is in favor of female literacy and the study of the Arabic language, she considers it unnecessary and morally and politically ill-advised for Muslim girls to learn European languages.

**Zakia:** What did you learn at school today?

**Nafisa:** I learned [Arabic] reading and writing, French, sewing and piano. I also learned English and foreign dancing.

**Zakia:** As for [Arabic] writing and reading, these are certainly useful subjects; you can sit and read from the holy book of the Quran or learn about your religion from other books. But English and French, why do you learn those languages? Are you planning to marry a French or English man?

**Nafisa:** No, that’s not it. All the children of important people (*an-nas al-kubar*) learn French or English because girls marry boys who know these languages and after marriage they can converse together in these foreign languages.

**Zakia:** But aren’t you either going to marry the son of an Arab or the son of a Turk?

**Nafisa:** Yes.

**Zakia:** OK then, why don’t you learn Arabic or Turkish, the languages we speak with the families of our country? As for the man who foregoes his own language to speak with his wife in French or
English while he’s the son of an Arab or Turk, he has little taste. Why would one of our men speak with us, girls of the East, in the languages of the French or English?

Nefisa: That’s the way it is now. You don’t know what’s happening in the world. Some of the girls in the Sham (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine) go to foreign language schools and their husbands go to them too.

Zakia: Those are the girls who dress like foreigners and walk on the streets with clothes meant for the house, just like the foreign women. We shouldn’t go out without covering ourselves, and we shouldn’t go to gatherings at the theater or to parties where there would be men whom we don’t know. Why should we and our beloved sisters in the Sham learn these foreign languages?

Nefisa: The new civilization, modern life (Dimin it-tamadun al-jadid), calls for girls to learn foreign languages.

Zakia: I can see why men would have to learn foreign languages, they have reasons. They need to know what the foreigners are saying, read their books. But why us? Are we girls going to open a shop or meet with foreign consuls? Will we give speeches in the parliament or write in the newspapers? That’s nonsense. Instead of teaching girls foreign languages, your school should be teaching you your own language, the ways of your religion, and how to bring up children and take care of the house, not this nonsense about things that aren’t useful.

Let’s say a woman knew French and her husband didn’t. She would leave him in search of someone who knew French so that she could speak use her French and retain what she learned. I swear, people these days don’t know what’s come over them. They imitate anything they see the foreigner doing without thinking. They want to become foreigners too and completely forget themselves. It’s sad.

Nafisa: Let’s take the wives of the kings. They know many languages. Would you say this is unnecessary?

Zakia: They’re allowed to [learn foreign languages] because the wives of the foreign consuls visit them. They spend holidays and a
lot of time with them. They should learn foreign languages to be able to speak directly with the wives without translators. They’re in a situation which compels them to learn these things. As for us, it’s just not necessary. Forget it.

Girls’ education, as this discussion about foreign languages suggests, should strive to reform the domestic and private sphere and provide future women with tools to be better wives, mothers and Muslims. Foreign languages might not only distract women from their primary domestic responsibilities, but acclimatize them to the habits and tastes of Europeans and potentially lead them to paths of immorality. Note how adultery looms over the woman who speaks English or French. Whereas the knowledge of foreign languages enables men to effectively carry out their public responsibilities, women’s knowledge of foreign languages constitutes a form of cultural pollution and potential licentiousness. The ‘immoral’ theme continues with even more urgency in the following passages dealing foreign music and dance.

Zakia: And tell me, why are you learning dancing? Are you going to dance at a wedding or are you going to a ball where a young man pulls your waist against his thighs and spins you among the other young men who dance with foreign women? It’s shameless behavior.

Nafisa: You’re probably going to mock me for learning the piano too.

Zakia: The piano? What’s that all about?

Nafisa: The piano is a musical instrument which a woman faces and taps at with her fingers.

Zakia: I’ve heard old people say that if the mare softens the sound of her voice it arouses passion in the stallion. This means that [music] moves passion and if a woman falls in love she’s never going to fall in love with her husband because he’s in front of her every hour. He is in the hand, and the one in the hand is outside the heart. She’s going to fall in love with another man, God forbid! This is going to be scandalous!

The arts of dance and music are ascribed with qualities of passion, shame and scandal. They incite both inter-sex – and inter-national – mingling in a society
where seclusion and veiling of Muslim women was the overwhelmingly norm. Girls are encouraged instead to pursue the less passionate, and more solitary arts of sewing and needlework.

Nafisa: And now you’re going to make fun of me for learning sewing and needlework and say, ‘Why should one spend time hand sewing a head cover when she can buy it already made for two cents?’

Zakia: On the contrary, I think sewing is a necessity for women. The woman can sew her own as well as her husband’s and children’s clothes and decorate them with embroidery. She can make a skull cap for her husband, nice pillow cases, a prayer rug, a money bag, curtains, fringe for the bed, a belt, a nice night shirt, handkerchiefs, a pretty bedspread, a cover for the coffee pot. If a woman learns these things she’ll spend all her time in her house occupying herself, even if she has servants. If she’s lonely she can do her housework and when she finishes, instead of wasting her time sitting at the window and looking at all the good and bad things going on [in the streets], she can do what the children of good, decent families do.

Many girls buy their own jewelry from the money they earn from needlework. It can bring a lot of income. There are a lot of women who help their husbands out through needlework and handicrafts. Their husbands are always the finest and best dressed among the men, always well taken care of. I advise you to do well in sewing and open your eyes to learn what best benefits you. Try to learn needlework.

Needlework and handicrafts fosters exemplary qualities for the ideal type Egyptian Muslim woman: passive, private, industrious, thrifty, family-oriented, clean, and devout. Finally, Zakia raises the issue of religious instruction at school, and by so doing emphasizes that the source of a Muslim woman’s morality and behavior should not be derived from the culturally alien and unvirtuous Europeans arts, but from Islam.

Zakia: Do you have a faqih (Quran teacher) in your school to teach you about your religion?

Nafisa: We have Shaykh Ibrahim.
Zakia: Have him teach you about your religion, about how to pray, fast, clean yourself when you have your period, how to wash before praying, how God gave man certain rights over women. Let him teach you what is forbidden and accepted in your religion. If a woman doesn’t learn her religion she will not have a conscience and she will not have a mind to prevent her from bad things.

Nafisa, persuaded by Zakia’s judiciousness, concludes by telling her friend that she is going to inform her father that she will only study reading, sewing, and needlework and will no longer learn French, piano, and foreign dance. We see here how Nadim uses a strategy of influencing the parent through the daughter, rather than the other way around.

These lessons do not deviate from the prevailing attitude of the period regarding how Muslim girls required only a limited education to allow them to fulfill roles of respectable housewives, mothers, wives and Muslims. As numerous scholars who deal with issues of gender, nation, and anticolonial struggles have noted, nationalist leaders often assigned women the responsibility of preserving their native language and cultural identity by relegating them to the private sphere (Ahmed, 1992; Badran, 1995; Chatterjee, 1993). Where Nadim breaks new ground is in his technique of communicating directly with girls in the vernacular, encouraging them to make active choices about the content of their education, and recognizing their agency – or ability – to influence their fathers’ decisions regarding their schooling.

Whereas the lessons of the Girls’ School stress individual morality and the responsibility of girls to preserve their cultural and religious integrity while pursuing a formal education, boys are given the responsibility of building the nation. In particular, the articles of the Boys’ School address the phenomenon of Christian missionary schools, the threat they pose to Egyptian unity, and the role of Muslim boys in ensuring national social harmony (Nadim [6 December 1892]1994b, 1: 364-369; Nadim [13 December 1892] 1994, 1:391-395).

In the following passages Hafez, a practicing Muslim and politically informed young man (a.k.a. Nadim), cautions Kamal, a Muslim boy who attends a foreign Christian school, of the harmful consequences that could befall him and all of society if he continues to attend a foreign school. Hafez conjectures that foreign schools aspire to convert students to the Christian sects of the Europeans and eventually split the country in a classic colonial strategy of ‘divide and rule’. Boys, he cautions, should conserve their cultural and religious heritage and maintain a sense of both Muslim identity and Egyptian unity.
Hafez: What school do you go to?

Kamal: A foreign school. They teach Muslims, Christians and Jews the Christian faith. They make us pray like them before lessons.

Hafez: Why don’t you tell your father about this?

Kamal: I told him and he asked me what I say in this prayer and I told him I’m talking about our father in heaven. But he didn’t do anything. A lot of classmates are Muslim and all their parents are unaware of this religion issue. Many Muslims are brought up in these schools and do not perform any of the Islamic rites. They don’t pray, fast, or wash correctly. They do not even distinguish between Halal (acceptable things and behavior in Islam) and Haram (those things which Islam forbids).

Hafez: Oh God forbid! People only see these foreign schools as nice buildings and furniture, expensive equipment, low tuition fees and free food and drink for their children. I wonder if [Egyptians] know the reasons behind these schools. They have nothing in common with our language or religious faith. These [European] countries have many people in need schooling, [worse off] even then us. Don’t [Egyptians] see through this trick to convert our students from our faith to theirs? Your father’s and other parents’ lack of awareness is so strange. I think the main reason your parents send you to this school is to learn foreign languages. Why don’t our rich people open schools that teach the Arabic language and Islam in addition to foreign languages? This would prevent [Egyptian] students from converting.

Hafez provides Kamel with instructions on how to perform wudu’, the ritual cleansing before Islamic prayers to fill in an important religious gap in his friend’s education. He then suggests that perhaps one advantage of foreign schools is that they provide Egyptian Christians with religious instruction. To his chagrin, however, he finds out that the Christian students are at the same disadvantage as the Muslims, for they are being educated in the beliefs and practices of a denomination different from their own:

Hafez: You told me you learned a Christian prayer at your school. I’ll bet your [Christian] friend, Shenouda, is happy with this religious education because at last he found someone to teach him his religion.
Kamal: Shenouda is Orthodox, but the teachers have taken him to the Protestant faith. Nakhla was Protestant but was taken by the Jesuits.

Hafez calls for religious tolerance and cautions all Egyptians from succumbing to the ‘divide and rule’ strategy of their European educators/dominators.

Hafez: Every nation is so zealous for its faith and every sect is zealous for itself. You have to maintain your faith and inform your father about what’s going on at school and how they teach you another faith. You also have to tell Shenouda to tell his father. Muslims [who attend these schools] will become Christian from a very young age and re-educating them in old age will never work. Fathers should know what is happening. If they don’t, a Copt will convert from the sect of his father to that of the foreigners. The foreigners divide the sect [of the Copts] that has been united for centuries. You shouldn’t allow this to happen...

Kamal: Why should I [as a Muslim], be concerned if my Christian friends disagree and divide?

Hafez: The Copts are Christians, but they are also your fellow compatriots (watanak) and you’ll be happy if they are united because this will protect you from failure...Their unity is necessary for you; it maintains good relations and [national] harmony. If [divisions] appear among them, Shenouda might be upset if you visit Nakhla (a Protestant), and vice versa. If you abandon both friends, you will cause further separation between the two sects... Foreigners will be happy with their separation because they aim at causing disunity in Eastern societies. You have to maintain national unity and bring Muslims, Christians and Jews together. You should all behave rationally and not cause discord in the country.

Nadim, the ultimate teacher, directly inserts himself into the conversation to reiterate to Hafez – the symbol of all Muslim boys, that he should respect non-Muslim Egyptians and strive for inter-sectarian national harmony.

Nadim: Societies provide the basis for social harmony. Different sects and races have to abide by the law and make use of the achievements of others. The East in general, and Egypt in
particular, is full of people who belong to different races... You have to treat people as if they know about civil rights and are keen to maintain [civic] aspects of the nation in tact... Do not refrain from advising your brothers all that you learned from me and your teachers. You will thus become a teacher yourself and educate those who are unable to join a school or those who [live in] fear. Urge them with your knowledge and manners to join you in pursuing education.

Ultimately it is incumbent upon young educated, enlightened Muslim men, the nation’s teachers, to provide the conditions that will allow for social harmony and national unity.

Conclusion

Educational reform in the nineteenth century intersected with struggles for political and economic autonomy from the British, national identity building, and uses of novel technologies to forge a public sphere. Like other reformers of the period, Nadim utilized old and new platforms and technologies including the school, the theatre, the orator’s podium, the mosque, the *adab* manual/newspaper to propagate his ideas concerning educational, political, economic and social reform to the public, or more accurately, multiple publics. Indeed Nadim demonstrated a rare ability to communicate with audiences that spanned socio-economic, gender and age groups. Whether states-people, revolutionaries, peasants, mothers, or, of particular concern to us here, Muslim youth, Nadim spoke directly to his audiences in a language they could understand. Always the teacher, Nadim provided Egyptians with a moral, institutional, scientific, political and religious framework for coping with changing and contentious times.

Ultimately, Nadim deems education the panacea for society’s ills, and teachers the champions of a better society that would ideally be characterized by inter-sectarian social harmony, liberation from European domination, and national unity. Yet Nadim’s idealized Egyptian society had its own inequitable social hierarchy in which non-Muslim men were ultimately subordinate to their Muslim counterparts and Muslim women were restricted to the private domain. Despite his involvement in progressive literary and political movements of the 1870s, Nadim’s views by the 1890s – in large part as a response to the British occupation – took on a quality of culturally conservative, yet politically radical Islamic nationalism. Nadim most valorized those young Muslim men who emerged from different strata throughout Egyptian society and devoted their lives to
learning and teaching, to articulating and communicating a new social vision to the public. For teachers, in Nadim’s universe, were ultimately the ‘souls’ of the nation and as a logical extension the school, in its myriad manifestations, was its heart.

Notes

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Arabic are my own. I would like to thank Muhammad al-Sharkawi for his help in reading and translating the Arabic materials; however I have made all final edits and take responsibility for any possible errors. Much appreciation goes to Abd al-Munim al-Jamie’e for generously sharing his resources, time and expertise with me, and also to the anonymous reviewers for their insightful feedback. A final thanks goes to Peter Gran who is responsible for introducing me to my new friend—and sometimes foe, ‘ Abdallah Nadim.

2. A number of important works dealing with Egyptian education in English, including works on women, do not treat Nadim as a serious player in 19th century educational politics (Ahmed 1992; Badran 1995; Heyworth-Dunne [1939] 1967; Hyde 1978; Mitchell 1988; Radwan 1951; Starrett 1998; Steppat 1968 ). Figures such as Rifa’a al Tahtawi and Ali Mubarak who studied in Europe and were strong advocates of educational borrowing have received far more attention in the English literature. Mohammad Abudh, Nadim’s colleague in the reform and anticolonial movements, became a part of the political establishment later in life and somewhat of a darling of the English. By the 1890s, when Nadim was fervently writing his way into political exile, ‘Abduh was developing close relations with the British, particularly Lord Cromer, the British consul general in Egypt and securing his career in Egypt (Hourani 1983, 135).

3. For a discussion of the foreigner, or khawaja in Nadim’s writings, see Osman (1979, 103-108).

4. I do not mean to mislead the reader into erroneously thinking that Nadim has not been an object of serious study: he has. He appears most prominently in the Egyptian nationalist literature of the post 1952 period and a number of books and articles in Arabic are devoted to him, as are a limited number of works in French and English. (See, for example, Amin 1949; Hadidi 1962; al-Guindi 1997; al-Jamie’e 1980; Tawfiq 1954; Osman 1979; Delanoue 1961-2). It is Nadim’s contribution in the domain of educational reform specifically that has been underdeveloped in the scholarly literature—specifically the English literature.

5. Henry Giroux, a leading critical educationist, describes the public intellectual as someone who is able to communicate ‘to a diverse range of audiences from a number of public arenas...[and] move between academic institutions and other public spheres in which knowledge, values, and social identities are produced’ (1997, 263-264).


7. Egyptian historian Ahmed Amin notes that during this period it was common for boutiques and small shops to serve as schools of literature (Amin 1949, 207-208).

8. I would like to thank Dr. Mustafa Badawi from St. Antony’s College, University of Oxford, for his insights about udabati in Egyptian cultural life.
9. For more on the *udabatiyya* see Fahmi (1964).

10. I was unfortunately unable to find any detailed information on the society’s *kuttabs* for girls, although several sources mention that they did exist.

11. Between 1879 and 1881, the years of Nadim’s campaign in support of Benevolent Societies, two other branches of the Alexandria School were opened in Damietta and Cairo. The Islamic Benevolent Society in Damanhour opened a school in June 1881, in Mansoura the society for vocational and technical education opened in July 1881, in Mit Ghur the Islamic benevolent society opened, in Alexandria the Firm Bond Benevolent Society (*al-‘rwa al-withqy*) established a night school in 1892, and in Cairo the Nile School was inaugurated in 1893 (Nadim [3 July 1881] 1994a, 5). There were also societies specifically for girls education such as the Islamic Society for the Education of Girls established in 1892 (Badran 1995, 49). The best known of all Islamic Benevolent Societies was the Islamic Benevolent Society of Cairo known as *al-Maqasid* established in 1892 and founded by Mohammed ‘Abduh. Its illustrious board included Muhammed Talat Harb, Saad Zahglul, Muhammed Farid, Omar and Ahmed Lutfi, Ahmed Hishmat and Hassan Assem (Amer 1996, 425). Donations for this society were forthcoming from the Islamic, Christian and Jewish communities as well as people from all social strata (Amer 1996, 439). Their schools were located throughout Egypt in Cairo, Alexandria, Tanta, Beni Mazar, Asyout, Mahala, and Port Said (Ahmed 1960, 39-40).

12. For an excellent study of Ya’qub Sanu’ see Gendzier (1966).


14. More than 100 years after being written, *Al-Masamir* is still clouded in controversy. In 1999 Egyptian historian Abd al-Munim al-Jamie’e from Cairo University’s Fayoum campus, used the book in a history course. An Islamist student complained to the president of Cairo University Farouq Ismail that the book, and subsequently the class, was promoting licentious, immoral values. The president concurred with the student’s view and brought al-Jamie’e before the university’s disciplinary committee. The case became highly politicized, with many intellectuals supporting al-Jamie’e and the cause of academic freedom. Al-Jamie’e eventually won the case and continues to teach courses on ‘Abdallah Nadim (personal interview with al-Jamie’e Sept. 13, 1999 Cairo).

15. See Starrett (1998, 30-61) on British educational policy in Egypt during the mandate years.

16. In a statement issued by Christian missionary women at the First Missionary Conference of 1906, the following was read: ‘[We call for] an army of those with love in their hearts to seek and save the lost. And, with the willingness to take up this burden, so long neglected, for the salvation of Mohammedan women... (First Missionary Conference, 1906:21).

17. Christian missions from France, Austria, England, Germany, United States and Italy were active in establishing schools.

18. In 1878 there was a 111% increase in the number of Muslim students who attended foreign schools, from 747 to 1850 pupils (Heyworth-Dunne 1968, 423, 443-455) and by the early twentieth century the number of Muslims at Christian schools increased many times over. The Mission of the United Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, more than any other single mission, made prodigious efforts in establishing schools and attracting native Egyptians to them. By 1906 the American Mission oversaw some 171 schools with a total of 15,451 students, 3115 (20%) of whom were Muslim (Watson 1907, 278).

19. Whereas primary boys’ schools had been operating since 1837, it wasn’t until 1873 that the first government school for Muslim girls, as-Sayufiyya School, opened under the patronage of Ismael...
Pasha’s wife Cheshmat Hanum (Heyworth-Dunne [1939] 1967, 375). In 1832 the School of Midwives was established for female students as part of the modernizing reforms for the military. Although not a primary school, in 1894 it was the only other government school for girls aside from as-Sayufiyya and had a paltry enrollment of twelve students (Ministére de l’Instruction Publique 1894). See Khaled Fahmy (1998) for more on the origins of the School of Midwives within a context of modernity and medicine in nineteenth-century Egypt.

20. Only in the more progressive Masonic press (al-Lata’if), and only in a limited number of articles, did writers advocate women’s education not only to enable them to become better mothers and wives, but to provide them with personal fulfillment and opportunities to participate in society (Cannon 1985, 476).

21. These statistics were compiled by the author from records of the Egyptian Ministére de l’Instruction Publique of 1894. I would like to thank Madame Jehan at the Ministry of Education archive for her assistance.

22. Nadim reports in al-Tankit wa al-Tabkit (13 June 1881, 18) that 3000 copies of its first issue were distributed (in Osman 1979,14) and he reports in al-Ustaz that 1500 copies of the first issue of that paper were printed, and all but 11 were sold (Delanoue 1961, 96) and 2840 were printed altogether (Nadim. [13 June 1893] 1994, 2:1029).

23. A year later Nadim’s protégé Mustafa Kamel also used the metaphor of the school to name his nationalist, anti-British periodical al-Madrasa (The School) (e.May 1893). A British press watcher at the end of the 19th Century notes—rather unfavorably—the commonalities between the two Egyptians who were close political allies and friends. He wrote: ‘Both men are possessed with a glowing hatred against the ‘English Tyrants.’ Their motto is: ‘Egypt for the Egyptians.’ Both are unquestionably clever, and their vociferous appeals had a great influence over the already much excited Moslems of Egypt’ (Hartmann 1899, 22).

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Abstract — Egyptian science and mathematics teachers self-report shows that examinations are viewed as the dominant factor inhibiting changes to classroom practice. Although future reforms need to be focused on examinations, the analysis presented here suggests such work needs to be accompanied by changes to textbooks and classroom resources. As inhibitors to change are also located in students and their parents another task is helping them to reconsider what counts as education. The evidence comes from a postal survey of Egyptian science and mathematics teachers following their twelve week in-service programmes in the UK.

Introduction and research questions

There is a line of reasoning in the literature on science teachers’ professional development (Bell & Gilbert, 1996; Treagust, Duit & Fraser, 1996; Tobin, 1996; Tobin & Ulerick, 1992) which focuses attention on what science teachers think. One implication of this literature is that for a science or mathematics teacher to change their classroom practice they need to change their ideas about content, pedagogy, assessment, classroom relationships, responsibilities, and so on. Much of this literature has developed out of the experiences of those who research and teach in western or northern countries that have comparatively well resourced schools.

But concentrating simply on teachers’ thinking ignores the wider background to the picture of teacher development and change within the school. The school, community and society are the context within which teacher development and change must take place. Heyneman (1997) provides a useful introduction to the quality of education in the Middle East and North Africa. Christina, Mehran and Mir (1999) have specifically reviewed early childhood and care, women’s education and higher education within the social and political location of the Middle East. The consequences of neglecting the material conditions of education
in conceptualising the context of teacher change becomes more apparent the poorer the school. Johnson, Monk & Hodges (2000), in reviewing the current educational situation in the Republic of South Africa, have pointed to how differences between schools act as the material and socio-cultural background to teacher development and change and bring into focus wider issues than just teachers’ thinking.

Recent research on educational environmental factors that effect teachers’ classroom practice has mainly concentrated on the social-political dimensions rather than physical ones. From the perspective of developing countries, Crossley & Guthrie (1987) are amongst several commentators that point to the impact of examinations on classroom practice. Eleanore Hargreaves (1997) has specifically commented on the examinations ‘monster’ of the secondary leaving certificate in Egypt.

Johnson, Monk & Swain (2001) point out that although teacher’s thinking, particularly in the form of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987), is a necessary part of why teachers behave as they do, it alone is insufficient for a complete analysis of teachers’ classroom practice. Johnson, Monk and Swain offer an evolutionary view of a teacher’s classroom practice where consideration of the educational environment, physical as well as socio-political, is also necessary. Briefly, the argument is that any science teacher’s classroom behaviour is better understood as a selection of pedagogical content knowledge that survives in the classroom environment in which the teacher has to work. Classroom practices that do not ‘fit’, do not survive. This goes some way to explaining the extinction of novel classroom practices when external support of the development agency is withdrawn (for example see Van der Waal & Pienaar 1996). Johnson, Monk and Swain argue for the need to research the science teacher’s classroom practice in the classroom environment.

In trying to help teachers change their classroom practice it is necessary to pay attention to why teachers currently teach as they do. A parallel might be drawn between the medical physician’s responsibilities for accurate diagnosis as well as for offering prescriptions for cures. A prescription without accurate diagnosis might prove lethal to the patient. The educational researcher needs to listen more carefully to the teacher’s description of ‘symptoms’. For where there is ‘pain’, it is the science or mathematics teacher, as ‘patient’, who is best able to describe the nature of that pain. This research is an attempt at a ‘consultation’ with science and mathematics teachers in Egypt. The research reported here looks at the views held by Egyptian science and mathematics teachers on both what stops them changing their classroom practice and what changes they can introduce, or have introduced, to that practice.
The research study

The sample

The sample is drawn from those Egyptian science and mathematics teachers who visited King’s College London as part of an in-service programme organised by the Ministry of Education of the Arab Republic of Egypt (Arab Republic of Egypt 1996; 1999). These teachers worked at the prep-school (students aged 11 to 14) and secondary school (students aged 14 to 17) levels. They were selected for placement in the UK, or USA, according to a score on an English language test. Typically, the Egyptian science teachers (45 per group) and mathematics teachers (15 per group) spent twelve weeks in London. Over the past six years 1,000 teachers have visited King’s College London. Postal questionnaires were sent out to teachers in groups who had returned to Egypt from the Autumn ‘98, Spring ‘99, Summer ‘99 and Autumn ‘99 programmes. A pre-paid envelope was included for the responses to be posted back from Egypt to England. Of the 240 questionnaires sent out 130 replies were received back.

The instrument

The teachers who had returned to Egypt were asked how much they thought particular aspects of their school environment – physical and socio-political – stopped them changing their practice. They were also asked to identify aspects of classroom behaviour that they had changed recently or they had used since returning from the overseas in-service programme run at King’s College London.

The instrument carried five questions:

- **Question 1** sought biographic data for identification purposes. Analysis of the data according to the Governorate (province within Egypt) looking at regional variations, is reported in Swain, Ghrist, Riddle & Monk (2001).

- **Question 2** sought data on promotion or extra responsibilities given to the respondent since returning to Egypt from the in-service programme in the UK. The analysis of data according to promotion is reported in Monk, Swain, Ghrist & Riddle (2001).

