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AIMS OF THE JOURNAL

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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SOCIAL RELATIONS AND SCHOOL CHOICE IN SPAIN

XAVIER RAMBLA

Abstract – *The article presents the outcome of a sociological analysis of parents' (mostly, mothers') and teachers' reasoning on school choice in Spain. A general discussion of parental choice, as well as a specific discussion of its institutionalisation in Spain, define the framework of the analysis. Windisch's (1992) typology of everyday reasoning spells out how the two parties of the choice social relation, namely teachers and parents, justify it. The conclusion states that class and gender are salient factors if school choice is to be explained in different institutional settings.*

Introduction

Parental choice has become a central issue in sociology of education as a consequence of the introduction of market-led policies in the UK, the USA and elsewhere in the eighties. While it is not a major policy device in all European countries, some governments have recently started to introduce it in Southern Europe. This article will try to explore the social relations involved in school choice according to ethnographic evidence collected in Spain.

The main thesis defended in the article states that choice is embedded in gendered and classed unequal social relations, whatever the national setting. The argument will be defended by discussing the validity of analyses referred to Britain when extrapolated to Spain with caution. Furthermore, a typology of discourses expressed by the two parties of the choice social relation, i.e. teachers and parents, will add new evidence.

The sociological analysis of parental choice

Since the first experiments of the Thatcher government educational policy until the debates on quasi-markets, a rich bibliography has been produced in order to find out the links between school choice and other social phenomena such as class or gender. As a brief list reminding the importance of post-structuralism, feminism, policy analysis or institutional economics shows, several theories have been fruitful to grasp relevant aspects of the social relations involved in school

choice. Although it is not possible to review all their implications here, three main arguments can be recalled in order to frame the following analysis.

Firstly, parents' decisions vary significantly depending on their class position. Certainly, this factor does not determine decisions in a mechanical fashion, but its influence is recurrent in many researches carried out in different countries (Lareau, 1987, 1995; Edwards and Whitty, 1991; Ball, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997; Dale, 1994; David et al., 1997). Roughly speaking, proximity seems to be a stronger reason the lower the class position, as well as cost-benefit calculation and the effort to look for a 'good' school are more important for middle-class parents than they are for working-class parents. Some parallelism can be signalled if this evidence is compared with the analysis on family educational practices according to the theory of reproduction. However, that debate focused on everyday practices whose immediacy, seriality and indexicality are not explicit, whereas the analysis of parental choice is mainly an analysis of discursive consciousness. Giddens' (1993) distinction of practical and discursive consciousness supports the former comment.

Secondly, both parents seldom take care of school decisions in the same way, because mothers are made responsible in practice. David (1993b) has summarised the evidence on this point. Two considerations - namely, that school choice lies on the very middle of the public-private boundary, and that education has traditionally overlooked the private side of such a boundary (Arnot and Ivinson, 1997) - probably set the theoretical foundations to explain this bias. On the other hand, the distinction between practical and discursive consciousness becomes useful once again, since common and professional discourses have spuriously obscured the practical influence of gender relations on parental choice. David's (1993a) 'boundary approach' highlights the fact that the analysis of education is de-gendered when these discourses assume that the school boundaries are static.

And finally, school choice brings professional and everyday knowledge face to face. 'Families' draw on common theories of education when making decisions on their children's upbringing (Montandon and Perrenoud, 1994), although in fact it is women who develop this form of knowledge (Ribbens, 1994; Luttrell, 1995). Teachers also draw on their own professional knowledge, which is more related to practice and embeds more practical prejudices than academic educationalists often admit (Gomes, 1993). For this reason, professional and organisational discourses can eventually 'capture' lay perspectives on schooling and legitimate a social image of school choice that is far away from people's practice (Bowe et al., 1994; Boulton and Coldron, 1996).

Therefore, the research literature has come to sketch the school choice process as a social relation between teachers deploying their professional knowledge and mothers deploying their domestic knowledge. Besides, androcentrism

undervalues this second form of knowledge, and its eventual use varies according to the class position of families. It seems advisable to refer the former theoretical summary to Bourdieu's (1994) theory of fields of activity. Schooling can be considered as a field of activity where choices are movements locating actors along classed and gendered privilege lines. However, it is also advisable to keep in mind that both practice and discourse are crucial as far as choice is concerned; otherwise, the actors' reflexivity would be marginalised from the analysis.

Parental choice in Spain

Although quasi-markets have not been widely introduced, the educational system has traditionally induced families to choose between public and private schools in Spain. Before the Conservative party began to experiment voucher systems in Valencian infant schools after gaining the regional election in 1995, or the (also Conservative) central government introduced new criteria to define intake areas reinforcing parents' individual decision in 1997, for a long time many people had been actually choosing their children's school. Since a public schooling system was not complete until the mid-eighties, the Catholic Church kept a broad share of students at compulsory levels, and a laical private sector became also important in the most industrialised regions. Nowadays, private schools can be funded by the state if they submit to the criteria of 1985 Act on the Right to Education, and most of them actually do. As a consequence, almost 40% students in compulsory education attend private schools.

At the moment a comprehensive reform may have enhanced the salience of choice between the state and the private sectors for the last years. The pre-reform system established compulsory primary schooling until the age of 13. Then an examination (School Graduate) offered achievers the possibility to attend both academic or vocational schools, whereas under-achievers could only attend vocational schools. In spite of the growing rates of success at School Graduate, and the extension of compulsory schooling until 16 years, the dual system did not even the prestige of both options at all. The 1990 Reform Act makes schooling comprehensive and compulsory until 16. However, repeated delays in its implementation, the current Conservative government manifest intention to curb comprehensivity, budget cuts eventually restricting public supply of secondary comprehensive schools in many localities, as well as the private sector effort to improve facilities and supply all levels in the same school buildings, all these factors have come to invest choice with a renewed social meaning.

Some scholars have convincingly argued that social distances between the

state and private suppliers of public services are particularly high in Southern Europe welfare regimes. Although welfare-mix is a traditional feature of these regimes, as it is in Central Europe, collaboration seems to be much more scarce and partial (Sarasa and Moreno, 1995).

The same trend has been portrayed as the key factor to explain parental low involvement at school. In this view, after Francoism, the former expectations that participation would change schools once they were democratized have been frustrated because of teachers' professional corporatism (Fdez. Enguita, 1993). At first sight a historical overview seems to support the argument: the extension of primary schooling and the growth of private schools were simultaneous in the seventies (Lerena, 1986); later on, public schools gained esteem and attracted a middle-class intake due to the Socialist policy in favour of public schooling in the eighties; but, in the nineties analysts hold a debate on the possibility that students from privileged backgrounds avoid public schools due to a classist fear of comprehensivity. However, does this institutional distance hinder parental involvement of all social groups? This question has not been explicitly posited yet, but some diagnoses seem to have assumed that involvement eventually depends on trust (or mistrust) instead of class and gender hierarchies (Sánchez, 1991; Corraliza, 1991; Fdez. Enguita, 1993; MEC, 1994; CEE, 1995).

In my opinion, a more accurate picture should remind that social groups deal with such an institutional distance from unequal positions. On the one hand, political restrictions hinder involvement on their own, since the Spanish state often fulfils its legitimation needs through rhetoric strategies emphasizing grandiloquent objectives whose implementation is afterwards neglected (Bonal, 1998). The expectation that involvement would democratise schooling was handled in this way. In a sense the argument on mistrust has convincingly shown that political factors also play their role in education. Nevertheless, on the other hand, it would be an overstatement to exclude the influence of social inequalities over parental involvement at school.

It is not evident at all that parental involvement faces such huge institutional obstacles in Spain that class and gender do not impinge on it. Some data suggest the contrary. Thus, participation in school council elections is higher at the infant, primary and special levels (CEE, 1995), where students' autonomy is lower and mothers' responsibility comes to be more direct; besides, participation in parents associations is more likely the higher the class position (Sánchez and Subirats, 1992). Therefore, it is reasonable to ask whether the sociological analysis of school choice can be replicated in a country where educational policy has not legitimated itself with a proclaimed adherence to parentocracy as in Britain (David, 1993b).

Mapping patterns of reasoning

Choice is the outcome of a process where constraints, ideologies and individual reasonings interplay (Bowe et al., 1994; David et al., 1997). Among all these processes my article will focus on reasoning in order to explore the ethnographic patterns of decision-making.

All ethnographic analyses have rejected the market model so far. Actually, that model assumes that decisions operate in relation to discrete orders of preferences, but this hypothesis has never tested. On the contrary, ethnographers have convincingly argued that decision-making is quite more complex than mere rational, instrumental, clear and discrete choice. But, why is not the market model definitely rejected if it contradicts everyday life experience? How can it legitimate educational policy in the midst of crises and contradictions? In my view, the market model keeps legitimating educational policy because it naturalises the social hierarchies that access to public services (as schooling) entails.

Windisch (1992) has devised a typology of reasoning, based on psycho-social research, that spells out the internal processes of these unequal relations. This typology assumes that reasoning is an ongoing process, related to social structure and change as well as inequalities, by means of which a variety of cognitive paradigms are constructed, actualised and continuously modified. One of these cognitive paradigms grounds the social representations of 'rational choice': it distinguishes one's own as well as the others' practices, it leads action toward the subtle work of searching agreements, and it requires structured and multifactorial explanations of social reality. This paradigm can be labelled 'calculation'. Another paradigm sketches quite the opposite picture: it blurs the differences between the own and the others' practices, emphasises withdrawal from negotiation, and refers explanation to deep and unknown causes. This paradigm can be labelled 'reification'.

Actually, although discrete models of choice reduce the complexity of calculation, they reinforce its social prestige. Calculation has been legitimated by the 'homo economicus' stories on capitalist success or fraternal contracts (Pateman, 1988). These stories portray a sexist view of men dominating other men and women, and have constituted a very powerful symbolic resource in modern societies. Furthermore, discrete models of choice condemn reification to irrationality. In spite of their simplification effect, they induce anybody drawing on calculation to think he/she is right, by comparison with anybody using other patterns of reasoning such as reification.

Windisch (1992) states that his cognitive paradigms are used in regular ways by speakers. Although everybody uses all of them, patterns of reasoning can be polarised in some settings. This approach can be projected over the analysis of school choice. Parent-teachers relations are filtered by institutional rules

emphasising individual and discrete actions through interviews, meetings, graduation ceremonies and so on. These contacts compel parents to focus their reasoning on very narrow features of schooling regardless of their general views. Therefore, if class and gender hierarchies can be spelt out under the patterns of reasoning about schooling, and these hierarchies are embedded in polarised distributions of calculation and reification, it is plausible to argue that these hierarchies constitute a crucial process of school choice.

An analysis based on this hypothesis is presented in the following sections. This analysis assumes that schooling is a field of activity where decisions become movements within classed and gendered lines, and it highlights reasoning as a crucial movement in formal settings connecting families and schools. It draws on focused interviews on local schools, since this narrow focus is analogous to the context of most family-school interviews.

The empirical results outline the following picture:

- a) mothers are in charge of family educational decisions,
- b) whereas middle-class mothers often use calculation, working-class mothers often use reification;
- c) teachers almost always use calculation.

Therefore, mothers are the actors in this field of activity from the family side, they justify their choices with different patterns of reasoning whose social prestige is unequal, and they normally face teachers deploying the most prestigious pattern of reasoning.

The former distribution is neither a statistical generalisation nor a mechanistic model; on the contrary, its interpretation should be aware of the continuous interplay between reasonings, broad subjectivities and social constraints. Some comments on its theoretical and empirical grounds can be suggested.

Firstly, in spite of the eventual influence of professional corporatism or institutional distances due to historic particular factors, class and gender structure school choice in Spain as in other countries. Since Ball et al. (1994), Lareau (1995) or David et al. (1997) report similar trends in other countries, the external validity of the analysis is not weak

Secondly, family educational reasonings attribute as high prestige to individualisation as family educational practices have proved to do. Here the distinction between practical and discursive consciousness highlights a crucial remark on school choice. Many researchers have found out that family educational practices contribute more to learning the more similar they are to the elaborate linguistic codes that schools use (Bernstein, 1971, 1975, 1977; Lareau, 1987; Fontaine, 1986; Kellerhals, 1991; Morais, 1992). It is their view that working-class families' practices stressing the influence of contexts over individuals are

held in low esteem because school and family practices become prestigious as far as they rely on negotiations between autonomous individuals having clear preferences in mind. Family discourses on schooling, i.e. family reasonings, seem to be unequal in a similar fashion, since calculation stresses individualisation whereas reification stresses contextual influences. However, reasoning is the outcome of an explicit symbolic work entailing several rationalities. If both practice and reasoning reflect a hierarchy, the role of individualisation in education cannot be only understood as a continuity or discontinuity between families and schools; on the contrary, several rationalities conflict on the importance of individualisation to educate children. The rationale and the prestige of these rationalities should be studied in their own terms.

Thirdly, institutionalised pedagogic rules delimit which voices are legitimate and which voices are not (Bernstein, 1990, 1996). Such a process impinges on both professional and lay reasonings about education. In the same way as performance models can exclude or subordinate competence models from educational policy-making (Bernstein, 1996), narrowly focused reasonings about choice exclude feminine more sophisticated discourses of decision-making such as the ethics of care (Gilligan, 1993) from the schooling arena.

The research design

The present analysis refers to fieldwork in the areas of Barcelona (1994-1997), Castilla-La Mancha and Madrid (1996-1997) in Spain. A sample of interviews with mothers and focus groups with teachers provided first evidence from several schools in the nearby of Barcelona in 1994; afterwards, it has been replicated by other interviews with parent associations members (mainly women) in the same area, Tomelloso (Castilla-La Mancha) and Madrid during 1996 and 1997.

The samples included a variety of women and schools. Mothers became the majority of interviewees in the 1994 sample, which was addressed to 'families', and in the 1996 and 1997 fieldwork, which was concerned with parent associations. They came from a middle-class, a mixed and a working-class public school in the Barcelona urban area in 1994. These schools had not only been selected so as to guarantee social but also pedagogic variety. Thus the middle-class school had won a local fame as a supporter of child-centred pedagogies – it came from the laical private sector who had solicited its admission into the public system after 1985 – the socially mixed school combined rethoric adherence to child-centred principles with subject-centred practices, and the working-class school aimed to articulate child-centred, anti-sexist and pro-labour pedagogies. However, pedagogic orientations did not have a significant effect on mothers'

reasoning, since the class bias was reproduced both in more child-centred and more subject-centred schools. In fieldwork carried out during 1996 and 1997, mothers came from parent associations where middle-class members and values were dominant (the case of Barcelona) as well as where working-class members and values were dominant (the cases of Madrid and Tomelloso). Obviously, the predominance of one or another class milieu did not exclude some variety within each school or association.

In 1994 teachers were sampled after interviewing directors of schools with middle- and working-class intakes and with subject- or child-centred methods. Commonalities on their reasoning were overwhelming. At a second stage, focus groups were held with teachers at the same schools where mothers had been sampled from. On the other hand, some teachers were also interviewed in the 1996-1997 fieldwork while collecting information to assess several pedagogic innovations.¹

When mothers were interviewed, questions focused on the 'barrios' (urban areas) and schools at the locality; but when teachers were interviewed, questions focused on the social characteristics of pupils. The aim of the interviews was incentivating everybody to compare social groups within similar contexts. All interviews pointed at a common focus, which was expected to induce interviewees to make comparisons. Mothers were asked to describe the several areas at their localities and the schools they knew there. Teachers were required to classify students and to justify the criteria they drew on. In both cases there was not any rigid question route, but a wide array of prompts was scheduled in order to lead interviewees to compare areas, schools or students' groups.

As it has been previously mentioned, the external validity of the method relied on the eventual similarity of results with those from other countries; and its internal validity was grounded on the analogy between focused interviews and 'formal' family-school meetings, because both settings induce actors to refer to the same narrow focus.

Transcripts were analysed according to Muchielli's (1974) criteria. The internal structure of discourses was spelt out in terms of the frequency of allusions patterned as calculation or reification. Most interviews showed a clear preference for one or the other pattern of reasoning.

Thus, people from several origins who performed two social roles (teacher and mother) were required to compare schools within similar focuses. They spoke on learning, on pedagogic styles, on schools location, on schools reputation, on academic and personal problems of teachers, and other topics.² Certainly, many factors influenced 'what' they said, and some of these factors may emerge from the very communicational setting of interviews. Furthermore, other techniques would have been more valid to know 'what' mothers actually thought (e.g. focus

groups), as well as other techniques would have been more valid to know 'what' mothers actually did (e.g. observation). Nonetheless, the focused interview and its content analysis found out that the form of speech, besides the content, was a crucial dimension.

Analysis: mothers' and teachers' patterns of reasoning

The analysis of patterns of reasoning has found out that teachers and mothers' speech can converge or diverge regardless of its contents. So far explicit agreement and disagreement have been recorded by many ethnographies, and can be adduced as key factors of conflict or consensus in many episodes, but a latent and common state of affairs, that of agreement on divergent grounds, has not been deeply explored. Windisch (1992) suggests such a possibility, because the same view (e.g. the need of education) can be reasoned using calculation and reification expressing quite different stances.

The distributions drawn by fieldwork in Spain point out that teachers normally use calculation, as well as most middle-class mothers, whereas most working-class mothers use reification. Once again it is important to remind that these distributions have to be contextualised, and that the attribution of types of reasoning to class positions should always be framed within specific focuses of speech. Keeping all these cautions in mind, some discursive traits can be sketched.

Teachers use calculation when they interpret students' or parents' practices, arrange solutions for academic problems or recall several factors to explain something.

a) Teachers are able to re-construct parents' and students' views. For instance, they refer to homework imagining which can be the scene at somebody's home. Then they recall the 'normal' scene in which parents insist on homework, and they point out that is a key contribution to achievement. On the other hand, they are also able to imagine that cultural level, over-work or family instability can produce situations where such a 'normality' collapses.

b) When teachers monitor their action, they are deeply concerned with negotiation. For instance, in the focus groups held in 1994 (when Spanish primary schools still channelled students into academic or vocational secondary education tracks) teachers usually referred to their attempts to look for an agreement with families whose children had not clearly passed the examinations. Then they could advise repetition, they could pass the student but enforce parents to take him/her into vocational education, or they could look for guidance in order to lower parents' exaggerated aspirations or pressure.

c) Teachers draw complex and rich explanations of educational phenomena structuring a diversity of factors. The most salient example here has to do with their accounts of achievement, since in those focus groups they never restricted their reasoning to a single cause but quoted simultaneously a broad array of factors such as maturity, the school method, the school size, the class origin of students, or the strength of teacher collaboration.

Similar discursive traits are also common among mothers using calculation. These mothers also guess what teachers think, look for agreements and elaborate complex explanations.

a) Many mothers are quite good at comparing the others' practices. As a matter of fact, it is mothers using calculation who easily provide a social radiography of localities distinguishing high-, middle- and lower-class areas. In both occasions (1994 and 1996-7) fieldwork calculation has appeared as a pattern of reasoning to reckon the advantages and disadvantages of schools; but it has also been used to understand that teachers face great difficulties when coping with so many children.

b) Some mothers use calculation when negotiating with schools. In 1994 interviews some middle-class mothers told how they negotiated agreements on educational strategies to help problematic children, on bilingual arrangements in Catalonia, on balancing the importance of homework and their views about the need of leisure for children, and so on. Some conflicts were recorded during fieldwork in 1996-7. When calculation became the expression of mothers' strategies in these conflicts, the search of alliances, the setting of negotiation agendas, or the conscious use of indirect pressure through rumour were explicitly quoted.

c) Mothers' explanations of social reality can be as rich as teachers' when calculation provides the framework of reasoning. For instance, in 1994 the views that schools could always do 'something' in spite of teachers' pessimism, that success depended on both academic and psychological factors, or that choice was intrinsically difficult due to the partiality of all available informations, made reference to a broad scope of phenomena to account for school events.

Discourses are very different when mothers use reification. Uncertainty, withdrawal from action and monocausal explanations are quite more important then.

a) Reification blurs the image of 'the other'. Focused interviews recorded many responses expressing a deep uncertainty on the features of local areas or local schools in 1994. In 1996-7 fieldwork asked some work teams to look for the

connection between short stories on everyday life situations and short reports on general social trends. Working-class groups took several sessions to make explicit statements linking both informations, whereas middle-class groups made those statements from the very beginning. The first groups valued the communication of direct experience more than generalisation and statements on strange social actors.

b) Reification does not induce to negotiate but to withdraw from action. For instance, a wait-and-see approach to post-compulsory education was common when mothers used reification in 1994 interviews. Such an attitude seems to be related to their reliance on monocausal explanations.

c) Monocausal explanations are very common among mothers using reification. Some examples are quite clear. In 1994 interviews many mothers considered that learning is a very visible process whose indicators are the age when children write, read or multiply. Other monocausal explanations argued that schools could not change if 'what you have inside' was not right, or that vocational guidance is misleading due to economic crisis.

In summary, mother-teacher interaction can activate analogous or asymmetric patterns of reasoning regardless of the explicit interests of both parties. If mothers and teachers use calculation, each one recognises the other's practices, tends to negotiate agreements in order to solve eventual conflicts, and interprets the situation in base to complex factorial schemata. Under these conditions, although professional knowledge eventually predominates over lay knowledge, mothers' (or fathers' in some occasions) intervention can be relevant for a school. If mothers use reification, however, they are uncertain of other mothers and teachers intentions and strategies, they prefer to stop and see instead of negotiating, and they attribute what happens to deep factors beyond their range of action. Under these conditions, it is quite difficult for mothers (or occasionally fathers) to be influential. Therefore, social structures engendering the representation of families in schools, and ranking common perspectives on education along class lines, embed inequalities at the very core of any message transmitted from schools to families or the other way round.

Discussion: class and gender shape choice

Parental choice is mainly a discourse that has broken into the social variety of subjectivities in order to normalise them. As a consequence, it has strained class and gender social inequalities where students allocation was bureaucratic previously, but these tensions are common to new quasi-markets and to the old

competition between public and private schools. The general regularity is that class and gender eventually shape actual school choice in different ways.

Choice is a movement within a field of activity that is central to industrial and post-industrial societies due to many factors. In this field of activity hegemonic and subordinate positions are established in base to social resources and inter-group comparisons (Bourdieu, 1982). From hegemonic positions social agents can easily start with new movements that other agents will never emulate or will eventually disdain. The final effect will be the reproduction of inequalities (Bourdieu, 1978).

When choice is emphasised by educational policy, middle-class practices toward schooling come to be invested with more prestige. Everything happens as though choosing élite schools was possible for everybody, and some schools try to emulate these élite schools in order to attract high-achievers and upper mobile social strata. However, such an strategy is closer to hypercorrection than it is to true emulation (Ball, 1995).

Similar effects can be reported where school choice is more traditional. For instance, although religious private schools have been more prestigious than public schools in Spain since the nineteenth century, and many people have chosen them in great cities, an internal ranking also distributes prestige among these schools according to the importance of religious orders. Thus, the Jesuits and the Opus Dei own the top schools, Escuelas Pías or La Salle stand at a middle position, and Salesianos have traditionally been in charge of vocational education and training. Salesianos provide more prestigious VET than most public vocational schools, but their intake comes from lower class backgrounds than that for Jesuit schools.

Fieldwork conducted in Spain has also found out a similar internal ranking of public schools. In many Catalan middle towns former laical private schools, which had promoted the Catalan culture during Francoism and applied for a public status after the 1985 Act on the Right to Education, became the local élite schools afterwards. Furthermore, by comparing 1994 and 1996-7 fieldworks in the nearby of Barcelona, it can also be reported that a working-class school deploying an all embracing child-centred and anti-sexist pedagogy had been colonised by middle-class families in 1997. Involvement had simultaneously improved. In Tomelloso (Castilla - La Mancha) fieldwork reports also noticed the local ranking of school prestige. Certainly, the only local private and religious school was reputed as a top prestige one, but public schools at the urban center were also highly valued and made open attempts to display signs of social prestige. Conversely, urban peripheral public schools were attributed a lower prestige, and some of them were 'sunk' schools where marginality seemed the only possible outcome of schooling.

So far Bourdieu's account of educational reproduction in terms of distinction appears to be still valid with reference to school choice. Nonetheless, this portrayal cannot complete the picture. In spite of the distinction-and-reproduction logic, mothers' stances on schooling do not only respond to the emulation logic. The side effect of class and gender hierarchies can be reproduction, but both patterns of reasoning recorded in Spain (and in other countries) have their own rationale. Individualisation is the most prestigious and paradigmatic approach to what is intended by education nowadays, and it reinforces the prestige of middle-classes, who adhere to its tenets spontaneously. However, the working-class departure from such a paradigm by means of reification is not a mere automatic reproduction of hierarchies, since a vast literature proves that domestic educational decisions rely on a variety of popular and congruent philosophies of education (Montandon and Perrenoud, 1994; Ribbens, 1995).

It is not surprising at all that a mother whose social position is not fully integrated casts some doubts on the possibilities of their children to be fully individualised. Although reification does not produce a discourse to make this doubt explicit, it is an everyday life resource to denote the strength of structural constraints. In the eighties, the sociology of education conceptualised this kind of congruent but oppositional perspectives as expressions of resistance. In a sense, mother's doubts and working-class boys' explorations of the low utility of academic credentials in the shopfloor culture (Willis, 1977) are analogous, since inequalities are re-interpreted with reference to class and gender signals, and social reproduction is the side-effect on both occasions. At this point the same debate on the 'romanticisation' of subordinate cultures could be repeated (Walker, 1986).

However, it is my view that the theoretical solution requires another course of argumentation. Although oppositional and congruent perspectives emerge from unequal social relations and can cause the collapse of a specific legitimation of inequality, that only happens sometimes, not necessarily always. Therefore, reification reasoning is neither properly conceptualised as reproduction nor as resistance. At this point, it could be reasonable to conduct a post-modernist analysis conceptualising it as a manifestation of the variety of human subjectivities tacitly handled by power devices. But such an analysis can only explain why some expressions of subjectivity are privileged, whereas others are not, if it goes back to the de-construction of modernity.

A more specific explanation is feasible thanks to Bernstein's theory of the pedagogic device (1990, 1996). To put it in a nutshell, this theory states that education is a sort of communication mediated by distributive, recontextualising and evaluation rules. Distributive rules delimit which social meanings are legitimate and therefore to be included in the education process, recontextualising

rules pack these meanings in the fashion that all schools will have to interpret them, and evaluation rules determine how the learner's socialisation has to be assessed.

School choice is also a part of the pedagogic device. Some distributive rules highlight the salience of economic maximisation, instead of the ethics of care or neighbour solidarity, when deciding which school is appropriate. Other recontextualising rules define what schools are supposed to do with families: either promoting involvement, or blaming the victim, or keeping them away from professional domains. Finally, professional judgements on parents activate rules of evaluation in the same way as teachers' judgements on students do. Besides consensus or conflict, analogy or asymmetry with respect to patterns of reasoning impinge on the final activation of these rules at each occasion. And what is more, the whole device produces a privileging text that continuously remakes the hierarchies between class and gender social characteristics. In conclusion, calculation is attributed a higher prestige than reification by means of a process intrinsic to the very pedagogic communication.

Conclusion

A general account of the school choice social relations can be generalised over different countries. Even though educational policies have not enforced parental choice with the same strength in Britain and Spain, the influence of class and gender over actual choice processes is similar. This conclusion also contributes to the Spanish debate on the importance of the institutional distance between suppliers and takers of public services.

Choice is the outcome of reasoning, as well as other manifestations of subjectivity. Two patterns of reasoning can be distinguished if Windisch's (1992) typology is applied to the analysis of reasoning about school choice in Spain: calculation – with an eventual emphasis on individualisation – and reification – with an eventual emphasis on the influence of the context on individual options. A sociological analysis can grasp gender and class inequalities under the social distributions of these patterns of reasoning, since mothers and not fathers are actually in charge of family representation at school, and working-class mothers often use reification instead of calculation, i.e. the prestigious, professional and middle-class pattern of reasoning.

This finding can be conceptualised either as reproduction or as resistance. None of these theories grasp all its crucial dimensions. Nor does a post-modernist approach highlighting the diversity of human experience. It is Bernstein's theory of the pedagogic device that appears to provide the best conceptualisation,

because it states that mother-teacher interaction activates some evaluation rules in the same way as teacher-student interaction. Social inequalities are then transmitted by the very pedagogic message.

Notes

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² After considering several solutions, direct excerpts from interviews have not been included in the article for two reasons. First of all, translation from colloquial Catalan or Spanish into English was very difficult due to the variety of social and regional markers of speech. And secondly, the scope of issues was so broad, and the institutional frameworks were so fragmentary due to the ongoing and slow educational reform, that it was not possible to outline a general picture without including a long list of quotations. For this reason interviews are only referred to, but not quoted, in the following paragraphs.

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'IT'S THEIR JOB, NOT OURS!': HOME-SCHOOL RELATIONS IN CYPRUS

HELEN PHTIAKA

Abstract – *In a previous paper (Phtiaka 1996) I looked at the relationship between home and school in Cyprus from the school's point of view. This paper completes the picture exploring parental views on home-school relations. It investigates parental motivation and decision making, and questions what lies behind parental 'absence' from school. It finally attempts to enrich our understanding of home-school relations by identifying what different groups of parents want and need from school. The paper is based on nine case studies of families whose children attend second year at Country Primary School and builds on research carried out during the children's first year in school. Findings indicate that all families without exception care about their children's education and accept responsibility for it. They are very positive in their evaluation of school and teachers and accept teacher authority on all educational matters. Finally, all parents agree that co-operation between home and school benefits the children. Families are nevertheless divided in their approach to school as they have varied school experiences. They voice different needs and expectations from school depending on which group they belong to: the over-involved, the middle or the marginalised group. The paper concludes that given parental goodwill it is the responsibility of the school to initiate contact with the families on their own terms and to avoid interpreting their behaviour through a deficit model, requesting from the vast majority of parents what only a small minority can provide.*

Introduction

Dear president of the community, head-teacher, dear teachers, parents and our children, it is with feelings of joy that I welcome you on behalf of the Parents' Association. Once more the end of the school year finds us refugees, away from our paternal homes and our sacred land. (...) Despite the difficult conditions of our refuge however, we have managed with teachers' and parents' help to organise our school perfectly well and to see it function wonderfully, without problems, supported by all necessary facilities and equipment, notwithstanding the large number of pupils it accommodates. *Of course, parental participation in*

school activities could have been on a bigger scale and therefore more effective! Nevertheless I believe that we managed to make considerable achievements. (my emphasis) We arranged health insurance for our children, we placed fans in the classrooms so that children can attend classes more comfortably during the summer months, we bought musical instruments, and much more...'

Thus did the President of Country Primary School PA¹ greet parents and teachers at the end of year celebration on June 20th 1995. Teachers did not need to reply and parents were not offered a chance to express themselves. Fortunately I had become acquainted with their views a few months back...

... In a recent paper (Phtiaka, 1996) I argued that the issue of home-school partnership has for a long time been dealt in the literature in a fashion that ignores the power struggle underpinning the relationship. I suggested that efforts to bring parents in close contact with school raise ethical issues of power and powerlessness and pose questions of partnership equity. They also mistake parental anxiety or resistance for lack of interest, and occasionally strip parents from the only defence they have against public scrutiny. I concluded that as researchers and educators we need to consciously distance ourselves from 'blaming the victim' techniques, ensuring that schools are self-sufficient in providing for their students and do not make demands beyond parental ability or time. Instead of complaining about parental inadequacies we need to direct criticism and demands for help towards the State. Adequate school resourcing, I argued, is the best way of dealing with inequalities in home interest and support, considering that for a number of children support at home will always be impossible or inadequate.

I am still convinced that it is vital for educational research to keep such concerns at heart and to continue to question the social context within which schools and parents operate and research is carried out. Despite noble intentions, narrow focus on support techniques at the micro-level is not only inadequate, but also dangerous, as it may well distract from the cause of the problem and lead back to 'blaming the victim' approaches.

The previous paper looked at the issues at hand from the school's point of view. This paper will complement the earlier one and complete the picture of home-school relations in Cyprus exploring parental views on home-school relations. It will closely investigate parental motivation and decision making, and will question what lies behind parental 'absence' from school. It will finally attempt to enrich our understanding of home-school relations by identifying what different groups of parents want and need from school.

The research project

Both the previous paper (Phtiaka, 1996) and this one are products of a research project looking at home-school relationships in Cyprus. The project started in May 1993 with a survey of all primary schools (65) in one Educational District (Georgiou, 1996). This was the First Phase. It was followed by the Second Phase which consisted of case studies in four of these schools, chosen for their complimentary character in terms of size, location, socio-economic background, catchment area, as well as age and gender of head teacher, given that those appeared at the survey to be influential features on home-school relations. The findings from two of these schools, Country school and St. Paul's school, have been reported elsewhere (Phtiaka, 1994, 1996). This paper is based on data from the third phase of the project, which involved nine families from Country Primary School.

Country school and community

Country School is a large Cypriot² primary school in the outskirts of a village near the sea. The school draws its intake from a large refugee settlement established outside the village following the 1974 Turkish invasion.³ Only 16 out of the 343 children come from the village which is very small compared to the settlement. 95.5% of the pupils come from young refugee families. Their parents were themselves at school in 1974 when they became homeless. This in itself raises very interesting issues regarding the social conditions and needs of the families, but this will not be the focus of this paper. According to the headteacher's estimates, only 5% of the families include parents who are University graduates and practice professional jobs. 20% are further education graduates employed in the public or private sector, 20% are secondary education or training graduates, mostly privately employed and 5% are unskilled labourers with little or no education.

The vast majority of parents, 40%, are skilled labourers with elementary education. The refugee settlement is large and unattractive with very few public facilities including the church and some shops. It is built to the north of the school, while the village is to its south, and is therefore geographically quite distinct from it, the school functioning as a border between them. There is little contact between the settlement and the village, even though both parties have an interest in the school and contribute to its running. Connections between the settlement families are also very limited as the headteacher (a refugee himself) explains:

Mr. Solonos: Look, people from the settlement come from 48 different communities. They don't have the connection people have when they are born and brought up together in a village. Those who come from one community perhaps mix with other people from the same community, and those from another community do the same. Their habits and their customs remain the same they had in their own community because they came here when they were grown ups.

Helen: So it is like a city not a village...

Mr. Solonos: Well, almost! You may not greet someone even if he is your neighbour, as it happens in a city. While in a village you would greet young and old alike because you consider them all a part of you.

Helen: And do they still feel strangers after 20 odd years?

Mr. Solonos: The young are different. See, the children all have a similar mentality. But the grown ups still hold the mentality they had when they came over. They do not mix. I think in a few years the divisions will disappear if the Cypriot problem remains as it is now (unresolved).

Clearly, refugee families have divided loyalties (Loizos, 1981; Aga-Khan and Bin Talal 1986; Hirschon, 1989). A refugee settlement is by definition something temporary. They did not come here to stay. They came here to stop until the military and political problem is resolved. In conditions of fear and insecurity following a war, human relationships do not easily flourish. Years later, when they find themselves still in the settlement, the refugees begin perhaps to feel the need for a community, but this need has to compete with loyalty to their birth place. This loyalty keeps alive their will to return and cannot easily be abandoned. The dilemma is evident in the adults' approach to relationships in the community, and influences to an extent the children's feelings too. It is in this context of suspicion and enforced temporary co-habitation that relationships within the community and between families and school need to be examined.

Defying the social conditions of its area, Country Primary School is a proud, well built, friendly and comfortable school, surrounded by pleasant gardens and playing fields. It has 343 children and 15 staff under the direction of a 63 year old male headteacher. Some of the staff, including the headteacher, are refugees but do not live in the settlement. The school is well organised and runs 'like a clock', everyone knowing exactly what they are supposed to be doing and when. Staff turnover is low, as teachers are happy to stay for a number of years (Ministry of Education permitting), comforted by the pleasant atmosphere of the staffroom,

and surrounded by facilities (music room, medical room, playing fields, book collection, map collection, and so on) elsewhere unavailable. Children are on the whole disciplined and well behaved, and parents eager to help at home and in school. As one teacher, Eleni, puts it:

Whatever we ask them, they do, most of them. They come and inquire (about their children) and we are pleased... We don't have stropky parents. They are easy going, they do as they are told, the kids come to school prepared...