- **Question 3** invited respondents to rate 18 teaching activities in terms of the use they had made of them since their return to Egypt. The four point rating scale ran from ‘never/ a little/ quite often/ a lot’, with an additional ‘not sure’ rating. The ‘not sure’ rating was used in 56 ratings out of a total possible 2340 ratings.
The classroom activities involved using: worksheets, translation activities (e.g. numbers to graphs or graphs to words (Monk & Johnson, 1995; Monk, Dillon & Fairbrother, 1993), structured questions, computers in lessons as well as computers for lesson preparation, demonstrations, practical work, group work with practical work, concept maps, class discussions, poster making, graphs, calculators, videos, tables of data or information, games or cut-out-and-stick activities, the chalkboard.

Question 4 asked respondents to rate 13 things that may have changed since they returned to Egypt. Again a four point rating scale was used running ‘no change/ a little change/ quite a lot of change/ complete change’ with the additional ‘not sure’ rating. The not sure rating was used in 42 ratings out of a total possible 1690 ratings (2.5%). The items that the Egyptian science and mathematics teachers were invited to respond to in terms of change were: the way you teach, the way you plan your lessons, the variety of activities in your lessons, the amount of practical work you do, the way you evaluate or test your students, your use of the computer, your use of resources inside the school, your use of resources outside the school, your relationship with your students, your relationship with other teachers, your relationship with parents of your students, your relationship with your subject inspector, your relationship with other schools.

Question 5 involved respondents rating 14 possible inhibitory factors on a 10 point scale running from ‘no effect’ to ‘a lot of effect’ on teaching. The instruction was, ‘Since your return to Egypt, how much of any of the following prevented or stopped you changing the way you teach? Put a cross in one of the boxes.’

The factors were: size of class, equipment or resources, type of examination, timetable in the school, other science or maths teachers, the head teacher, the subject inspector, the Governorate, the Ministry of Education, teachers’ centres attended, textbooks, syllabus, students, parents of students.

Analysis of ratings of inhibitory factors

Inhibitory factors

The data from each questionnaire was entered into a spreadsheet. For each of the items on the questionnaire an average score was calculated. In this study particular attention was paid to the data in response to question 5 (‘Since you returned to Egypt, how much of the following prevented or stopped you changing
the way you teach?'). The average scores for each item in question 5 were ranked from the highest average to the lowest.

Examinations stand alone as being the highest rated single factor Egyptian science and mathematics teachers in our sample cited as inhibiting their changing their teaching. The lowest rated single factor is other teachers. Egyptian teachers work as isolated individuals within their own classrooms. The measure of their performance is the examination results (Hargreaves, 1997).

**TABLE 1: Average ratings for the 14 inhibitors to change in existing classroom and professional practice as reported by the 130 returned questionnaires from the Egyptian science and mathematics teachers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inhibitor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The type of examination</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment or resources</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The size of the class</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The syllabus</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timetable</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The subject inspectors</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head teacher</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governorate (local education authority)</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ centres</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other teachers</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a fair spread in the ratings, as indicated by the standard deviations. Some of the profiles for the ratings are normally distributed, others showed either bi-modal, skewed or flattened distributions.

The data for question 5 were then used in a correlation analysis to determine how much the responses to any one inhibitor were correlated with the response to any other inhibitor. The Pearson product moment correlations were then scrutinised. With an arbitrary cut off level of 0.5, only those items that correlated at 0.5 or above were noted. The items identified as correlated were then grouped into constellations of inhibitors. It is interesting to note that although
the correlation analysis is mathematical and ‘blind’ to the inhibitors, nevertheless those inhibitors that correlate into constellations can be seen to be associated on educational grounds.

TABLE 2: Pearson product moment correlations for the 14 inhibitors to change in existing classroom or professional practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eq</th>
<th>Cl</th>
<th>Syl</th>
<th>Stu</th>
<th>Tex</th>
<th>Tim</th>
<th>Insp</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Hd</th>
<th>Pnt</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>TC</th>
<th>OT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam.</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equip.</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class size</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Equipment, syllabus and textbooks form a cluster that is essentially elements of the immediate, proximate, teaching milieu. The students and their parents form a constellation that links the school to the community. The Ministry of Education, the Governorate (local education authority), inspectors, the head teacher and other teachers form a constellation of the bureaucratic and professional milieu that is distal to the teachers classroom life. The average scores and the correlated constellations are displayed in figure 1.

Analysis of change by constellation of inhibitory factors

For each of the individual inhibitors and constellations, identified through the correlations, a profile of the distribution across the rating scale was drawn up. The rating scale was a ten point scale. These distribution profiles were used to cut the sample population into two sub-samples: those with high ratings and those with
FIGURE 1: Averaged Egyptian science and mathematics teachers’ ratings for inhibitors to change in classroom and professional practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average rating on a 10 point scale</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.9 exams</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
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<td>6.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 equipment</td>
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</tr>
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<td>5.7</td>
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<td>5.6 textbooks</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 timetable</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4.8</td>
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<td>4.7</td>
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<td>4.4</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 130 respondents

correlational link

0.0

size of class

students

Inspectors

Min of Ed

parents

headteacher

governorate

other teachers
low ratings. (The cuts did not always produce sub-samples of equal sizes as the profiles indicated particular patterns of response across the whole sample.)

Responses to the 18 items for questions 3 (‘Have you used....... ?’) and 13 items for question 4 (‘Have you changed......... ?’) were then subjected to a two-tailed t-test to determine the difference between the means and the statistical significance of the difference between the means. The level of statistical significance that would be noted was set at 0.05.

Examinations

The profile for the ratings on the immediate inhibitor of the examinations carried a large number of responses in the range 8 to 10 with a tail running from 6 to 1. A cut was made to give two sample populations. 77 respondents were placed in the sub-sample that claimed examinations prevented their changing their practice (ratings 8 to 10) and 53 were placed in the sub-sample of those that claimed examinations had less effect (ratings 1 to 7).

TABLE 3: Differences for claims that examinations inhibited changing practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondents per rating</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>77</td>
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</table>

Activity and p value

Mean ratings for sub-samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Used worksheets</th>
<th>0.8</th>
<th>1.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p = 0.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the Egyptian science and mathematics teachers who reported examinations did inhibit changes to their teaching they also reported changes of practice where they had used the more student centred activities associated with worksheets. This was the only item of the 18 for question 3, and 13 for question 4, that showed any statistical significance with a probability of less than 0.05. With a cut off at the 0.05 level, all the other item ratings were indistinguishable for the two sub-populations.

This finding is worth noting for it points to a general principle. The specific pattern is that Egyptian science and mathematics teachers who feel inhibited by the examinations, were, on their own report, more likely to try activities that did
not specifically direct students to the recall required in Egyptian examinations. The general principle is that, in trying something out, the teachers became more aware of the pressures that inhibit them in their pedagogic choices.

**Size of class**

The profile for the ratings on the single inhibitor of size of class was bi-modal with ratings clustering at either end of the scale. Two sub-populations were formed with 66 respondents (ratings 7 to 10) claiming prevention and 64 respondents (ratings 6 to 1) claiming less effect. Again the sub-sample populations reported the same degree of use of change except for just one item. The sole item from question 3 showing statistically significant difference between the means which indicated that class size was seen to have an effect on change was the teachers self-reported use of graphs. Working on graphs requires the simple physical resources of graph paper, rulers, pens, pencil, rubber and perhaps calculators. Giving each and every student such resources in a large class is costly. Those Egyptian teachers who have tried graph work self-report the inhibiting factors.

**TABLE 4: Differences for claims that class size inhibited changing practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Respondents per rating</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-samples</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activity and p value | Mean ratings for sub-samples
Used graphs     | 1.2 | 1.6

p = 0.02

**Equipment or resources, syllabus and textbook constellation**

The distribution profile for the ratings on this constellation of the teaching milieu is flattened. A cut was made to give two sample populations. 71 respondents placed in the sub-sample that claimed the proximate teaching milieu prevented their changing their practice (rating 6 to 10) whilst 59 were placed in the sub-sample that claimed less effect (ratings 1 to 5).

Again 30 of the 31 items (17 for question 3 and 13 for question 4) showed no statistically significant difference between mean ratings at the 0.05 level or less.
The responses of the sub-populations – those that claimed the proximate classroom milieu influenced their changes in practice and those that reported it did not – were, apart from just one item, otherwise the same. From the two tailed t-test the one sole item which showed a statistically significant difference between the means for the two sub-samples was the use of concept maps. Using concept maps as a pedagogic strategy takes time, uses paper, and does not directly address the prime task set by the examinations of recalling facts, procedures and results. To try to use concept maps involves acting against the direction set by the syllabus and textbooks which present certainty – not student interpretation or uncertainty.

Students and their parents

The profile for the ratings for the constellation was spread about a mode of 6. The cut was made at a score of 5.5. Those scoring 5.5 and above being put into the sub-sample that claimed students and their parents effected their changing their teaching (65 respondents) and those scoring 5 and below being put in the sub-sample that claimed students and their parents did not effect their changing their teaching (65 respondents).

Yet again, the sub-samples are essentially indistinguishable except for two of the 31 items. Those that claimed students and their parents prevented their changing their teaching also reported that they made more use of the chalkboard and class discussions. Class discussion takes time away from students copying from the board. Copying from the board provides students, particularly upper preparatory and secondary students, with a feeling of certainty and thereby, confidence with their entry into the examinations. The general principle found in

### TABLE 5: Differences for claims that the proximal constellation of – equipment, the syllabus and textbooks – inhibited changing practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity and p value</th>
<th>Mean ratings for sub-samples</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used concept maps</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.6</td>
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</table>

p = 0.05
the analysis according to examinations, class size and the teaching milieu, is repeated again – in trying something out, the teachers became more aware of the pressures that inhibit them in their pedagogic choices.

**Timetable**

The profile for the single inhibitor ratings was bi-modal and the cut was made between a rating of 5 and 6. This produced two sub-samples: those that claimed the timetable did effect the introduction of changes (N=62) and those that claimed less influence (N=68). Once more the populations were essentially the same in their self-report of use and changes. Two items did show statistically significant differences in the means and these were the use of the chalkboard and reports of changed relationship with other teachers.

How one meets and talks with other teachers depends upon physical contact. Physical contact depends upon availability and availability depends upon the timetable. The chalkboard is the trace of a lesson that is left when the teacher departs the class.

**The constellation of bureaucratic and professional constraints**

The profile has a skewed distribution. A cut off point of 4.6 was used to produce the two sub-samples. (The rating for the constellation is averaged across the five contributing factors.) 64 respondents were put into the sub-sample that reported the bureaucratic and professional environment inhibited their changing their practice. Those who had an average rating off 4.6 and less

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**TABLE 6: Differences for claims that the constellation of – students and parents – inhibited changing practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Mean ratings for sub-samples</td>
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</table>
were put into the sub-sample that claimed the bureaucratic and professional environment was less likely to affect their changing classroom practice. The two populations showed no statistically significant difference in their means on 30 of the 31 items. Of those that claimed that the bureaucratic and professional environment stopped them changing their teaching they also reported a statistically significant increase in mean rating for their use of group work with practical.

**TABLE 7: Differences for claims that the timetable inhibited changing practice**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Activity and p value**

- **Used chalkboard**
  - 2.4
  - 2.8
  - p = 0.02
- **Changed relationship with other teachers**
  - 1.6
  - 2.0
  - p = 0.04

**TABLE 8: Differences for claims that the distal constellation of – subject inspectors, the ministry of education, the headteacher, the governorate and other teachers – inhibited changing practice**

<table>
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<th>Rating</th>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Activity and p value**

- **Used group work with practical**
  - 1.2
  - 1.7
  - p = 0.05
Again this result follows the general principle. To attempt to do any practical work in science and mathematics requires chemicals, glassware, specimens, apparatus, calculators etc. To try to do practical work the Egyptian science and mathematics teacher is faced with the shortage of such provision. Attention turns to the school authorities, at local or national level, as the inhibitor, in not providing such resources.

**Teachers’ centres**

With an averaged rating of only 4.1 on the 10 point scale, the teachers’ centres were rated as the one feature of the teachers’ environment that was least likely to inhibit their changing their practice. The profile of the distribution of ratings was weighted towards the lower end with a tail at the upper end. The cut to form the

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**TABLE 9: Differences for claims that the teachers’ centres inhibited changing practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity and p value</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<th>6</th>
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<td>Activity and p value</td>
<td>Mean ratings for sub-samples</td>
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<td>Changed evaluation or testing of students</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed use of computers</td>
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<td>Used computers for lesson preparation</td>
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two sub-populations was made at the low rating of 3. So 74 respondents rated teachers centres as 3 or below whilst 56 rated teachers centres as 4 or above. For the 31 items t-tested, 3 items of use from question 3 and 4 items of change from question 4 showed statistically significant differences between the means.

Those who claimed teachers centres prevented or stopped them changing their practice also made statistically significantly different claims of more use of computers for lesson preparation, use of calculators, changes to the way they teach and changes to their use of computers, changed relationships with other schools, changed evaluation or testing of their students and the use of computers in lessons.

Discussion

Change is difficult

The 31 items in questions 3 and 4 (18 use of activity items and 13 change in practice items) when crossed with the 7 inhibitors, or constellations, give 217 possible differences. However, the t-tests showed statistical significance on only 15 differences (7%). Therefore, generally the two sub-populations were similar. Those who saw obstacles to change were not that much different in their self-report of use and change to those who saw no obstacles. This is because the teachers teach in the same circumstances and under the same constraints. What can actually be done in Egyptian science and mathematics classrooms is severely limited and limited by the same set of factors regardless of one’s opinions. So producing change, any change, is a difficult thing for an Egyptian science or mathematics teacher to do.

This data adds support to the conjecture made by Johnson, Monk and Swain (2001) that teachers in what Beeby (1966) terms untrained and mechanical educational systems have repertoires of classroom practice that are selected by the classroom habitat in which they work. Johnson Monk and Swain are of the opinion that the notion of the reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983, 1987) is only useful when considering teachers who work in what Beeby terms professional educational systems. The data reported here shows that teachers may have quite widely differing opinions about how they are, or are not, constrained to use different practices or change their practices. However, because they all work in somewhat similar classrooms and schools, the reported use and reported change of use is much the same.

Where differences in reported use or change occur they are associated in all instances with a heightened awareness of the effect of the various factors that
effect change. The data appears to point to the teachers who report use and change being more sensitive to the factors that inhibit change. Trying to change makes you painfully aware of the limits to change.

**Use of classroom activities and the awareness of inhibitory factors**

In the analysis there are a potential 126 classroom activity/inhibitor combinations (7 inhibitors, or constellations, x 18 items of use in question 3). Only nine activities show statistically significant differences for the means of reported use. Only one item – the use of the chalkboard – turns up twice (associated with the constellation of students/parents and the timetable). All items show an increase in reported use. The self reported differences in use involved:

- worksheets (associated with examinations),
- graphs (associated with class size),
- concept maps (associated with syllabus/textbooks/equipment),
- the chalkboard (associated with students/parents and the timetable),
- class discussion (associated with students/parents),
- group work with practical (associated with bureaucratic organisation),
- calculators (associated with teachers’ centres),
- computers in lessons (associated with teachers’ centres)
- computers for lesson preparation (associated with teachers’ centres).

For teachers in Egyptian science and mathematics classrooms, all except the use of the chalkboard are relative novelties and can therefore be associated with an attempt to introduce more progressive practices into science and mathematics teaching. To struggle to introduce such practices into one’s own teaching would heighten awareness of the difficulties in doing so.

For instance, the demands of the examination put pressure on teachers to cover the syllabus. So student centred activities like using worksheets slows the pace of coverage of the syllabus. Or, if one wants to introduce more graphical work then the shortage of graph paper, rulers and calculators becomes an issue and the size of the class one teaches limits how much, and how often, graph work is possible. Concept maps, as a learning activity, again, in being student centred, slows the pace of coverage of the syllabus and also requires material resource in paper and pens. Students’ own ideas are of little interest if one operates a content centred model of pedagogy where recall of the ideas in text books are what really matter in passing the examination. More class discussion may help the weaker students but slows the faster ones. The faster students (and their parents) will offer censorship of the teacher who goes too slowly. If one is struggling to introduce
more group practical work one will quickly becomes aware of how the provision of facilities, through the bureaucratic machinery of the school, local government and national government, inhibits how much one can do.

If one has attended a teachers’ centre and learnt about how to use calculators and computers in teaching then one might be frustrated by the lack of provision in school. Why the Egyptian science and maths teachers responded as they did is not completely clear from the questionnaire data and does require further investigation.

Unlike the increases for other eight activities the use of the chalkboard, of itself, is not novel. However, more progressive practice involves a different use of the chalkboard, as teachers move away from a teacher centred didactic copying mode, to using the chalkboard as a means of keeping track of the points raised in conversation in a more student centred mode, students would be the first to notice such changes. Both through their own comments, and those of parents, they can affect censorship on any such attempt to change practice. It is possible that the Egyptian teachers who thought students and parents inhibited their changing their practice used the chalkboard more as the classroom aide memoir, rather than producing more notes for students to copy down. We have no evidence for this and so it too needs further investigation.

How can one interpret the reported increase in use of the chalkboard when the responses were analysed for the teachers being aware of how much the timetable effected their teaching? An awareness of the effect of the timetable showed a statistically significant difference for both the increased use of the chalkboard and a changed interaction with other teachers. Perhaps, the imprint of a lesson that remains after the lesson has finished is the work that has not been wiped from the chalkboard. Other teachers who both precede and follow may comment in the staff room on work seen on the chalkboard. So, perhaps the timetable affects how one interacts with colleagues where the point of interaction is the chalkboard. Such a conjecture provides another issue that needs further research. From the data it is not clear how the Egyptian teachers were responding to the item on the use of the chalkboard. Were they responding to a vision of a changed mode of use of the chalkboard – as seen in the UK – or a global coverage of the surface – as carried out in Egypt?

**Changes to professional practice and the awareness of inhibitory factors**

There are potentially 91 combinations of change to practice and inhibitory factors in the analysis (7 factors or constellations x 13 items in question 4). Of the five instances of statistically significant differences for the means of reported changes in practice all show an increase in reported change. Again, a positive
report of change appears to be associated with an increased awareness of the obstacles to change. The self-reported instances are a changed:

- relationships with other teachers,
- way of evaluating or testing students,
- ways to teach,
- use of computers,
- relationship with other schools.

The self-reported changed relationship with other teachers is associated with the timetable as an inhibitor. Nearly all Egyptian teachers in preparatory and secondary schools move from room to room as the students stay in their home room for most of the day. The timetable therefore dictates who is in a class teaching and who is out of class in the staff room at any one time. Teachers return to the staff room when they are not teaching as they do not have rooms which they would see as being their own. Who they meet in the staff room, or do not, is dictated by the timetable.

The last four instances of self-reported change are all associated with the teachers’ centres.

The work of teachers’ centres

With an average rating of 4.1, the teachers’ centres were placed second to last for the individual inhibitors having a preventative or stopping effect on changing practice. The lowest averaged rating was for the factor of ‘other teachers’. However, the self-report of usage and changes to practice actually showed the highest number of instances with the factor of teachers’ centres. Three instances of usage and four instances of change of practice are associated with a higher report of the inhibitory effect of teachers’ centres on changing practice. No other single inhibitor, or constellation, in this analysis shows such a number of effects or such statistically significant differences between the means (p ranges from 0.002 to 0.05) of the sub-populations created in the analysis. Here there is a raft of change and usage.

The logic of the analysis so far has been that where teachers have tried to introduce changes they have been more forcefully confronted with inhibitors. Such a line of reasoning should therefore apply to teachers’ centres as an inhibitor. Those that report the few changes and use identified in the analysis are also more likely to cite the teachers’ centres as having an inhibitory effect. Using the same logic leads to the uncomfortable conclusion that teachers’ centres do not help in the introduction of the changes and usage reported. The teachers have introduced
new usage and changes to their practice *despite* the teachers’ centres, not because of them.

Such a conclusion is uncomfortable because it goes against the grain of common sense. Common sense is that at teachers’ centres teachers can develop their knowledge and learn new skills. However, the knowledge has to be related to the examinations for it to be useful to the teachers. The skills have to bear some relationship to the classroom environment in which the teacher works. For as Johnson, Monk and Swain (2001) have pointed out, such knowledge can only produce a changed practice as and when the environment in which the teachers work allows such practice to be effected. Knowledge of itself will not change a teacher’s classroom practice unless the classroom environment allows that changed practice to survive. What happens at teachers’ centres needs to be very carefully tailored to classroom practice if it is to have any chance of uptake in the classroom.

**Conclusions**

As Crossley and Guthrie (1987) have written,

‘Teachers are not generally irrational opponents of change but they rationally weigh alternatives according to the realities they perceive.’ (pp.65-66)

Later they go on to comment:

‘A necessary, but not sufficient condition of attempts to change classroom practice is that innovations should not be incongruent with teachers’ and pupils’ perceptions of the requirements of any public examination system.’ (p.74)

The data reported here and the analysis presented suggests that the final examination, although the single most important inhibitor, is not the only one. Equipment, syllabus and textbook are also important as part of the proximal environment within which the teacher must work. The attitudes of the students and parents have an effect on what is acceptable practice, both in classroom activities and professional matters. Whilst teachers may think what they wish, the physical and socio-political environment about them does not allow them to just do as they wish. Any classroom practices or professional behaviour that does not fit within the latitude the teacher’s environment allows will quickly cease – die out – due
to the selection pressures of that environment. This is the down side of the
collections that might be drawn from this study.

Turning this argument about, and thinking more positively, the environment
of the teacher does allow some latitude to classroom practice and professional
behaviour. Not all the teachers who responded to the questionnaire reported the
same degree of use or change to their practice. The data presented here does point
to how changed practice and usage does occur. The Ministry of Education in
Egypt faces a difficult task in trying to move its educational system forward
(Souror 1990; 1996) out of the mechanical stage, identified by Beeby, and on to
a more professional stage. The ‘diagnosis’ here is that the teachers, as ‘patients’,
identify examinations as the single most important factor to shape their own
classroom practice. But some caution is required on the part of the educational
reformer, as ‘doctor’, for James (2000) alerts us to how examination reform can
be a very blunt instrument. This can be understood in the light of Chapman &
Snyder’s (2000) suggestion that the potential institutional functions of
examinations can be more complex than just testing students: shaping teachers’
practice; motivating teachers to improve; providing feedback information;
targeting the provision of resources; and influencing the disbursement of funds.

Of course, ‘Change the examinations’ is easily written down but a good deal
more difficult to bring about in practice in Egypt (Abu-Hatab & Carroll, 1996).
Our interpretation of the data presented here shows co-ordinating changes to
examinations with changes to syllabuses, textbooks and material resources is
likely to be even more effective in bringing about reform, although the price-tag
is much higher for this particular ‘medicine’. A campaign that aims to help
students and parents re-evaluate what is important in education may at first sight
appear to be marginal and of little consequence. But our analysis suggests it too
is necessary. It may be the ‘tonic’ that allows a speedy recovery rather than a
lingering ‘convalescence’.

The work of teachers’ centres in Egypt, as reported by the science and
mathematics teachers in this survey, appears to be of little direct or immediate
effect on classroom practice. The data appears to point to teachers acting
independently of the teachers’ centres. And yet, to dismiss teachers’ centres as
being irrelevant might be a mistake. For teachers do need a mechanism by which
they can develop their thinking about their practice. To close teachers’ centres to
save on education budgets may be to throw out the baby with the bath water. Teachers
teach as they do because of what they think and the material and socio-
political environment in which they have to work. All the factors identified are
necessary, none, taken on their own, is sufficient for reform to be effective. The
wise educational reformer will try to move forwards on several different fronts
in concert.
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References


PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST’S ROLE

MARIA POULOU

Abstract – Acknowledging the importance of teachers’ implicit theories for the determination of school psychologist’s role, this study aims to elicit prospective teachers’ personal theories for the role of school psychologist. By using metaphoric pictures, 59 pre-service teachers described their perceptions of the school psychologist’s role in relation to other members of the school community, the expectations of both teachers and the school psychologist in relation to the role of the school psychologist, the variability of conditions in which the school psychologist’s role is undertaken as well as their feelings about the school psychologist’s role. Content analysis of data indicated that prospective teachers perceived the school psychologist’s role as being carried out within the school setting and as being prominent in relation to the teachers’ role. The school psychologist aims to help students and teachers to achieve their goals, while teachers perceive the school psychologist as a consultant. The school psychologist’s task is undertaken under continually changing conditions, depending mainly on the variability of people’s needs. Finally, prospective teachers described a variety of emotional responses in relation to the school psychologist’s role. These findings are discussed in terms of the expansion of the school psychologist’s role, teachers’ professional identity and the training programmes of both school psychologists and teachers.

Introduction

The role of the school psychologist has been the subject of the debate and criticism since the 1954 Thayer Conference (Levinson et al., 1996). Much research since then has focused on school staff and the school psychologist’s perceptions of the role and the functions of school psychologists, discrepancies between actual and desired roles and the extent to which role preferences and conflicts are associated with the school psychologist’s job satisfaction and the school staff’s satisfaction with the school psychologist’s role (Roberts, 1970; Gilmore and Chandy, 1973; Hughes, 1979; Dean, 1980; Violato et al., 1981; Bowen and Dalton, 1981; Fisher et al., 1986; Mucha, 1994; Watkins et al., 2001). This professional obsession with identity, according to Benson and Hughes (1985), may be the result of the multiplicity of role definers and the general
character of school psychological practice. Besides the plethora of studies, however, the role of the school psychologist has been narrowly defined by legal issues and by administrators and teachers who do not understand the potential of school psychologists. Within the school environment, there is ambiguity as to the role of the school psychologist because school staff may be unaware of the duties, obligations, training and skills of the school psychologist (Peterson et al., 1998; Hagemeier et al., 1998). These studies also concur that there is a desire for the psychologist to embrace alternative assessment techniques instead of traditional educational diagnostics, to develop more intervention-oriented roles and to expand consultation (Bahr, 1996). Benson and Hughes (1985) also suggested that an effective strategy for the modification and expansion of the school psychologist’s role refers to the influential role of teachers and principals. In their study, they revealed that school psychologists want teachers to be more influential in determining the role of the school psychologist. Teachers may be the school psychologists’ most valued ally in expanding school psychological services. Thus, informing teachers and principals about the benefits of preventive services provided by the school psychologist and then obtaining evidence that teachers and principals perceive those services as effective, adds to the reconsideration and expansion of school psychologist’s role.

In Greece, school psychology has attempted to expand its role and functions and establish itself in the educational field. Teachers are often annoyed by, or misunderstand the school psychologist’s role (Nikolopoulou and Oakland, 1990). The Greek Psychological Society’s division of school psychology recently drew up a report concerning the role and qualifications of the school psychologist (Ε.Ψ.Ε.2000, 14). A study of Greek teachers’ perceptions of the role of school psychologists revealed that teachers believe that they help and facilitate their task and perceive their co-operation as necessary. From teachers’ responses however, a need arises for the clarification and definition of role limits for both teachers and school psychologists, in order to avoid conflict between these two professions in their common area of activity (Poulou, in press, a).

It follows that further research is needed to sufficiently delineate and identify the role of the school psychologist, particularly in the Greek context. The current study attempts to delineate prospective teachers’ perceptions of the school psychologist’s role. Adopting Benson and Hughe’s (1985) assumption for the modification of the school psychologist’s role, this study determines the role and functions of the school psychologist as they are perceived by prospective elementary teachers. Emphasis is mainly given to teachers’ personal or implicit theories. Teachers’ personal theories refer to a person’s latent, private construct of knowledge, experience and values that is relevant to the practice of teaching (Meijer, 1999; Matsagouras, 1999; Papouli-Tzelepi and Spinthourakis, 2000).
Studies of teachers’ implicit theories share the common idea that teachers’ cognitive, emotional and actual behaviour is driven and predicted by their personally-held system of beliefs, values and attributions (Clark and Peterson, 1986; Barnes, 1992; Poulou and Norwich, 2001a). Sugrue (1997, p.214), referring to Holt-Reynolds, argued that pre-service teachers do not consciously learn implicit theories at an announced, recognised moment from a formal teaching/learning episode. Rather, lay theories represent tacit knowledge lying dormant and unexamined by the student. Sugrue further argued that the content of lay theories, the principal forces that interact in their formation and their tacit nature, have major significance for initial teacher education and ongoing professional development of teachers. Consequently, they need to be constructed, understood and be open to continuous negotiation and reconstruction in order to promote the quality of teaching. According to Tilema (1994), the reconstruction of unconscious beliefs and ideas held by prospective teachers could be a more important task in programmes of teacher education, than the presentation of the new information itself. In fact, it is student teachers’ personal theories which filter the information they receive, and judge, accept or reject the educational research findings. Wubbels (1992) and Korthagen and Kessels (1999) contended that one important reason for the poor transfer of theory taught on campus to classroom teaching practice is that teacher training programmes fail to influence the conceptions which prospective teachers bring to the teacher training programme.

Acknowledging the importance of teachers’ implicit theories for the determination of the school psychologist’s role, it thus becomes crucial for teachers to realise their implicit theories about the specific role of the school psychologist and to examine the extent to which they comply with contemporary knowledge and research findings. Therefore, this study aims to elicit prospective teachers’ personal and latent theories on the role of the school psychologist. It aims primarily to expand the school psychologist’s role and secondly, to cultivate a professional landscape of co-operation and communication between school psychologists and teachers. The study of teachers’ perceptions contributes to further understanding and clarification of the school psychologist’s role, and at the same time constitutes a useful tool to both psychologists and teacher trainers, to be used for effective preparation of these two professionals in their common field of activity, the school. More specifically, it aims to examine prospective teachers’ perceptions of:

- the role of the school psychologist in relation to other members of the school community;
- the school psychologist’s and school staff’s expectations of the school psychologist’s role;
the variability of conditions in which the school psychologist’s role takes place;

prospective teachers’ feelings about the school psychologist’s role.

Methodology

The methodological study of beliefs, perceptions and values constitute a difficult undertaking for researchers (Poulou and Norwich, 2001b). Dolk et al. (1999) argued that introspection and retrospection are unsuitable methods for studying feelings and thoughts, because people explain their actions by rational reconstructions. Although these reconstructions may be correct in most cases, their validity is not always easily verifiable. To compensate for this drawback, several authors have suggested using metaphors to promote awareness of the non-rational aspects of teachers’ functioning (Munby, 1986; Marshall, 1988; Russell et al., 1988; Tobin, 1990; Tobin et al., 1990; Munby and Russell, 1990; Marshall, 1990; Wubbels, 1992; Korthagen, 1993; Dolk et al., 1999). According to Smith (1999), philosophers have shown that words and sentences do not represent ideas or objects. They are, rather, connected to other words, or sentences which are really made or invented. As an inscription of a word, thing, or idea by another word, thing or idea, metaphors can be useful tools for understanding complex cultural areas. Through the mechanism of analogy, they offer people a way of relating one idea to another idea with which they are more familiar or which is more concrete. Weade and Emst (1990) argued that in the classic form of metaphor, there are two parts. A secondary subject (one part) is used to describe a primary subject (second part), implying an analogy between the two. Metaphors convey points of view and frames of reference to graphic and figurative illusions. Thus, they contribute to sense making abilities and facilitate the process of meaning construction. The combination of what metaphor is said to be able to do (express abstract concepts), and what teacher knowledge is believed to be (structured by teacher’s experiences and difficult to articulate), led Carter (1990) to use metaphors for modelling teachers’ comprehension of their work. Carter contended that the use of metaphor can facilitate dialogue between the cooperating teacher and the pre-service teacher and can simulate the kind of reflection necessary for the improvement of teaching. Carter (1990, pp.111-112) described the following functions of metaphors:

1. Metaphors communicate not only knowledge but also associated affect about the task of classroom management.

2. Metaphors helped teachers approximate more closely the realities and demands of classroom management.
3. Metaphors were useful in describing the mental activity required of teaching; activity that is difficult, if not impossible to communicate via literal means.

4. Co-operating teachers used metaphors to show how conceptions of teaching are reflected in teachers’ actions.

5. Metaphors illustrated how teachers reasoned about problems that presented themselves daily in classrooms.

Moreover, Morine-Dershimer and Reeve (1994), in their study of prospective teachers’ metaphoric language, concluded that firstly, some metaphors or images of thinking are more appropriate than others in contributing to effective teaching practice, secondly, that teacher trainers have some knowledge which helps them to identify a more or less appropriate metaphor for teaching and thirdly, a change in metaphors for teaching will influence teachers’ underlying beliefs and eventually their behaviour. Finally, based on the assumption that metaphors can encapsulate and bring teachers’ perceptions and underlying beliefs to the surface, the current study made use of this methodological tool to investigate prospective teachers’ perceptions of the school psychologist’s role.

Sample

Fifty nine prospective students participated in the study (52 female, 3 male and 4 did not indicate their sex). Twenty five of the prospective teachers came from Patras University, 17 from Crete University and 17 from Athens University. All of them were in the fourth year of their studies in the Pedagogic Department. Prospective teachers were asked to describe the role of the school psychologist, by using a metaphor. More specifically, they were given the following instructions:

By using a metaphoric picture (i.e., people following a leader), describe the way you perceive the role of the school psychologist. In your description, mainly answer the following questions:

– who is the school psychologist, in your metaphoric picture?
– what is (s)he doing?
– are there any other people with him/her and what are they doing?
– what is taking place in your picture?
– what does the school psychologist want?
– what do the person or people who are with him/her want?
– does your metaphoric picture remain static?
– how do you feel when confronting this picture?
Clarifications were given to participants when necessary. It was also emphasised that the selection of metaphoric picture would be personal and unbiased from the example given in the instructions.

Results

The school psychologist’s role in relation to members of the school community

The content analysis of prospective teachers’ metaphors by 3 educational researchers, revealed a differentiation in the way in which the school psychologist initiates his/her intervention. On the one hand, prospective teachers perceived the school psychologist as an active member of the school community, co-operating with pupils, teachers, parents and other school members in a continuous process of accomplishing common goals (51 students, 86.4%). On the other hand, prospective teachers perceived the school psychologist as being isolated from the school community, as somebody who, even though (s)he attends closely, does not participate in school events (8 participants, 13.5%). S/he is however alert and ready to respond to any request for his/her intervention made by school members.

The school psychologist as a member of the school community

More specifically, when the school psychologist was perceived as an active member of the school community, there was a distinction in teachers’ perceptions, in relation to the degree of power and authority exercised over school staff. In this case, the majority of prospective teachers (46 participants, 77.9%) perceived the school psychologist to be leading members of the school community, either in an atmosphere of mutual reciprocity and co-operation or in a more prescriptive way.

Seen as a leader, according to 30 prospective students (50.8%), the school psychologist guides students or other members of the community in a context of communication, mutual interaction and co-operation. More explicitly, 9 participants (15.2%) perceived the school psychologist as a dance teacher, shepherd, guide, conductor, team leader, adult and mother. In the teachers’ words ‘... the school psychologist is the guide of a crowd of people (the students). S/he is friendly and sociable towards students, helps them to solve their problems, and talks with them, trying to be objective. The students ask for his/her advice and oppose his/her views when they disagree with them.’ In these metaphoric pictures, the school psychologist plays a pivotal role as somebody who talks, consults and helps students satisfy their needs, get to know themselves and plan their future, in
a friendly and relaxed manner. It is worth mentioning though, that the protagonists in these nine pictures were solely the school psychologist and the students. Moreover, 21 prospective teachers (35.5%) described a conciliatory interaction between the school psychologist, pupils, parents and teachers, with the school psychologist having the central role. Thus, the school psychologist could be a basketball coach, guide, school bus-driver, mother, big brother, film director, or students’ assistant. ‘… In a forest there are pupils, parents and a pupils’ assistant. The forest has pathways which are easier or more difficult to follow. The forest symbolises school life. Pupils aim to pass through the forest along the easy paths, or to successfully negotiate the difficult paths. In the middle of the forest, in an easily accessible place, there is a pupils’ assistant, the school psychologist. S/he works with students’ parents, or with the students themselves. His/her goal is to inform the students about the alternative paths, or the means of overcoming the obstacles, so that they can continue their walk in the forest.’ Another prospective teacher perceived the school psychologist as a guide. ‘… A guide who is not authoritative though, and who allows people to take their own decisions. S/he works with them, asks for their opinion and guides them to action without direct interference.’

On other occasions however, in the eyes of the 16 of the prospective teachers (27%) the school psychologist seemed to control students or members of the school community in a prescriptive and fixed manner. Ten prospective teachers (16.9%) attributed to the school psychologist the role of coach, sergeant, conductor, doctor, farmer, guide, grandfather, or duck. In these metaphors, prospective teachers described a rigid relationship between the school psychologist and students without the interference of teachers, parents or other members of school staff. For instance, ‘…the school psychologist is the sergeant who commands his soldiers. The latter are obliged to execute his orders. The sergeant wants to train his soldiers in the event of a national emergency’, or ‘… the ducklings follow the mother duck step by step’ and further ‘… the guide is the school psychologist. He guides students into raising their hands, exactly as he does. All but a few students imitate his movements’. In addition, 6 of the participants (10.1%) perceived the school psychologist as a co-ordinator, inspector, government minister or guide who strictly controls and directs a crowd, ‘… the school psychologist is a government minister who moves around his employees’ offices and supervises whether they are conducting their jobs as they should. There is much tension in the picture. Phones ring, employees answer the phones, while the minister exhorts everyone to take care in carrying out their jobs and to try and do their best, in a commanding and strict tone.’ In these metaphoric images, pre-service teachers did not specify the people who constitute the crowd. Although they refer to ‘employees’ or ‘other people with
him’, they do not clarify whether these people are students, teachers or other members of the school staff.

Three participants (5.08%) perceived the teacher as the guide of school community members and the school psychologist as contributing to the teacher’s task. ‘A volleyball team is chatting with the coach and his assistant, during a time-out of a match. The teacher is the coach and the school psychologist is the assistant. Also present are the players who are listening to both of them carefully. The coach consults and encourages the team, while his assistant gives further instructions to each player individually, if necessary.’ Another metaphoric picture illustrated the role of the school psychologist as ‘… a dog who is watching a flock of sheep. The students are the sheep, their teacher is the shepherd.’

One participant (1.6%) perceived the school psychologist’s and the teacher’s roles as being equal. ‘In this picture we have two people (the teacher and the school psychologist), who work together towards a common goal: the resolution of problems and better functioning of the team (the metaphorical picture refers to a sports team). Both people need each other and on condition that they are willing to co-operate, the team will function effectively.’

One participant (1.6%) perceived students to be the leaders of the school community. ‘In this picture, a crowd of people (the school psychologist, specialists, parents, teachers) follow a guide (a student). By watching his/her behaviour and the conditions in which it is manifested, they try to find the causes and coping strategies for his/her behaviour.’

The school psychologist isolated from the school community

Eight participants (13.5%) perceived the school psychologist as being isolated from the school community, in a place which, however, is easily accessible to the members of the school community. Analytically, 3 participants described the school psychologist as a ‘… priest who preaches about moral values and teaches his flock the way to correct their mistakes and improve themselves,’ or as ‘… a confessor who listens to people’s thoughts and feelings, contributes to the relief of their soul and creates bonds of trust’. One participant perceived the school psychologist as an observer who watches the members of the school community carefully and intervenes whenever s/he considers it appropriate. ‘A group of children are on a campus, near a lake. The school psychologist is the campus lifeguard. He is watching the children playing, ready to intervene in the event of an emergency’. For the prospective teacher who described a picture of a basketball game, the school psychologist is the ‘… the referee, who has no direct contact with the players (students). On the contrary, his mission is to remain unnoticed and intervene only when necessary for the smooth running of the game.’ For another
participant, the school psychologist is ‘… a member of a medical team, who visits an encampment for sick and hungry children. He moves among them continuously in order to gain a clear picture of the conditions, watches people’s reactions and tries to resolve the awful situation’. One teacher perceived the school psychologist as ‘... an acrobat who is balancing on a rope without a safety net. He wants to reach the end of the rope and satisfy the expectations of the audience. At the end of the rope, there is another acrobat, standing on a safe platform, who is encouraging him. This is the teacher.’ Finally, one pre-service teacher used the metaphoric expression of ‘God’ or ‘higher’ power who provides spiritual piece and the balance of heart and mind’, to describe the role of the school psychologist.

The school psychologist’s and school staff’s expectations of the school psychologist’s role

According to prospective teachers’ metaphors, the school psychologist wishes to ‘... diagnose pupil’s problems and try to remedy them’ and ‘... guide, consult, help and motivate pupils’. S/he also wishes to ‘... create appropriate learning conditions for students’ and ‘... approach pupils in an integral and honest way to help them achieve a spiritual and psychological balance.’ The school psychologist anticipates that each pupil will ‘... explore and expose his/her feelings about him/herself and others. S/he wants to guide pupils to a better understanding of themselves, in order to accept themselves, become mature and solve their problems.’ In addition, the school psychologist anticipates ‘... helping teachers with topics related to school psychology, which s/he is well aware of’, ‘...solving the problems which school staff might have and satisfying their needs’ and word for word ‘... contributing to the moral, emotional and mental development of people who ask his/her advise.’ In one prospective teacher’s words ‘... the conductor (the school psychologist) wants to achieve musical harmony through his/her directions. A mistake s/he might make or the wrong note from the musicians will destroy the music. Moreover, in case of a wrong note s/he will help the ‘solo’ musicians to remedy their mistakes.’

At the same time, school staff want ‘... a consultant who will make them feel safe and secure’ and ‘...a person who will give them guidance on matters which trouble them.’ They need someone to ‘... work with them to achieve common goals,’ and ‘... a person who behaves in a socially acceptable way and becomes a paradigm for others.’ School members ‘... want to trust the school psychologist and act on his/her guidance. The school psychologist will help them to understand themselves, to release themselves from their constraints, face and solve their problems’ and ‘... learn how to improve themselves and others.’ On the other
hand, two participants argued that ‘… people who co-operate with the school psychologist might not understand his/her actual role.’ ‘Pupils approach the school psychologist because they have been referred to him/her, while teachers and parents are curious about his/her recommendations.’

**Variability of the conditions in which the school psychologist’s role is undertaken**

The pictures which prospective teachers described were characterised by silent power, mobility and energy, implying the variability of conditions in which the school psychologist functions. Regardless of the topic, pictures were full of life and a constant shift between intensity and tranquillity. All but four participants perceived their metaphoric picture as changing constantly. ‘The picture is full of passion, power, mobility and a variety of emotions’. The picture changes ‘in a stable and careful way’. ‘Change is continuous and developmental’. The variability is encountered depending on who is in charge – the school psychologist or another person. ‘Sometimes the school psychologist is the leader, while at other times someone else plays this role, depending on the situation.’ It is also encountered in the school psychologist’s instructions, ‘… the picture changes according to the effectiveness of the school psychologist’s intervention and its reflection of his/her response to the children’ and lastly, in people’s needs and the variability of people and conditions, in general. For one pre-service teacher the picture is ‘…not exactly static. It is as though the record player has got stuck, and is playing the same song over and over again, without ever managing to reach the end.’

**Prospective teachers’ feelings about the school psychologist’s role**

The question related to prospective teachers’ feelings when confronting their metaphor, elicited a variety of emotional responses concerning the school psychologist’s role, his/her responsibilities and the outcome of his/her intervention with pupils. Specifically, pre-service teachers described feelings of:

- **happiness and safety**: ‘... a picture without a school psychologist produces feelings of concern. The school psychologist’s presence in the picture enhances balance and harmony, and evokes feelings of safety.’ ‘… Knowing that the school psychologist, teacher and students can co-operate and help each
other makes me happy.’ ‘... The friendly atmosphere and the absolute co-
operation make me feel sure of the outcome.’ ‘... It is nice to know that there
is someone (the school psychologist) who intends to help, inform and get to
know these people (students and teachers)’ or ‘... that students can talk to a
person (the school psychologist), whom they can trust’;
- deep emotion: ‘... it is comforting to know that there are people who can help
you’;
- desire: ‘... to participate in that team of people (students and the school
psychologist) someday’;
- satisfaction: ‘... the school psychologist works hard and tries to do his/her best
and complete his/her mission’;
- surprise: ‘... at the school psychologist’s energy, education and
effectiveness’;
- hope and optimism: ‘... for the resolution of problems in the future’;
- pleasure and fulfilment: ‘... since the situation described in the picture is ideal
for me’; but also
- fear and concern: about the effectiveness and the outcome of the school
psychologist’s intervention ‘...to bring about the restoration of calm in the
soul’. ‘... Sometimes the school psychologist’s task is meaningless and does
not actually reach the heart of the problem.’ ‘... I realise how difficult the task
of both the school psychologist and the teacher is, since they have to face a
group of people with different destinations in life’. Furthermore, students
expressed their concern about the real picture in Greek schools ‘... the
metaphoric image is nice. The question is whether there is such a picture in
Greek schools. Most of the time, the school psychologist is the dominator
and students are under his/her influence.’

Discussion

This study revealed that the majority of prospective teachers (86.4%) per-
ceived the school psychologist as being a member of the school community,
who actually participates in school life, aiming to achieve common educational
goals. There were however 13.5 percent of teachers who perceived the school
psychologist as being isolated from the school community, yet ready to inter-
vene and contribute to the school’s welfare, when necessary. When the school
psychologist was perceived as interacting with school staff, the majority of pre-
service teachers (77.9%) considered the school psychologist’s role to be
prominent and central, while 3 teachers considered the teacher’s role to be
fundamental and one participant considered both roles to be equal. The findings
concerning both the school psychologist’s function within the school setting, and his/her role being perceived as more prominent than that of the teacher’s, concur with previous research; where 50 percent of prospective psychologists perceived the school psychologist to function in conjunction with school personnel, maintain the central role in the school community (Poulou, in press, b). This conclusion seems rather optimistic on the surface, since prospective psychologists and teachers share similar views about the central role of the school psychologist. It also seems to overturn past research findings concerning the differentiation in teachers’ and psychologists’ perceptions of the school psychologist’s role (Roberts, 1970; Fenn, 1977; Bowen and Dalton, 1981). However, the identity of the teachers’ and the school psychologist’s role and the clarification of their limits of action, may be a cause for concern. The perception of the school psychologist’s prominent role might erroneously lead to the conclusion that teachers play a secondary or passive role, while they exercise no authority or power in the school setting. As one prospective teacher accurately stated ‘... the school psychologist’s role seems to be central and dominating in the picture. The people surrounding the school psychologist should be more active.’ Concerning the quality of relationships, the majority of prospective teachers who perceived the school psychologist as leader of the school community (50.8%) described a picture of mutual interaction and co-operation between school psychologists and school staff.

There was however, a relatively high percentage of prospective teachers (27.1%) who described the school psychologist’s role as authoritative and prescriptive, exercising control over pupils and school staff. It is obvious that such a belief held by prospective teachers might undermine their future co-operation and communication with school psychologists. In addition, there was a percentage of 32.3% of prospective teachers who included only the school psychologist and the pupils in their metaphorical picture, with no reference to teachers or to other school staff. When other people were added to the picture, which is true in the case of 27 of the pre-service teachers (45.7%), it was not always clear whether these people were teachers, parents or other members of the school staff. This result causes further concern, since teachers actually excluded themselves from psychologist- pupil interaction, assuming a strict dyadic relationship between the school psychologist and the children. Moreover, it is consistent with the result of Duis et al.’s (1995) research, in which 85 percent of pre-service teachers examined, had never spoken to a school psychologist, and many felt they needed a better understanding of their role in consultation. It is also congruent with Mucha’s (1994) survey, which revealed the need for better personal communication among school psychologists and teachers during consultation.
At this point, the role of teacher training programmes becomes apparent. These programmes aim to enhance teachers’ professional identity on the one hand, and to inform prospective teachers about the roles and services of other professionals who also function within the school, on the other. Moreover, both teacher and school psychologist’s training programmes aim to create an atmosphere of healthy communication and co-operation between teachers and psychologists, in order to achieve their common educational goals successfully, through their different but equally important roles. As Oakland and Saigh (1987) stated, the organisation of education is analogous to a family, whose members differ in knowledge, responsibilities and authority. These members convene at an irregularly shaped table, providing them with different degrees of power.

Furthermore, according to teachers’ perceptions, the school psychologist anticipates helping students to solve their problems and to achieve mental and psychological development and at the same time, facilitating teachers in completing their task. On the other hand, members of the school community regard the school psychologist as a consultant, a person whom they can trust and co-operate with to achieve improvement in both themselves and their students.

In addition, the school psychologist’s task is carried out under continually changing circumstances. The mobility and variability of the school psychologist’s working conditions depend on the degree of his/her power in the educational setting, the effectiveness of his/her intervention and the endogenous variability of people’s needs, in general.

Confronted with their metaphoric picture, prospective teachers described a variety of emotional responses, ranging from feelings of safety and satisfaction underpinned by the school psychologist’s presence at school and his/her co-operation with school staff, to feelings of fear and concern about the outcome of his/her intervention.

Certain limitations of this research should be mentioned before discussing the implications of the study. Random sampling was not used in selecting the prospective teachers, because their availability influenced their selection as participants. Taking into consideration the small sample, we can argue that this study only consists of an indicative report of prospective teachers’ perceptions of the school psychologist’s role. Additional studies are needed to explore psychologists’, teachers’, students’ and school staff’s views on this topic. Furthermore, the methodological tool used in the study resulted in the use of only one particular form of analogy, which only involved people instead of other analagical systems. Although metaphor enhances awareness of prospective teachers’ latent perceptions, it is no panacea. In Perrin’s (1987) words, ‘Metaphor opens us to experience in certain ways and closes us in others. It invites us to
participate in the constitution of reality, while at the same time, barring us from the consideration of rival alternatives.’

This study attempted to give an insight to prospective teachers’ perceptions of the school psychologist’s role, by using their own language. As prospective teachers begin to become aware of their beliefs and expectations through the metaphors they use, a foundation of reflection is provided. Tobin (1990) asserted that through reflection, teachers can better understand the conflicts between and within their roles and beliefs, and where change is most needed. Tobin further continued that reconceptualising a role in terms of a new metaphor activates an entirely different set of beliefs and perceptions. Apparently, the alteration of tacit beliefs or implicit theory is not an easy task (Matsagouras, 2001). Beliefs and practice cannot simply change through exhortation, technology or a series of workshops (Papoulia-Tzelepi, Spinthourakis, 2000). Teacher educators can however assist prospective teachers in making their private belief system and their cognitive frames of reference explicit. They are in the unique position of being able to discover the images prospective teachers use to conceptualise their role and their professional identity in relation to the school psychologist. Teachers educators can then trace potential problems in prospective teachers’ metaphors and help them generate alternative ways of viewing their roles and the roles of other professionals as well.

On the other hand, school psychologists’ awareness of prospective teachers’ perceptions may be an important component of perceived effectiveness of their own role, and may add to the expansion of their professional identity. It is crucial that school psychologists be aware of these perceptions, particularly when there are discrepancies in the determination of roles. In that case, school psychologists and teachers would find it prudent to negotiate their responsibilities and activities, in order to reach a common understanding and an effective plan of action. After all, teachers perceive the school psychologist’s role as essential in the completion of their task and they consider co-operation between the two as beneficial to the educational process (Poulou, in press, b). At the same time, provided that they are appropriately trained, school psychologists are in a unique position for helping teachers, students and their families (Burden, 1994).

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CONFLICT AND DEMOCRACY EDUCATION IN PALESTINE

MAHER Z. HASHWEH

Abstract – This paper describes the conflict situations that teachers and students faced when a new problem- and case-based approach to democracy education was used in Palestine. The data for the study were six documentary cases written by teachers who participated in the three-year project, supplemented by the observations and interpretations of the author as a participant observer. The study describes how dedicated and tactful teachers generally succeeded to teach democracy in a largely undemocratic context, and shows that teaching democracy in the manner described perturbed the system, and students and teachers were faced with internal and external conflict situations. These conflict situations sometimes facilitated radical change in the knowledge, beliefs, and behavior of teachers and students. The study underscores the importance of internal cognitive and emotional conflict, in addition to external conflict, in learning, as well as draws attention to the dialectical relation between teachers’ efforts to introduce educational change and their own change and professional development.