Eleni, first year teacher

Eleni's comment on how the relationship between home and school operates needs to be noted. For the time being however, we shall remember that Country school is a very organised and pleasant school, with a relaxed and happy atmosphere.

The families

Country Refugee Settlement consists of a variety of households with varied incomes, including professional families, clerks, skilled workers, and unskilled manual workers. The population of the study examined in this paper includes 9 families from all three categories, all but one of which had a first year child in school in December 1993 when the family questionnaires were distributed to all 57 first year pupils (Georgiou, 1996). Six families were identified because their completed questionnaires gave means of identification which allowed me to trace them, two were approached because of their limited communication with the school, and one because the father was the president of the PA. The family not included in the 1993 sample was an English one with a very interesting language home-school communication problem. Pupils were first asked for permission to contact their parents. Permission was granted by all of them. Parents were consequently contacted at home and asked if they were interested in an interview on home-school relations. If hesitant or unable to fix an appointment at first call, they were invited to contact the researcher at their pace. All but one family approached did so. In this way nine families were identified.

All families were interviewed at home with the assistance of a tape-recorder, at a time convenient to them in December 1994. They all had a child in the second year, except for one, Antonis who was repeating the first year class. The conversations were cordial and the interviews very well received, parents welcoming the interest shown in their children's progress and their own problems.

The children themselves were very excited by the visit and participated with interest and enthusiasm when present. The children at the heart of the discussion were: Costantinos, Myria, Argiri, Xanthi, Pinelopi, Christina, Helen, Yiorgos and Antonis. In the interest of confidentiality I shall not draw a family portrait for each family as I would like to.⁴ Instead I shall provide the necessary information as I deal with each case.

Learning: whose responsibility?

I have argued elsewhere (Phtiaka, 1996), that one of the main issues raised in the area of home-school relations is the issue of responsibility. Whose responsibility is it to educate the children? Does this responsibility lie with the State, the School or the Home?

We cannot deny that in 20th century Europe the State holds a major share in this responsibility and so criticism and pressure need to be directed to the State. However, targeting the State is a long, hard struggle which may well be slow in bearing fruit. In the meantime we, as educators and researchers, may be faced with the problem of identifying the most effective ways to facilitate student learning. Such concerns are most likely the moving force behind applied research studies which have been addressing the issue of home-school partnership for a number of years worldwide (Atkin *et al.*, 1988; Cairney and Munsie, 1992; Cairney *et al.*, 1995; Cairney and Ruge, 1997; Davies, 1991; Epstein, 1992; Georgiou, 1977; MacBeath and Turner, 1990). The two concerns, targeting the State and seeking practical solutions at the chalk-front, need to be addressed in parallel nonetheless, and one should never distract us from the other. Furthermore, while applied research is more rewarding to participants, understanding of the issues is incomplete and therefore applied research ineffective if the social context and the dynamics of the broader situation escape us. Consequently, we can only temporarily turn our attention to practical issues, never denouncing the theoretical concerns.

Our understanding of the relationship between home and school needs to be enriched with information from many angles. Findings so far (Phtiaka, 1994, 1996) indicate both school and parents to be interested in children's education and to require each other's assistance. However the border between each one's responsibility is not clear. Teachers are seen to believe that their job is completed within the walls of the classroom. What happens beyond that is not their responsibility. Is this the case? Is it true that if learning is not successfully completed in school premises within school hours this is not a school problem? Are slow learners, for instance, to be left to their own or their parents' devices?

How can any delay in learning be compensated and by whom? Here is a reminder of how some teachers feel about the subject:

I had a mother visiting the other day. I managed to say what I had to say, but instead of me telling *her*, *she* was telling *me* that the kid can do all these things, while in fact he can't! (...) Deep inside, parents know the problems, but they do not want to admit them...

Irini, second year teacher

Why should a parent not want to admit their child's difficulties if such difficulties are due to inadequacies of school teaching, and if the school is responsible for overcoming them? It seems to me that unwillingness to admit any weaknesses on the child's behalf can only be understood in terms of parental denial that they have failed their own responsibility; be it to produce a bright child, or to help the child overcome its problem. The teacher also seems to understand this exchange in terms of shedding off responsibility. 'Instead of me telling *her*, *she* was telling *me*' (emphasis original). Is this an example of teacher-parent shifting off the responsibility for the child's failure to each other? And why would that be happening if the border of responsibility was clear?

Unlike the UK where responsibility for pupil learning has for a long time rested on the school,⁵ such responsibility in Cyprus seems to lie squarely with the home. This is evident in the education system's relative lack of compensatory educational devices and time, constant parental search for compensatory education in case of pupil problems (Phtiaka, 1994), and direct parental statements. What do parents believe? Having established the school view on the matter, there is a need to direct our attention to parental views. This will help us better understand how home and school relate to each-other and identify power struggles and/or opportunities for co-operation.

Parental views

In this study parental views were characterised by consistency and a good insight into pupil behaviour. Parents' opinions were surprisingly close to school ones regarding responsibility issues. However, parents articulated thoughts and needs which have to be closely examined before our question on responsibility is answered.

A number of concerns were shared among all parents, while others were unique to certain families, possibly a product of their profession, financial situation, or involvement in the Country School Parents' Association (PA). It is

useful to start by examining the views shared by all nine families involved in the study and then concentrate on the differences arising. It is reassuring, for instance, to see that there is basic agreement on all important issues which can be used as a basis for a very good cooperative relationship between home and school.

Common themes

All parents seriously care about their children's education

Contrary to popular belief and some research evidence (Bell, 1993) all data clearly indicates this to be the case. Decisions on matters such as choice of school, provision of study facilities at home, school work worries, and homework anxieties, demonstrate that all parents without exception are interested in their children's education, think hard about options available and take educational decisions very seriously. Even decisions which appear to an outsider, and possibly to the school, as mistaken, ill-judged, or harmful for the children's education, have painstakingly been decided upon by parents who care and often place themselves in hardship to offer their children what they think is best for them. To illustrate this point a good example may be the decision by Helen's mother to send Helen and her brother to Country School. Helen Stone and her family are English citizens living in Cyprus for almost two years now. The father works in the Middle East and the family has decided that Cyprus would be a good place as a base for the children to grow up and go to school rather than move around different countries every so often. No one in the family speaks Greek. They live in a holiday flat, away from the mainstream life of the village and the refugee camp. As a consequence the children get little opportunity to speak Greek at home while this is their means of communication at school. Helen, who is nine years old, has been placed in the second grade, that is with seven year olds, for most of the day, but takes language classes with the first grade, that is six year olds. The school headteacher is rather sceptical about her progress, but sees no better way of supporting her during school hours. He has advised the mother to encourage the children to play with Greek children at home to help develop their language skills. Helen's brother, who is placed in the first grade with children only a year younger than him, is in a better position. The mother explains her decision to send her children to this school:

I was going to put them in (an English School)... We went to see them and people persuaded me out of it. (...) I suppose being in (the Middle East) I know the kind of schools. It's more of a business. If you don't get through, that's it! You are out! And I spoke to a lot

of London Cypriots (...) who had their kids go through and been thrown out at the last minute and they don't know what to do with them! One of them may be probably about 15. He can't go back to Greek school because he can't do the Greek well enough. (...) So we checked, we found a house up here because I would rather have them go to a village school than... Then we went up to the school and we talked to the headmaster, made sure we got the house. (...) I went to see the minister of education and he said it's no problem as long as you go within the area that you live... You've got to live in the area the school is in, that was another reason that we moved down here. But it's a lovely school!⁶

It is evident here that a decision which can easily be considered ill judged or harmful for the children's education is instead the product of a long and painful decision-making process for the mother, who has conducted careful research within the means available to her. On careful consideration this decision has a very good success potential, especially for her son, who is younger and more sociable and whose gender offers an advantage over his sister regarding out of school, street socialisation with local children.

This is a clear example of a family choice which can easily be misunderstood and misconstrued by the school as lack of careful planning regarding the children's education, while it evidently is not. In the light of such instances we need to search parental motivation and judge parental decisions very carefully indeed.

All parents accept responsibility for their children's education

It is also clear that all parents without exception in this study accept responsibility for their children's education. For instance they consider themselves personally responsible for their children's homework, and explain how they monitor and control it and how they assist their children in completing it. Such views occasionally are elaborately stated and backed up by a coherent pedagogical philosophy as is the case with Constantinos' mother who is a secondary school teacher:

I was ill again yesterday, so my husband dictated a piece for him to write and helped him with his Maths. You see, I told my husband that we need to take the child closer to us, because I think we have somehow alienated him without meaning too. I believe that the responsibility rests squarely with us. We need to check his work

more! And not only that, I think this way you keep the child closer to you! If you go and sit near him, and explain something to him, you show him your love! You see, because of our work load we have become a bit alienated from the kids. We don't have enough communication, and where there is no communication, nothing goes right! In winter, you see, my time is limited... We come home at 2.00 o'clock p.m., and with them being three...⁷

Costantinos' mother

In other instances they are simply presented as a matter of fact, something that parents take as much for granted as the school does:

She is good at school. We don't have any problems. Of course parents need to work hard at home too. If you don't sit down with her to explain, it is difficult for the kid to understand. School is not enough on its own. I often sit with her for two hours of an evening...

Christina's mother

It is worth noting that the same is evident for the children. Behaviour and comments of pupils involved in the study, even those like Yiorgos, who is generally considered immature and irresponsible, also indicate acceptance of homework responsibility and constant worry about work completion.

Mother: Yiorgos sits down to work on his own account.

Helen: Does he?

M: Yes. In a little while we shall sit down to his homework.

H: He does not need to be pushed...

M: (No) It is strange he has not come to ask me to sit down with him to work yet. To be free, you see, during the weekend, so that he does not have to worry about work and can enjoy himself, he says...

Yiorgos' mother

As is evident from the above quotes, parents and pupils alike devote a lot of time and effort on homework seeing it as a necessary compliment to school work. What perhaps needs to be questioned is not their readiness to accept responsibility for it, which is backed up by numerous research findings (Finders and Lewis, 1994; Hoover-Dempsey *et al.* 1995a; Okagaki and French, 1998), but rather their ability, confidence and time available to deal with it. We shall come back to homework later, but here is an indicative quote linking homework with study facilities at home:

Mother: (...) I have a Maths encyclopedia and I read it. Where is the book Antoni? Where did we put it? (looks for it) Here it is! (she shows me) It has all the Maths from the first to the sixth year! (...) I bought it recently you know, I did not have it from the beginning, it is three or four months I got it... We had nothing like this in the house, no encyclopedias...

Helen: So, where did you find it?

M: (speaks proudly of the encyclopedia, shows it to me) It is 6-7 books! It has Maths, dictionaries, History... I saw them, I liked them. It is expensive, I tell him, but because... He comes every month! That day I told him... I don't have this much money... It is too much money... Even for paying by the month... He asked for 30 pounds, I tell him, I can't! Come down a bit! He said 15 pounds. O.K. I say, O.K.. As it is for the house, and it is good for the kids, it does not matter. Leave them! 15 pounds a month. He comes here and takes it!

Antonis' mother

The mother's struggle to do everything in her power to facilitate homework and help her children along is moving. Antonis' mother is not an articulate woman and often has difficulty relating to me what she wants to say. Her broken speech flow indicates, I hope as I translate it, her difficulty in communicating with a teacher (me), but also her willingness to do so, and prove that she does care, and is doing all she can to help her children succeed in school. Such instances indicate the lengths parents go to in order to fulfill their obligations to school. If their interest is measured by outcome alone, we shall never have the true picture of their commitment.

All parents are very positive in their evaluation of the school climate and the head-teacher's and teachers' work and attitude

Parental response regarding school staff and particularly the head-teacher and their children's teachers ranges from satisfactory to enthusiastic (unlike research findings elsewhere, e.g. Rabusicova and Pol, 1995). The language used, as well as the comments made, indicate a moving parental trust and affection for the school staff. Here is a lovely quote which indicates this:

The teachers are very eager to tell us, to advise us. All teachers. Our school is very good for the children, their cleanliness, their progress, right from Mr. Solonos to everyone I know. They try hard

for the kids. (...) It is a great school! I love everybody there. I feel like going home when I go to this school!

Argiri's mother

Parents go as far as comparing their child's teacher and head-teacher to their own and coming to the conclusion that school is a much nicer and cosier place today than it used to be in their days:

Mother: This headteacher! I have never met a man like him before! He loves the kids! When I go to collect Pinelopi I see him, he touches the kids, he strokes them, he shows them he cares. The other day he took my girl to give her candy! You feel as if he were... you don't feel him like a headteacher! In our days... We used to hear the word headteacher and get scared! We thought... you know... they used the cane in our days...

Helen: Yes, he is very friendly with the kids... And he usually knows them by name... Does he know Pinelopi's name?

M: Yes! He does, even though he does not teach her... You know, he is always there, in the entrance, most times... he says 'hello', he asks how we are, you feel... you feel comfortable... you don't feel like you used to feel at school in the old days...

Notwithstanding communication barriers, Helen's mother agrees too:

(...) The headmaster is really sweet! (...) The headmaster has always been lovely!

Criticism for the teachers, where it exists, comes from fathers who seem to be further removed from school reality than mothers are. It is often based on preconceptions rather than fact and finds the mother of the house in disagreement.

Father: I wonder if they will have a Christmas celebration...(...) And they have to make them dress like angels, to dress like this, to dress like that, why bother? Just to stay in their classroom and do it between them? If they are going to do that, why don't they invite the parents?

Mother: They do invite us! They do!

F: Not when the kids are performing...

M: Yes, they do...

F: Isn't that what you told me yesterday?

M: No, it isn't! I told you it is in the morning!

F: Well, in the morning... How can I go?

M: Well, I told you it is in the morning...

Helen: It is difficult...

F: Can I leave my work and go... Can someone say 'Today I am not going to work. I shall go and see my daughter...'

M: It is because fathers are not usually very interested... In the nursery there were not many... When it was done in the evening... There were not many (fathers)... But the school wants to do it! He (the headteacher) explained it to us last year. That they do not have a room and he is sorry they cannot have one big school celebration!

Maternal enthusiasm and trust for teachers is widespread. Mothers appear to become critical only when they are forced to carry the sole responsibility for their child's failure. Yiorgos' mother gives her assessment on what her child needs, having informed me that she had been invited in school to meet the educational psychologist who seemed to think that Yiorgos needed special care:

Helen: Does Yiorgos need any private tuition?

Mother: No, I don't think he does! I think he needs my attention, not to neglect him... and his teachers to be good to him, but also strict! Not to give in to him! I brought that to their attention as soon as school started this year, before it had even started. Last year's teacher was a very good teacher, she did a good job to put up with him for so long, but she did not...

H: She got tired?

M: Yes! She got tired! And she let him do as he pleased! While this year's (teacher) was strict with him right from the beginning...

It is interesting that in both cases where criticism is voiced the mothers are faced with enormous problems and the families are perceived by the school as 'problem families'. This indicates that parents are very adept at receiving messages about how valued or esteemed they are in school and respond to them. A critical position of the school towards the family is likely to elicit a critical response from the family in defence.

All parents accept teacher authority on all matters educational

Parental acceptance of teacher authority on educational matters is on the whole quite remarkable and consistent regardless of parental education and occupation. Here is an example of unquestionable acceptance of teacher expertise.

Helen: (...) I've known her (a teacher in the school) since last year.

Mother: She is the best teacher! The kids learn with her!

H: Are all your teachers good?

M: They are. As far as that goes, yes, they are!

Yiorgos: Yes, yes, yes!

Older Brother: There is a teacher, in the fourth year, whoever does not prepare homework, he punishes him!

H: Really?

G: Yes! I know him!

M: That teacher... He is very good, he is! What is his name?

G: Menelaos.

M: He is very good that teacher! They all are! They all have their own way of doing things...

Yiorgos' mother

Parents seem to be convinced that teachers are the educational experts and must be allowed to organise their work as they see fit. They object to outside interference and are even protective of teachers from other parents' intervention or what they see as unreasonable demands.

If someone has a suggestion he can go to the PA and say 'here is what I think'. They can think and decide. If someone is a troublemaker and wants this and that, and wants to go to Mr. Solonos (the headteacher) and says this is what I want and he insists, then, I don't think the headteacher needs to take him into account...

Xanthi's father

Such basic trust and unwillingness to interfere has to be reassuring to teachers who are worried about parental confidence in their expertise. The question still remains however, why is this belief so strong? One reason seems to be that lack of external interference is to everyone's benefit as it ensures that basic standards are kept up (also Georgiou, 1995). Apart from that it appears that school authority still holds strong in Cyprus, and teacher image, although not as strong as it once was and teachers would still like it to be (Phtiaka, 1994; Georgiou, 1995), is nevertheless still powerful.

Acceptance of teacher authority and expertise is indicated by some kind of nervousness about school which is observed even among the most enthusiastic parents. This is a very useful finding when we attempt to understand home-school relations, as it indicates that reluctance to visit the school is a very complicated

phenomenon which can be explained in a number of ways most of which have nothing to do with parental lack of interest or care. Let's hear how parents themselves describe it:

(...) I heard it from other mothers that it is not right to go and ask every week, every two weeks...

Pinelopi's mother

My kids are not going to go to college! I just hope that they are quiet in school so that I don't get in trouble with teachers!

Yiorgos' mother

And then I think sometimes that the teachers, if they have just been through a day of work, the last thing they really need is for me to come in and start asking them questions in English (...) and not being quite sure if they can answer me. I don't like to bother them!

Helen's mother

It seems that many parents never grow out of being pupils when they visit the school. Old failures, fears or phobias continue to haunt them as adults negotiating their children's education (see also Finders and Lewis, 1994). It is remarkable that such reservations are observed in behaviour of parents who are themselves teachers – they describe it as unwillingness to disturb colleagues – something that must make us even more conscious that such behaviour can easily be misunderstood.