Introduction

Democracy can be viewed as an important means for the peaceful resolution or management of conflict in a society. It is also a means, for individuals and groups, to influence decision making, that is, to affect change in reality through the use of dialogue and rational debate in order to persuade others and to defend positions, as well as through political participation and activism. Democracy education, to be authentic, has to use these processes of democracy as processes of teaching and learning. However, whereas democracy advocates have largely stressed the role of democracy in the resolution of already-existing conflicts, this article shows that teaching and learning about democracy in Palestine, within a case-based approach that encourages problem-solving, critical thinking, and active participation, emphasizes the creation of conflict, in an already conflict-laden area. The role of those involved in democracy education, students and teachers alike, becomes to face these external and internal conflicts. In some important cases, the protagonists undergo radical change in attempting to resolve these conflicts. The main aim of the present paper is to describe how courageous, dedicated, and tactful teachers can surmount the obstacles to teaching democracy in a generally
undemocratic context, and to show how teachers who were involved in a
democracy education project in Palestine, as well as their students, faced conflict
situations that sometimes facilitated radical change in their knowledge, beliefs, or
behavior. The paper also aims to underscore the importance of internal cognitive
and emotional conflict, in addition to external conflict, in learning, as well as to
draw attention to the dialectical relation between teachers’ efforts to introduce
educational change and their own change and professional development.

The study was based on the assumption that democracy can be taught in the
basically undemocratic context of developing countries, and more specifically the
Arab States. The situation in Palestine is even the more exceptional one of
teaching democracy in a stateless and colonized society. To what degree is this
assumption justified? There is a long debate in the educational literature about the
causal relationships between educational and societal change. Many, if not most
educators, have argued that social change leads educational change, and that
education, and schools in particular, play an essentially conservative role of
maintaining the *status quo* and recreating the socio-economic structure in
societies. Arab educators (Watfah, 1996, for example) have seen educational
institutions, in Durkheim’s (1956) perspective, as microcosms of the larger society that produced them, and consequently, they carry society’s characteristics and act as tools to sustain that social order. Bowles and Gintis’ (1976) seminal study showed how schools in America served to reproduce the economic and social capitalist structure. Watfah (1996) reviewed other French studies in the same strand. That schools play a conservative role in maintaining the *status quo* is largely accepted now. Accepting this position leads to a pessimistic view about the role of education in inducing change, and to a skeptical position about attempts to teach democracy in undemocratic societies.

Most of the writings about education and child-raring practices in the Arab States can be classified in this strand since they analyzed Arab culture and society to identify its undemocratic ‘character’ and revealed how this culture affects schooling on the one hand, and how schooling, on the other hand, helps maintain the present culture and society. The leading intellectuals who have criticized Arab culture, home-rearing practices, and schools as barriers to democracy have been Sharabi (1975, 1987) and Barakat (1984). Sharabi, for example, pointed out to the patriarchal structure of Arab society, and identified child-rearing and schooling practices that reflect and maintain this society. Barakat identified many traditional values that are in dissonance with democratic values, attitudes and habits of mind. More recently, Watfa (1996, 1999) has shown how the authoritarian culture is reflected in, and maintained by, the family and the school relations and practices. Watfa (1999), additionally, reviewed a diverse and rich literature in the Arab States that addresses these issues. Watfa concluded that authoritarianism is closely
related to the patriarchal structure of Arab societies, that Arab culture emphasizes obedience of the young to the old, that schools train students to become obedient and submissive by embodying these values in student-teacher relations. Al-Naqib (1993) agrees that the role of schools is to develop blind obedience in students and, consequently, to facilitate their acceptance of prevalent societal values and ideology. Other educators have gone further to empirically study the effects of patriarchal relationships on student learning outcomes, for example, on the scientific attitudes of school students (Heidar, 1996).

However, other educators have pointed to the liberating and progressive role of education. There is an important aspect of education that addresses the mind, and that aims to develop intellectual abilities even in a predominantly conservative education context. This, sometimes unintended, by-product of education leads to the development of critical individuals who can reflect on the status quo and work for change. The role of education in promoting social mobility, economic and political development, and modernity in the Developing World in general is known (e.g., Fagerlind & Saha, 1989). Bahlool (1997), in one of the very few books that addressed education and democracy in the Arab States, took this more optimistic position, and argued that ‘every change in society or the political system presupposes change at the individual level’ (p.82). He opposed revolutionary or radical instantaneous changes because some members of the new élite will be prone ‘to the same shortcomings that were present in the society that produced the élite and in the social culture which the élite is trying to overcome’ (pp.82-83). The alternative, according to Bahlool, is in education: ‘positively affecting any individual in the society is like lighting a candle … [because] the individual is the starting point just as he is the end point’ (p.83).

It is unnecessary to accept either of the two positions in this dualism concerning the relations between social and educational change in order to teach about democracy in predominantly undemocratic contexts. Indeed, it is un-useful to ask the question at this level of generality. The relations are far more complex. For example, most studies assume the existence of one Arab culture. Knowing that there is one dominant culture and many sub-cultures in most societies, the question becomes: which culture is the educational system reflecting and maintaining? In Jordan, for example, can we neglect the differences between a rich private school in West Amman and another rural one in the Jordan Valley? Can we speak, also, about one culture in Palestine, Yemen and Morocco? Can we also reliably assert that the Arab culture is predominantly patriarchal, and take this as our starting point in the study of education and society in the Arab world? Heidar’s (1996) aforementioned study revealed that students in this ‘patriarchal’ society nevertheless believed that there was no intellectual authoritarianism, that is, they could express their differences of opinions with their parents and elders. Hence,
there were no clear relations between some of the proposed components of patriarchal relations. Additionally, this dualism assumes that powerful forces in the society completely control schooling practices and other means of enculturation, which is not completely true. Schools can be considered as sites for struggles between different groups in society, representing different interests and ideologies. Finally, the individual in these studies is portrayed as a passive receiver of culture and not as an active and selective constructor of his or her knowledge, a learner who is autonomous and who learns in collaboration with others and through acting on the world, that is an individual who acts and interacts in society and not merely an end-receiver of knowledge and values. In light of these considerations, and in light of the world interest in democracy, and the pro-democracy official discourse in many Arab States, educators and teachers have a significant margin of freedom to experiment with teaching democracy in these States. In my opinion, this debate about the causal effects between societal and educational change will not be resolved at the academic level, but rather will be determined by the results of struggles at the concrete level of practice in schools and other institutes of learning, and it is in this spirit that the study was undertaken.

The Democracy Education Project

The Democracy Education Project was a three-year project that started in September 1998. During the first year of the Project nine high school teachers from private, public, and UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Welfare Agency) schools in the Ramallah area of the West Bank participated in a year-long workshop that met on a weekly basis. During the first semester of the academic year, the teachers were exposed to the philosophy, theoretical bases, and teaching methods of a case-based approach to democracy education. They collaborated, under the leadership of a university-based researcher, in designing a case-based unit. During the second semester they taught the unit in their respective ninth grade classrooms, and continued to meet on a weekly basis to reflect on the teaching of the preceding week, and to plan for the teaching of the forthcoming week.

The teaching unit presented a case about punishment of students in schools, and used it as an anchor for collaborative student learning about various elements of democracy, such as citizenship, the rule of law, the separation of powers, the legislative process, accountability, and basic rights. The teachers agreed upon a set of design criteria to guide the development and teaching of the case. Among these were the necessity of building the case using local events or issues, the use of a problem-based approach, the need for the case to provide a base for creating a
community of learners, and the requirement that students explicitly plan their investigations before conducting any research. In teaching the unit, students started working as one group to identify problems and questions raised by the case. Consequently, the students worked in small groups to answer questions related to certain elements of democracy, such as the rule of law, or citizenship. Using the jigsaw method, (a method that allows regrouping of students so that each of the students in the new group is an ‘expert’ on a subtopic, but knows very little on other subtopics), the students were finally re-arranged in new groups to propose solutions to the original problems raised by the case. The teaching of the case lasted for about 16 class periods – a detailed description of this phase of the Project is found in Hashweh & Njoum (2001).

In the second year of the Project the teachers collaborated in designing five more case-based teaching units. During the first semester of the third year each of six teachers taught one case-based unit in one of the grades nine to 11. During the second semester each of the teachers wrote a documentary case to describe and analyze some aspects of her or his experience in teaching the case-based unit. The teachers continued to meet on a weekly basis throughout the two academic years to reflect and deliberate on their work – the teaching cases and the documentary cases are included in Hashweh (in press).

The six teachers who participated in the three-year Project held Bachelors Degrees (two held Masters Degrees), had teaching experiences ranging from five to 14 years, and their ages ranged from 27 to 38 years. They were teachers of Arabic, English, Social Studies, Mathematics or Physics at grades ranging between seven and 12. The teachers taught in coeducational schools, except in one case where the school was a girls’ school. Whereas in the kind of quantitative work used in this study the aim is not to test generalizations, and hence, there is usually no effort to choose representative samples of a certain population, I was conscious of the need to choose schools that are not unique in the Palestinian context as well. The inclusive private schools and the UNRWA school that were selected had students representing the different religious and socioeconomic diversity found in Ramallah. Additionally, there is no reason to believe that there is a local particularity to Ramallah, in the sense that its teachers and students would be different from those in other areas of the West Bank.

The main source for data for this paper came from the six teacher-written documentary cases. I also used my notes and experience as a participant observer in the Project to supplement the accounts portrayed in the teachers’ cases. I chose accounts that portray conflict situations faced by students and teachers, that describe how they confronted these situations, and that depict the results of these confrontations. I start by describing the emotional conflict described by teachers participating in the Project. I then describe conflict situations at three levels,
starting with the community and system level, moving to the school level, and finally to the classroom level, concentrating at this last level due to its importance in influencing the learning and development of both students and teachers.

**Teacher emotional conflict**

While the educational literature has described teachers’ prior beliefs and conceptions (for example, Prawat, 1992; Hashweh, 1996), and the cognitive conflict that sometimes faces teachers during learning and professional development, there is almost no mention of the emotional conflict and anxiety that seem to accompany (or underlie) learning when teachers are involved in educational reform. Most of the six teachers mentioned their fears, hesitations, or anxieties in the cases they wrote. One of the teachers wrote almost at the beginning of her case: ‘I felt afraid from the new experience about which I was to embark.’ Another wrote: ‘I could not reveal my fears to my students, but informed them that I was not an expert on the different facets of democracy.’ One of the main reasons for the anxiety was that the teachers were not very familiar with the subject-matter that they were to teach, as the last quote reveals; only the social studies teacher felt she was well-prepared to teach democracy. The same teacher quoted above started her case by writing: ‘The beginning of the Project was very difficult for me. As a teacher of physics I did not have the necessary background to teach democracy. I felt I was the least qualified person to teach this subject.’

However, others were anxious about using the new student-centered teaching methods, methods that were in contradiction with the traditional teacher-centered methods that they usually used, and that required new roles for students and teachers, and new beliefs about these roles. A third teacher wrote: ‘I was highly hesitant … I was not familiar with the new teaching methods, teaching through the use of self learning, or self-service classrooms as I like to call them, where you divide students into groups, re-divide these groups and re-group them in new groups, and additional groups until you lose your mind… I was highly skeptical about the efficiency of this method, thinking that it is not appropriate for our school students. It might be appropriate for graduate students, or maybe for special students who are serious, industrious and motivated.’ He added later: ‘We agreed to use the new methods to teach democracy. And I saw a similarity between using the small group approach and the teaching of democracy; both ideas were somewhat alien to our society. Learning in small groups, when the educational system has made the use of traditional teaching methods in languages, social sciences, mathematics and science scripture, will meet the same degree of surprise and estrangement as teaching about the concept and meaning of democracy, with
its related elements such as accountability, separation of powers, and diversity, under an [Palestinian] authority that has not heard about such terms, or an [Israeli] occupation that has not the slightest regard to democracy and human rights.’

With such hesitation, skepticism, and anxiety among the teachers the question arises as to what motivated them to participate in such a Project. The main motivation seems to have come from the desire of these self-selected teachers to develop professionally. Many simply wanted to improve their practice. One teacher wrote: ‘Curiosity and the desire to change my teaching style that has not changed since I became a teacher in the present school six years ago motivated me to risk joining this Project.’ However, the more important motivation seems to have occurred when the teacher realized a gap between his or her existing practice and some ideals and goals that she or he held (see also Atkin, 1992; for a detailed description of teacher learning in this context see Hashweh, in preparation). Another teacher, Afaf – who had a black-belt in karate – wrote that she had successfully used coercion and intimidation to control her students, and later realized that this is not how she wanted to treat her students. She added: ‘This situation began to bother, even suffocate, me.’ This motivation, expressed as a desire to resolve a conflict between the actual and the ideal, set off a variety of emotions such as guilt and apprehension among some teachers. These emotions are depicted most clearly in two cases by two female teachers who co-taught a unit. One of the cases described the teacher’s experience in teaching the unit, while the other described the first teacher’s development as observed and perceived by the other. The two teachers confess to each other about their mutual hesitations and apprehensions at the beginning of the Project, and offer mutual support to deal with these emotions. One of them, for instance, wrote about the other: ‘Afaf told me she could not sleep last night. She was particularly troubled because she believed her students did not have the abilities necessary to succeed in the required activities. ‘Can they learn autonomously? Can they use the democracy concepts to understand and analyze reality, or to take positions and defend these positions? Can they debate and convince others about their views? I do not believe ninth grade students can analyze cases, pose questions, and come up with recommendations,’ she asked.’ We notice from the case that the other teacher’s confidence helped Afaf gain confidence. Afaf also used her colleague to express her ideas and emotions, and to think aloud in order to organize her thoughts, and to reflect on these ideas and emotions, and not necessarily to seek answers from her colleague.

Afaf, as shown in her colleague’s case, realized right from the beginning a discrepancy between the way she treated her students and the teaching of democracy. She expected her student to confront her with this contradiction, and indeed, she wrote in her own case that one of her students exclaimed: ‘Are you
going to teach us about democracy! You are the last person who could do that. As a teacher you only order us around. Your gaze is enough to frighten us, and no student dares to stand up to you. You are a dictatorial teacher.’ This serves to heighten her sense of guilt. The other teacher wrote in her documentary case that Afaf became greatly critical of her behavior towards her students. She adds that Afaf whispered to her: ‘Why am I feeling that I have committed a crime? All other teachers do the same. Maybe I was a little bit stricter, but they did the same. I should take the whole thing more lightly.’

The weekly meetings that the participant teachers attended helped to provide the mutual support to face these emotions; each discovered that she is not the only one with apprehensions or problems, and that ‘we’re all in this together.’ We often were also able to jointly discuss different solutions to the problems faced by the teachers. The professional climate that characterized these meetings, with emphasis on openness, constructive criticism, and provision of help, facilitated this process, although teachers varied in their willingness to put their thoughts, feelings, and practices on the ‘examination table.’ The long period of the Project also helped in building trust between the participants. This sense of trust was very important to the learning process of the teachers, since it allowed them the opportunity to express their ideas and feelings, to discuss them, and to construct or accept new ones when needed. (See also Brown, 2001, and Maria, 2000, who emphasize the importance of trust in learning in very different contexts).

This process of expressing one’s ideas and feeling to others became even more difficult for some when they started writing their documentary cases. One teacher told us that writing the case made her feel like getting naked in front of others. In spite of this, this particular teacher saw great value in the discussions during the weekly meetings. When a teacher posed a problem that she faced for discussion and saw how another views it from a different perspective or a third proposes solutions that she had not thought about, this allows her to reconstruct her experience and to deepen her understanding, and, simultaneously, this allows her to realize the importance of discourse in knowledge creation, or the social construction of knowledge.

Although the initial motivation to join the Project was a desire to develop professionally, at later stages it appears that the nature of this motivation might have changed. In light of the profound difficulties that some met at the initial stages of implementation, the main motive to continue was perhaps the sense of obligation to continue or the avoidance of the embarrassment of withdrawing. One teacher wrote: ‘I did not know whether there was any point to what I was doing or whether it was all in vain – periods lost with nothing achieved. I had no choice: I had started the Project, and I had to complete it.’ When the same teacher achieved success at the end of the Project she was exuberant: ‘Samer [one of her students
who had initially displayed negative attitudes towards democracy and its study] has changed his mind, and this was something I had never expected. This was a great achievement for me, and I felt the delight of success.’ The final motivator for all teachers was sensing indicators that their students had learned, better understood a concept, became more skillful, or developed positive attitudes toward the subject matter they were teaching. Although monitoring student involvement in classroom activities was initially used by teachers to assess their teaching effectiveness, student learning was finally the main yardstick with which they assessed their success or failure.

The cases were revealing in illuminating the emotional states, goals and motivation of the participant teachers, and they indicate that teacher learning, like student learning, is warm and whole, and quite different from the cold cognitive learning that is usually described and analyzed.

**Conflict at the educational system and community level**

The six teachers involved in the Project were granted permission to teach the democracy unit using class periods that were usually assigned to civic education, social studies, or library. Nevertheless, the teachers felt under enormous pressure to finish teaching the unit in the minimal amount of time in order not to affect the coverage of the curriculum they were usually teaching. Education Ministry supervisors, principals, and parents expected teachers to teach the official curriculum, and to use the textbooks authored and published by the Ministry, as in many other countries in the area, and attempts to change this *status quo* were sometimes perceived as subversive. Since we had secured permission from the administration of the different school systems and the principals for the Project, the teachers met few problems with the administration. However, some teachers failed to communicate well with the parents about the goals and methods of the Project, and this created some conflict situations for them.

This conflict is well documented in Afaf’s case:

‘One day Farah, one of my students, started crying in class. I learned, upon questioning her, that her father had found out she was studying about democracy. He wanted to forbid her from going to school, and tore up all the materials and papers she had for the Project. He said he did not send her to school to study such principles. When she argued with him he became more furious, attributing her willingness to argue with him and to disobey him to the democracy education Project. She added that her father was coming to see me and the school principal.'
The second day Farah’s father came to the school, accompanied with some of the members of the executive committee of the Parent’s Council [the Parent-Teacher Association]. I, and the principal, met with them. The father was very angry and spoke in an offensive and harsh manner. He accused me of inciting the girls to rebel against their parents. He explained that democracy is in contradiction with our Islamic faith, and that it helps girls stand up to their parents and to do what they wish. Finally, he added that he thinks I should concentrate on teaching the basics, language and mathematics, rather than this democracy stuff.

The teacher continues to describe how a member of the Executive Committee, an Islamic cleric who had come to the meeting upon the father’s request but who had not been previously informed about the nature of the problem, disagreed with the father, and showed how Islam is compatible with democracy and women’s rights. At the end of a long meeting the father reluctantly agreed to allow his daughter to continue studying the democracy unit.

While this case describes how some parents objected to the content of the unit, other cases describe how they objected to the teaching methods used. One teacher wrote that students and parents accused him of not teaching any more: ‘I heard one student say that this method of teaching is easy for teachers since we now have to do all the work while the teachers take the credit for our learning. In other schools parents complained to the administrations, and questioned the teacher’s role, and even cast doubt on the teacher’s competencies in some cases.’

**Conflict at the school level**

The conflict situations at the school level were no less serious than those at the larger context level. Afaf’s case describes how she managed to convince her principal to grant her permission to teach the democracy unit without affecting the principal’s sense of grandiose, after the later was offended that the teacher knew about the Project before her. The same case describes how Afaf got in trouble with her students in other classes who accused her of bias in selecting one particular section to study about democracy and neglecting other sections. She also described how she was able to change her behavior when interacting with students in the class section that studied the democracy unit but not with students in other sections, and the dilemma that she faced. Another teacher described how she was put in a conflict situation with one of her colleagues:
‘Democracy is still freedom to most of the students even after all they had studied about the principles and elements of democracy. Whenever they wanted to do whatever they liked they justified it by saying that this is democracy – being free, complete freedom with no accountability or constraints by law. This caused a big problem with the history teacher. He had planned to discuss democracy as part of the history course he was teaching. When he reached that unit they accused him of treating them in an undemocratic manner. They insisted that as part of democracy they should decide on what they should study and how to learn it. The teacher talked to me about this incident in the teachers’ room, and accused me of inciting his students to rebel against him. Although he was initially harsh, he mellowed down when I told him about the Project, about the tenacious misconceptions that the students held about democracy, and about my efforts to confront these misconceptions.’

While the cases describe these external conflict situations that the teachers were put into, they also show how tactful and dedicated teachers can manage to face these situations, and reach resolutions that break down the barriers to educational innovations.

Conflict at the class level

Conflict at the class level was the most difficult for teachers and students alike, and while it was sometimes manifested as external conflict between teachers and students or amongst students, the more important kind of conflict was internal. Teaching and learning about democracy introduced internal conflict and sometimes necessitated radical changes in the thoughts and behaviors of students and teachers alike. Learning, in this context, was not solely additive and cumulative, but was occasionally characterized by qualitative changes in the learners’ thoughts and behaviors. I shall start by briefly describing one conflict situation that affected student learning, and later describe situations that affected teacher learning in more detail – a more detailed description and analysis of these situations is found in Hashweh (in press).

Students’ conceptions about democracy

I have chosen to describe and discuss one illustration of a conflict situation that faced students and teachers resulting from the students’ prior conceptions about democracy and attitudes towards it. It is revealing that most of the six
documentary cases show that students came to the study of democracy with already-held ideas about and attitudes towards democracy. Some of these conceptions were sophisticated. In the case written by Afaf she described how her students equated democracy with freedom and freedom of choice. They were also adept at seeing the gap between the reality at home, the school, and the larger society on one hand, and how things should be in a democracy on the other hand. However, the cases also reveal that many students held inaccurate conceptions and negative attitudes. Many, for example, thought democracy means complete freedom unrestrained by law or accountability. They believed that the only restraint should be internal, that is self-control. This, of course, makes many of the elements of democracy, such as legislation, the rule of law, and accountability, unnecessary.

When the students started to discuss the teaching cases presented to them, and to read about the different element of democracy, many faced conflict between their prior inadequate conceptions of democracy, on the one hand, and reality as described in the case and the readings about democracy on the other hand. One teacher wrote her case focusing on these prior conceptions, the ensuing conflicts, and the results of these conflicts. Samer, one of her outspoken students, initially defined democracy as ‘the freedom of a person to do whatever he likes within a certain framework.’ When she asked him to explain what he meant by that, he answered that there are certain persons who do not know where the boundaries on their freedom lie. He made it clear that restrictions on behavior should be internal only. When discussing the political process in Palestine he saw no need for accountability: ‘As long as we have chosen our authorities through elections, they are authorized after that to do what they deem appropriate, to chose the means that they find suitable.’ The case that this particular class studied was about consuming expired canned food (sardines), and the health problem that this caused. Students discussed the causes of the problem, and how to solve it, discussing issues about who should be held responsible for the presence of expired food in food stores, the separation of power, the adequacy of legislations and how to influence legislation, and the rule of law. One important piece of information in the case, that some middle-level person in the Palestinian Authority might have had some connections with the distribution of expired food products, caused conflict for Samer. Towards the end of studying the unit, the teacher was surprised by the change in Samer’s position:

‘The most important result was that Samer discarded his belief that democracy is freedom. When we were discussing the separation [and balance] of powers Samer said: ‘No authority should have absolute power.’ I replied, repeating what he had said a few weeks earlier: ‘As long as we have chosen our authority and government
through elections, aren’t they free to do what they like after that?’ Samer answered passionately, ‘No. democracy is not absolute freedom. What if these rulers abandoned the principles they were proclaiming during election? Do we leave them to play havoc with our society? Do we leave them to import expired food products for the poor people who believed in them?’

Teachers’ beliefs about students

Most teachers held two prior beliefs about students, as evidenced by the cases they wrote, beliefs that they were required to reconsider when they faced cognitive conflict during the teaching of the case-based democracy unit. The first belief was that students characteristics were stable across time and domain. A ‘smart’ student will stay smart in the future, and if he/she is smart in languages then he/she will be smart in other subjects, such as mathematics, as well. These stable characteristics or traits might be intelligence, motivation, effort, or distinction. In one case the teacher worried that a student displayed negative attitudes towards democracy, and expected that he would not change his attitudes. In another story the teacher candidly describes her surprise when a student, who was poor in mathematics, demonstrated strengths in other areas when working in a small group:

‘As I had expected, the students in each group chose one of the good students as a group coordinator except for one group, where the students chose Samar who was a very poor student in mathematics. I couldn’t but express my surprise to this group asking: ‘You have been chosen by the group?’ I was curious, and asked each group what criteria they had used to choose the coordinator. Each group answered that they chose the student because she was a good student, except for Samar’s groups. They told me that Samar was a good student in Arabic, and that she wrote short stories and poems, and that is why they had chosen her. I did not know what to answer. I had thought she doesn’t understand anything. … I kept a close eye on Samar’s group to observe how she conducts herself. I wasn’t sure why I did that. Was I feeling guilty about my hasty judgment and the way I had treated her in the past? Or did I want to prove to myself that I was right?’

Samar surprised the teacher again by proving to be the best coordinator in the class. In a third story a teacher described his skepticism about small group work.
He added that he expected students ‘who are industrious and study under traditional teaching methods will maintain the same standards under any other teaching method’. He was surprised when he saw three ‘poor’ students, who hardly participated in any class activity during his Arabic periods, the stars of an after-school basketball game to which he went for the first time.

In all three cases we find that what initiated the conflict was the discrepancy the teacher discovered between his or her beliefs, or the expectations based on these beliefs, and a certain incident that occurred while teaching (a student changing his attitude towards democracy, a poor student in mathematics excelling in Arabic, inactive students in Arabic periods becoming the center of activity and attention in a basketball game). This conflict led the teachers to reconsider their initial beliefs about one-dimensional stable intelligence and to appropriate the theory of multiple intelligences that was presented to them in the workshop. In the first case, when she realizes that her student had changed his attitudes towards democracy the teacher wrote: ‘I realized that making prior judgments about the outcomes of teaching is not correct.’ In the second case, the teacher not only changed her beliefs about Samar’s abilities, but used the theory of multiple intelligences to direct the attention of students in another small group to the talents of a girl with low status, in an effort to raise her status and, thus, to engage all students in work. The third teacher displayed an emotional reaction, in addition to the conceptual change that he underwent: ‘This compelled me to reconsider my theories and repertoire of teaching methods … If this energy is available here in the basketball court, why can’t it be available in my class? God how much time I have lost in front of silent, stiff and lifeless benches. Please forgive me God. … I should avoid making prior judgments on behalf of any student. A student can be a good achiever in one area and a poor one in another, or vice versa.’

This change in teachers’ beliefs about student abilities was the most profound change that occurred in their thinking, and we find evidence for its occurrence in five out of the six cases written by the teachers. Two factors facilitated this change: the anomalous events that contradicted with the teachers prior beliefs, and the presence of an alternative belief – the theory of multiple intelligences that was presented to the teachers. The importance of teachers actually engaging in practice and learning from practice has to be stressed, and in particular the dual role of anomalous events – they simultaneously contradict with prior conceptions and lend support to new ones.

The second belief about students that many teachers held was that their students have low abilities. One teacher described them as ‘academically poor,’ while a second described them as ‘not having the intellectual skills necessary for the activities suggested by the Project.’ A third claimed they were unmotivated and not serious. Since the teachers believed their students had low abilities or
motivation to begin with, and since these ‘traits’ do not change with time (the first belief above), then they concluded that they will not learn anything worthwhile as a result of the project. In this case, the teachers’ beliefs changed when they conflicted with reality. One teacher expressed this change best: ‘The outcomes that I got with this class was different from what I had expected. I had thought that I would never succeed with this class no matter what teaching method I use. In reality, I was astounded by the results. How is it that these students who never understand what I explain in class now understand and analyze? How is it that these students, who had never heard a word of praise from me, achieve so well and disprove my hypothesis?’

Teachers’ beliefs about democracy and about discipline

Some teachers shared with their students the belief that democracy means total freedom, and that only self-control should be used to regulate behavior, with no need for external constraints and mechanisms for monitoring and guiding behavior. This does not mean that the teachers did not simultaneously hold sophisticated and accurate conceptions of democracy, but these will not be discussed here. These beliefs interacted with the teachers’ beliefs about classroom management and discipline, and, consequently, are described together in this section. In the first conflict situation I describe, I use the case of Afaf to show how she had to reconsider her beliefs about discipline in light of the contradiction she realized between these beliefs and her beliefs about democracy.

Afaf initially held two salient beliefs about her students and classroom discipline. She believed that student should be well disciplined in class for learning to be effective. She also believed that students do not have adequate self-control to behave properly in class. She used these beliefs to rationalize her initial intimidating behavior towards her students. However, as we saw earlier, she soon realized a conflict between her practice and the implications of her new conceptions of democracy. To treat her students in a more ‘democratic’ manner, she had to change her initial belief about students and believe that they can exercise self-control. Examination of the two cases written by Afaf and by her colleague reveal the important role of dialogue, reflection, and deliberations in allowing Afaf to make the necessary changes in her beliefs, and, accordingly, in her practice. Afaf’s colleague described how Afaf was hesitant throughout the teaching of the democracy unit to allow her students latitude in behavior or expression. Afaf was especially appalled by the criticism that her students made of the school discipline policies and practices, and the alternatives they proposed. She considered them rude. It took her colleague some effort to convince her that this was eventually in the teacher’s own interest: ‘Don’t you see that they have
developed a good understanding of the rights and duties of citizens? You will find it easier to deal with them in the future because they have developed and discussed rules and policies that will act as guidelines for their behavior. They have accepted them, and you will have little discipline problems in the future.’ Afaf, convinced by now that the teaching of democracy would help her students exercise more self-control, changed her behavior. ‘I started to allow them to take part in decision making, especially in issues that were closely related to them,’ she wrote. She added later, ‘The relation between me and my students became a friendship relationship, and we started to deliberate and debate using our minds and logic.’ However, she changed her practice only in that particular section: ‘I could not interact with students in other sections in the same manner because they had not studied the principles of democracy. If I treat them in a manner similar to the one I used in this class I believe they will go overboard in their behavior because they do not know their rights and obligations, and there will be no constraints to check their behavior. My students would be committed to the school regulations because they internally believe in them and not out of fear of me or of punishment. Fear can temporarily induce discipline, but internal self-control, which results from students knowing their rights and duties, is more lasting.’

Another conflict situation occurred when some teachers, upon using small group work, found the sound level in the classroom irritating and unacceptable. Having been used to traditional teacher-directed classrooms, they expected very low noise levels. This conflict between beliefs or expectations and classroom reality again triggered thinking on the teachers’ part. However, and in contrast to the last conflict situation, this conflict did not lead to a change in the teacher’s beliefs or expectations. One teacher discussed this issue in her case at some length. She had problems with the high noise level, especially at the beginning of the period. However, she attributed the high noise level to the use of inappropriate furniture, heavy desks that were hard to move in order to arrange them for small group work. She wrote at the end of her case: ‘All my efforts failed to change the chaos at the beginning of each class period. I realized that the real problem lay in the physical set up of the classroom, and that this should be taken into consideration to provide the necessary environment in the future.’ She did not entertain the idea that a higher noise level, compared to that during traditional teaching, is acceptable, and desirable – no genuine group work can occur without dialogue. This lost opportunity for teacher development occurred because she did not have an alternative to her prior beliefs or expectations. People will not abandon an idea if they do not have an alternative one (see Hashweh, 1986; Posner, Strike, Hewson & Gertzog, 1982 for a discussion of conceptual change in science).

The third conflict situation occurred when teachers wanted their students to express and defend their ideas, and to have the courage to defend their rights as
part of democracy education, yet often found students ‘rude’ when they actually engaged in such practices. The teachers set goals and expectations for student behavior when learning about democracy. However, when the students acted in accordance with these expectations teachers felt uncomfortable because these new student behaviors contradicted teachers’ prior expectations about student behavior. Some of them were not able to draw a line between desirable courageous behavior and rude behavior.

This conflict is evident in Afaf’s case. She wrote: ‘I hated this weakness, docility, and submissiveness to orders that characterized my students… Fear controls their minds and tongues. … How can I make these girls demand that their rights be respected?’ Yet when these girls submitted a proposal that evaluated the existing school discipline policy and demanded amendments, she found them, according to her colleague, radical and rude. Another teacher punished a student when he asked about the final use of the report that his group wrote. The teacher felt that the student was rude, and did not see that the student was worried about his intellectual rights as a coauthor of the report. He could actually have used the incident to discuss intellectual property rights in a democracy rather than punish the student. Again, this is an example of a lost opportunity for teacher learning and development since this teacher did not have the chance to discuss this incident with his colleagues in spite of the design of the Project that included weekly meetings to discuss teaching and to plan for it.

Some teachers believed that democracy entailed that students be engaged in decision making regarding all aspects of teaching, including a say in the content and methods of teaching. I have already pointed out that some students shared the same belief. Some teachers experienced a conflict between this interpretation of the implications of democracy for teaching and learning, and the necessity of teaching a specific unit on democracy using a specific approach, and grouping students in heterogeneous small groups. In many cases the teachers could not resolve this conflict, and we find that they ended their cases struggling with these dilemmas.

Afaf’s case describes how she faced this problem when she tried to divide her students into heterogeneous small groups. High achievers wanted to work together, and refused to have poor achievers in their groups, claiming that the latter will not work hard, and that the group’s grades will consequently be lowered. She informed the students that the way she had grouped the students was final, and not open for discussion. Some students answered, ‘How are we going to study about democracy while you are using your authority as a teacher to enforce decisions from the beginning of the Project?’ The teacher added in her case: ‘In spite of the fact that I completely agreed with what they said, I answered that this grouping was for their own interests, and I ended the discussion.’
Again we notice that when the teacher, Afaf, did not have a chance to discuss this problem with others, that is to deliberate and reflect on her practice, and to be exposed to alternative ideas, she did not change her prior ideas, in this case her beliefs about democracy its implications for teaching. However, as we have seen earlier, the same teacher changed her ideas about student ability to self-control their behavior when she had the chance to discuss the issue with her colleague. As for Afaf’s (and some other teachers’) misconceptions of democracy, she assumed that democracy means providing freedom for choice for every individual in every situation that requires decision making. She was not cognizant that democracy entails freedom of choice within certain constraints. She, and other teachers, could have used such opportunities to discuss the nature of democracy in class, to provide for alternatives within constraints, and to show that the Project actually provides these alternatives. Students, for example, could choose which democracy subtopic (element of democracy, such as rule of law) they wanted to study, what problems and questions to define and pursue, how to answer these questions, and what format their final project should take. She could also have allowed students to have some choice in joining the different groups, as long as each group remained heterogeneous.

**Teachers’ beliefs about democracy education**

Teachers held many beliefs about the aims of democracy education that I shall not try to identify here in full. I shall only emphasis the conflict that some teachers faced when they sensed the gap between the principles of democracy and the Palestinian reality. Teachers faced with such a conflict questioned the value of teaching students about democracy. The teacher who was particularly affected by this conflict was Afaf, who entitled her case ‘Democracy in a Refugee Camp?’ The title reflects the teacher’s doubting the possibility of democratic life or democracy education in a camp. In spite of this initial hesitation, she taught the democracy unit, and was greatly surprised by the success she met. Her students became daring in asking for their rights and defending these rights, which was the most important goal of democracy education for Afaf. We have already mentioned how she found them almost rude when they daringly criticized the status quo regarding school discipline in their school, and suggested modifications in the school policy and regulations. She described incidents that also show the benefits of democracy education for her students.

In the first incident the students wanted to leave school to join in a rally against occupation on a certain day that celebrated a national occasion, but the principal refused to allow them to leave the school. The teacher intervened, and asked her students to discuss the issue with the principal. The students elected some
representatives who negotiated a solution with the principle that allowed the students to join the rally after the fourth period that day. The class discussion after this reflected how students have internalized many of the democracy ideas discussed in class, and how empowered they felt. The episodes provides evidence that the case-based approach had succeeded in helping students acquire knowledge that they can use in their personal and social life, in contrast to the knowledge that they keep in ‘cold storage’ to use only in exams during traditional teaching. The second episode described how one of the students mentioned that they had stopped cheating in mathematics exams after studying the democracy unit, and did not need the teacher to proctor these exams. Afaf seems to have been greatly successful in achieving her important goal of democracy education – inducing student self-control.

Afaf, due to this success she met in teaching democracy, became worried that she had provided her students with a disservice; she believed that her students who were all female, now adamant about protecting their rights, would be faced with problems in the future in a male-controlled and undemocratic society. In reality, these questions reflect Afaf’s views of the aims of education in general: to prepare the individual to adapt to society and maintain the status quo or to change and transform her or his society? Due to her adherence to the first aim she faced a conflict, a dilemma that remained unresolved.

Conclusion

This last incident about Afaf worrying about the future of her students ironically reveals that after three years of participation in the Project, and in spite of the sometimes drastic changes that occurred in her thinking and practice, she has still not realized an important aspect of the Project – mainly, that teachers should and can participate in the struggle in their society to change the status quo. As mentioned in the beginning of this paper, many Arab intellectuals and educators (e.g., Barakat, 1984; Sharabi, 1975, 1987; Watfa, 1996, 1999) have criticized Arab culture and society as patriarchal and authoritarian, and have identified cultural values, home child-rearing and school practices that are barriers to democracy in the Arab World, but have not clearly explained how changing this state of affairs should occur. The main premise of the Project, still not completely realized by the teacher Afaf, is that schools, like other social organizations, are arenas for the struggle between conservative and progressive movements in the society.

Students and teachers have approached democracy education with prior ideas, experiences, and expectations that sometimes stood in contradiction with the ideas concerning democracy and pedagogy that they were exposed to. This had
occasionally triggered cognitive and emotional conflict, and prompted them to undergo examination and reorganization of their mental structure. When teachers faced conflict, and were able to reflect on their prior ideas and to entertain new ideas with the support of their colleagues and Project leader, they underwent important qualitative changes in their ideas and practices, and, therefore, developed professionally. On other occasions, the teachers did not have the chance to think through these conflicts or to consider new alternative ideas, and the conflict did not lead to radical change.

In this article I have emphasized the emotional and cognitive conflicts that the students and teachers faced when learning and teaching about democracy. The cases, however, also replicate the findings of previous studies about the relations between culture, society and schools in the Arab States. In agreement with Al-Naqib (1993) and Watfa (1996, 1999) we found that students and teachers sometimes initially held beliefs about student-teacher interaction and appropriate classroom behavior, and about democracy that reflected an authoritarian culture. Teachers like Afaf continued to struggle with the implications of democracy for student-teacher interactions until the end of her case, and still was uncomfortable with student honest expression of their ideas because she did not completely give up her old emphasis on obedience. She has still not finally resolved the differences between rudeness and civility. It is precisely because the Project necessitated the introduction of new content, pedagogy, and student-teacher relations that were in dissonance with prior practices and beliefs that conflict was created. In contrast to previous studies that emphasized how schools reflect and maintain the culture and the social structure, the cases show how students and teachers were able to undergo important changes in their ideas and behavior. The cases describe classes that did not reflect authoritarian values, but exemplified democratic relations, and were enhancing the process of democratization in Palestinian society.

We have found that teaching democracy occasionally creates conflict. If we view democracy as a tool for struggle, a means of changing reality through resistance and dialogue, then the contradiction between learning and practicing democracy disappears – in either, conflict is a major component of the process. Struggle for democracy, justice and freedom is necessarily characterized by conflict. The importance of the teacher written cases in this Project lies in revealing the deep, rather than the surface, aspects of this conflict – the internal emotional and cognitive conflict that accompanies external visible conflict. Their strength also lies in bringing to our attention that changing reality dialectically interacts with personal change. Additionally, the use of teacher-written cases has allowed teachers to tell their own stories, to sketch their own accounts of their attempts at educational innovation and change. These stories show that while teaching democracy in Palestine is a very difficult process, it can be successfully
undertaken. They are stories of courageous and dedicated teachers who tactfully surmounted the obstacles to teaching democracy in an essentially undemocratic context. It may be striking that all six cases turned out to be mainly stories about conflict and struggle. But should we have expected that stories about attempts to change the status quo, even the educational one, in a context of a society struggling to achieve statehood, to build its own civil society and democratic institutions, and to achieve independence from a foreign military occupation to be any different?

Notes

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References


SOCIAL BACKGROUND EFFECTS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT DURING TRANSITION TO HIGH SCHOOL

AHMET AYPAY

Abstract – The study analyzes the factors that influence student transitions to high school, overall high school achievement, math, science, as well as verbal achievement. The sample included students in an Aegean city, Canakkale. The Sample (N=572) included 14 high schools, with the exception of two high schools in this town. The study found little or no effect of SES on academic achievement. Previous academic achievement was positively associated with academic achievement. School type (vocational or general) and attending preparatory schools were negatively associated with academic achievement. Student aspirations were positively associated with academic achievement. Parental involvement did not have consistent effects on academic achievement.

Social background effects and academic achievement in transition to high school

There have been two lines of inquiry concerning student social background effects around secondary schooling. The first one assumes students’ entry into a program is both a cause and effect of academic achievement (Gamoran & Mare, 1989) and entrance into college (Rosenbaum, 1980). The second line of inquiry views educational attainment as sequential transitions. The proponents of this perspective view student flow based on yes/no decisions whether a student continues or drops out of school. By doing that, researchers hope to differentiate where the social background effects are the strongest (Shavit & Blossfeld, 1993). According to advocates of this approach, social background effects are lower in transition to college while they are the strongest in transition to high school. Lucas (2001) argues that these effects constitute a universal pattern.

Models that investigate factors that affect academic achievement usually take structural, student attitudes, and behavioral variables (Jaeger, 1993; Pugh, 1976). Student educational aspirations and evaluations of their own ability have been among the most important determinants of academic achievement. Favorable attitudes regarding educational attainment lead to greater effort and achievement while unfavorable attitudes lead to lowered anticipations and less effort among the low SES students (Coleman, 1991).
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One of the widely accepted findings in the literature is that the best predictor of offspring’s educational attainment is parental educational level (Coleman, 1988; McNeal, 1999). This finding is consistent across different studies using various theoretical perspectives. However, school effects literature understates the effects of family and cultural factors thereby overstating the effects of schooling (Fuller & Clarke, 1994).

Gender is an important factor in predicting academic achievement. An IEA study reveals that in eight of nine countries girls (at age 14) outperformed boys in reading achievement. However, they later lag behind since there has been pressure on them regarding labor and childbearing (Fuller & Clarke, 1994). Heyneman & Loxley (1983) found lower family effects in science achievement in 29 countries. Schools relatively have less influence on language and reading achievement.

The review of six studies in the literature that spans over 25 years (see Table 1 below) provides little support for SES and academic achievement (Bogenschneider & Steinberg, 1994; Glewe & Jacoby, 1983; Heyneman, 1976; Ho Sui Chu & Willms, 1996; Karweit, 1976; Lee & Smith, 1995; Pugh, 1976). One study reported lower academic achievement in middle class children whose mother work (Bogenschneider & Steinberg, 1994). One study concluded that SES works through parental involvement (Ho Sui Chu & Willms, 1996). Another study reported that restructuring leads to higher academic achievement and this is not related to SES – rather it was a result of systemic restructuring efforts (Lee & Smith, 1995). Glewe & Jacoby (1983) reported that while the mother’s educational level has a positive influence, that of the father had no effect.

While there is support for the view that parental involvement leads to improved academic achievement (Coleman, 1991; Epstein, 1991), other research indicates parental involvement is associated with lower levels of achievement (Horn & West, 1992), or does not effect academic achievement (Epstein, 1991; Keith 1991). In McNeal’s (1999, p.118) view, ‘The variation in levels of parental involvement by gender and social class, as well as the variation in how parental involvement affects achievement, may be one potential explanation for these inconsistent findings.’

As in most developing countries, education is a more crucial factor for social mobility such as Turkey than in industrialized societies. There are a variety of schools (See Table 2 for some of these various schools) in Turkey and these schools create additional differences (Sozer, 1997). Kose (1995) used Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital to test whether the unequal distribution of cultural capital among social class and groups influence access to higher education in 1990s. Kose found that family SES and cultural factors play an
important role in access to higher education, and that social and cultural factors are more important than school effects regarding academic achievement when transitioning to higher education, that family-school-preparatory schools influence academic achievement, and that the fathers of most successful students in university placement exams were academics, bureaucrats, and technical staff. The mothers of these students were high school or, in some cases, college graduates. These successful students came from upper middle class. The findings suggested that SES was not an independent factor that exerts a statistically significant influence on academic achievement independent of social and cultural characteristics of family. Thus, Kose argued that family social and cultural factors are more important in ‘determining’ access to college than economic factors.

In another study, Kose (1997) investigated the academic achievement of students in 1995 University Entrance Exam. He looked at public high schools, private high schools (both medium of instruction was in English and Turkish), religious vocational high schools, and Anatolian High Schools. Specifically, Kose investigated the relationship between verbal ability, quantitative ability, and courses in verbal, math, physics, chemistry, biology, history, geography, philosophy, as well as foreign language. The author found that students from Fen Lisesi (from science high school), Anatolian High Schools, and private high school graduates fill the best spots in the University Entrance Exam.

Recently, there has been a policy change that is likely to influence the entrance college in Turkey. The University Entrance Exam results are no longer the sole determinant of student placement into a program in higher education. In addition, a school level GPA has also an influence. A student receives extra credit if s/he chooses a department which is the extension of his/her high school department in higher education. For example, a graduate from a fine arts high school who chooses to enter a fine arts college at a university receives extra credit when compared to a student who graduated from a general high school. Therefore, currently the type of high school a student attends largely determines whether s/he will be admitted to college. There is little or no research in Turkey that looks at the transition from elementary school to high school. This study focuses on the transition from elementary school (grades 6-8) to high school.

The importance of the study stems from the following characteristics: (1) there little or no work that examine transition into high school in Turkey; (2) the study focuses on in-depth analysis of various types of high schools such as both general schools and vocational schools; (3) the study considers the effects of parental involvement on academic achievement in Turkey.
### TABLE 2: High Schools, Students, and Percentage of Student in the Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All High Schools in the City of Canakkale</th>
<th>Total Student Population</th>
<th>Included in the Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Freshman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Freshman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>873</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Freshman</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>94.6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Due to low number of enrollment these schools were not included in the study*

**Sample and Methods**

**Participants and Instrument**

Convenience sampling procedure was used in this study. Located in the Aegean Sea and on the Dardanelles straits, Canakkale is a city with a population of approximately 75,000. The study included all the high schools with the
exception of two in the city of Canakkale in the Northwestern Turkey. These schools were excluded because of the low number of students they catered for. One of the schools excluded was the only private school and overall less than 2% of students go to private schools in Turkey. The second high school excluded is a religious vocational high school, and it was not considered in this study because of the sharp decline in enrollment. Both schools are less likely to attract students in the near future. Depending on the size of school one or more classes were surveyed. The data includes 873 freshman high school students surveyed in 14 high schools in the summer of 2001. Depending on the size of the student population, one or two classes from each school were included in the sample. The sample is described in detail in Table 2.

The instrument developed by the author included 80 questions regarding student background characteristics, previous school achievement, academic achievement, guidance in the elementary school, parental involvement, and future aspirations.

The descriptive statistics for the sample were as follows: 52% of the students were male, 47% female, 60% of mothers completed primary schooling, 12% completed elementary schooling, 17% high schools, and 8% college degree, and 2% completed graduate degrees. On the other hand, 40% of fathers completed primary schooling, 17% elementary schooling, 25% high schools, 16% college, and 1% completed graduate degrees. Students reported that 27% of the families live in rural areas. Finally, 62% of the students were enrolled in general high schools while 38% were in vocational high schools.

**Measures and Analyses**

Three types of variables were used for data analysis in this study, namely background variables, academic and personal variables, and parental involvement variables. Table 3 provides the item and factor descriptions as well as reliabilities.

T-tests were used to determine whether there are differences between group means regarding the variables under investigation in this study. The sample included in t-tests was 772 students. Further, OLS regressions were used to predict what factors influence academic achievement.

Factor analysis with promax rotation was performed. Factors with given values greater than 1 were used to create variables. Then, Cronbach Alpha reliabilities were checked. Guidance, parent-school relationship, parent-child discussion of school activities created following the results of factor analysis. Guidance includes questions whether a student was informed about his/her choices. Parent-school relationships included parental involvement with school officials, teachers, PTOs, and parents of other students. Parent-child discussion of
school activities includes questions regarding discussions of school activities with parents as well as parental help and monitoring homework and student activities.

OLS regressions were used to determine the factors that influence academic achievement. Regressions included 572 students. Four OLS regressions were run. The dependent variables were academic achievement (students overall GPA), student grades in Math, Science, and Verbal (Literature). Independent variables were gender, living in an urban environment, elementary school GPA, school type (general or vocational), school size, whether a student attended to preparatory courses, mothers and fathers education as an SES measure, student self report of ability, aspiration, ideal profession, and weekly study time. Guidance, parent-school relationship, and parent-child discussion of school were the independent variables created using the results of factors analysis.

Students provided information on their elementary and current school grades, which served as our index of academic achievement. Educators argue that student grades measure future academic progress and future success better than standardized tests because they reflect teacher judgments on how students think and solve problems (Dornbush, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Farleigh, 1987). Moreover, the correlations between self-reported GPAs and actual GPAs tend to be high (Bogenschneider & Steinberg, 1994).

Parental level of education was used as a measure of SES. Students were asked to indicate the highest level of education by each parent. Categories were primary school, elementary school (grades 6-8), high school, community college, college, and graduate degree. Parental education is considered as the most stable component of a family’s social class. Other composite measures such as income and occupation fluctuates more and therefore they are found to be less stable (Bogenschneider & Steinberg, 1994).

**Results**

The results of t-tests (see Table 4) suggest that there were differences regarding gender, living in an urban area, mothers educational level, and fathers educational level between low and high achievement students as manifested by their overall GPA in high schools in Canakkale, Turkey.

Among academic variables, there were significant differences based on t-tests between high and low achieving students. These differences were the largest regarding graduating GPA in elementary school. Mathematics grades followed the graduating GPA. Also, there were differences regarding quantitative ability as denoted by student self evaluation of himself/herself, and verbal ability of students.
TABLE 3: Description of Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Achievement</strong> – responses include the student responses about the subject areas during their senior year in elementary school.</td>
<td>(1=0-2.49 2=2.0-3.49 3=3.50-4.49 4= 4.50-5.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduating GPA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicial Ed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alpha Reliability = .87</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Parent-School Relationship** – responses indicating whether parents contacted with the following individuals during elementary school. (1= None 2=Once 3= Twice 4=Three times 5=Four or more times)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents of other Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alpha Reliability = .54</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Monitoring (Parent-Child Discussion of School)** – responses indicating whether parents helped with the following during elementary school. (1= Never 2=Sometimes 3=Often 4=Always)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutored</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled Student Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Grades</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped with homework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limits the hrs Watching TV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Hours in a Week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alpha Reliability = .74</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guidance – responses indicating how influential the student guided by the following during elementary school.
(1=None 2= Little 3=Some influence 4=Very influential

Mother
Family
Counselor
Classroom Teacher
School Administration
Preparatory School

Alpha Reliability = .64

Gender – a single item indicating the gender of student (1= male, 0=female).

Urban – a single item indicates whether a student lives in urban or rural area (1=urban, 0= rural).

School Type – a single item whether student attends to a general or vocational high school (1=vocational, 0= general).

School Size – a single item indicates whether a school is large or small (1=less than 500 students, 0=higher than 500 students).

Preparatory Courses – a single item indicates whether a student attended preparatory courses for high school (1= attended, 0= did not attend).

Mothers’ Education – a single item indicates mothers level of education (1=less than high school, 2 = high school, 3= college or graduate).

Fathers’ Education – a single item indicates fathers level of education (1=less than high school, 2= high school, 3= college or graduate degree).

Ability – a single item indicates given students ability which profession does he/she thinks will be successful require which level of education? ( 1= primary, 2=secondary, 3= high school, 4= Community college, 5= college, and 6= graduate education).

Aspiration – Given students grades, how likely you will reach the profession in your ideal? (1= impossible, 2= difficult but not impossible, 3= easy, 4= quite easy).