I used to go more often (than his father), because once a week I used to finish early at school and used to go and ask. I did not want to go more often and bother the teachers...

Costantinos' mother

Some parents are even prepared to put up with unfair treatment or misinformation instead of risking causing a scene at school:

Helen: Has it ever happened for Xanthi to learn something at school... to come home and say something you disagree with, for instance?

Father: It happened once, but I am trying to forget it...

Xanthi's father

or, even worse, restrict the child on an occasion where the teacher may need to be restricted:

Helen: What would happen say if one day Pinelopi came and told you something...

Mother: About the teacher?

H: Yes!

M: Well, I would say something to her I think... I would... You know... to encourage her a bit more, so that she would not come against the kid...

H: Like, for instance... Say that the teacher had told her off about something...

M: Well, I would say... Pinelopi, my kid, you know, in a nice way, so that she would not internalise it...

H: Ah! you would speak to Pinelopi, not the teacher...

M: Yes, yes!

H: Wouldn't you say anything to the teacher?

M: Eh... I wouldn't, I wouldn't say anything, I think... so that she won't... I think if you do that to them they go against the children more...

Pinelopi's mother

Keeping quiet is not true for all parents. Powerful parents occasionally interfere, over-stepping the boundary and causing problems for teachers. This appears to be the exception however, and the school needs to respond to the sensitivities of the parental majority.

All parents agree that co-operation between home and school has beneficiary effects on pupil work

Indeed some report noticeable changes in pupil behaviour or attainment after a discussion with the class teacher. This is very common and an expected finding among parents who are reported to have good communication with school. It is, however, particularly noticeable for parents who are accused of lack of co-operation, as it clearly indicates that they too are open to advice and make an effort to follow it once given. Here is such a parent:

Mother: His reading is good. Last year it was very limited, but this year he can read his words better than last year. He is weak in Maths. My elder is better at Maths... (she laughs).

Helen: He has matured this year. He is doing better...

M: I think the fact that I stayed home (quit my work) helped him... She (his teacher) told me 'you helped him at home, so I will help him in the class too. Help him a bit more at home', she says... Maybe it is my assistance that helped him learn... He is better...

Antonis' mother

The example given seems to indicate that the mother in question evidently values teacher opinion and tries to follow it up. Lack of success cannot be attributed to her alone. Other factors such as continuing interest from school or support systems available, also need to be questioned.

Summarising, we need to argue that these findings contradict many common myths about parental attitudes to school. In this study, parents from all spheres of life seem to have a high commitment to their children's education and a strongly embedded respect for schools and teachers. If anything, their acceptance of teacher authority and hierarchy makes them rather coy and reserved, and does not allow them to take initiative for approaching the school. As they see it, it is the teachers' job to teach their children, and they know best. They are standing by, ready to help anywhere they are needed, and leave the initiative to the teachers:

If the school needs anything, we'll buy it, no problem!

Myria's father

If they needed anything, I'd be happy to help if they asked me...

Argiri's mother

This needs to be noted as far as home-school relations are concerned as a reminder that parents are interested and willing to collaborate with the school. All families do not have the same needs however, and it is to their differences we now turn in an effort to understand how different families relate to school, what each can offer and what they need back.

Differences

While there is agreement on the issues discussed above, there is a clear distinction on parental views regarding other issues. This is very useful in helping us understand how different parents experience home-school relations. Parents are by no means a homogeneous group, and this needs to be remembered in our efforts to approach them. On a closer look the nine families of the case study sample split,

quite conveniently, into three groups. The families in each group have important similarities while being quite distinct from the other groups. This is not to say that all three families in one group are identical. They simply share school experiences and opinions in a way that brings them together and distinguishes them from the others. The grouping has been done on the basis of shared opinions, beliefs and values regarding school, and it is therefore interesting to note that families in the same group also share socio-economic characteristics. Each group is given a name which attempts to capture the essence of the beliefs of the families involved, and is examined separately. The three groups are the 'over-involved', the 'middle group' and the 'marginalised'.

The over-involved

The over-involved families are the families of Costantinos, Myria and Argiri (in order of involvement). What unites the three of them is their self-assurance and their over-identification with school which contrasts the 'school phobia' other parents exhibit. All three families also appear to have privileged information and access to school, and their children seem to be doing very well there both academically and in extra-curricular activities. Each family has a University degree. The fathers are professionals, two botanists and an engineer, two of them heavily involved in the PA. Two out of the three mothers are no longer working, one having in the past worked as a nursery school teacher, and the third is a secondary school teacher. In my interviews with them I spoke to both parents, if only briefly to the father who is not a PA council member, and the conversation with the two fathers involved in the PA council extended to wider issues regarding state educational policy, party political interference in education and the national problem. They were well informed on current affairs and articulated very definite personal opinions on all matters discussed.

These three families were the only ones in the study who did not express a wish for further feedback and information on their children's progress. This is not surprising as they all happened to enjoy privileged information and special treatment. Two of them, through the PA, were involved in decision making regarding school activities, and had instant access to the school staff, and the third benefited by neighbouring the school closely. Over-involvement and privileged access to school activities appears to have been extended to the children. All of these parents reported for their children frequent participation in school plays and presentations. All reported high grades and complimentary feedback on the children's work, ranking their children among the first in their class. The children shared these views and portrayed themselves as successful, occasionally commenting on other children's inadequate performance. An interesting feature

shared particularly by the two fathers involved in the PA, is a 'mistrust' of independent parental intervention and help in school, and a critical stance on other parents for lack of interest and involvement in school affairs.

All these features, identified them better with teachers, and placed them in a position of 'gatekeepers of information and home-school relations'. The PA president had been involved with PA council for 9 years while his three children attended Country school. He confided in me that during this time some ideas had not been followed up because of lack of parental interest and assistance. His criticism he articulated in his yearly address to parents during the end of year celebration thus:

'(...) Of course, parental participation in school activities could have been on a bigger scale and therefore more effective! Nevertheless I believe that we managed to make considerable achievements (...).'

Although the speech is carefully constructed and most probably does not mean to offend, a legitimate way of interpreting it is: 'While parents on the whole were disinterested and ineffective, the PA managed to...'. In this context the personal pronoun 'we' can easily be mistaken for dividing rather than uniting the parental community from the PA. This is particularly interesting as it gives rise to questions such as 'where does the home-school border lie?' and 'who guards it?'. For parents involved in PA business, the PA is clearly the mediator between home and school. Suggestions on parental initiatives not involving the PA were not welcome, the PA considered the proper medium between home and school. Yet it needs to be questioned if the PA in its present form offers what parents mostly want from school which is information regarding children's progress, and practical assistance at home.⁸ This is, oddly enough, something that this group of parents (and others like them) can easily provide for the school community, with or without PA assistance, and something which definitely interests the mothers of the group who seem to be more sympathetic to other mothers' problems.⁹ This is a good example:

Mother: There are mothers... I know a mother who is illiterate, no school at all, completely illiterate, and she has two children at school... Like, for instance those children, I could for half an hour... maybe I would not be able to help them for longer as I have the three kids...¹⁰ (...) Perhaps some parents could go to school in the afternoon and help those children. I think that would be a very good thing! Because there are many parents who are illiterate

unfortunately, not many, but there are some... As I told you, in the case I know, they are not rich or anything, and she is forced to send them to private lessons, because when the mother cannot read, how will she teach? No matter how much the kid wants to learn, how can it learn?

Argiri's mother

For the time being no such thing is happening while there are differences in the school treatment families enjoy. It is hard to judge to what extent special treatment is actively sought for by these parents, an inevitable side-effect of better acquaintance with school problems, or an uninvited effort by school staff to please them. A telling story involves the choice of Costantinos, the PA president's son, for the role of Joseph in the Christmas play. This needs to be seen in comparison with the choice of Yiorgos, a boy whose family has been included in the 'marginalised' group, for the role of the shepherd. It needs to be noted that at the time of recording I do not know Constantinos but I am familiar with Yiorgos from a previous visit. I quote from my fieldnotes:

I happen to be in the class observing on the day the teacher chooses children for the Christmas play. When the teacher announces her intention, there is excitement in the class. Children get enthusiastic and start shouting 'Miss, Miss I want to be so and so...'. The teacher appears to ignore them. There is no relation between what the children request and what they get. Clearly she has her own reasons for choosing these children. She looks around and calls names. The children who hear their name get up and stand in front of the others, smiling, evidently pleased they are chosen. Costandinos is called to be Joseph. He gets up slowly and reluctantly giving the impression that he does not want to participate in the play. He seems disinterested and rather unsuitable being so coy. He stands up and smiles nevertheless. All this time Yiorgos has brought the ceiling down with his cries: 'Miss! Miss!' He badly wants to be in the play and keeps shouting. For some time no attention is paid to him. Finally, and after the main roles have all been offered to others he is offered the role of a shepherd. Yiorgos stands up and smiles pleased with himself and the offer. It needs to be noted that all children in the class participate in the play. Some have speaking roles. The others are either shepherds (the boys) or angels (the girls). So being a shepherd is not such a big deal after all! I approach the teacher at break and ask her about her choice of

children. She tells me that she needs to choose children who will be able to carry the responsibility through. They must be able to learn the part and recite it properly. She cannot choose children who will let her down.

Fieldnotes, December 1994
Country Primary School

It is useful to mention here the Christmas play was a small affair where two classes performed their own play individually in a classroom. It took place in the morning when working parents were unable to attend, and was attended mainly by mothers. That said, all parents were keen to see their children perform and very proud to relate stories about their performance. This group of parents was lucky enough to have stories to relate. On the other hand Antonis' mother characteristically told me about her attendance of school performances:

I once went for my older boy's sake, it was Christmas again, I went. Last year I went too. But these ones (my sons) never have a poem to recite! I don't know... This year he is going to be a shepherd he says...

Antonis' mother

This is clearly a very different experience of the Christmas play for children and parents alike, and their disappointment is evident. These parents want the same things for their children but have no means of helping them to get them. Furthermore, they seem to receive a message that their children are not capable of handling such responsibilities and not worthy of such honours. Unsurprisingly, such parents and such children are not as enthusiastic in attending school events and being active members of the wider school community, thereby confirming their reputation as disinterested. Contrary to that, the parents identified here as over-involved seem to have the power to influence directly or indirectly teacher choices on such occasions and be always at the heart of school life.

Summarising, we need to state that this group of parents is characterised by confidence and self-assurance, possibly stemming from high educational qualifications and administrative skills. It benefits from privileged access to information and decision-making and enjoys excellent communication with school. Armed thus, these parents identify with the school system and function as gatekeepers between home and school. They share the school's view of the 'ideal parent' and striving to meet it they are in an excellent position to help their children succeed in school.

The middle group

Between those parents who are heavily involved in school decision-making, and parents who are marginalised, lies what must be the vast majority of parents. In our sample this group consists of the families of Xanthi, Pinelopi and Christina. What unites them is their expressed interest for more information and feedback from school (see also Hoover-Dempsey et al, 1995) and their voiced wish to be more involved in school activities. Unlike the over-involved families, the middle group families were a bit nervous regarding contact with school (also Finders and Lewis, 1994). They were very positive in their comments about teachers but rather cautious in approaching them, portraying some mild signs of parental 'school phobia'. The frequency of their school visits differed, mothers retaining the primary role in maintaining the contact.¹¹ They all contacted the school regularly, however, pacing their visits according to their concern. While Xanthi's mother had a daily contact with the class teacher as she delivered Xanthi to her class, Pinelopi's mother favoured fortnightly visits to school and Christina's mother argued that a monthly visit was enough to keep her in touch with what goes on and fit to help her child at home. It needs to be noted here that the first two were housewives, while the third worked as a nurse. Two of the fathers were skilled labourers and one was a bank clerk.

In two out of the three families interviewed, fathers were present, while in the third the father was still out at work. On all occasions mothers seemed to be more in touch with what went on in school and more positive towards teachers. No mother was involved in PA business or expressed a wish to be, all claiming to be very busy at home, even though one had been active in the nursery PA in the past. One father expressed a wish to be more involved in the PA council and voiced his displeasure for not having been informed in time for council elections. In any case work commitments seemed to prevent him from taking an active part in evening school activities. The same was true for the second father, whose work commitments prevented him from being present at the interview, while the third was not very interested in the PA even though he had time available in the evening. All three families, while being very happy with the school, required more feedback regarding their children's progress and more information regarding school activities. They were concerned that their voice was not heard in school and very appreciative of the smallest piece of information they received, as Pinelopi's mother indicates:

Mother: You know, I like the teacher's comments, to note if her writing was good under the spelling exercise, you know, 'next time make sure it is better'. It's a nice thing this teacher does to write

under (the child's work). (...) She wrote once or twice 'her writing has deteriorated'. I tried: 'Pinelopi not like this! Try to do it the way you did before!' (...) If I do not see 'unprepared' in her book, it means she did well today. And because I see that she (the teacher) ticks it every day... I like this system this teacher has, a lot! I don't know... I am really enthusiastic about it! I see every day, the work is checked...

Pinelopi's mother

This group seemed to retain the balance in school retaining a close but detached interest in school activities. They appeared to respond immediately to school requests without making particular demands. Interestingly, two out of the three families in the group considered their children to be of average ability, 'in the middle', while the third judged their daughter to have 'excellent attainment'. What is also interesting, and possibly related to their educational qualifications, is the parents' anxiety regarding homework. Xanthi's father explains:

These days the kid needs her mother or father next to her to sit down to homework. Look! There are days she finishes school and has no time in the evening to go out and play! Do you think this is right for a second year child? Imagine what happens to children who face difficulties with their school work!... There are days she needs to draw for the class, days she needs to write composition, days she needs to learn a poem, to do this, to do that... They give them so much work at home, there are days when she is still at work when she should be in bed...

Xanthi's father

The same anxiety was expressed by all three families, and, according to them such concerns were widely spread among parents:

Everybody says it! Wherever you go and ask, people say that there is a lot of work to be done at home and parents must do it! The kid needs your help to proceed. We are not refusing to help them, but we have great difficulty! Especially when our eldest was in the first year! We had to be teachers ourselves to show him how to proceed! And Christina? How many hours should she work? How many hours should the kid work? I ask you! (..) I remember an occasion last year... in the end the kid started crying, and my sister in law started crying! They had so much to do, so many pages

Maths... Wherever you go it is the same... You see, my friend... I have just come from there... He has two kids... His wife finishes at 7.00 p.m., she's just gone up to the house to start work there, he is still working... And the children need someone with them...

Christina's father

Parental anxiety regarding homework (Okagaki and French, 1998) has been prominent throughout the study, the difference being that the over-involved parents did not appear anxious about their ability to deal with it. Such anxieties make parents question their credentials in dealing with school, and place them in an inferior position compared to teachers. This results in a lack of confidence which materialises in 'phobia' for dealing with teachers (Finders and Lewis, 1994). Parents of this group found very hard to say 'I am not embarrassed to go because I know she will understand me', as Argiri's mother said. They were not as confident because they perceived the child's failure as a result of their own inability to help her. They felt at fault for not having the skills to help and feared that matters would deteriorate in the future.

Such fears may be interpreted as calls for assistance. Parents are clearly willing to accept responsibility for their children's education, but require help. On the whole, a call for more information, more involvement and more assistance is what can be said to characterize this co-operative group of parents. Let us now turn to a group which voices much more urgent needs.

The marginalised

The name of this group is coloured by the position they seemed to occupy in relation to others in school. What seems to unite these families, which are once again very different between them, is their difficulty in communicating with school, their powerlessness and their cry for help. All three mothers felt helpless and expressed a strong 'school phobia' which prevented them from regularly contact with teachers and keeping up with their child's progress. Children's attainment and progress was reported to be low, all three struggling to keep up with the rest of the class, two of them having repeated one year by the time they were in the second year. Parental anxiety regarding school work, and homework was much more evident than in the previous group. The mothers confided to lack of knowledge, time and energy in assisting with it, without for a moment denying that it was their responsibility to do so, or indicating that they were not trying to.

A very interesting feature of this group is the 'absence' of the fathers which seemed to make an already hard task impossible! Out of the three, only one

joined briefly and accidentally¹² the interview towards the end, the other two being unavailable. Helen's father worked abroad visiting his wife and two children every few months. Antonis' and Yiorgos' father lived at home but seemed 'not to be there' for their wives and five and four children respectively, at least with regard to school matters. They both did irregular and insecure unskilled labourers' shift work, one of them apparently struggling with serious financial problems. All mothers were housewives at the time of the interview, although they had held clerical and labourer's jobs in the past. All three women refer to lack of support from their husbands in a way which strongly contrasts the sharing of the other interviews and is quite touching. Yiorgos' mother reports:

Helen: I expect their father cannot help because he is working those hours when Yiorgos does his homework...

Mother: No! He just does not want to sit down with them to their homework.

H: He has no patience...

M: No! He has no patience at all, and the kids do not learn with him. He has no patience with the kids!

H: And you? Do you have patience with five children?

M: Eh... I try, while I work in the kitchen and that...

Yiorgos' mother

Lacking in support and faced with multiple responsibilities and limited education (or language in the case of Helen's mother) these mothers found dealing with school very hard. They were embarrassed to visit, they had nowhere to leave their younger children, two out of three had no transport, and all were scared they will be perceived by school as a nuisance. Helen's mother puts it very eloquently, although hers is a slightly different case from the others her communication difficulty owing to lack of Greek language:

I am a bit of a coward really when it comes to it! I pick them (the children) up five minutes later because I am a bit embarrassed! (...) I feel that I am an extra burden on them (teachers), because I think sometimes they can't explain what they want to say to me, and it's not their problem! I should be able to speak their language! I feel embarrassed that they have to make this extra effort to try and make... I can see their faces and that they are thinking 'how the hell am I going to explain this to her?'