Ideal Occupational Preference – An open ended question asking students about their vocational aspirations and the type of scores required in University Selection Examination (1=Quantitative, 2=Social Sciences).

Hours studied (Weekly) – a single item measures how many hours does the student studies (1=1-3 hours, 2=4-6 hours, 3=7-9 hours, 4= 10 hours or more).
TABLE 4: The Results of T-test comparisons Regarding Low and High Academic Achievement (N=773)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>T-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>5.22***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2.31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Income</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Education</td>
<td>2.93**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Education</td>
<td>3.68***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>3.50***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>9.25***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>13.85***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>2.05*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduating GPA (Elementary grades 6-8)</td>
<td>16.84***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parental Involvement Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td>6.42***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-Child Discussion of School</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-School Relationship</td>
<td>1.97*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring at Home with Homework</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Monitoring of Homework</td>
<td>4.27***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

Finally, there were significant differences between high and low achieving students regarding whether they received guidance in elementary school and the variables related to parental involvement. The largest difference was in guidance. Parental monitoring of homework and parent school relationship follows guidance. The results of t-tests show that there are differences between high and low academic achieving students.
The results of OLS regression with overall academic achievement as the dependent variable reported in Table 5. Among the background characteristics, only graduating GPA (.23*** from elementary school was positively associated with overall academic achievement. Being male, attending to a vocational high school, and receiving preparatory courses were negatively associated with academic achievement (-.15***, -.20***, and -.17*** respectively). Living in an urban environment and school size did not have a statistically significant effect on student achievement.

Inconsistent with the literature, SES as measured by parental (fathers and mothers) education level was not significantly related to academic achievement. Student ability (.14***) and having an ideal profession (.07*) were positively associated with student achievement.

### TABLE 5: Results of OLS Regression (DV= Academic Achievement) – N=572

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background Characteristics</th>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized</th>
<th>Unstandardized</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender (Males)</td>
<td>-.15***</td>
<td>-.20***</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>4.30***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduating GPA</td>
<td>.23***</td>
<td>.95***</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>6.88***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Type (Vocational)</td>
<td>-.20***</td>
<td>-.28***</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>5.59***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Size (Small)</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory Courses</td>
<td>-.17***</td>
<td>-.24***</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>4.51***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers’ Education</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers’s Education</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>.14***</td>
<td>.06***</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>4.23***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspiration</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal Profession</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>1.94*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours Studied (Week)</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td>.11**</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>3.11**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-School Relationship</td>
<td>.72*</td>
<td>.04*</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>2.09*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-Child Discussion</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p<.001, **p<.01, p<.05                      R-squared = .28
Consistent with previous research, parent school relationship positively associated with overall academic achievement. It is the largest predictor (.77*) of academic achievement. Receiving guidance in elementary school (grades 6-8) was also positively associated with academic achievement. Overall, the model explains % 28 of the variance ($R^2 = .28$) in predicting overall student achievement as manifested by student grades.

Table 6 reports the result of OLS regression with Math as the dependent variable. Consistent with previous literature, students’ previous academic achievement (.11**) was positively related to current math achievement. Being in a vocational high school (-.16*** ) and attending to preparatory (-.20*** ) courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Standardized</th>
<th>Unstandardized</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background Characteristics</td>
<td>Gender (Males)</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduating GPA</td>
<td>.11**</td>
<td>.77**</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>3.11**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Type (Vocational)</td>
<td>-.16***</td>
<td>-.37***</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>4.18***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Size (Small)</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparatory Courses</td>
<td>-.20***</td>
<td>-.20***</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>5.24***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mothers’ Education</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fathers’s Education</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>.16***</td>
<td>.12***</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>4.48***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aspiration</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>2.04*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ideal Profession</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hours Studied (Week)</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>3.14**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent-School Relationship</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent-Child Discussion of School</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05  

$R^2 = .23$
for high school were negatively associated with math achievement. Gender, living in an urban environment, and school size were not significantly associated with math achievement.

Mother’s and father’s education level as an SES measure were not significantly related to math achievement. Student ability was a strong predictor (.16***) of math achievement. Student level of aspiration, although relatively small, was positively associated (.07*) with math achievement.

Receiving guidance in elementary school was positively related to math achievement. Parental involvement variables were not significantly related to math achievement. The model explains % 23 of the variance in the model ($R^2$=.23) in predicting math achievement.
Table 7 reports the results of OLS regression with science as the dependent variable. Graduating GPA was a significant predictor (.13***) of high school science achievement. Attending in a vocational high school was negatively related to science achievement (-.13***). However, taking preparatory courses was the largest predictor (.16***) of science achievement.

Mothers and fathers education were not significantly related to science achievement. Student ability was a positive predictor of science achievement. Having an ideal profession was also a small but positive relationship with science achievement.

Although small, receiving guidance in elementary school positively associated (.08*) with science achievement. Parental involvement variables were not significantly related to science achievement. The model with the dependent variable science achievement explained only % 14 percent of the variance. This model explained the lowest level of variance.

Table 8 presents the results of OLS regression results with verbal as the dependent variable. Consistent with literature being male was negatively associated (-.19*** ) with verbal achievement. Elementary graduating GPA (-.20***), attending in a vocational school (-.14***), and taking preparatory courses (-.08*) were negatively associated with verbal achievement. Living in an urban environment and school size were not related to verbal achievement.

While mothers education level was not significantly related, although small fathers education level was positively associated (.02*) with verbal achievement. This is the only significant effect of parental education level in any one of the analyses in this paper. Student ability and aspiring to have an ideal profession were positively related to verbal achievement.

Receiving guidance in elementary school and parent school relationship were both positively associated with verbal achievement. The model with the dependent variable verbal explains 20% of the variance (R^2 = .20).

**Discussion**

This study did not find support for educational attainment research which indicates that the later an education transition, the lower SES effects. Specifically, the study found little or no support for the SES effects in academic achievement when transitioning to high schools. This finding is inconsistent with the literature. However, it is also inconsistent with an earlier study that focused on transition into college in Turkey. In his study, Kose found some support for the SES variables in transition to college. As a result of these studies, the results suggests that the
TABLE 8: Results of OLS Regression (DV = Verbal) – N = 572

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent Variables</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Background Characteristics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender (Males)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduating GPA</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Type (Vocational)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Size (Small)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparatory Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers’ Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fathers’s Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal Profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours Studied (Week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-School Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-Child Discussion of School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

R\(^2\) = .20

Evidence from Turkey does not support Lucas’ (2001) contention that SES effects are higher in transition to high schools.

The following independent variables significantly and consistently associated with overall achievement, math achievement, science achievement, and verbal achievement: Graduating GPA from elementary school (grades 6-8) was positively, school type (attending to a vocational high school), and attending preparatory courses negatively associated. In this study, school size was not related to academic achievement.

Student ability and aspirations or having an ideal profession were consistently positive predictors of overall student achievement, math achievement, science achievement, and verbal achievement. Surprisingly, SES level as measured by...
parental educational level (mothers and fathers educational level) was not a significant predictor of academic achievement.

Finally, having guidance in the elementary school was positively associated with overall math, science, and verbal achievement across models. Parent school relationship was significantly associated with overall academic achievement and verbal achievement.

In contrast to studies in developing world, this study results suggest that girls overall perform better than boys regarding overall achievement. Moreover, girls do not lag behind in verbal achievement. The study failed to find any indication that girls were outperformed by boys at the high school level.

The prevailing perception among educational researchers is that smaller schools establish better student and parental involvement that is more likely to yield higher achievement. The argument is that good practices of schooling and student involvement will raise student aspirations and this, in turn, will lead to higher levels of academic achievement. This may be the case, but the limitations of this research must be kept in mind while interpreting the results. In this sample, this was not the case at least for the influence of smaller schools. The results cannot be generalizable to Turkey and this study was not a longitudinal one.

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References


ÉDUCATION, DÉVELOPPEMENT ET ÉCOLE DE DEMAIN EN MÉDITERRANÉE

RONALD G. SULTANA

Jusqu’à il y a quelques années, la problématique de l’éducation était pour beaucoup dans les pays du sud une question de rattrapage des pays du nord, et si l’on rêvait d’un système d’éducation plus efficace, et si l’on discutait du projet d’éducation pour l’avenir, c’était vers le nord que l’on regardait, en pensant que les pays les plus évolués économiquement avaient les réponses à nos problèmes.

Et ce n’est pas faux, ou, du moins, pas tout à fait faux. On peut dire que les sociétés les plus développées sont déjà passées par les ‘stades’ que l’on traverse dans le sud du monde. Leurs systèmes ont déjà subi les effets de la massification des écoles au niveau primaire, secondaire, et même tertiaire, par exemple. L’informatique a déjà bien marqué la formation des citoyens, et dès l’enfance, les étudiants apprennent que l’avenir économique à l’échelle individuelle et nationale dépend de leur capacité à accéder au savoir et à le manipuler. Le changement rapide, qui bouleverse toutes les idées reçues, a donné naissance à une autre approche vers l’éducation: ce n’est plus une question de ‘produit’, mais de ‘processus’. Autrement dit, l’accent est de plus en plus mis sur le ‘comment apprendre’, et de moins en moins sur l’apprentissage comme but en soi. Nos systèmes éducatifs dans le sud, souvent lourds et bureaucratiques, centralisés et même autoritaires, ne sont pas bien positionnés pour faire évoluer ce changement, qui demande une souplesse dans la réaction pédagogique devant des étudiants différenciés qui, comme le dit avec insistance la psychologie moderne (Gardner, 1993), sont bien capables d’apprendre, et d’apprendre comment apprendre, mais par des routes diverses. La pédagogie différenciée, la reconnaissance de l’intelligence multiple, et l’accent mis sur l’évaluation pour soutenir l’élève, et non pas pour le juger et le canaliser vers l’oubli et le mépris, se manifestent aujourd’hui comme la réaction éducative dans les sociétés qui se disent ‘post-fordistes’ et ‘post-industrielles’. Ce sont les marques des pays qui aspirent à devenir des sociétés à haute habileté et à haute rentabilité.

On a beaucoup à apprendre de ces expériences vécues – meme si on ne peut jamais transporter une problématique d’un contexte à l’autre, et encore moins les solutions, on peut toujours au moins mieux imaginer un répertoire de positions à prendre, basé sur les succès et les erreurs des autres pays. Évidemment, cela représente le niveau le plus superficiel de l’éducation comparée, puisque les défis que l’on a devant nous sont tellement liés écologiquement à leur contexte,
et d’une façon tellement complexe, que l’on ne peut jamais vraiment assimiler, sans beaucoup de modification, les ‘solutions’ proposées par les soi-disant ‘experts’. La solution allemande pour l’éducation technique, le ‘dual system’, n’a pas vraiment marché ailleurs – ni en France (malgré les louanges d’Edith Cresson), ni en Afrique, où on l’a projeté comme la réponse miracle devant le défi consistant à faire évoluer les ressources humaines, et à établir un lien plus étroit entre l’éducation et le développement économique.

Voici donc ma proposition: avant de parler de l’éducation de l’avenir, il faut peut-être d’abord et surtout parler de l’éducation d’aujourd’hui. Quelle est la situation éducative dans la Méditerranée, et surtout au sud et à l’est du bassin? Malgré le fait que les pays arabes, par exemple, versent 5.5% de leur Produit National Brut au secteur de l’éducation, qui représente le taux le plus élevé dans les pays du ‘sud’ du monde, plus de 34% des enfants ne reçoivent toujours pas d’éducation élémentaire. En moyenne, l’état méditerranéen a dépensé 267US$ pour chaque étudiant dans les années quatre-vingt-dix, alors que les pays de l’OCDE ont investi cinq fois cette somme (Unesco, 1995). L’analphabétisme reste toujours un grand problème: 50,5% de la population au Maroc ne sait ni lire ni écrire, 48% en Egypte, 43% en Algérie, et 34,7% en Tunisie (Nucho, 1998). Dans l’est, la situation est moins précaire mais elle reste toutefois alarmante: le taux d’analphabétisme pour le Liban et la Jordanie est de 20%. Selon les rapports de la Banque Mondiale, la qualité de l’éducation dans les pays du pourtour méditerranéen est moins élevée par un facteur de sept, quand on la compare avec le service offert dans les pays de l’OCDE – et quand on tient compte d’un index qui associe les trois caractéristiques suivantes: les dépenses, le progrès des étudiants dans le système éducatif, et le temps de contact dans la classe (Heyneman, 1997: 456).

Devant ces faits, ces défis – et beaucoup d’autres qu’il serait trop long d’inventorier, mais que l’on vit tous les jours dans nos classes et dans nos écoles – quelle réponse apporter pour le nouveau millénaire?

Cette question a dû être posée tant de fois dans des milliers de colloques dans tant de pays qu’elle risque de devenir rhétorique et même banale. Si je la pose maintenant, ce n’est pas parce que j’ai des réponses assurées, mais parce que je voudrais partager quelques idées, quelques indices qui pourront montrer un chemin qu’en fin de compte, chacun doit trouver pour soi.

Tout d’abord, ce chemin ne peut pas venir tout prêt de l’extérieur. Ce ne sont pas les experts étrangers qui vont nous enseigner comment régler nos problèmes, et comment affronter nos défis. Je dis cela parce que partout en Méditerranée, nous sommes souvent des applicateurs de politiques d’éducation formulées ailleurs – c’est à dire, que nous sommes plutôt des emprunteurs que des ‘faiseurs’ de politique éducative (‘policy-takers’ plutôt que des ‘policy-makers’) – et nous
avons appris que les apports d’idées, pratiques, techniques – et, dans beaucoup de cas, des textes et d’autres matériels et ressources pédagogiques – non seulement ne marchent pas automatiquement quand ils sont plantés dans un sol et un climat différent, mais qu’en plus, ils ne sont jamais très innocents. La production et la circulation du savoir reflète souvent la production et la circulation du pouvoir dans une société mondiale prise par le processus de globalisation. Ce sont souvent les catégories de pensée, les valeurs, les priorités de ceux qui ont le pouvoir de définir une situation qui, à la fin du compte, établissent l’agenda.

Et aujourd’hui les catégories de pensée, les valeurs, et les priorités du nord dans le domaine de l’éducation sont bien claires – meme si elles sont souvent contestées par les humanistes dans plusieurs pays. Ce qu’on a vu se passer dans l’ouest depuis les années quatre vingt c’est l’installation de la logique du marché dans la pratique éducative. L’éducation n’est plus ce qu’on appelle ‘un bien public’ auquel tous les citoyens ont droit, comme on a droit aux soins médicaux, mais c’est devenu un service lui aussi sujet aux forces du marché. Si nous sommes bien placés dans ce marché, nous pouvons choisir les écoles de nos enfants, et nous payons pour assurer l’avenir éducatif des nôtres. Et les autres – souvent les filles, les défavorisés, les minorités, les enfants du milieu rural – restent en dehors de l’approvisionnement de l’État, harcelé de toutes parts par des besoins sociaux qui augmentent, dans un contexte ou les ressources deviennent de plus en plus limitées.

C’est très important de dresser une liste des aspects différents de cette idéologie, des visages multiples mais essentiellement cohérents dans laquelle elle peut se manifester. L’idéologie du marché – et la philosophie éducative inspirée par le néo-libéralisme veut:

– **la dévolution du pouvoir** du centre vers le local, une dévolution des responsabilités financières et administratives, mais très souvent pas le pouvoir de décider le curriculum, par exemple, et même pas la pédagogie;

– **une vision de l’école comme productrice**, où l’on verse des ressources, où l’on définit les buts, et où l’on attend des résultats – une vision qui souvent ne prend pas en considération la complexité du processus d’éducation, et la relation psycho-politique entre le savoir et l’apprentissage;

– **la création d’un marché (ou quasi-marché) des écoles**: puisque la vision de l’éducation est basée sur un modèle dit ‘input-output’, l’important est de mettre les écoles en compétition une contre l’autre, et pour faire cela il faut trouver des facteurs qui sont sujets à la mesure, et donc à la comparaison. L’éducation devient alors une question de résultats obtenus par les étudiants
dans les examens officiels. Et comme dans un supermarché, il faut bien afficher ces résultats dans l’arène publique - une sorte de liste de championnat qui est supposée aider les parents à choisir la meilleure école – c’est à dire, la plus performante – pour leurs enfants;


tout en intensifiant son action de contrôleur, de décideur, d’inspecteur, l’état diminue et abandonne ses responsabilités financières: on a vu un peu partout le recul de l’état du champ social. D’abord il y a la stimulation du secteur privé dans toutes les institutions de la société, l’éducation incluse. Et puis il y a le déclenchement du principe que c’est l’utilisateur d’un service qui doit payer, un principe qui est de plus en plus appliqué dans les domaines de l’éducation et de la santé, au détriment de plusieurs couches sociales. L’idée du respect de la dignité de l’homme et de la femme, quelles que soient leur origine, leur couleur, et leurs ressources commence à entrer dans l’oubli, et les acquis d’un peuple après des siècles de combat sont perdus en quelques années.

Cette aide entraîne avec elle une vision particulière du monde, comme je l’ai déjà fait remarquer. Je ne voudrais pas insinuer que le Sud doit se détacher de la modernité, ou des courants qui marquent notre époque. Mais il faut avoir un regard critique, cynique même, face à ces courants, souvent présentés comme inévitables et benins, mais qui, comme notre longue histoire nous l’a appris, ont un effet pervers. Depuis que le monde est monde, la richesse d’une partie du monde dépend – se fait au dépens – d’une autre partie du monde. En termes plus simples, il faut un tiers monde pour avoir des pays riches. Même l’OCDE, dans une étude récente, a reconnu que le néo-libéralisme n’a pas forcément donné le fruit attendu, et qu’en plus, cette façon de gérer les marchés a créé une couche épaisse de ‘nouveaux pauvres’ dans les sociétés riches, et a élargi les distances entre les classes sociales – un fait qui est lamentable non seulement parce qu’il gêne notre esprit de justice, mais aussi parce qu’il mène à l’instabilité sociale.

On pourra peut-être dire qu’après l’épuisement des grandes idéologies, on n’a plus vraiment le choix. Et c’est précisément cela qui m’inquiète, et doit nous inquiéter dans la profession d’éducation – ce manque d’alternatives, ce manque de multiplicité de possibilités. On parle souvent, en Europe et aux États Unis, du fondamentalisme islamique. En Méditerranée, on parle aussi, souvent avec raison, du fondamentalisme catholique, et même judaïque. Mais, comme le signale fort bien le sociologue grec Mouzelis (1998), il y a un autre fondamentalisme, le fondamentalisme économique, qui est en train de s’installer partout, et qui, comme tout autre fondamentalisme, n’accepte pas la possibilité d’un autre regard sur le
monde, d’une autre façon d’être ou de faire. Et c’est peut-être cela la vocation du
corps des enseignants qui ont en main les générations de demain – une vocation
noble de dialoguer avec les esprits des enfants et des jeunes, de libérer et de former
l’imagination, de penser un monde comme il peut et doit être, un monde plus juste,
plus humain, plus digne de cette grande aventure de l’humanité.

Dans beaucoup de colloques sur l’éducation de demain, on entend beaucoup
parler de la technologie, et c’est bien: les nouvelles technologies de
communication et d’information offrent de nouvelles possibilités aux enseignants
et à leurs étudiants. L’enseignement à distance peut faire un pont entre les écoles
et les catégories exclues du processus d’éducation. L’ordinateur lié à l’internet
peut mettre le monde dans la classe, comme objet d’étude, d’émerveillement, et
de regard critique. Aujourd’hui c’est possible, si on a ce qu’il faut – et dans nos
pays, c’est assez rare d’avoir les moyens de mettre en pratique les bonnes idées
– d’enseigner une langue étrangère et d’établir un contact instantané avec d’autres
classes dans des écoles où cette langue est parlée dans la vie de tous les jours. Avec
de bons programmes, on peut mieux réaliser le rêve difficile de la pédagogie
différenciée, puisqu’il devient possible de grouper les étudiants selon leur style
d’apprentissage, et d’organiser la leçon et de la livrer dans des styles concordants.

Mais je ne pense pas que la technologie apporte des réponses à tout. D’abord,
c’est très important de souligner le fait que les nouvelles technologies n’ont pas
vraiment changé radicalement nos concepts pédagogiques. Comme dans le cas de
la télévision dans la classe, le film, l’instruction par ordinateur, ‘intelligent
tutoring systems’, et plus récemment les programmes hypermedia, l’internet, et
‘computer-mediated communication’ (CMC) – ces nouvelles technologies ont,
paradoxalement, été aussi bien reçues que leurs effets ont été minimaux. Comme
le disent Salomon et Almog (1998) entre autres, malgré l’innovation
technologique, la philosophie fondamentale qu’un seul type de programme
d’apprentissage suffit pour tout le monde, et la pratique répandue de communiquer
le savoir de haut en bas, restent les normes presque intouchables. Plus la
technologie est vite acclamée et intégrée, plus elle est assimilée dans la logique
dominante de l’apprentissage, qui alors reste toujours le même (Papert, 1987). Et
puis, il faut se souvenir que ce rêve technologique coûte très cher, et que les
gouvernements dans le sud sont tentés d’investir beaucoup dans ce domaine parce
que cela donne l’impression de modernisation, de remontée au niveau des pays
riches, et nous finissons dans une situation où nous avons les ordinateurs dans les
classes mais nous ne savons pas quoi en faire, ou nous n’avons pas les programmes
et le software qu’il faut – c’est à dire dans notre langue et liés écoligiquement à
notre culture… et, pire encore, d’autres services qui ont un profil moins élevé dans
les médias, mais qui ont une importance fondamentale dans le processus éducatif,
restent sans financement.
Evidemment, j’exagère un peu pour souligner un point. Nous ne pouvons pas moderniser nos industries sans connaissances modernes. Mais nous ne pouvons pas non plus mettre tous nos espoirs dans la technologie quand nous voulons imaginer l’éducation de demain dans notre région. La technologie sans les valeurs, le résultat c’est Auschwitz.

Je voudrais terminer mes réflexions en faisant appel à quatre valeurs ou principes que l’on a recommandés à notre gouvernement à Malte, quand il nous a demandé de lui soumettre nos propositions pour les écoles de l’an 2000 (Wain et al., 1995). Je mentionne ces valeurs pour souligner le fait que le projet éducatif reste un projet humaniste, et qu’il ne doit pas finir englouti et colonisé par la rationalité technocratique et individualiste du néo-libéralisme.

Voici les quatre valeurs, qui doivent être considérées ensemble, et qui, en langue anglaise sonnent mieux qu’en français puisque les mots commencent tous par la lettre ‘e’, c’est à dire: entitlement (avoir droit à), effectiveness (efficacité), equity (équité), et economy (économie).

1. La première valeur, ou principe, c’est l’‘entitlement’, c’est à dire, avoir le droit à une éducation de qualité. C’est un droit intouchable et inéluctable. Plus qu’avant, et dans l’avenir plus qu’aujourd’hui, non seulement l’éducation et le savoir nous permettent d’être des citoyens productifs, mais ils nous permettent aussi de participer à la communauté nationale, régionale et internationale, et de prendre part aux décisions qui touchent notre vie de si près. Une éducation de qualité comme droit, pour tous – les filles, ceux qui habitent dans les régions rurales, les défavorisés, ceux qui ont des besoins spéciaux, les enfants des immigrés et d’autres minorités. C’est à dire qu’il ne faut plus tellement laisser l’état parler de ce qu’il offre comme services éducatifs, mais il faut, au lieu de cela, poser des questions gênantes: qui, dans mon pays, ne reçoit pas une éducation de qualité? Pourquoi? Est-ce qu’il y a des groupes particuliers qui sont plus représentés au-dessous du seuil de notre définition d’une éducation de qualité, un seuil établi selon des critères justes et aussi généreux que possible, et qui indiquent le minimum que la nation veut garantir à tous ces citoyens?

2. Une deuxième valeur qui doit guider la provision des services éducatifs d’un pays, selon moi, c’est le principe d’effectiveness ou efficacité, c’est à dire, la bureaucratie qui gère le système ne peut plus se cacher derrière les mille et une excuses qu’on sait inventer dans tous les pays. Les signes des malaises sont partout pareils – et le pire, c’est que beaucoup de systèmes éducatifs dans notre région sont inscrits dans une logique de blâme – c’est à dire, que tous les acteurs responsables de ce service essentiel exportent les critiques vers l’autre:
la direction blâme les enseignants qui, eux, blâment les étudiants et les élèves ou les parents qui, à leur tour, blâment les maîtres et le système, et ainsi de suite. L’état nous blâme parce que l’on ne voit pas beaucoup de progrès, et nous, nous blâmons l’état parce qu’il ne nous donne pas les ressources qu’il nous faut. Mais, en fin de compte, nous avons une responsabilité collective pour transmettre aux générations qui nous suivent les quatre piliers de l’éducation si bien identifiés dans le rapport Delors (Unesco, 1996), c’est à dire ‘le savoir’, ‘le savoir faire’, ‘le savoir être’, et ‘le savoir vivre ensemble’. Sans ces compétences, les citoyens de demain ne peuvent pas être les gardiens de cette terre, si belle, mais si fragile. Comme dans le rapport Delors, ce que je viens de dire sonne rhétorique, si on ne le traduit pas par un plan concret, avec des cibles précises à atteindre, et avec de lignes claires de responsabilités. Il faut poser les questions gênantes – comme l’a fait Watson (1999) dans son évaluation critique de la vision de l’Unesco pour l’éducation du vingt-et-unième siècle – c’est à dire, qu’il faut répondre aux questions du financement, du rôle du secteur privé, de la motivation des cadres enseignants à qui l’on demande souvent de faire des miracles, mais sans leur donner ni les ressources, ni le soutien qu’il leur faut. Il faut aussi faire évoluer des plans pour l’éducation technique – quand on l’introduit dans la vie d’un étudiant, si elle doit être spécialisée ou non, et quelle relation on doit envisager entre l’école et l’industrie. Mille et une questions, et pas une seule qui soit facile ou qui vienne avec une réponse toute prête. Il n’y a pas de recettes dans notre métier. Mais, puisque l’éducation nous entraîne dans une relation de pouvoir entre adultes d’un côté et jeunes de l’autre, on est obligé d’être redevable, et à la fin du compte, responsable.