Helen's mother

This is a wonderful quote as Helen's mother is a very sensitive woman and has the ability to capture feelings very well in a sentence. It is also very useful for our purposes for two reasons. First, because parents who have difficulties in communicating with school rarely can explain so eloquently how they view the situation (the other two certainly could not). Second, and most important, because this is a brilliant example of what happens when school and home 'speak different languages', the linguistic example extending to a cultural one. This, it appears, is what happens: The school clearly communicates to the parent what their expectation of a 'good' parent is, and how they rate him or her personally on that scale. The parent is aware, among others, that s/he is expected to speak 'the school language' and feels inadequate and guilty for failing to. So s/he prefers to hide at home rather than expose their ignorance in public. The best way to achieve this, is to keep away from school, even to the detriment of their child's education. This decision amounts to a defense mechanism and is not taken lightly. This is evident from the guilty feelings these mothers seem to have in abundance. What is very interesting here, is the role of the school in exploiting and perpetuating this guilt, perhaps in order to alleviate its own.

Antonis' mother is a case in point. A clothes industry labourer with irregular employment now staying at home with her newly born, she has four boys, the older 11 years old. Antonis is her second son. Both parents are poorly educated and can provide little assistance at home despite their efforts. The older boy is often in trouble as he is unable to read and write properly in the fifth year. The father has recently been called to school by the headteacher (who taught him when he was a boy) to be informed of his son's new problems. He reports:

Father: The headteacher said Antonis is the best in his class.¹³ His elder brother is very weak.

Helen: Yes?

F: Mr. Solonos put all the responsibility on my shoulders because, he wanted him to repeat a year and *the lady here* did not agree! (Points to the mother. The mother looks uncomfortable and attempts to explain how it all happened.)

Mother: He (the headteacher) asked me first! He asked me and said that it was hard (on the kid) to get him to repeat the class. 'If you want to leave him... he is yours, he said, he is a bit better... His Maths is pretty good, and he can tell all the letters apart, I cannot leave him in the same class, he told me... And so I told him, well, we shall help him at home and... He was better in the second year, but he deteriorated because he could not read... It is my fault, I don't deny it...I mean...

The mother is expected here both by the headteacher and the father to accept full responsibility for her son's failure to read and his consequent bad behaviour. Having chosen what she thought best for her child at the time, and, unsupported, having failed to help him, she accepts the responsibility and questions her decision. What she nevertheless does is to also question the school's responsibility for her son's illiteracy and consequent misbehaviour. In doing this, she is very careful not to accuse anyone directly, but to simply state that while she was doing everything possible on her part, the school was falling short of its responsibility:

Mother: (...) She (the teacher) put him out to clean the courtyard. That was... that was not something... I mean it is she who... it is this way that the kid goes astray... You know, when I was in the house I did so much for him (prepared exercises) and he sat down and studied. And I studied too! And he goes there and she puts him out... Well, this is an unacceptable mistake! Like this... Their mistake... While... if you get a bit cross, he is only a kid, there is no need to slap him. I some times give him a slap, but let's say, (what she needs is) to put him in order! If they don't put him in order, who will?

This is again an excellent point to stop and ponder at what the mother is saying. She outlines her own efforts to help the child, questions the teacher's role and indicates her disagreement with the punishment used, while pointing out that it is a school responsibility to keep discipline. It seems that a mother faced with as many problems as she is expects help with discipline as well as learning from school. This raises again quite sharply the issue of responsibility. 'Who is responsible for what' regarding children's education?

I argued elsewhere (Phtiaka, 1994) that both school and state agree that the family is. All nine families in this case study accept an impressive amount of responsibility for their children's education, and struggle to live up to social and educational expectations. So far there is no tension between the parties involved. What appears to be obvious, however, is that very few families can succeed! Coincidentally, these are the families where parents hold University degrees and well paid, stable jobs with convenient working hours. The others seem to find it difficult even when backed up by financial security, much more when they are not. This needs to alert us to the fact that we may be asking from parents something very few can provide, condemning the rest for failing to do so! All they can deliver, they do. Pressure and criticism simply increases their powerlessness and their alienation from school. Helen's mother puts it in a nutshell:

I am keeping my fingers crossed that eventually... that it will suddenly click!

On closing this section we need to remember that what summarises the relation of this group to school is a sense of powerlessness, and a desperate cry for help with discipline and learning. Parents, even the most disadvantaged among them, are not denouncing their responsibilities towards their children as schools often think. They are simply crying out for help in order to be able to see these responsibilities through.

What are these findings telling us?

Parents, even those who have in the past been considered as 'hard to reach', are not in the least hard to reach! Even the most disadvantaged of parents care about their children and are interested in their education. They are willing to help and are receptive of teacher advice. They feel honoured to receive it, they appreciate and treasure it, and are keen to implement it. However, their perception of school dictates reservation and leads to lack of initiative regarding contact with teachers. This is often mistakenly interpreted as a lack of interest and care for their children's education and unwillingness to accept responsibility for it, something which is far from true.

On the contrary parents are very keen to prove their interest and very sensitive to school criticism. They are quick to receive school messages and adept in perceiving that they are undervalued and underestimated. When they do, they respond with a critical evaluation of school responsibilities but can feel alienated and marginalised and lose all incentive to participate in school activities. The responsibility lies with the school to send the message that all parents are valued and their efforts are respected regardless of outcome.

Assessment of the home situation will inevitably take place at school. This in itself is a positive step. What may be negative is school response to it. It seems that such a response has overall, and perhaps for reasons embedded in teacher culture (Hargreaves 1988) been 'This is a problem family. Forget it!' while it should have been 'This is a problem family! Support it!'. The difference lies in the deficit model that has in the past been used to interpret such an assessment (Scott and Morrison, 1994; Cairney et al., 1995). This model has rejected parents because of failure to reach a required standard. Yet, the notion that one can 'become a more effective partner in (his/her) child's education, and thus a more effective parent (Bowe et al, 1994), is a problem notion and so it should be treated. What may take place instead is a needs assessment followed by an offer of support for the family

on its own terms.¹⁴ The discourse used to interpret parental behaviour has so far failed to be sensitive enough to cultural or other 'language difficulties' between home and school. It has consequently used interpretations and meanings from one language to interpret another. This has resulted in misunderstanding and misinterpretation of parental behaviour; especially that of the silent parental majority whose actions have been interpreted through the codes of the powerful parental minority. We have seen that their 'languages', their perceptions and their needs are at odds with each-other as one over-identifies with the school and the other is desperately trying to live up to given standards. Any use of one language to interpret the other is pointless. School will only fulfill its stated purpose by learning the language of the majority and responding to it. This requires listening and responding on the families' own terms, on the understanding that they too want the best for their children's education.

Where do we start?

Individual teachers, especially young ones, are not insensitive to parental needs. They are capable of offering sophisticated and insightful explanations for parental 'absence' from school replicating parental statements.

Eleni: Most parents come to see me. It is just the weak pupils' parents who don't come.

Helen: Don't they?

A: They feel ashamed from what I hear... Not from my (class) parents! We have relatives, uncles, brothers and sisters in law... They get embarrassed! 'What shall I go and say?', says my sister in law, 'To hear that he is such and such?' Not that she does not care! At home she helps them a lot! 'What shall I go for?' she tells me. 'Can't I see him? He is not getting anywhere...' Do you see? 'No!' I tell her. 'You must go, otherwise the teacher will think that you are not interested!' They don't see it like that! They think that... They are embarrassed to face... They think it's their fault! While there are many kids... (who are having problems)

It is fascinating to see the sensitivity in the teacher's description. Her views exactly parallel the statements of Antonis' mother. With that she manages to place teachers in the real world, reverse the roles and identify with the most disaffected mother of the study, at a time when powerful parents have identified with the school. This is quite an achievement and needs to be noted. Her perception is

particularly acute as she feels safe to move between the roles of teacher and mother and see both concerns.

Eleni: It is the teacher's responsibility first and foremost and then... If you do not tell them how to co-operate, how will parents know? He must be educated to sit down and... he must be a teacher... This is why... The teachers' children are not more intelligent! It is because of that... I always tell people wherever I find myself. I tell them: 'Don't think that teachers' children are more intelligent than yours! It is because they know how to show them! Or because the house is full of books! They see you read...

This is a daring statement compared to the response of teachers interviewed in their position as parents and being unable to remain in that role and disassociate themselves from the power offered by their professional position (Phtiaka, 1996). Eleni is the one who can best identify with parents, although interviewed in her capacity as a teacher, but she is not alone in empathising with parents and appreciating that pupil failure does not reflect parental lack of interest. So does Anna. They are both young teachers with 5 and 6 years of service respectively. They both see the problems and attempt an individual response within their means. Anna was Antonis' teacher in his first year. Noting that the mother could or would not come to school, she took the initiative to approach her and offer some advice. She is well aware of the family problems:

A: (...) One of them, Antonis, is very bad. The kid is in a mess!
(she gives details about the family situation)

H: And what can you do in all that?

A: Eh! What can I do? Simply to give the kid some love...

Such efforts cannot be sustained on an individual basis alone! A one-off meeting with the mother fizzles out as problems mount and the mother is unable to solve them herself. The school and the teachers can do much more than offer their love to the child. They need to internalise and support individual efforts. They need to provide a school ethos and a support structure for parents to come to school with their quests, teachers to be enabled to reach out to families, parents who are willing and able to help those who are not coping. What the state needs to do is financially support such efforts! Or else, reverse its rhetoric and be blatant about schools providing the grounds to assist the powerful to maintain their power and retain the weak from getting it. Parents are only asking for a listening ear and a helping hand and are immensely grateful to receive it, even if it is only the researcher's:

Helen: Is there something you want to tell me? Something that I have not asked related to school?

Father: (thinks) The good thing is... that there is this service you provide...

Helen: (for once lost for words) Well... Eh... I would not call that a service...

Father: I don't know how you call it... But I say service... for you to come here... close to us... isn't it?

Is it?

Notes

¹ All names of people and places used in this paper are pseudonyms.

² For details on the Cypriot school system, see Phtiaka 1996.

³ On July 20th 1974 Turkey invaded the island of Cyprus causing 200,000 people from the North of the island to become refugees in their own country. Twenty-four years later the border is still closed, Turkey retains an army of 35,000 on the North and the refugees live in settlements in the South.

⁴ I have referred elsewhere (Phtiaka, 1996) to the difficulties of qualitative research in a small place like Cyprus where informants are very easily identifiable.

⁵ Shifting responsibility for their children's education back to parents seems to be one of the many objectives of the 1988 Education Act in the U.K.

⁶ All quotes, except those of Helen's mother are translated from Greek.

⁷ This is a secondary school teacher, mother of three boys who are doing very well at school, who finishes work at 2.00 p.m. every day. Everything she says needs to be seen in this context.

⁸ At Christmas the PA gives clothes as presents pupils from low income families.

⁹ Gender issues are constantly raised in these findings, but are not dealt with in detail.

¹⁰ This mother has three children, the youngest two months old at the time of the interview.

¹¹ It is noticeable that mothers from all groups maintain the primary responsibility for the children's education, even when the father of the family is involved in PA politics. In this way mothers appear to be lumbered with all the work while fathers enjoy the titles (mothers unsurprisingly claim to have no time for involvement in the PA). Gender segregation on such issues is well documented in the literature (Biernat and Wortman, 1991; Okagaki and French, 1998; Stevenson and Lee, 1990; Ware, 1994).

¹² The father was asleep in the house the afternoon of the interview and joined us at the end. He looked rather embarrassed and gave the impression of stumbling on us as he was trying to leave the house.

¹³ This is not confirmed by the class teacher. She reports that his progress is more satisfactory this year than was last year, which is not surprising as he is repeating the class, but he is far from being top of his class.

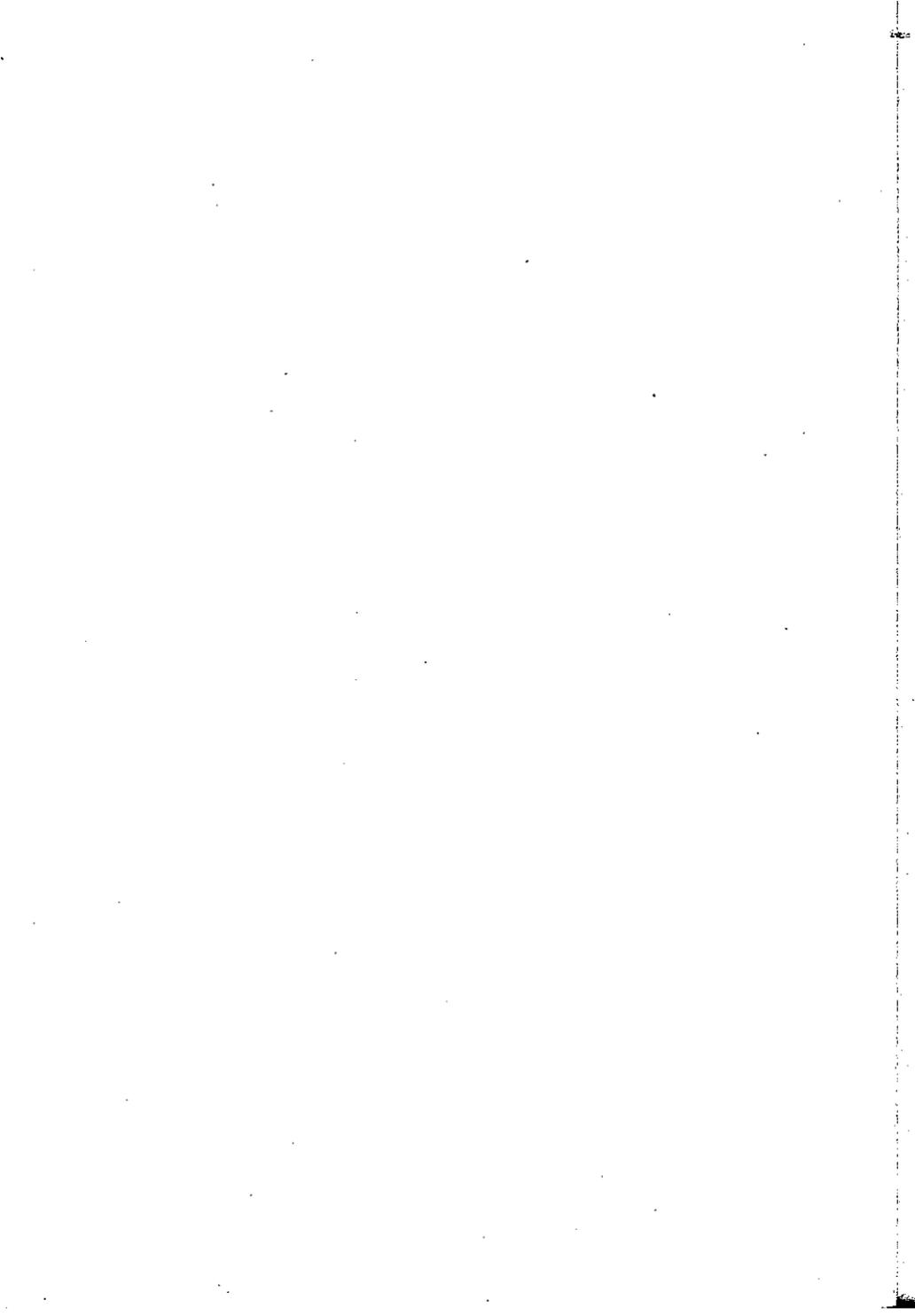
¹⁴ Okagaki and Frensch (1998) also report in an ethnic context that different families have very different needs and intervention strategies that work in some family contexts (may be) ineffective in other family contexts.

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THE GAP BETWEEN INTENTION AND ATTAINMENT IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: A SYNDROME REVISITED. THE CASE OF THE REFORM IN TECHNOLOGICAL STUDIES IN ISRAEL

IRIS GEVA-MAY
ISAAC LEVIN

Abstract – This study analyses the syndrome inherent in the gap between policy setting and policy implementation, as exemplified by the case of the reform in the high-school system initiated by the Israeli Ministry of Education's Technological Division. The reform policy in the Technological trend prompted by the great advances in this field in recent years is explored, and the degree of its expected versus de facto implementation is analysed. The measurement tool for degree of implementation is the comparative requirements of the final matriculation exams before and after the beginning of the reform. The analysis focuses on the electronics and electricity trends. It challenges the validity of the proposed reform implementation and disputes the validity of the matriculation exams as a tool meant to assess reform implementation. The gap between the initial intention of the policy makers and actual policy implementation will be analysed and discussed.

Introduction

This study refers to the reform policy initiated in Israel by the Ministry of Education in high-school electricity and electronics trends following the great technological developments of recent years. Microelectronics, speed of data processing, space and medical electronic instruments, digital communication – have all developed and markedly influenced our lives over the last fifty years. The need to update school curricula in the field of electronics has therefore become imperative.

This reform initiative was taken by the Ministry of Education in the late 1980s and its actual implementation began only in 1989/1990. The goals of the reform, as stated, were the following:

- a) to endow the high-school student with a broad basis of technical and scientific knowledge, with the additional purpose of easing his/her difficulties when joining an institution of higher education or industry;

- b) to strengthen individualised learning beyond regular school hours;
- c) to neutralise the stigma connected to status within technological studies, i.e., 'superior' for electronics and 'inferior' for mechanics;
- d) to give the student the opportunity to perform in the matriculation exams according to his/her ability and desire;
- e) to increase computer-learning time;
- f) to enable the student to shift from one level of learning to another within a certain subject-trend.

The reform process in the technological trend started in 1989 and involved ten pilot high-schools across the country. These schools instituted the post-reform matriculation exams in 1990. Gradually, more technological schools joined the reform. In the following years all technological high schools applied the same type of matriculation exams, except for the lower levels where the reform implementation started only in 1993. The new subject-matter and the cognitive approach advocated by the reform were supposed to be present in these new tests.

This study is mainly concerned with the implementation of the first and second goals. The basis of analysis is the content matter of the matriculation exams. The rationale for using these exams as an indicator for degree of reform implementation is that these tests, in Israel, reflect the final subject-matter knowledge, mastery and cognitive development that high-school students reach. The content of the matriculation exams reflects the requirements demanded of the students at the end of their learning process. Therefore, in our context the student is presumed to have acquired the body of knowledge set by the reform goals and to be able to perform adequately when tested on it.