3. Une troisième valeur que l’on a identifiée et qui doit nous guider dans l’exécution de nos responsabilités est l’équité, un principe qui va plus loin que l’égalité’ (Samoff, 1996). L’équité ne signifie pas le traitement de tous de la même façon – c’est précisément cela qui crée l’inégalité dans les écoles. Les étudiants viennent dans nos classes avec des ressources intellectuelles, culturelles, sociales et financières différentes. Il faut reconnaître ces différences, et les prendre en compte, mais dans un contexte inclusif, c’est à dire qu’on ne peut pas construire un système éducatif où les différences sont une excuse pour canaliser des groupes dans des espaces marginaux. Au contraire, on doit garder l’idée et la pratique d’inclusion, puisque le défi crucial pour l’éducation du vingt-et-unième siècle c’est d’apprendre aux jeunes à vivre avec la différence, et même à la célébrer. C’est en vivant dans un contexte hétérogène que les étudiants d’aujourd’hui deviennent les adultes ouverts et sensibles de demain. Mais en même temps, nos systèmes
d’éducation doivent être assez flexibles pour répondre, d’une façon efficace, aux besoins différents de nos étudiants, mobilisant des ressources différentes pour mieux cibler les interventions. Ce rêve d’une pédagogie différenciée est, aujourd’hui, plus près de sa réalisation grâce aux systèmes d’instruction assistés par l’informatique, mais sans une acceptation du principe d’équité, cet engagement dans les nouvelles technologies peut élargir, et non diminuer, le gouffre béant qui sépare des groupes d’étudiants (Chabchoub & Haddiya, 1995).

4. Ce que j’ai mentionné à propos de l’équité, de l’efficacité et du droit à une éducation de qualité doit être traduit dans le monde réel, et dans ce monde souvent – trop souvent – ce sont les finances qui règlent le jeu. Mais quand je dis qu’une quatrième valeur ou principe c’est l’économie, j’utilise ce mot d’une façon radicalement différente de la façon utilisée par des organismes comme la Banque Mondiale ou le OCDE, par exemple. Pour moi, l’économie comme valeur signifie que, dans un contexte de manque - et on sait ce que c’est que le manque dans notre région – on fait une option, un choix en faveur de ceux qui sont le plus dans le besoin. Mais c’est plus facile à dire qu’à faire. Dans toutes les sociétés, l’élite a toujours réussi à manipuler les ressources et l’accès à ces ressources de telle façon que ceux qui ont, continuent à avoir, et ceux qui n’ont pas, et bien, tant pis pour eux! Nous aussi, dans la Méditerranée, ce berceau de trois religions abrahamiques qui ont, comme pilier principal, le devoir envers l’autre, nous avons nos systèmes pour faire en sorte que les privilèges se transmettent d’une génération à l’autre. Malgré la prétendue méritocratie de l’école, c’est à travers la même école qui, en réfléchissant et en intégrant une seule culture, un seul système de valeurs, finit par exclure des groupes spécifiques d’une éducation de qualité. Et en plus de ça, comme on le dit un peu partout dans ce bassin, c’est qui on connait, et pas tellement ce qu’on connaît, qui fait toute la différence. Le principe de l’économie fait en sorte que, si on le pratique, ceux qui n’ont pas le capital culturel, social ou financier qu’il faut pour accéder à une vie éducative, auront le système qui leur sert de soutien, et pas d’obstacle.

Quand on a proposé ces quatres principes à la communauté maltaise, il y a eu un consensus presque total sur le fait que ce sont les valeurs qui devraient guider toutes les réformes dans le secteur éducatif pour les années à venir. Les valeurs ont même été adoptées comme l’édifice principal autour duquel on construit le nouveau curriculum national. Le problème commence, comme toujours, quand on essaie de traduire des principes en actions concrètes, quand on s’en prend aux poches ou aux privilèges de ceux qui ont le pouvoir.
Mais c’est peut-être bien cela le défi pour l’école du vingt-et unième siècle: c’est d’affronter avec courage et enthousiasme l’idée d’imaginer non seulement une éducation – mais toute une société qui sache intégrer, apprécier et affirmer chaque individu.

Références

HOMAGE TO PIERRE BOURDIEU

Editorial Note: Pierre Bourdieu was a distinguished member of the International Board of Editors of the Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies, a venture he supported ever since the first issue was launched in 1996. Two scholars associated with the journal have offered their homage to this great intellectual.


M'HAMMED SABOUR

Pierre Bourdieu died in Paris on 23 January 2002. Though his health had been deteriorating for a number of years, the seriousness of his illness and sudden demise came as a complete surprise. He retired last summer and prepared to move with his group from the Collège de France to new offices provided by the Ministry of Education for the continuation of his research work. When we met a month and a half before his death he still spoke about projects to be carried out after he left the hospital. In talking about his biography, many of his colleagues thought him too young to write his memoirs. Fate proved them wrong.

Born to a very modest family in a small village (Denguin) in southwestern France, Pierre Bourdieu did not in principle possess the economic, social or cultural capital necessary to overcome the circumstances he had inherited. But due to his success at school he was awarded scholarships which allowed him to continue his studies at the comprehensive school Lycée de Pau (the capital of his home region), as well as at the Lycée Louis le Grand, the university, and the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris.

He felt ill at ease while studying in Paris, an outsider due to his social and provincial background. His Parisian classmates were for the most part members of the French bourgeoisie. He became conscious of the disadvantages and vulnerability of his habitus and nature. Furthermore, at a young age, because of his school success, he was forced into a life in dormitories far from his family, which certainly had a deep effect on him. The latter in part explains his hatred and critique of controlling and coercive structures as well as all kinds of symbolic power structures. His experience obviously affected his interest in the problem of dominance in school and society.

Bourdieu was trained in philosophy and anthropology. He completed his military service in the late 1950s in Algeria and at the same time did ethnological and sociological research into Algerian society. His works about Algeria...
represented a major turning point in his academic and scientific career. As a student and follower of the great post-war tradition (e.g., Kant, Marx, Cassirer, Levi-Strauss) he was also inspired, for example, by Westermarck’s studies of Morocco. His observations and field work helped him to develop his theories. Without totally rejecting American or overemphasizing French sociology, he achieved a critical distance from both and developed his own unique brand of sociology. This is evident in his forty books and hundreds of articles.

Though sociology is not given the respect accorded philosophy or history (at least in France), Bourdieu defended it and established its importance as a critical discipline which irritated the establishment and decision-makers. He always said that sociology is a social calling; it must study, evaluate and criticize society, its institutions and actors, and then bring about change and progress. But he also demanded a theoretical and methodological strictness of it. Such inflexibility made him enemies and the target of mockery.

Although Bourdieu became world-famous, he was always opposed and criticized in French sociological and intellectual circles, sometimes in a prejudicial manner. The criticism offended him and forced him to make stinging and contentious pronouncements. In addition to researchers and the intelligentsia, he was also the target of the media. And in France the press is extremely influential. For many years the media heaped abuse on Bourdieu.

According to Bourdieu, while Sartre was the most attacked intellectual in French history, he was also one of its greatest (‘intellectuel total’) since he provoked the prevailing system and questioned matters thought to be unquestionable. He did not believe that he was treated as badly as Sartre. Sartre was, however, for Bourdieu, a model of the exemplary intellectual devoted to his cause, which he consciously or unconsciously sought to emulate. In the 1990s Bourdieu began to utilize the scientific and academic prestige he had achieved in social struggles: for example, he defended the rights of the working class, immigrants, homosexuals and Algerian intellectuals and opposed the dominance of neo-liberalism. In the process, he became in the eyes of many a messiah and the hero of the opponents of globalization as well as the champion of the oppressed and the marginalized. To others, he was a dominating and autocratic intellectual and sociologist who was unable to tolerate differing opinions.

He himself stated that the value of his ideas and actions would be recognized only after his death. In the same context he noted that the intellectual field is reminiscent of the world depicted by Marcel Proust, where every individual seeks to avoid recognizing the value of another, fearing the loss of his own value. It appears that he was correct since immediately after receiving the news of Bourdieu’s death, one of his main opponents, the sociologist Alain Touraine,
declared on French television that Pierre Bourdieu was one of the greatest sociologists of our time and his ideas significantly influenced the 20th century. This recognition came late, but is undeniable.

Pierre Bourdieu left an intellectual legacy which has revolutionized and enriched sociology. His ideas will indisputably inspire coming generations to greater achievements.

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A Tribute to Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002)

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January 2002 witnessed the death of Pierre Bourdieu whose sociology has been labelled, perhaps with only a little exaggeration, as ‘not only the best, but…the only game in town’ (Lash, 1993, p.193). Over the past decade Pierre Bourdieu1 has increasingly been portrayed by the French media as the new intellectual star, taking the mantle from Michel Foucault and having the edge over his contemporary Jacques Derrida. Bourdieu’s recent denouncements of neoliberal doctrine propelled him, in Niilo Kaupi’s (2000, p.7) words, to ‘a Sartrean intellectual in the full sense of the term’. His public denouncement of budget cuts in gerontological welfare and higher education, early retirement schemes, and anti-immigration legislation in the name of free markets and international competition were instant national news, making his name a constant feature of the French press, and thus projecting his persona from the academic to the popular sphere.

Bourdieu’s political practice was supplemented by political publications which did not mince words regarding the threats posed by contemporary ‘neoliberalism’. For instance, On Television (1998a) attacked media presenters for delivering ‘cultural fast food’, and Acts of Resistance (1998b) stressed the duty of the intellectual in confronting the oppressive features of globalisation. In addition, Bourdieu joined other intellectuals such as Hans Haacke (1995) and Gunther Grass (2002) to criticise policy-units for their ‘American’ piecemeal approach to social policy. Recently, Bourdieu’s intellectual persona was also considered fitting to feature as the focus of a documentary film. The film, titled Sociology is a Combat Sport (2001), premiered in French cinemas and became an instant hit in both downtown Paris and international university campuses. 2
It was thus no surprise that his death triggered many a public homage that placed supporters of Verdés-Leroux’s (1998) denouncement of Bourdieu as a ‘sociological terrorist’ in an awkward position. Indeed, no nation esteems intellectuals more than does France, and in none are intellectual celebrities of comparable magnitude. However, unlike preceding French public intellectuals, it was not attractions of image or character that gained Bourdieu cult status but his rigorous scholarship (Wacquant, 2002a). Bourdieu’s was also a prolific writer, being the author of some 45 books and 500 articles, many of which have been translated in various languages ranging from Hungarian and Arabic, to Japanese. Moreover, his ‘thinking tools’ - as Bourdieu (1989a) preferred to term his metatheoretical approach - have been applied across many diverse disciplines such as linguistics, feminism, gerontology, gay and lesbian studies, colonialism, literacy, consumption, organisational relations, and of course, education.

Bourdieu’s *oeuvre* simply resists an elementary ordering of a priority of concepts or themes. In fact, Bourdieu has been authoritatively placed in all major theoretical traditions. This difficulty to pigeonhole Bourdieu is largely due to his – at least by current Western standards - unconventional career formation. Primarily, Bourdieu’s position in the French *academe* has always been marked by an ‘outsider’ status due to his southern geographical location and peasant familial background - factors that never enabled him to feel like ‘a fish in water’. Another unconventional factor consisted in the wide range of philosophical sources that influenced his sociological underpinnings, but especially Bachelard’s (1968) vision of knowledge as being an open-ended process in which prior errors were to be dialectically overcome. At the same time, Bourdieu’s concepts of public intellectual (e.g. 1987b, 1989b), theory of symbolic power (e.g. 1984, 1990b), and rationalist perspective of knowledge (e.g. 1991, 1998c) are all highly indebted to Marx, Weber and Durkheim respectively. Finally, there is no doubt that Bourdieu’s (1962) confrontation with the Algerian war left a searing personal mark, shaping his intellectual orientation and commitment towards the principle that research must incorporate both a critical and emancipatory edge.

All of Bourdieu’s (1977, 2000a) sociology can be thought of a ‘steadfast’ effort to side-step the absurd antinomy between objectivism and subjectivism - in the attempt to construct a science of dialectical relations between objective structures and the subjective dispositions within which these structures are found. In developing his transcendental ontology, an ideological break was made with both objectivism and subjectivism, leading to a focus on *practice* as the outcome of the structure-agency relationship. Hence, rules were rejected in favour of ‘strategies’, schemes that were fundamentally associated with the maximising of material and symbolic profit. To effect this synthesis of objectivism and
subjectivism, social physics and social phenomenology, Bourdieu forged an original conceptual arsenal anchored by the notions of *habitus*, *field*, and *capital*.

The notion of habitus is for Bourdieu (1977) the main ‘thinking tool’ that makes it possible to surpass the opposition between ‘ontological individualism’ and ‘constituted practice’. The habitus, most concisely, is ‘an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted’ (ibid., 95). Bourdieu (1993) saw the social context where the habitus operated as a multidimensional space differentiated into distinct fields, networks of objective positions occupied by agents through their possession of different forms of capital. A field is thus a structured system of social relations at micro-macro levels were individuals, institutions and groups exist in a structural relation to each other. In Bourdieu’s (1986a, 1987c, 1992) schema, capital is not granted a solely economic meaning, but essentially a resource which yields power. Thus, in addition to economic capital he pointed other immaterial forms of capital - cultural, social and symbolic. Whilst cultural capital referred to a wide range of ‘informational’ resources such as language, cultural awareness, and education credentials, social capital designated the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of persons. On the other hand, symbolic capital is *worldmaking power*, involving the capacity to impose the legitimate vision of the social world and of its divisions.

Bourdieu did not simply develop an abstract theoretical system but strove to embed his ‘thinking tools’ to a series of empirical concerns. For instance, in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (1984) Bourdieu applied such notions to the arena of class analysis. Much of *Distinction* examined the way in which intellectual middle-class culture is defined in relation to popular culture, and considered how it has articulated an aesthetic of distance and abstraction as a means of distinguishing itself from the sensuous, the immediate and the popular. After indicating how aesthetic judgement is an eminently social faculty, resulting from class upbringing and education, Bourdieu constructed a theory of social space organised by two cross-cutting principles of differentiation: economic capital, and cultural capital. Yet, Bourdieu’s social space is three-dimensional. The first vertical division pits agents holding large volumes of either economic or cultural capital against those deprived of both. The second, horizontal, pits those who possess much economic capital but few cultural assets, and those whose capital is pre-eminently cultural. The final and transverse dimension referred to how the trajectory of volume and composition of capital for groups and individuals change over time.

Having mapped out the structure of social space, Bourdieu demonstrated how the hierarchy of life styles is the misrecognised retranslation of the hierarchy of classes. For each major social position – bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, and working
class – corresponded a class habitus undergirding three kinds of tastes. The bourgeoisie were statistically by far the most likely to adopt the attitude of *distinction*, a disinterested contemplation demanded by legitimate aesthetics. Working-class people, on the other hand, held a class ethos based on the *choice of necessity*, determined by the collective experience of material necessity and expressed itself in a realistic aesthetic form. Caught between these two visions of the world lay the petty bourgeoisie whose class ethos was determined by cultural goodwill that signals an ‘undifferentiated reverence’ towards high culture. Amongst the more traditional fractions of the petty bourgeoisie, shopkeepers, artisans and the like, this would manifest itself in a rigorous work ethic and a rejection of the ‘frivolity’ of the bourgeois culture and the ‘vulgarity’ of the working class.5

*Distinction* portrayed French society as one which is characterised by classes and class fractions continually striving to maintain or improve their position in the social space by pursuing strategies of reconversion whereby they transmute or exchange one species of capital into another. With respect to such capital reconversions, Bourdieu (1986b, 1996) believed that in modern societies the principal mode of domination has shifted from overt coercion to symbolic manipulation:

‘what is at stake in the struggles about the meaning of the social world is power over the classificatory schemes and systems which are the basis of the representation of groups and therefore of their mobilisation and demobilisation.’ (Bourdieu, 1984, p.479)

Amongst such classificatory systems, the field of education, more than the family, church or the business ethic, has become the primary institutional setting for the production, transmission and accumulation of the various forms of culture capital. Bourdieu (1984) in fact envisaged education as a part of a larger macrocosm of symbolic institutions that reproduce existing power relations subtly through the engendering and distribution of a culture that is consistent with the dominant classes’ interests.

Bourdieu’s (1967, and Passeron, 1977, 1979) sociology of education is largely built upon two notions: ‘cultural arbitraries’ and ‘symbolic violence’. Certain aspects of culture cannot be accounted for by logical analysis nor do they develop out of the nature of human beings and, therefore, are ‘arbitrary’. Like all systems, the educational system also has its own cultural arbitraries, which are, as Bourdieu suggested, variants of the dominant classes. By symbolic violence, Bourdieu meant a soft sort of violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity. The educators perform symbolic violence by imposing meanings as ‘legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force’ and at the same time communicating a logic of disinterest (Bourdieu and Passeron,
Therefore, when education goes about educating, it is essentially trying to impose ‘culturally arbitrary’ conditions by an arbitrary power under the guise of legitimate order. The consequences, which are beneficial to the middle classes, are threefold. First, learners coming from the dominant classes find education intelligible and show flair and excellence. Secondly, the culture of the dominant classes is shown to be the most superior. And finally, an act of ‘symbolic violence’ is perpetuated on learners coming from non-dominant classes by forcing them to support an alien culture.

Another central feature of Bourdieu’s sociology was his emphasis on reflexivity as a necessary exercise for valid and reliable social science. By reflexivity, Bourdieu meant the continual need to turn the instrument of social science back upon the sociologists in an effort to control the distortions introduced in the construction of the object. This emphasis was based upon Bourdieu’s (1988, 1989c) belief that the most insidious bias that a sociologist can make is to assume a scholastic stance that causes him/her to misconstrue the social world as an interpretative puzzle to be resolved, rather than a mesh of practical tasks to be accomplished in real time and space. This ‘scholastic fallacy’ eventually leads to disfiguring the situational, adaptive, ‘fuzzy logic’ of practice by confounding it with the abstract logic of intellectual ratiocination. The sociology of sociology was seen as indispensable because it increases ‘our awareness of the socially based effects of domination…by promoting struggles aimed at controlling these effects and mechanisms that produce them’ (ibid., 385).

In retrospect, it is evident that Bourdieu’s sociology is one of the most comprehensive that is presently available. Bourdieu’s major originality is to be found in his development of a micro theory of social power that aimed at an anti-essentialism that would reveal all the sources of domination, but especially that symbolic or genteel violence used by the dominant to legitimate their power. Such an approach enabling the sociologist to analyse cultural relations in society without imbuing the reader with the anti-humanist melancholy so prevalent in post-modern academics (Fowler, 1997, 2000). Of course, Bourdieu’s work was not immune from criticisms, of which the most consistent was the accusation of deterministic and structural biases. However, in addition to the fact that Bourdieu was already clear about the imaginative role of the habitus in both Outline and his reply to critics in Other Words, such critics oversee Bourdieu’s three recently translated books. The latter – Practical Reason (1998c), The Weight of the World (1999), and Pascalian Meditations (2000b) – contain a reappraisal of the power of human agency vis-à-vis the objective structures.

On a concluding note, it is commendable to note that despite his terminal illness, Bourdieu remained highly prolific to the very end. Recently, The Science of Science and Reflexivity – a very rigorous critique of the whole field of ‘science
studies’ – was published in France. In June, two more books are expected to be published; namely, *Interventions 1961-2001*, a bibliography of his work that includes more than 45 books and 500 articles, and the work that Bourdieu just finished before falling ill, *The Ball of the Bachelors*, a set of ethnological essays about his home village. The English speaking community can be sure about the publication of three more books, *Counterfire* (June, 2002), *Backfire: Against the Tyranny of the Market* (August, 2002), and *The Economic Field* (August, 2003). At the same time, there also lies an unfinished manuscript on Manet’s revolution in the artistic world (Wacquant, 2002). There is no doubt that Bourdieu will continue to affect the sociological world long after his death.

Notes

1. Little biographical information has been published on Bourdieu’s own personal and career formation. Bourdieu (1987a) himself resisted public self-disclosure, was highly protective of his private life, and treated ‘biographical writing’ as a form of self-absorption that celebrates individual existence but devoid of genuine sociological rigour. The best pieces of literature which do offer some information on his career and personal formative influences include Bourdieu’s ‘Sociology and philosophy in France since 1945’ (and Passeron, 1967), *In Other Words* (1990a, pp. 3-33), *The Logic of Practice* (1990b, pp. 1-29), and the interview he granted Honneth, Kochyba, and Schwibs (1986).

2. Here I would like to share with you an episode from the film which I had the opportunity to watch in Athens last February, and which I believe captures adequately Bourdieu’s intellectual persona. The episode occurs which during an academic debate a fiery critic denounces the ‘psychiatrists of the suburbs’ who diagnose society’s ailments, and states that ‘It’s not God, it’s Bourdieu. You must not confuse them’. Immediately he rushes out of the University’s amphitheatre to a long and enthusiastic applause. However, Bourdieu remained unperturbed, and once order has been resumed, replied in a serious, but unoffended, tone that ‘Truth is not measured by hand-clapping!’.

3. To-date the most comprehensive bibliography of Bourdieu’s writings is *HyperBourdieu* (Barnard, 2002). The site also contains links to tens of tributes and homages following his death, as well as list of doctoral dissertations that are based on Bourdieu’s sociology.

4. The conception of field is often erroneously compared to Goffman’s (1974) ‘frame analysis’. However, such a comparison overlooks that whilst the social and economic conditions are embedded in the heart of Bourdieu’s argument, they are merely implied at the periphery of Goffman’s theory.

5. Less conventionally moralistic, Bourdieu (1984) argued, were the newer petty bourgeoisie fractions, the upwardly mobile who had benefited from the expansion in higher education and were taking white-collar posts in the growing tertiary sector. Their aspirations manifested themselves in their *cultural goodwill*, that enthusiasm for a culture too recently acquired, a culture which still bore the visible marks of the efforts in its acquisition and could not, therefore, compete with the casual self-assurance of the ‘natural’ aesthetic.
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**References**


CONFERENCE REPORT

East Mediterranean Cooperation in Adult Education


Issues concerning adult education in a number of countries in the Mediterranean, and particularly Eastern Mediterranean countries, were presented and discussed during a two-day conference, organized by the IIZ-DVV (Institute for International Cooperation, German Adult Education Association) and the Cyprus Adult Education Association (CAEA). The two convenors were Klitos Symeonides from the CAEA and Michael Samlowski from the IIZ-DVV. The conference was held at the tourist resort of Ayia Napa (originally a small fishing village) in Cyprus’s Famagusta area. The venue was the Hall of Ayia Napa’s magnificent medieval monastery, a monastery, dedicated to Our Lady of the Forests, that contains a partly underground 16th century church and has a very old Sycamore tree (believed to be 600 years old) rooted in front of its south gate.

It should be stated at the outset that Bulgaria (two representatives) and Malta (two representatives), two of the countries invited to and represented at this meeting, do not strictly belong to the ‘Eastern Mediterranean’ area. The other non-Eastern Mediterranean country, represented at the conference, was, of course, Germany, but then its national adult education association, a very visible and progressive player in international adult education, sponsored the event. The other participating countries were Albania (two representatives), Egypt (two representatives), Greece (one representative), Israel (two representatives), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYRM – one representative), Yugoslavia (a representative from Serbia and a representative from Montenegro) and, of course, the host country, Cyprus. Among the speakers from the host country was Dr Petros Kareklas, Permanent Secretary of Cyprus’s Ministry of Education and Culture, who officially opened the conference with a short speech in which he, among other things, affirmed his country’s commitment to lifelong learning and to the fostering of international cooperation in this broad area.

To my knowledge, this was one of only a few initiatives of its kind – a meeting on adult education in the Mediterranean – to be held in this part of the world. One other initiative that immediately comes to mind is the 1984 Malta international conference, ‘Lifelong Education Initiatives in the Mediterranean’ that resulted in the publication Lifelong Education and Participation (Wain, 1985), a rare
collection of papers on adult education, and lifelong education more generally, in
the Mediterranean. Gathering people from different parts of this conflict-ridden
region is not a straightforward task, as a number of readers of this journal would
have discovered on various occasions. The hosting of this conference in the
divided island that is contemporary Cyprus also rendered the situation concerning
country representation problematic. Evidence of this was provided by Michael
Samlowski of the IIZ-DVV who disclosed, in his opening speech, that the Turkish
persons, from the Ministry of Education, who were invited to this meeting, were
not granted leave of absence. Situations such as these continue to drive home the
point that attempts to bring participants from the different states of the
Mediterranean together for any initiative are fraught with problems. Various
initiatives in the past have indicated that the presence of X in any forum would
automatically mean the withdrawal of Y.

The presence of Israel, Yugoslavia and Cyprus at this conference underlined
the pertinence of the theme ‘Adult Education in a Crisis situation’ for seminars/
conferences and other projects concerning adult education in the Mediterranean.
Dov Friedlander, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Israeli Adult
Education Association, proposed this as a key theme for any future gathering of
adult educators from the region. This struck me as one of the most important points
to be made at the Ayia Napa conference, a conference that consisted, for the most
part, of presentations describing the adult education situation in each of the
participating countries. In the majority of cases, the presentations took the form
of ‘country reviews’. Many of the presentations emphasised the need to develop
appropriate organizational structures for adult education in the country concerned.
The Cyprus presentation, by Klitos Symeonides, indicated that ‘the political
instability [in Cyprus] of the last quarter of a century has contributed to the lack
of a comprehensive and coherent policy [for adult education] and to the absence
of a structure which would allow existing provision to be looked at as a whole and
co-ordinated appropriately’ (Symeonides, 2002). The point regarding the need to
develop appropriate structures for adult education was most pronounced in the
presentations by representatives of Eastern European countries. In countries such
as Yugoslavia, a country that once (in its older form) enjoyed a strong tradition in
the field (see for instance Soljan, Golubovic and Krajnc, 1985), these structures
are now virtually non-existent. There is the problem of recognizing Adult
Education as a legitimate area of educational provision that warrants an
appropriate organisational structure. In Serbia, for instance, ‘Adult education’,
according to Snezana Medic (2002), Director of the Institute for Pedagogy and
Andragogy, University of Belgrade, ‘is not treated as a strategically significant
economic and social development factor.’ In a number of countries, such as the
host country, Cyprus (the bulk of adult education provision has traditionally been
administered by the Ministry of Education’s Primary Education sector) and the FYRM (adult education falls under secondary education), adult education is simply an ‘add on.’ It is an appendage to the formal structure of education, a structure that primarily caters for schooling. One wonders whether this reflects the situation in most of the world’s southern and Eastern European states where the major concern is with formal schooling, the one sector that continues to attract the bulk of the funds provided by foreign donor agencies. Once again, Snezana Medic (2002) stresses this point with respect to Serbia by stating that, in her country, education is being equated with schooling: ‘the state has desisted from the provision of systemic solutions to adult education and has greatly diverted its interest from this field, focusing its concerns solely on schools, i.e. on formal education. Education and learning in adult life is treated as a personal interest.’

Other countries of the Mediterranean seem to have a concrete and well-developed adult education structure in place. Christos Doukas (2002) indicated that Greece has such an organisational structure. The General Secretary for Adult Education supervises ‘the Institute for Continuing Adult Education’ and ‘Second Chance Schools, Regional Committees for Adult Education, Multi-centres for Adults, a National Center for Professional Training and a Resource and Documentation Centre.’ The idea of having one comprehensive and coordinating organizational structure for adult education is difficult to realize in any context given that there are usually many players involved in this amorphous field. These include commercial entities, NGOs (In the joint Malta presentation, David Caruana, of GEM Foundation, highlighted some of the issues they face) and different ministries, not to mention Mosques and Churches in countries characterized by a dominant belief system. One is ever so likely to come across a ‘dispersed’ organisational model for adult education.

There is also a contrast between Mediterranean countries with respect to the degree of importance attached to adult education research/teaching programmes within universities. Universities in Yugoslavia and Slovenia, and other countries that formed part of the old Yugoslavia, have had strong research programmes in adult education. Scholars such as Dusan Savicevic (University of Belgrade) and Ana Krajnc (University of Ljubljana) are well known in the international adult education literature. The Malta presentation highlighted the existence of an adult education programme, involving diploma and Master degree courses, as well as undergraduate course units, within the University of Malta’s Faculty of Education. In contrast, other Universities do not include adult education among their teaching/research programmes. University of Cyprus Council member, Panayiotis Mallis, for instance, indicated, at the conference, that Adult Education does not, as yet, feature in the programme of studies within the Department of Education at the host country’s relatively new university (the University of Cyprus was
founded in 1989). It would be interesting, however, to monitor future university developments in Cyprus given the possibility, mentioned in Panayiotis Mallis’s talk, of the setting up of an open learning university institution and that, as Klitos Symeonides pointed out, a decision has been taken to establish the University of Applied Sciences (Symeonides, 2002). Will some of the private institutions, currently seeking accreditation, start providing degree programmes in this field?

The lip service accorded adult education in many countries of this region naturally results in a lack of adequate funds available for this sector. It is not only countries of the South and Eastern Europe who suffer from lack of adequate state funds for adult education but several other countries, including the traditionally much more endowed countries of the North. In his very revealing presentation on Germany, Michael Samlowski indicated how adult education, in this country, is characterized by a reduction of State funds that is leading adult education agencies to resort for support to the supranational state that is the European Union. The EU, through its Socrates and Leonardo programmes, and the European Social Fund, is now becoming the main provider of funds for those who are fortunate enough to have their proposals selected. The one positive aspect of this situation is that agencies are encouraged to engage in international cooperation in order to obtain EU funding, and this is very much the case with agencies engaged in, for instance, Grundtvig’s centralised and decentralised actions. I wonder whether those who are not successful with their proposals for EU funding might have to resort to corporate assistance with the danger that adult education, once an important feature of a genuinely democratic public sphere, increasingly becomes yet another arena of commodification and corporate encroachment in these stringent Neo-liberal times.

While on the subject of Neo-liberalism, the presentation by Genci Bushi, from Albania’s National Employment Service, served to remind us that vocational education is very much on the agenda in societies in transition from planned to market economies. In situations such as these, and through the promptings of such institutions as the World Bank and the IMF, adult education begins to assume a very narrow form. The euphemism of ‘Human Resource Development’ (read: human capital) gains the ascendancy in this context at the expense of concerns with social justice, with adult learners being conceived of solely in two-dimensional terms, namely producers and consumers, rather than social actors with a role to play in a genuinely participatory democracy. In this situation, adult education becomes an important vehicle for the transmission and inculcation of the Neo-liberal ideology, losing its concern for the broader dimensions of citizenship. Quite revealing was the presentation by Margarita Nikolovska from the FYRM in which she reminded us of the existence of a network of workers’ universities in the old Yugoslavia, of which her country formed part. She stated,
however, that the concern nowadays is no longer with adult education in its broader sense but with training and retraining, in a country where the rate of unemployment stands at 36%.

While some presentations underlined the vocational aspect of adult education, others continued to remind us that, in certain contexts, some of the most basic forms of adult education continue to be of great relevance. It is a well-known fact that, for many countries of the Mediterranean, especially those along the basin’s southern rim, the acquisition of literacy skills, specifically functional literacy skills, remains one of the great challenges. The presentation by the two representatives from Egypt, especially Vashdev Assandase, from Caritas, continued to confirm this view. While countries such as Egypt continue to grapple with literacy in its most basic forms, others such as Greece deal with the issue in its wider contexts, focusing on literacy at the workplace as well as in its personal and social aspects. The concern in Greece, in keeping with the EU’s Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, is on multiliteracies, and specifically basic literacy and numeracy, digital literacy, science literacy, media literacy, historic literacy, environmental literacy, literacy for the workplace and cultural literacy (Doukas, 2002).

The large percentage of people who are functionally illiterate, to be found in the Southern areas of the Mediterranean, has implications for adult education programmes devised in response to the strong migratory movements, from South to North, that characterize the present historical conjuncture, as a result of which the Mediterranean has been called the ‘new Rio Grande’ (Richter Malabotta, 2002). A number of people who seek employment in Europe’s southern states are functionally illiterate in the official language of their country of origin and in the language of the receiving country. One of the challenges for adult educators in the receiving countries is to explore meaningful adult literacy strategies that take account of this reality.

The great challenge for adult educators in the Mediterranean is to devise different strategies that take account of the ever-increasing multi-ethnic nature of the societies in which they live in a manner that renders the programmes empowering for the different ethnic groups involved (Mayo, 2001). These strategies would hopefully result in programmes that conceive of incoming ethnic groups not as deficits but as consisting of people with cultural attributes that can continue to enrich the society in which they have chosen or, in some cases, have been forced to live. The theme of multi-ethnicity was broached by Michael Samlowski and was given prominence by the Israeli representatives who indicated that it was a constant feature of education in Israel since the inception of the Jewish state in 1948, given that this state became the new abode of persons coming from different parts of the world, bringing with them different cultures. Reference was
made to the more recent projects targeting Ethiopian immigrants, projects that involved the preparation of Ethiopian teachers with an important role to play in an adult education programme that was meant to valorise the culture of the incoming group of citizens/learners. In 2000, this project earned the Division of Adult Education, in the Israeli Ministry of Education (represented at the conference by Sarah Rubinstein), a Unesco commendation. It is imperative, in situations such as these, that members of the incoming group are allowed to act as both teachers and learners, having much to offer to, as well as to receive from, the other ethnic groups within the receiving country.

The workshops allowed participants to explore possibilities for further cooperation at the bilateral and larger international levels. Quite instructive was the framework in which these discussions took place through which each participant was urged to focus on (a) what strengths he/she can bring to a possible cooperative network and (b) what benefits he/she can derive from it. One of the ideas floated around was to create a Mediterranean network in adult education. Cyprus’ commitment to this initiative was quite strong throughout the conference and Klitos Symeonides was entrusted, by the participants, with the task of coordinating the initial effort in this regard. I would personally regard the development of such a network as a consummation devoutly to be wished, although one ought to act with tact in this regard given the various conflicts in the region that can easily undermine even the most genuine of attempts to develop such an initiative. Michael Samlowski pointed out, at the start of the conference, that there seems to be little significant participation by Mediterranean Southern states in European politics and the politics of the European Association for the Education of Adults for that matter.

Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that Mediterranean countries require fora much more tailored to their needs, with agendas that derive from the region itself. This is one of the reasons that must have spurred on the Editor of this journal to help develop a Mediterranean educational research network whose tangible manifestations to date include the successful Selmun Seminars and the Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies itself. These initiatives can serve to inspire the development of a genuinely Mediterranean network in adult education, a network that would be most inclusive comprising countries and individuals from both the region’s Northern and Southern parts. Limiting such a network to the southern states of Europe would not render it truly Mediterranean. The presence of Arab states is crucial. One should also be careful not to develop such a proposed network in such a way that it becomes simply an appendage of some larger European adult education entity. One must be wary not to reproduce, through this type of ‘soft politics’, the kind of colonial relations that have bedevilled the countries of this region for so long. It should be a network that is
Mediterranean in the most inclusive sense of the word. Here the challenges are enormous, not least of which being that of tapping into sources of funding that would allow participants from the Northern and Southern parts of the region to travel and come together. This is no small challenge! Institutions in many parts of the South are not as well endowed as those in the North, and so a great amount of perseverance and imagination is required in pursuing this idea and the funding that would make its realisation possible.

The idea of an inclusive Mediterranean network would also entail doing away with the false dichotomy that has characterised such adult education networks elsewhere, especially in Europe and North America, where we find associations, conferences and networks intended exclusively for either practitioners or researchers. I recommend that no such dichotomy should characterise the kind of network augured by the Cyprus conference, a conference characterised by some noticeable absences (for instance, there was only one Arab country represented) but which had the merit of having brought people from universities, ministries and NGOs together, in one medieval hall, to discuss the challenges facing adult education in their respective countries and in the Mediterranean region in general.

References


Peter Mayo,
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Adult Education is considered a major social activity. Indeed UNESCO’s 1997 Declaration on Adult Education considers it as an endeavor aimed to affect social change. It is assumed also that adult education contributes to ‘Nation Building’ in the sense of uniting people, building a state and fostering a sense of nation, through acquiring knowledge mastering skills and reinforcing positive values and attitudes.

The present edited volume attempts to tell the story of adult education in Israel during the past fifty years of the State (1948-1998). The authors of the various chapters in the book try also to evaluate what were the specific stated goals over time and to what extent were they achieved and also ‘what ought to be done in the forthcoming years’ (p.vi).

The book consists of five sections: Section A – The Context, written by the editor is an extensive introduction that provides a conceptual model and a theoretical framework of adult education in general and in Israel in particular. It also attempts to evaluate and assess the adult education enterprise in light of its changing stated goals and actual achievements.

The next two sections: B – Hebrew and Culture, and C – Literacy, focus on the initial most important task of adult education since its inception in the 1940s, namely teaching Hebrew and imparting an old/new culture and a renewed modern-national identity to immigrants.

As in many other emerging societies/nations, adult education is charged with realization of national aspirations. Indeed adult education in Israel was charged with the task of the fulfillment of the Zionist dream of national revival. Thus it was expected to impart knowledge, skills and citizenship socialization to immigrants who hailed from more than one hundred different countries, as well as empowering groups and individuals to take part in the emerging society. Thus the major role of adult education was imparting the Hebrew Language and its culture in order to forge a sense of unity. The revival of Hebrew was a basic tenet of Zionism and later the State of Israel. Thus teaching Hebrew to new immigrants remained a major component in adult education.

Thus L. Laufert outlines ‘50 years of teaching Hebrew in Israel’. She concludes rightfully: ‘this courageous and irrational attempt to change millions of
people’s language turned into an unparalleled success’. (p. 34). No wonder that the Basques, Welsh and Eastern European, former U.S.S.R. Peoples came to learn of the experience and successes of revitalizing an ancient language.

Teaching Hebrew to immigrants, adapted its methods with the changing nature of the waves of immigration from European immigrants in the 1940s, to Middle Eastern Arabic speaking countries, immigrants in the 1950s to 60s and than back to Russian in the 1970s – 90s and recently to Ethiopian immigrants. Of Special interest are indeed the two chapters in this section: ‘Teaching Hebrew to Adult Ethiopian Immigrants, during Operation Moses’ by H. Polani, and ‘Chronicle of the Linguistic Absorption of Adult Ethiopian Immigrants’ by M. Peretz. The ‘Ethiopian Phase’ of imparting Hebrew was, and still is unique in the sense that not only languages and culture was taught, but also modernization since the bulk of immigrants arrived from remote rural areas in Ethiopia who were alien to the mores and ways of life in a modern Western oriented society, as is Israel. Here too many modifications of methods and approaches were required. While the adaptation of the Young Ethiopian immigrants went quite well, their parents sometimes did not overcome the physical, mental, social and spiritual-religious crisis.

The cultural mission of Hebrew, and the processes of its transformation from an ancient ‘sacred language’, the language of the Bible and worship, to a modern-spoken and vibrant language, is dealt with by S. Kodesh. This section is concluded by a chapter devoted to the role of imparting Hebrew to non-Jews, mainly Moslems, Christians Arabs and Druze from Israel, the Palestinian authority and from neighboring Arab Countries. Ulpan Akiva, an adult education institution, established in 1951, undertakes this mission. The vision expressed by its Director, E. Lapid is ‘to turn it into a Middle Eastern regional educational center for Jews and Arabs, so they can meet and deliberate in an environment that respects their differences’. (p. 67). The realization of this vision is most important in these days.

The book covers in various chapters a wide range of social issues related to imparting adult education through language, such as closing the socioeconomic gap (Grabelski), ‘Adult Education and Woman’s Literacy: A Feminist Point of View’ (R. Schachar); ‘The Function of Religious Torah Studies in Adult Education’ (Y. Fried); the role of ‘Life-Long Training for Employment’(J. Hecht) and ‘Parental and Familial Guidance’(R. Cohen) as well as ‘Learning in the ‘Golden Age’ – the role of adult education for the elderly people’.

Due to space limitation we cannot elaborate on these issues and have not mentioned other aspects discussed in the book.

Finally, although the stated aim of this volume is presenting ‘the saga of adult education in the first Jubilee of the State of Israel’ (p.iv), it does not refrain from criticism, as well as recommendations for modifications. However, this volume
cannot be considered an ultimate summary of the adult education enterprise in Israel, as indeed admitted by the editor. It does not present most important aspects of adult education such as the non-Jewish sector, the contribution of Israel Defense forces (IDF), which was once considered as ‘the largest education system’ in Israel, the penal institutions, and higher adult education.

However, in spite of its shortcomings, the present volume deserves to be on the shelf of every adult educator and researcher, not only in Israel, but also abroad, because of its internal implications that are evident in the extensive part of eighty two pages of abstracts in English.

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The attempt to bring to commentaries on the visual arts perspectives informed by philosophy and from ‘the theoretical humanities’ (to use a label given currency by the influential journal Angelaki) has in recent years yielded studies which attempt to reconfigure the relationship between art and the critique of art. One does not, after all, find in works like Michel Butor’s Les Mots dans la Peinture (1969), Jacques Derrida’s The Truth in Painting (1978), or Jean-François Lyotard’s Philosophy and Painting in the Age of their Experimentation: Contributions to the Idea of Postmodernity (1984) the kind of readings of painting and sculpture to which E. H. Gombrich, Robert Hughes or Andrew Graham-Dixon have accustomed those who seek to ‘understand’ art. Whereas Gombrich, Hughes and Graham-Dixon might seek to ‘explain’ a painting – to place it within a familiar confluence of influences, styles, intentions and meanings, as well as of ruptures and innovations – the approach taken by figures like Butor, Derrida and Lyotard attempts, instead, to explore not only how philosophy and ‘the theoretical humanities’ (or ‘theory’) can read art, but also how art can read, in turn, philosophy and theory. In other words, this approach presumes that there is, within art, an exploration of concerns that proceeds otherwise but reflectively to certain preoccupations within the discourses of philosophy and theory. That exploration, it is further presumed, repays analyses informed by those discourses, to which it is both discoverable and revealing. As a result, a reciprocity between art on the one hand and philosophy and theory on the other is brought to light in commentaries that seek to make the formers ‘otherwise’ impinge upon the discourses of the latter.

An analogy with literature and literary criticism might be instructive here. In question is the parallel, within the study of art, for what in literary criticism has been referred to as the approach that asks ‘not what Derrida can do for Jane Austen, but what Jane Austen can do for Derrida’. Readers unfamiliar with corresponding readings within the critique of art might wish to consult some of the best known examples: Jacques Lacan’s analysis of Gian Lorenzo Bernini’s ‘The Ecstasy of St Teresa’ in Le Séminaire XX: Encore (1975), Fredric Jameson’s reading of works by Vincent van Gogh’s and Andy Warhol in the first chapter of Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (1991), and two distinguished and possibly more approachable predecessors, Siegmund Freud’s The Moses of Michelangelo (1914) and Walter Benjamin’s celebrated reference to Paul Klee’s ‘Angelus Novus’ in the ninth section of Theses on the Philosophy of History (1950).
Of course, such readings will not answer to everybody’s taste. Nor should it be thought that the role of the art historian is being massively renegotiated as a consequence of what commentators like Derrida and Lacan have brought to the study of art. Indeed, the effect that the publication of studies like The Truth in Painting or Le Séminaire XX has had upon the academies should not be overestimated. At the same time, it is undeniable that a manner of inquiry into art has emerged that, exemplified by those works, places itself alongside rather than supplantingly to those critical traditions that define what art historians have always done. It is an alternative that has attracted a limited but exacting constituency of readers, and it is that constituency that John Baldacchino’s Easels of Utopia targets.

For readers outside that constituency, Baldacchino’s book will present a number of difficulties. Easels of Utopia is not for the reader uninitiated into philosophy and the theoretical humanities. The book articulates readings of the work of Umberto Boccioni, for instance, with that of Thomas Aquinas and Henri Bergson, or of Giorgio De Chirico’s with that of Duns Scotus. In doing so, it brings to bear insights derived from the work of figures like Martin Heidegger, Benedetto Croce, Derrida and Lyotard. It does this in a way that is not forgiving on readers who would require a preamble outlining the ideas and presuppositions underpinning such readings.

In this respect, the book’s opening section – ‘Modus operandi’ – is not particularly helpful. It explains that the book ‘is a gestural inquiry into the forms that have tormented the imagination with a fascination for the mysterious realities that are supplanted and fixed on canvas; sculpted, carved, or installed within the actualized spectacles of ideal potentials; or mounted as performative happenings in the aesthetic beyondness of sound or colour, matter or text’; it also makes clear that in such ‘happenings’, a ‘lack of philosophical rigour is overtaken by an equal (yet different) rigour … with which the art-form conserves its operosità’ (p.1). This declared focus on two different but not unrelated forms of rigour within art and philosophy can be seen as a statement of allegiance to the manner of inquiry into art that has been spoken of above: a manner deeply (and not tokenistically) convinced that ‘the parallels running between aesthetic and philosophical sensibility cross each other by necessity’ (p. 20). The book will therefore attract readers attuned to that manner and the intertext involved. It will do little, however, for other readers, who may well be dismayed by its singular lack of reproductions, and who may find themselves remarking, instead, on an occasionally wearisome turgidity in the style and on certain infelicities of syntax that make one wonder, at times, why the text was not subjected to a firmer editing hand.

These shortcomings should not, however, be allowed to detract too much from the achievement of the book, which should surely be judged on the basis of the
effectiveness of its theoretical-cum-philosophical inquiry into art. Baldacchino acknowledges ‘the difficulty of textual accounts to describe and sufficiently exhaust the “figural” world’ (p.78). It is a difficulty that is rendered even more acute in his study, since what motivates the pages of Easels of Utopia is a concern with the devices by which art, without necessarily succumbing to ‘teleological hysteria and archaeological nostalgia’ (p.3), is bound up with the recollection and forgetting of Being. In this sense, the book exemplifies an overriding concern within recent debates in the theoretical humanities. It puts one in mind of studies like Catherine Belsey’s Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden (1999), which examine how the arts contrive to represent and evoke states of innocence or grace that, apprehended with a wistful awareness of their immemorial irrecoverability, become amenable to the discourses on desire and the sublime that so exercise poststructuralists. The Utopia of Baldacchino’s title is linked to these issues. The subtitle’s reference to ‘art’s fact returned’, meanwhile, mirrors the book’s multifaceted interrogation of the way in which art’s form, ‘knowable of its contingency, … seeks knowledge while content regains the ability to rehearse its beginnings’ (p.134) – an ability, however, conditioned by ‘the anamnetic structure’ of ‘the aesthetic moment’ (p.116). In pursuing this interest, Baldacchino proceeds through the obligatory Heideggerian, Lyotardian and poststructuralist references, but takes in also, with formidable erudition and eclecticism, an astoundingly broad intertext that includes numerous artists, philosophers, and writers. This comprehensiveness is impressive. It is arguable, however, that this strength is also a weakness, for the very extensiveness of the book’s references prevent it from consistently achieving the deliberateness in close reading that so distinguishes, for instance, Derrida’s reading of the work of Valerio Adami or Gérard Titus-Carmel. The comparison is not necessarily an odious one, for Baldacchino is at his best when analysing in depth, and at some length, individual bodies of work and their relation to philosophical questions (as in chapter 6, which reads Caravaggio alongside Hegel), as well as when discovering affinities between artists occupying different historical and cultural contexts (as in the later chapters, which explore certain congruencies between Marino Marini and Francis Bacon, and Renato Guttuso and Stanley Spencer respectively). For this reason, it is a pity that the book lacks the kind of introduction and conclusion that might give programmatic and summative prominence to the concerns that unite the numerous figures referred to. Such a measure would have lent clearer definition to the rationale and the structuring principle underpinning the study as a whole.

Aside from these issues, Easels of Utopia contains a number of useful and penetrating analyses. It is particularly strong on Futurism, especially in arguing that any overweening attention paid to the work and ideas of F.T. Marinetti can lead to misunderstandings of that movement. The readings of Carlo Carrà’s work
are particularly fine. In addition, there is a pleasing persuasiveness in the arguments relating to the differences between Cubism and Futurism, as well as in those emphasising the contrasts between the political and the aesthetic avant-garde. These and other attributes make *Easels of Utopia* a worthwhile introduction to the inspiring research ethic of Baldacchino, whose teaching at the University of Warwick and at the Unit for the Study of Philosophy in Art (USOPiA) at Gray’s School of Art (a unit he himself established) attest to his conviction that the study of both art and philosophy can benefit from a profound focus on their essential reciprocity.

_Ivan Callus,_  
_University of Malta_

**Notes**

SPECIAL ISSUE:
Learning in Science in the Mediterranean Region

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies announces a call for papers for a special issue on ‘Learning in Science in the Mediterranean Region.’ The 21st century poses new challenges and opportunities in science education, research and practice in the Mediterranean region. It is our goal to bring a new measure of excellence by emphasizing quality and cutting-edge research, identifying new approaches and ideas, and examining tensions and challenges that confront the ever-changing teaching and learning environments in science education in the Mediterranean.

The papers will provide empirically based material that engages theoretical paradigms and frameworks in science education in the Mediterranean. The objectives of the special issue are:

• To learn about the specific challenges and tensions in learning in science that the different countries in the Mediterranean region are currently facing with particular emphasis on the following: colonial influences, the role of language, the role of religion, the role of regional conflicts and the contribution of science learning in peace education, the influence of social needs and priorities on science teaching/learning, multicultural concerns in the region, scientific literacy, the impact of new technologies, connections among science-technology-society, and the tensions between the local and the global in constructing science curricula.

• To analyze the historical, economic, political and cultural backgrounds and contexts that are constitutive of these challenges and tensions.

• To appreciate the regional dimensions of the tensions and challenges documented, in an effort to develop a sophisticated discourse that takes into account the localities as well as the realities of global forces in the Mediterranean context.

• To synthesize different strategies and policy orientations by Mediterranean countries that have been developed to address these tensions and challenges in science learning and teaching in the Mediterranean.

We encourage both conceptual and empirical manuscripts addressing timely and relevant issues in the above theme. Papers should not have been presented previously, nor should they be under consideration in another publication outlet.
Proposals for the papers are being solicited for the first round of consideration. Proposals should include a 200-word abstract and one-page curriculum vitae. Each participant’s name, e-mail and regular address, and phone number should also be listed. The deadline for submissions is 30th July 2002. Evaluation criteria include:

- Contribution to the knowledge about learning in science in the Mediterranean region
- Advancement of theoretical and empirical knowledge development
- Quality of conclusions and recommendations for future research

The accepted proposals will accompanied by an invitation to write a paper by 15th August 2002 and an invitation to participate at a Seminar (local expenses paid; participants will be responsible for transport to and from Cyprus) organized in Cyprus between September 9-13, 2002 where the papers will be presented. The Seminar will explore learning in science among Mediterranean societies. The revised final papers will undergo the normal review process of MJES.

Please send proposals to:
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Three complete copies of the manuscript should be submitted, typed double-spaced on one side of the paper. A diskette version of the article (preferably formatted on Word for Windows) should be included with the manuscript. It is essential that the full postal address, telephone, fax and email coordinates be given of the author who will receive editorial correspondence, offprints and proofs. Authors should include a brief autobiographic note. To enable the refereeing procedure to be anonymous, the name(s) and institution(s) of the author(s) should not be included at the head of the article, but should be typed on a separate sheet. The surname of the author/s should be underlined.
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The Editorial Board welcomes suggestions for special issues of the *MJES* dedicated to a special theme.

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The MJES is a biannual refereed international journal with a regional focus. It features educational research carried out in Mediterranean countries, as well as educational studies related to the diaspora of Mediterranean people world-wide. The journal offers a forum for theoretical debate, historical and comparative studies, research and project reports, thus facilitating dialogue in a region which has strong and varied educational traditions. There is a strong international dimension to this dialogue, given the profile of the Mediterranean in the configuration of the new world order, and the presence of Mediterranean peoples in Europe, North America and elsewhere. The MJES is of interest to scholars, researchers and practitioners in the following fields: comparative education, foundation disciplines in education, education policy analysis, Mediterranean studies, cultural and post-colonial studies, Southern European and area studies, intercultural education, peace education, and migrant studies.

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