Theoretical background

It is well known that implementation is a complex task in which a variety of obstacles may interfere. Basically, implementation implies the carrying out of political decisions. Such decisions will have identified a problem, will have set the goals that should be aimed for, and will have built up the process of implementation. In Majone and Wildavsky's (1984) view implementation is an execution process and a realisation of schemes and conceptions. Lingard (1992) addresses the broader economic, social, political and ideological context (of educational reform implementation in Australia) that affect execution processes and realisation of schemes and conceptions.

Nevertheless, in this respect models such as those presented by Bardach (1977), Edwards and Sharkansky (1978), Hogwood and Gunn (1984), Pressman

and Wildavsky (1984), Levine and Ferman (1985), Alexander (1989), Geva-May (1993, 1995) and in the field of education, among others, Bob Lingard and Linda Apelt (1993) and Bob Lingard (1991) in Australia and Stephen Ball (1992a, 1992b) in the UK, do not offer a very optimistic view of the situation in real-world circumstances. Levine and Sanger (1994) believe that if policy objectives set the goals of an administration, then in order for it to be implemented, its implementation problems must be anticipated beforehand. As they point out, it is ironic, for instance, that while billions are spent on discovering an AIDS vaccine, management obstacles can subvert a quick and effective immunisation program. It is ironic, in the case presented in this study, that when scientific and technological advancements have become so crucial throughout the world as we approach the end of this century, pitfalls in implementation derail a much needed reform policy. The long-term disadvantage and its effects are easy to figure out.

True, the implementation process is recognised as difficult to execute; the gap between policy setting and attainment is usually generated at this stage. The factors affecting implementation may be the result of contests among various actors, organisational structures, limitations – whether functional or financial, and feasibility.

In part, one main factor at the organisational level is the various organisational loci where policy decisions are made and policy implementation takes place. Lynn (1987) observes that 'decisions and actions (are) taken at all levels: high, middle and low' and therefore those who are concerned with policy making might be limited in their decisions and actions by 'games at all levels... above, beside and below them.' In general, in organisations implementation is viewed as 'mosaic' (Nakamura, 1987) and is part of the interplay between strategic considerations and bureaucratic routine. Even though termination might be decided upon at top-level management, or felt necessary at the low or middle level, it can be derailed on the other executive levels by low or middle policies or by the very same bureaucratic routine. Ultimately, the actors involved at each locus, and their interests, or lack of interest, are those who promote or derail any policy implementation attempt (Bardach, 1976; May and Wildavsky, 1978; Thompson, 1984; Ball 1992a.; Lingard 1992; Geva-May, 1993, 1995). Vested interests may prove to be a seemingly immovable obstacle to implementation of otherwise well-reasoned policies. Ball (1992a.), for instance, suggests that the implementation of the national curriculum for England and Wales has been a dialectical process influenced by legislators, administration and teachers.

Moreover, while technological knowledge and developments advance at an incredible speed, organisations, decision making and decision makers' approaches have the tendency, by their very nature, to remain stable, conservative and unchanged (Dror, 1971).

In view of these interfering factors, a key consideration should be how to overcome the gap between the realistically feasible and the optimal. While policy planners seek to set the optimum, those concerned with implementation should decide on the feasible.

For instance, before proposing an implementation process one should diagnose the general professional or organisational culture context, the actors involved and their values, beliefs, assumptions and behavioral norms. Anticipation of possible resistance should allow for better chances of implementation (Lynn, 1980; Levine and Sanger, 1994). For instance, Lynn views the capacity and performance of an organisation as the separate and combined effects of its technology, tasks, structure, financial resources, human resources, culture and environment. These need to be taken into account, separately and combined, to secure adoption and successful implementation. Levine and Sanger view culture as assumptions, values and behavioral norms.

The implementing team should be briefed as to the 'next steps' they have to take in order to act on the policy recommendations. Technical assistance programs, information exchanges and human resource training programs are typical of such 'capacity building' strategies.

Co-optation, as far as is possible, assigning implementation responsibility to an entity truly supportive of the policy, and employing 'fixers' to oversee the implementation process and encourage unwilling implementers to do their job, are recommended tactics for implementation. Bardach uses the term 'fixer' to describe an individual who oversees the day-to-day operational process of translating policy into action, audits or uses incentives for co-operation, provides valuable feedback to implementers and policy drafters alike on what befalls the policy as it is implemented in the field (Bardach, 1977; Levine and Ferman, 1985; Weimer and Vining, 1989; Levine and Sanger, 1994).

Weimer and Vining (1989) propose a technique called 'forward mapping' to help flesh out implicit assumptions about the implementation of a policy and improve the policy's chance of success. In forward mapping, you try to predict what must transpire for the policy to have its intended effect, including 'what' could go wrong, and 'who' might want it to go wrong and 'why'. Elmore details means of avoiding pitfalls in implementation and advises to begin with a concrete statement of the behavior that creates the occasion for policy intervention; to describe a set of organisational operations that can be expected to affect that behavior; to describe the expected effect of those operations; and then to describe what effect might be expected at each of the implementation levels on the target behavior, and what resources are required for that effect to occur (Elmore, 1979; May, 1986; Weimer and Vining, 1989; Levine and Ferman, 1994).

In curricular policy implementation obstacles are mainly attributed either to experienced teachers' previous teaching habits or to the character of the school principal and other professional leaders. Some of these individuals are those who eventually set the tone and write the matriculation exams. Ball (1992), examining the factors influencing changes in the English instruction since 1900, suggests that teachers' acceptance of an educational paradigm heavily depends on previous teaching experiences, loyalties generated during training, and support from their professional network. Hallinger, Hausman and Murphy (1992) found that even professional principals/leaders who view themselves as supporters of a fundamental reform are often severely limited by their own beliefs, training and experience in implementing reforms. As a result, although new detailed teaching guidelines are given, final performance requirements do not necessarily reflect the curricular changes just initiated.

Furthermore, if target assessment requirements do not change, i.e., the matriculation exams' content and demands, content-matter taught and methodological approaches remain unaltered. It is an accepted axiom in curriculum, assessment and evaluation literature that there should be a correlation among the three, and that they should all start from the same common goal-oriented denominator. When the connecting design among the three is poor, the goals cannot be attained.

The study

Study design

At the basis of our study stands the threefold conceptualisation of the relationship among aims implementation, assessment and evaluation, which goes as far as Tyler's (1950). Tyler's evaluation model refers to the assessment of aims' attainment as compared with policy's aims – at the end of an implementation process in order to find out how successful the program/policy has been. Haywood (1989), and Carter et al. (1986) discuss this issue in relation to science subjects. Like Tyler (1950), Schwab (1964) and others, Haywood stresses the fact that for each general curricular objective there should be an appropriate method of testing in order to check whether an objective has been attained or not. In turn, we claim that if the same objectives mark all three – the curriculum content, the assessment, and the evaluation, as the literature suggests – then any final proposed assessment should reflect those goals and their related content. Moreover, at the implementation stage in education, students should be helped to grasp the structure of the field of study, so that as a result they will be able to apply the

principles and experiences learned in a variety of situations (Bruner, 1963; Haywood, 1989). If all the above is true, the matriculation exams should present the same type of activities as those requested by the reform/curricular objectives, and should check students' ability to apply what they have learned.

In this study, we challenge the implementation of the reform policy goals (its curricular and methodological expressions) on grounds of content and face validity. Our main tool of inquiry is the discourse analysis of the matriculation exams – before and after the reform. The comparative methodology through pre- and post-analysis should throw light on whether any changes occurred after the reform was supposedly put into practice, and if the reform had any impact at all.

Content validity should provide answers as to the extent to which the goals and the test content reflect on one another, or in Haywood's words, the extent to which the exam represents the universe of related content; at the level of face validity we investigate the extent to which an exam actually shows that it measures the variables it is intended to test. We are not interested in predictive, concurrent or construct validity, because actual present or future performance in these exams is not under study.

Thus, the main goal of this study is to find out whether and to what extent the content and the analytical level of the questions set in the matriculation exams reflect the goals and frameworks defined by the reform. The subject matter and the pedagogical approach adopted in these tests are supposed to reflect the new educational policy and its level of implementation. The test of these exams' validity lies in their relation to the policy's objectives and point to degrees of policy implementation success. Therefore, we looked for changes between the pre-reform and post-reform exams.

Research method

The research method adopted is comparative and observes requirement differences – if they exist – between pre- and post-reform matriculation exams in the technological trend. A sample of pre- and post-matriculation electronics and electricity exams are analysed in order to identify the implementation of the target objectives of the reform policy. The content analysis of these exams follows principles set by Kerlinger (1973) who asserts that content analysis is not only a method of analysis but also one of observation. The investigator examines the materials produced, in this case the matriculation exams, and devises different observation measurements, in this case fourteen observation questions. The first step, according to Kerlinger, is to define the universe of content being dealt with, which in this study is the matriculation questions given to high-school students in the field of electricity. The second step is to divide that universe into categories.

Such categorisation, as followed in this study (see tables 1 and 2), points to the different units of content we wish to analyse.

By its nature the evaluation undertaken in this study is summative (Scriven, 1977; Nevo, 1983; Leithwood, 1986), pursues a basically Tylerian goals-versus-outcomes approach (Tyler, 1950), and leans on the problem-solving taxonomy criteria typical to the field of electricity (Waks and Lindenlaub, 1981).

According to Scriven, summative evaluation is a process at the end of which one can answer questions such as:

- a) What is the degree of success of a certain new instructional instrument against an acceptable criterion?
- b) Has success improved compared with the situation before the change?
- c) What are the advantages of the reform?
- d) Are the various investments in the reform 'cost efficient' in view of the degree of benefit given by the new instrument?

A common objective when evaluating an object – in this case a reform policy – is to judge its worth and benefit. Therefore, the content analysis conducted in this study seeks to find out whether the reform policy guidelines have led to any changes – whether at the content-matter level, in the relationship between content and previous knowledge, and so on. As such, the analysis focuses on:

- a) the subject to which the matriculation exam questions refer;
- b) the standard against which the exam problems were designed;
- c) the value of the test, i.e., the goals that had to be met by the exams;
- d) the source, i.e., who produced the questions and where;
- e) the time, i.e., the length of time allocated to solving a problem;
- f) the conflict existing between the syllabus and the exam in terms of content and level;
- g) the cognitive level the exam was aimed at.

The criteria chosen in this analysis for the cognitive level, accord with the PST – Problem Solving Taxonomy. This taxonomy is viewed as most appropriate for evaluating technological tests of various levels. The PST rests on Bloom's (1956) taxonomy, and was developed by Dean and Plants (1978). Waks and Lindenlaub (1981) elaborated on the cognitive levels of problem solving in the domain of electricity.

According to this taxonomy there are five distinctions of problem-solving complexity:

- a) routine is the lowest and it is achieved when a student solves a problem according to a certain routine he is familiar with;
- b) diagnosis is the second level of complexity and refers to the condition where the student chooses the correct solution among a number of possibilities that seem proper but some of which are incorrect;
- c) strategy is the third difficulty level in this taxonomy, meaning that a student is capable of selecting the most convenient solution among several possible ones.
- d) interpretation is the stage when one is capable of solving a problem with the aid of simulation and can translate the solution from the simulation world back to the real world.
- e) creativity is the highest taxonomic degree and refers to the level a student reaches when s/he is able to find an original solution to the question to be solved.

For our analysis, we translated these summative and the taxonomic components into a 14-step analysis criterion (see tables 1 and 2), which included:

- *the declared objectives of the syllabus* (1), as periodically published by the Ministry of Education;
- *the declared main subjects of the reform syllabus* (2), in this case as prescribed for the 10th to the 12th grades in electricity and electronics;
- *accordance of the exam with the content matter set by the syllabus* (3), i.e., whether the declared subjects appear in the exams;
- *accordance with syllabus objectives* (4), i.e., whether the declared learning tasks appear in the exams;
- *ratio between the number of questions in the test and the study-time allotted to a particular subject* in the syllabus (5);
- *PST level* (6), i.e., the taxonomic level required of the students in the exams -- at the routine, diagnosis, strategy, interpretation, or creativity level.
- *degree of science interlacing* (7), i.e., to what extent the exams reflect the requirement for a deep understanding of science beyond the regular use of equations and formulas;
- *knowledge variability* (8), i.e., the number of different subjects in a certain exam;
- *deep and sound knowledge requirements* (9), i.e., to what extent the students need to have acquired deep and broad knowledge in order to answer the exam questions;

- *content redundancy* (10), i.e., whether similar exam questions appear year after year;
- *degree of question choice in the exam* (11), i.e., the number of questions to be answered from a set given in a test; this points at the degree of difficulty of the test;
- *time allocation* (12), i.e., time allocated in the exam to students to solve each question;
- *proficiency delay* (13), i.e., whether the professional training proficiency has indeed been postponed until the very final period of high-school, as opposed to the pre-reform approach where professional training was undertaken and already tested in the earlier years of school;
- *trend overlapping* (14), i.e., the degree of content similarity and complementation between the electricity and the electronics exams.

Data collection

The data collection and its analysis concentrate on the characteristics of the matriculation exams before and after the reform in order to identify whether any significant content or conceptual changes occurred. Any such changes, in this study, would identify to what extent the reform influenced attainment expectations, how these expectations were reflected in the matriculation exams, hence whether the reform had actually been implemented. In other words, they would attest as to whether there was any gap between the new policy and the reality in the field.

Two major sample exams, one from the electronics trend and one from the electricity trend, were analysed following the above 14-step criterion. For comparison purposes the study included 7 pre-reform tests given in these subjects in 1987, 1988 and 1989, and 6 post reform tests at two points of time: one at the end of the first year of the reform in 1990, and the other two years later in 1993, when the reform was considered to be well on its way. The two post-reform points of time would also allow more valid conclusions to be drawn from the results obtained.

The exams were chosen so as to cover the same field of knowledge and related professional programs – in terms of general content definition – before and after the reform. The specific topics looked into were mainly digital electronics, analog electronics, measurements and communication. Note that the study concentrates on levels A and B, which are considered the highest study levels in the electricity and electronics trends in Israeli technological schools.

Pre- and post-reform matriculation exams analysis

The syllabus underlying the pre-reform exams was published in 1983. The reform syllabus was actually an expansion of the 1983 syllabus. The core subject-matter and the structure of knowledge in electronics and electricity remained the same.

Pre-reform exams analysis

The general educational objectives of the pre-reform electronics syllabus set until 1983 were:

- providing the students with sound and broad knowledge in microprocessors software and hardware;
- interlacing, in classroom lessons, modern communication concepts;
- teaching high-level computer languages;
- improving the ability of individualized thinking;
- dividing the learning process into analog and digital electronics.

The general objectives of the electricity syllabus were:

- to deepen and broaden the basic concepts of the profession, and by so doing to enable the student to merge quickly and easily in the technological world;
- to increase individual working and learning abilities;
- to develop the skill of reading and understanding data sheets and technical reports of various manufacturers in the electricity field.

Under the above general objectives there were included hundreds of subjects, covering, in electronics: semiconductors, electron movement in a vacuum, operational amplifiers, CRT, logic gates, wave propagation, microprocessors, television, and more. The electricity syllabus included subjects such as fundamentals of electricity and networks, switching and control, electrical systems, energy conversion, etc.

In spite of the very long and detailed lists of learning items, an analysis of the exams set over a period of three years shows that many important sections included in the syllabus were not tested even once in the 1987, 1988 and 1989 matriculation exams, e.g., power amplifiers, network theory, CRT, antennas, television, and wave propagation. Even subjects relating to popular items in our everyday life, such as stereophonic communication or color television, were omitted. On the other hand, typical identical subjects such as operational amplifiers and the technology of electronic components, appeared every year.

The 1987-1989 matriculation exams in both electricity and electronics were found not to have included questions that could reflect on the acquisition of a real and profound understanding of the structure of knowledge. Approximately 90% of the problems presented were routine questions according to the PST. This implies that in the pre-reform era, routine study of items from the syllabus could guarantee the student sufficient success in the final exams, and that s/he was not expected to master more than that.

The following table presents, separately, a detailed analysis of the 1987-1989 tests in electricity and in electronics according to the 14-step content analysis criterion designed for this study.

Post-reform exam analysis

The second part of this study concentrates on the matriculation exams formulated at the end of the first year of the reform, in 1990, and three years later, in 1993. The three years time gap was considered to allow for expected policy adoption patterns and teaching/learning changes.

As previously noted, the aims of the reform were:

- a) to endow the high-school student with a broad basis of technical and scientific knowledge, with the additional purpose of easing his/her difficulties when joining a university or industry;
- b) to strengthen individualised learning beyond regular school hours;
- c) to neutralise the stigma connected to status within technological studies, i.e., 'superior' for electronics and 'inferior' for mechanics;
- d) to give the student the opportunity to perform in the matriculation exams according to his/her ability and desire;
- e) to increase computer learning time;
- f) to enable the student to shift from one level of learning to another within a certain subject-trend.

In keeping with the reform policy, school electricity and electronics trends were unified and the syllabuses were merged. At the content-analysis level no noticeable differences between the pre- and post-reform matriculation exams were found. If matriculation exams are the ultimate final expression of knowledge, mastery, skill and cognitive development, then it was found that at these levels the post-reform exams did not demand, or expect, different ways of learning and thinking. Both the content and the face validity of the matriculation exams were found to be very low, not reflecting the initial goals of the reform in this trend of technology. Thus, the actual implementation of the reform policy was found

TABLE 1: Analysis of Sample Pre-Reform Matriculation Exams (1987-1989)

14-step analysis criteria	Professional Trend	
	Electricity # 301 Tests # 330251, 330141, 330041, 330261, 330061	Electronics # 304 Tests # 340061, 340161
1. declared goals of pre-reform syllabus	a. deepening the basis of knowledge and thus allowing for quick adaptation to the future technological world. b. increasing experimental work (labs). c. developing students' ability to read and understand application notes and manufacturers' reports.	a. transfer of broad and profound microprocessor knowledge -- software and hardware. b. introducing modern communications systems, digital and fiberoptic techniques. c. teaching high-level computer language.
2. main subjects in the syllabus	a. theory of electricity b. switching and control c. electrical systems d. energy conversion	a. theory of electricity -- basics b. analog electronics c. digital electronics d. introduction to computers e. communication fundamentals f. components technology
3. accord with syllabus content	full accord in 7 sample exams (59 problems)	full accord in 6 sample exams (60 problems)
4. accord with syllabus objectives	first objective: 100% second objective: 0% third objective: 100%	first objective: 50% second objective: 80% third objective: 80% fourth objective: 5% fifth objective: 100%
5. correlation (no. of problems and time allocated to relate topic teaching)	moderate: about 35%	small: about 15%
6. PST level	routine: 100%	routine: 90% strategy: 10%
7. science intertwining	not existent	not existent
8. knowledge variability	existent -- 100%	existent -- 100%
9. deep and sound knowledge	minimal -- about 5%	minimal -- about 5%
10. redundancy of topics in exams	complete	complete
11. choice rate	usually 5 out of 9	1 out of 2; or 2 out of 3
12. time allocation per problem-solving in exams	30 minutes per problem	30 to 60 minutes per problem
13. delay of proficiency	existent -- about 20%	existent -- about 20%
14. overlapping electronics/electricity	existent -- about 25%	existent -- about 25%

lacking: at the end of the first year of reform implementation, no major content-matter changes or different achievement requirements were found. Nor were any substantial changes identified three years later, in 1993 (see table 2).

In fact, paradoxically, the reform syllabus offers very detailed components. In addition, two types of 'test tasks' are proposed. These test tasks should guide the teacher and the student on specific tasks that may be presented in the exams. The first type of task, named 'nucleus task', indicates knowledge of items in the program. Beside each noted task there is a serial number that designates the subject/item in the syllabus. A second task, named 'composed task,' indicates knowledge of interrelated subjects in the syllabus. Here is a sample list of such proposed tasks from the various fields of electronics/electricity:

- analog electronics - to find the amplitude of periodic wave; to define output resistance of an amplifier.
- digital electronics - to convert a number from base 16 to base 2; to explain the principle of operation of synchronous counter.
- computers and microprocessor - to use the command 'diskcopy'; to explain the functions of a modem in a communications system.

To study the first years of reform implementation and goals attainment, a sample of three exams - electricity, energy conversion and control, switching and digital systems - was investigated. The 1993 tests included electronic systems, electronics and computers, energy conversion and control. No obvious difference between the characteristics of the 1990 and the 1993 tests was identified, even though the detailed requirements of the syllabus led one to envisage much higher levels of performance expectations in the later post-reform matriculation tests. An analysis of findings, following the 14 step criterion, is presented in table 2 below.

In the first post-reform year, the test questions covered 60 percent of the subjects that were supposed to have been taught. Nevertheless, both in 1990 and in 1993 the questions basically remained at the routine level. Main aims of the reform, such as science interlacing with technology, or transfer of deep and broad knowledge, were not seen to be expressed in these tests. For example, in the 1993 matriculation test paper no. #841201 in Electronic Systems, the student was asked to solve various problems such as: 'explain the 'three state' logic and its use'; 'explain the concept 'open collector' in logic components'; 'draw a block diagram of an FM superheterodyne receiver. Explain the function of each block.'

In view of the above findings, the additional goal of the reform, namely educating students so as to provide them with the option of selecting their own technological path in the future, cannot possibly be attained if the highest level of required performance is merely routine.

TABLE 2: Analysis of Sample Post-Reform Matriculation Exams (1990-1993)

14-step analysis criteria	Unified Professional Trend	
	Electricity # 301 Tests #111222, 111331	Electronics # 304 Tests # 815101, 815102, 841201, 111223
1. declared goals of pre-reform syllabus	a. to give each student the opportunity to express individual ability; b. to update content-matter and skills in technological education to match future technological advance; c. to broaden the scientific basis of technological education; d. to increase individualized learning; e. to allow taking matriculation exams according to individual choice and ability;	
	f. operational tasks not existent in 1990;	f. operational task exists: e.g. to define BCD code; to explain shift registers.
2. main subjects in the syllabus	a. switching and digital systems; b. analog electronics; c. digital electronics; d. electronic systems -- measurements, communication.	
3. accord with syllabus content	full accord	full accord
4. accord with syllabus objectives	the objectives were not specified for all the topics; when specified -- appeared in the exams, e.g., for "switching and digital systems" the stated objective was "understanding principles and developing problem-solving skills."	full accord with stated tasks but not with the general objectives of the syllabus, e.g., the concept "zone of proximity" is not touched on by any of the matriculation problems in the sample exams.
5. correlation (no. of problems and time allocated to related topic teaching)	limited	limited
6. PST level	routine: 100%	routine: 95% diagnosis: 5%
7. science intertwining	not existent	not existent
8. knowledge variability	existent -- 100%	existent -- 100%
9. deep and sound knowledge	minimal	minimal
10. redundancy of topics in exams	irrelevant criteria in the first year of post-reform exams.	good -- about 80%
11. choice rate	5 problems out of 9; or 4 out of 7	
12. time allocation per problem-solving in exams	30 to 48 minutes per problem	30 to 36 minutes per problem
13. delay of proficiency	existent -- 100%	existent -- 100%
14. overlapping	unified trend	

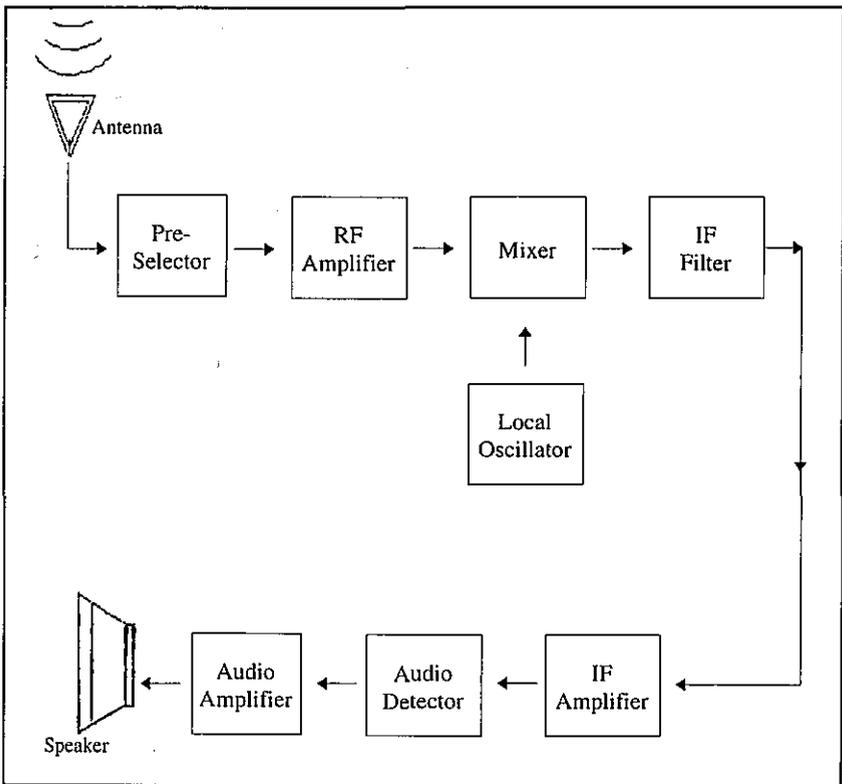
Sample questions from pre- and post-reform matriculation exams

The following are sample random questions from the pre- and post-matriculation exams analysed in this study:

A. Before the reform - test paper no. #340061:

'Explain the operation of the system shown in the following figure and state its function. What is the purpose of each building block of this system?'

FIGURE 1



If we refer to the fourteen-step analysis criterion, the conclusions we are bound to reach are similar to those reached in table 1 for the pre-reform exams:

1. The introduction of a modern communications system is not reflected: the system shown is in fact an AM radio invented about 60 years ago. In addition, the objective of tutoring toward self-thinking cannot be assessed when the student is asked to describe a block diagram of a radio system.
2. Communications fundamentals – this is indeed tested by this type of problem.
3. The problem accords with the content-matter required by the syllabus.
4. The problem does not accord with syllabus objectives.
5. The relationship between the number of questions and time allocation for teaching radio systems is weak. The time allocated for the learning of radio systems was 2 yearly hours that were part of 40 yearly hours devoted to the field of communication.
6. The PST level is 'routine.' Hereby average memory is needed by the student to receive a full score for his/her complete answer.
7. Science interlacing is not touched on at all in a description of the radio required here.
8. Knowledge variability cannot be relevant when only one problem is presented.
9. Deep and sound knowledge is not required in this case in order to answer correctly.
10. Redundancy: a similar question appears in every matriculation exam.
11. The rate of choice in this case is one problem out of three.
12. Average solution time per each single problem was 36 minutes.
13. Delay of proficiency is not relevant in this case.
14. Overlapping is not relevant in this case.

B. After the reform - test paper no. #841201:

'Draw a block diagram of an FM superheterodyne receiver. Explain in detail the function of each building block.

Specify the considerations leading to choosing the intermediate frequency of that receiver.'

Referring to our 14-step analysis criterion we may conclude that, as table 2 shows, the reform policy does not seem to have affected the level or type of final performance requirements:

1. None of the declared objectives is reflected in such a problem-solving requirement, i.e., such a problem presentation concerning an FM receiver has nothing to do with 'broadening the scientific basis

of technological education,' and has no relation to 'increas(ing) individualised learning.'

2. The subject, a superheterodyne receiver is indeed an important topic that must be included in an electronics matriculation exam.
3. Accordance of the problem with the content required by the syllabus is found. The subject covers the topics presented in the syllabus as regards communications.
4. Accordance of the problem with syllabus objectives is found, i.e., the type of answer elicited by the sample problems above, does not stimulate any cognitive effort.
5. The correlation between the number of problems in the exam and the time allocated to teaching receivers was found to be adequate.
6. The PST level is obviously routine, since no complex level of thinking is needed to solve the problem. Remembering what has been said in class is enough to obtain a full score.
7. Science interlacing is not reflected at all in the problems.
8. Knowledge variability is shown to some extent since the principles of operation of the various building blocks of a receiver are different, in a sense, although they all belong to the communications field.
9. Deep and sound knowledge is not reflected, and is not needed in fact, at the level required by this problem.
10. Redundancy of some subjects in exams: this exists.
11. Rate of choice in the exam: one out of six. This is an unreasonably high choice rate.
12. Average time per problem: 36 minutes.
13. Delay of proficiency is not relevant in this case.
14. Overlapping is not relevant in this case.

To sum up the conclusions reached in this analysis, we find that the cognitive level required for the tasks of the post-reform exams did not change in comparison with the pre-reform demands. In both cases our content analysis pointed at 'routine,' or in Bloom's terms, 'knowledge' levels. In the examples shown above, in the pre-reform exam the student was asked to explain the given block diagram of a common receiver. In the post-reform era s/he was asked to draw that receiver and explain its components. In both cases, only her/his ability to memorise was assessed and nothing more. The only difference we could see – and not for the best – was that before the reform the student had to choose one question out of three, while after the reforms s/he had much more freedom and could choose one question out of six! S/he did not have to know too much!

Summary and discussion

The comparative content-analysis undertaken in this evaluation study identified the following:

- There are no major differences between the pre- and post-reform questions in the matriculation exams, in terms of content matter, state of the art, or level of cognitive expectations.
- The highest taxonomy level in the studied post-reform sample tests is diagnosis – which falls far short of the syllabus's intention.
- Those who write matriculation exams are usually experienced senior teachers, who express the state of the field. The loci where the outcome of the reform is decided are on the low and middle levels, by teachers and their supervisors. Also, as pointed out in the introduction, one of the main factors in the implementation of any reform policy is the actors, their motivations, interests, and professional culture. The difficulty teachers have in changing their teaching habits is a major impediment in reform implementation. Only few act on the curriculum, inquire about it and elaborate on it. Others use the new program as prescribed, or use well-mastered old methodology, without any personal input into the new approach (Connelly and Clandinin, 1987; Ball, 1992b.). In the case of the post-reform exams, it is likely that the reform syllabus, although officially adopted, has been taught with the same good old methodology. The low and middle levels, and their lack of interest in changing habits, prove to be the determining factors in the implementation of this policy. The expectations reflected in the matriculation test papers, point in this direction.
- At high-school level, the matriculation exams can serve as the only main driving force for reform implementation. They can raise learning standards through the topics covered, through their complexity, or through a cognitive level enhanced by the problems touched on. On the other hand, matriculation exams similar to those in the pre-reform era will only set the clock back through lack of expectations.
- In general, the findings of this study, conducted three years after the beginning of the reform implementation, show at post-reform matriculation exams similar to the pre-reform exams. The post-reform exams showed very low content and face validity, i.e., they did not match either the approach or the

level set by the reform syllabus, and indicated that the objectives of this reform policy have not been attained; or rather, that in the 'lower and middle' loci there was no reform policy achievement expectation.

The reform policy was the right step to take in view of the developments inherent in the field of electronics and electricity: new approaches and contents must be adopted if the educational system wishes to prepare students for the degree of knowledge and competence required in technology in present time. Neither the needs of the times we live in, nor the reform policy objectives meant to meet these needs, one reflected in these exams. As Dror (1971) contends, approaches to implementation in organisational structures lag behind the swiftly changing technological needs. Both at the content and at the face validity level the post-reform exams proved to be holding on to the old procedures – which may mean that teachers still have very low expectations of their students. No commonality of view and purpose – as posited by Carter, Haywood, and Kelly (1986) – was identified in this study. It seems that the teachers were content to go on with the good old approach, and the students couldn't care less. Broader views underlying education and teacher education and including education to competent practice, and development of human capital for national investment, depend after all on competent practitioner development (Knight, Lingard and Barlett, 1994) or in other words, on teachers' willingness to adopt new performance guidelines.

The findings of this study raise several key questions: Does the gap between the explicit guidelines set by the new policy in the technological trend and the exam assessment criteria represent lack of success in the implementation of the reform? Does it mean that the laissez-faire attitude of the teachers in the field has put an end to it? Does it imply that leadership strategies, for implementation purposes, have not been attended to? Hence, do the matriculation exams, as they are at the post-reform stage, point to the beautiful rise and abrupt fall of the reform in the technological trend? Since the evaluation undertaken in this study was by definition summative, i.e., seeking final data at the end of an implementation process, and Tylerian, i.e., attempting to find out whether the goals of a policy/program have been attained at the end of the implementation process, we cannot provide formative-causal answers. A formative evaluation involving interviews with technology teachers, school principals and students, as well as classroom observation sessions, should expand on and validate the findings obtained in this study.

The data gathered in this study three years after the start of the actual reform implementation, lead to the following conclusion: there is no doubt about the good intentions of the policy makers regarding the target content and the pedagogical issues that could foster advanced knowledge and skills in technology. Yet the final

expectations as presented in the matriculation exams – and which set the standard for the learning/teaching process – point to low validity, i.e., to a serious gap between intent and goals achievement in the implementation of this reform. Unfortunately, the well-known syndrome, the implementation/policy-setting gap, has been detected once again. The findings reinforce assumptions raised in the field regarding policy implementation. In this case, no matter how acute the problem may be, or how important the policy is, devising a clever policy is not enough: steps have to be taken to make for implementation.

To sum up, the main pitfalls in policy implementation are usually the by-product of overlooking the fact that policies are determined by power contests, and that goals cannot be set independently of the means to obtain them, the loci, the actors and the culture involved. Policy makers sometimes misjudge the complexity of problem-solving in the practical world of affairs, as against 'laboratory' forecasting. They tend to neglect to note elusive uncertainties and to apply one of the many steps available to cope with them. This can give poor results which, in turn, may create new problems during implementation. Unless policy makers begin to envisage problems that might be encountered at the implementation stage, a policy's robustness is in trouble (Geva-May with Wildavsky, 1997). Robustness in this context is assessed by the ability of a policy to succeed in different environments and to survive in face of a difficult implementation process.

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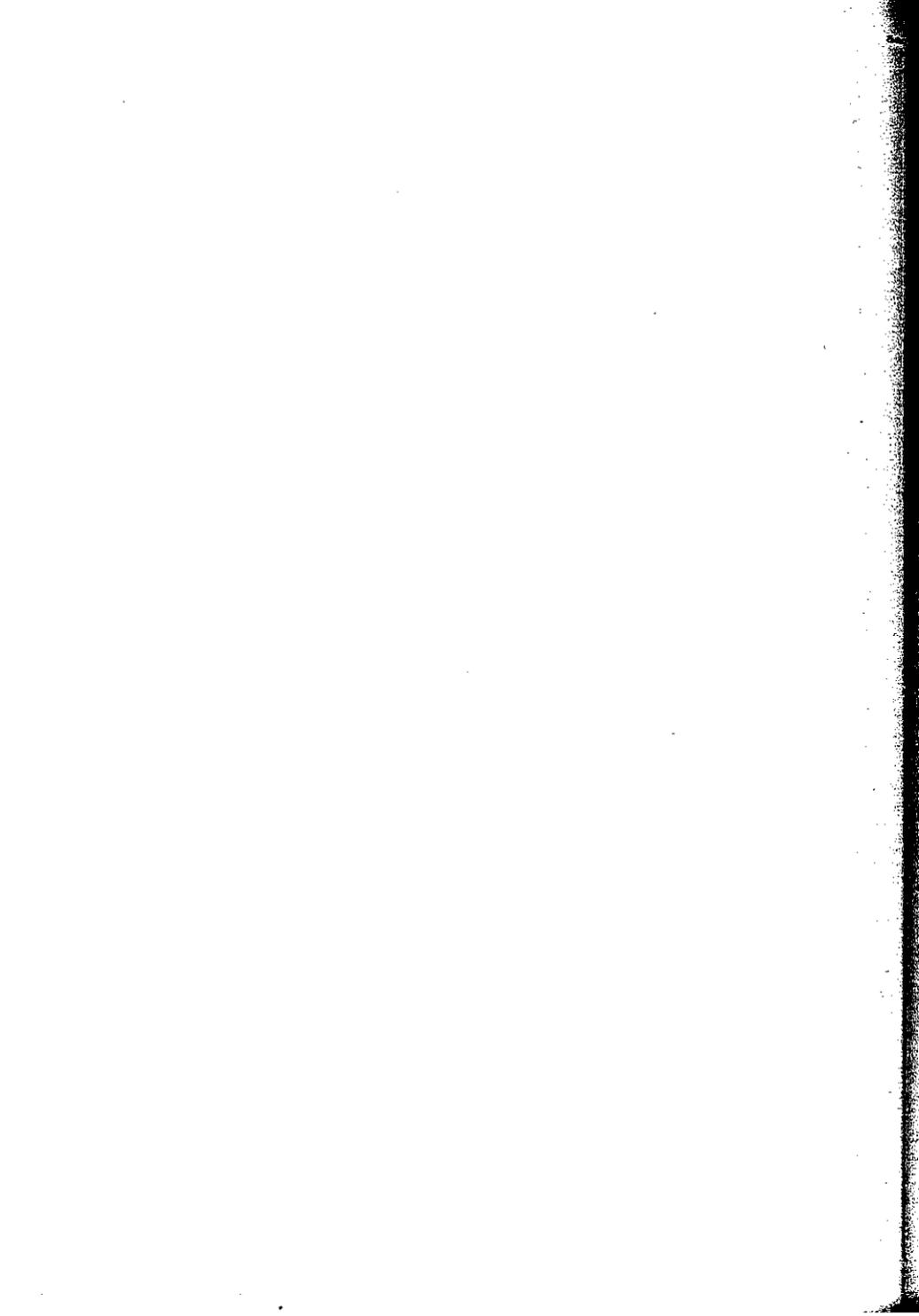
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test paper # 330251 in Switching and Control Systems.
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test paper # 330061 in Electrical Systems.

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test paper # 111221 in Electricity Control and Conversion.
test paper # 815101 in Electronics and Computers.
test paper # 111223 in Electricity, Control and Conversion.
test paper # 815102 in Electronics and Computers.
test paper # 841201 in Electronic Systems.



GREEK-CYPRriot PUPILS' UNDERSTANDING OF NARRATIVE HISTORICAL CONCEPTS

TRYFON SKOUROS

Abstract – This article refers to a research study which was conducted in Cyprus in May 1996 and which aimed primarily at examining whether fifth graders (10-11 years) of the Greek-Cypriot primary schools have 'mastered' the narrative historical concepts contained in the official history curriculum. The research also aimed at examining whether the following factors/variables have significant main or/and interaction effect on the fifth primary graders' ability to develop and understand the prespecified narrative historical concepts: a) pupil's age; b) pupil's gender and c) parents' educational status. The research was dictated primarily by the assumed difficulty of pupils' in understanding of narrative historical concepts which have great educational value. According to the results of the study, the pupils failed to master the prespecified concepts and consequently the study verified the existence of the problem. It was also found that parents' educational status affects significantly pupils' performance.

Theoretical background of the study

The meaning of concepts and their educational significance

From a psychological point of view 'concepts' are defined as 'generalisations built up by abstracting particular sensory events, the critical attributes, and classifying them' (Child 1981: 137). This definition indicates the intellectual skills used during the process of concept formation, that is, perception, discrimination, abstraction and classification. Alternatively, concepts can be defined in more concrete terms as ideas, usually expressed in words, to describe classes of natural or technical objects, qualities, attributes, quantities, places, ways of behaving and feeling, acts, events, phenomena, situations and relations having something in common, e.g. 'emperors', 'castle', 'envy', 'liberalism' (Gunning, 1978; Banks, 1973). The words, 'generalisations' and 'classes', as used in the above definitions, clearly indicate that the particular names of persons and places, such as 'Napoleon I' and 'Rome', do not represent concepts (Banks, 1973; Child, 1981; Edwards, 1978; Gunning, 1978).

Concepts can be divided into various categories according to specific criteria and characteristics, such as their depth and breadth, degree of abstractness,

preciseness, and so on. Thus, we speak of simple and complex concepts, high-order and low-order, concrete and abstract, precise and vague, and so on.

The term 'historical concepts' indicates a special category of concepts. Many different classifications of historical concepts have been proposed so far and many different labels have been used to characterise the same class of concepts (Blyth, 1990; Hudgins, 1974; Nichol, 1984). However, the most commonly identified classes of historical concepts are:

- a) 'narrative historical concepts', such as 'civilisation' and 'democracy', which professional historians use when dealing with the subject matter or the narrative aspect of history, and
- b) 'structural', or 'methodological' concepts such as 'cause', 'consequence', 'change', 'continuity', 'evidence', etc., which refer to the methodological or inquiry aspect of history (Hudgins, 1974).

The selection of narrative concepts instead of structural concepts for conducting the present study is a matter of priority given that neither kind has yet been investigated in Cyprus. The former are considered first-order concepts whose development is necessary for the development of the latter, considered second-order concepts (Hudgins, 1974).

The dependence of learning upon language indicates the significance of concept development in general, since language as an instrument of communication and thought consists of and uses concepts and vocabulary (Stubbs, 1976). The educational significance of language is based upon its function and role as:

- a) an instrument of thought in general (Bruner, 1964; Vygotsky, 1962);
- b) a factor promoting conceptual thought in particular (Vygotsky, 1962), and
- c) a means for communication and learning (Barnes, 1976; Edwards and Furlong, 1987).

Concept development and correct language usage take a central place in the National History Curricula for Cyprus (1994), England and Wales (1995) and the United States (1997). This is mainly attributed to the historical language required for dealing with a subject of great educational significance and promoting concomitant aims. The developers of the National Standards for United States History for grades kindergarten through 12 (NCHS, 1997, Ch.1, p.1), stress that history teaching 'contributes to the education of political citizen' constitutes 'the key to self-identity and one's connectedness with all of humankind' and 'opens to students opportunities to develop a comprehensive understanding of the world, and of the many cultures and ways of life different from their own'. The National Standards for United States History, which are in accordance with the History

Curricula for Cyprus (1994) and England (1995), point out that history teaching should aim at developing the following types of historical thinking: a) chronological thinking; b) historical comprehension; c) historical analysis and interpretation; d) historical research capabilities and e) historical issues-analysis and decision-making (NCHS, 1997, Ch.2: 1). It is evident that the achievement of such aims, as those mentioned above, is impossible without a developed historical language. Everything meaningful constitutes 'a complex net-work of interlocking conceptual, propositional and procedural components' (Rogers 1979: 17), which means that historical understanding presupposes conceptual understanding and that skills (how to learn) and content (what we learn) are highly complementary and reinforcing.

The development of concepts is usually pursued as an aim in itself since their content constitutes significant and basic knowledge that pupils should develop, e.g. 'feudalism', 'crusades'. Concepts' transferability and applicability to other situations and contexts reduce greatly the need for constant learning or relearning as one encounters new situations (Banks, 1973; Bruner, 1960; Gunning, 1978). Furthermore, concepts help pupils focus their attention on a special aspect of a situation, such as the 'social classes' of an ancient society, and thus the possibility of random observation is reduced (Banks, 1973). A special category of concepts, namely the organisational ones, such as 'economy' and 'foreign policy', which summon up a background web of supporting ideas and information, help pupils organise the historical knowledge and content (Nichol, 1984).

Research findings into primary pupils' ability to understand and develop narrative historical concepts

A number of research studies have thus far been conducted to investigate the degree of primary pupils' understanding and the way of development of narrative historical concepts derived from economic, political, social and religious history (for example 'despotism', 'serf', 'manor', 'king', 'trade', 'parliament', 'government', 'nationalism'). These research studies can be divided into two categories according to their basic aim and the kind of approaches by which the subjects had been taught the concepts. The research studies of the first category aimed at examining whether the acquisition of narrative historical concepts follows the same pattern, sequence and time stages identified by Piaget (Charlton, 1952; Coltham, 1960; De Silva, 1972; Furth, 1980; Hess and Torney, 1967; Wood, 1964). The subjects of the studies had been taught the concepts through traditional direct teaching. Various testing techniques have been used such as multiple-choice tests (Charlton, 1952), drawing, picture choice, model selection, verbal

definition (Coltham, 1960), questionnaires (Furth, 1980; Hess and Torney, 1967; Wood, 1964), contextual cues (De Silva, 1972). The variety of the testing techniques enhances the soundness of the results which, in general, revealed primary pupils' difficulty in understanding and developing narrative historical concepts fully and showed that:

- a) Pupils develop narrative historical concepts gradually and sequentially. The conceptual growth follows three sequential stages, which correspond to Piaget's pre-operational, concrete operational and formal operational cognitive stages of development. Pupils' understanding of historical concepts becomes more complex, abstract and generalised as they get older.
- b) There is retardation in conceptual understanding in history. The transition from one stage to another occurs later in pupil's chronological and mental age than Piaget suggested and varies according to the concept and the individual.
- c) There is time lag between a pupil's ability to experience concepts and his ability to realise their meaning and significance in a conscious way.
- d) Primary-school pupils rarely gave complete and circular explanations of the concepts. Their answers emphasised only one isolated aspect of the overall inter-relationships and were concrete, particular, personal, partial, dominated by perception. The domination of a specific and particular referent of a general idea was the main cause for its misunderstanding.

The research studies of the second category, which were conducted more recently, aimed at examining the effectiveness of certain child-centred approaches for concept development. They revealed that primary pupils can develop narrative historical concepts at a quite sophisticated level through visual aids (Rogers, 1984), inductive approach (Booth, 1987) and open-ended discussion (Booth, 1987; Cooper, 1992). Again various kinds of testing techniques have been used such as interviews, tests and questionnaires.

Factors influencing primary pupils' understanding and developing narrative historical concepts

Primary pupils' difficulty in understanding and developing narrative historical concepts is attributed to: a) their stage of cognitive development, and b) the nature of the narrative historical concepts.

According to Piaget's theory (1950, 1977) for children's conceptual growth and his proposed chronological framework, the great majority of primary graders go through the concrete operational level of their conceptual growth. Consequently, they have not yet developed the necessary classificatory ability

in particular and their conceptual thought in general so as to develop various concepts fully. Vygotsky's research findings (1962) also revealed primary pupils' difficulty in developing concepts fully.

It is claimed that young pupils have not acquired the necessary amount of life experience, historical knowledge and advance linguistic skills to handle and develop narrative historical concepts characterised by a distinct nature. A distinctive feature of historical concepts is their vagueness resulting from their abstract and categorical character as well as from the variability of common words' meanings. The abstract and categorical concepts of political and economic history, such as 'constitution' and 'trade cycle', require developed linguistic skills and cause ambiguity and misunderstanding to the immature pupils (Bernbaum, 1972; Burston, 1972; Coltham, 1960; Edwards, 1978; Steele, 1976). The assumed reliance of history upon common words of every day language, such as 'factory' and 'trade', raise particular linguistic difficulty to young learners because their referents vary according to the historical period, context and situation in which they are being used (Bernbaum, 1972; Burston, 1972; Edwards, 1978; ILEA, History and Social Sciences Inspectorate, 1994).

Research evidence into primary pupils' conceptual understanding in history revealed that pupils' age and gender account for their performance differences. Coltham (1960) and Wood (1964) found that, as the pupils got older their responses became more complex, abstract and generalised. Charlton (1952) and Coltham (1960) discovered that the boys scored more highly than the girls did and moved through the stages more rapidly.

Pupils' performance differences can be also logically attributed to parents' social class, which constitutes an influencing factor of pupils' experience, linguistic development and attitudes towards learning and schooling. According to the theory of linguistic deprivation, working-class pupils, unlike middle- or upper-class pupils, are not sensitive to the symbolic language of the school because they learn limited linguistic strategies and lack the necessary social experience (Bernstein, 1971, 1973, 1975; Chomsky, 1969; Deutsch, 1961). According to the theory of interaction explanation, working-class pupils' educational failure is the result of the wide gap between teacher's culture and pupils' culture which in turn causes mutual failure in communication between them (Barnes, 1976; Burston, 1972; Mercer and Maybin, 1981; Robinson, 1981). Parents' social class determines their high or low expectations of their children's progress in school and the degree of their support and help which influence their children's interest, motivation and attitude towards schooling accordingly (Douglas, 1964; Himmelweit, 1951; Musgrave, 1979).

The purpose of the study and its significance

The results of previous research studies on primary pupils' understanding of narrative historical concepts lead to the assumption that primary fifth graders' (10-11 years of age) face difficulty in understanding and developing such kinds of concepts, particularly the sophisticated ones, if these concepts are not taught in a systematic and effective way. The crucial educational significance of the assumed problem, which has not yet been extensively explored (Blyth, 1990), along with the fact that a similar research has not been conducted in Cyprus justify the conduct of the present research which aims at giving an answer to the following questions:

- (a) Have primary fifth graders (10-11) mastered the narrative historical concepts contained in the aims of history teaching?
- (b) What is the difficulty index of the prespecified concepts? Which ones are: i) very easy; ii) easy; iii) intermediate; iv) difficult; v) very difficult?
- (c) What is the nature of the concepts that prove to be difficult or very difficult?
- (d) Do pupil's age, gender, and parents' educational status affect pupils' performance?

The present investigation can be justified as follows: Age and gender remain pupils' characteristics; parents' educational status comprises an influential social factor which, according to the literature review, affects pupils' understanding of concepts. The research findings are expected to contribute to the scientific research process in general and to the further exploration of the assumed problem in particular. Furthermore, the outcomes of the research are expected to have both short-term and long-term effects on pupils by: a) informing teachers, administrative authorities and history textbook authors about possible pupils' difficulties in understanding narrative historical concepts and the possible impact of the prespecified variables; b) initiating fruitful discussion and interchange of ideas which will eventually lead to the improvement of the history curriculum and the production of better and more suitable textbooks; c) indicating to teachers their obligation to adopt and apply effective teaching approaches, and d) pointing to parents the impact of their educational status on pupils' concept formation.

Methodology

The research method and design

The descriptive evaluative process has been used in the framework of this research study for determining the extent to which Greek-Cypriot primary fifth graders have mastered the historical concepts. The evaluation used is criterion-

referenced because it basically aimed at describing, interpreting and evaluating pupils' performance according to a criterion. The prespecified arbitrary criterion or the set standard used for making mastery or non-mastery decision was: at least 75% of the concepts contained in the test (approximately thirty-one concepts) should be easy or very easy. Thus, for making mastery or non-mastery decision it was necessary that the difficulty index of each concept be established, the difficulty index values be grouped into five intervals and the concepts be categorised according to their difficulty level as follows: a) very easy (80+); b) easy (60-79); c) intermediate (40-59); d) difficult (20-39), and e) very difficult (0-19). The criterion used for the categorisation of the difficulty index values, and consequently of concepts, was percentage. Papaioannou (1981) has adopted the same categorisation of the difficulty index values.

The *ex post facto* research method has been also used for investigating the effect of the prespecified independent variables (pupils' age and gender, parents' educational status) on pupils' performance (dependent variable).

The design of the research involved forming two groups of pupils that differed on each independent variable and comparing them on their performance. The various groups were formed in retrospect, that is, after the administration of the test. According to their age, the pupils were divided into: a) pupils aged 10.25 to 10.75 and b) pupils aged 10.75 to 11.25. According to their parents' educational status, the pupils were divided into: a) pupils whose parents studied at a primary school or/and gymnasium, *lykeion*, technical-vocational school and b) pupils whose parents studied at a college or university.

Population and sample

The population of interest, that is, the group of pupils to whom the results of the study have been generalised, was all 2772 Greek-Cypriot primary fifth graders who studied during the school year 1995-96 at the various public schools of the town and district of Limassol.

The sample of the research on which information was obtained was a group of 600 primary fifth graders drawn from the above population by the use of two combined random sampling methods: the stratified random sampling and the cluster random sampling. The steps followed during the sampling process are:

- (a) The population was identified, that is 2772 primary fifth graders.
- (b) It was found that of the total number of the fifth graders 2082 pupils (75.1%) studied at urban schools, and the rest, 690 pupils (24.9%), at rural schools.
- (c) The urban schools were divided into three categories: a) central urban schools; b) peripheral urban schools, and c) suburban urban schools. The rural

schools were also divided into two categories: a) semi-rural schools, and b) main rural (remote) schools.

- (d) It was decided that a sample of 600 pupils be drawn from the above-defined populations. Seventeen urban and eight rural schools were randomly selected. Each of them provided a class of pupils (cluster random sampling). The total number of the urban fifth graders in the sample was 451 and that of the rural graders 149. Thus, the proportion of urban and rural pupils was the same in both population and sample, that is 75.1 and 24.9 per cent (stratified random sampling). The proportion of pupils who studied at the various subcategories of urban and rural schools was also the same in both population and sample.

It can be argued that the random sampling process adopted and the large size of the sample selected secures that the sample is representative of the population and function in such a way that: (a) the independent variables operate randomly for the different groups being studied and b) pupils having different amounts of the characteristics in question(s) are satisfactorily represented in the sample.

Instrumentation and statistical techniques

A multiple-choice test was constructed and administered to the sample of pupils after its testing in a pilot trial in order to measure their understanding and development of the prespecified narrative historical concepts. Furthermore, a questionnaire was carefully prepared and addressed to the sample of pupils in order to collect the necessary data for the investigation of the possible effect of the independent variables on pupils' performance.

Descriptive statistics were used for the estimation of the reliability of the tests and the item/concept difficulty index. The reliability of the test (0.86) was estimated by Cronbach's Alpha formula.

Three-way analysis of variance is the inferential statistics used for the investigation of the main and interaction effect of the independent variables on pupils' performance.

Results

Pupils' performance

Table 1 presents the concepts' difficulty levels. The information presented in the table gives explicit answers to three of the research questions by showing: a) the number of concepts which are very easy or easy for the pupils, that is the

necessary information for making a mastery or non-mastery decision; b) the number of concepts which fall into each difficulty level, and c) the nature of concepts which fall into the difficult or very difficult levels.

TABLE 1: The Difficulty Levels of Narrative Historical Concepts

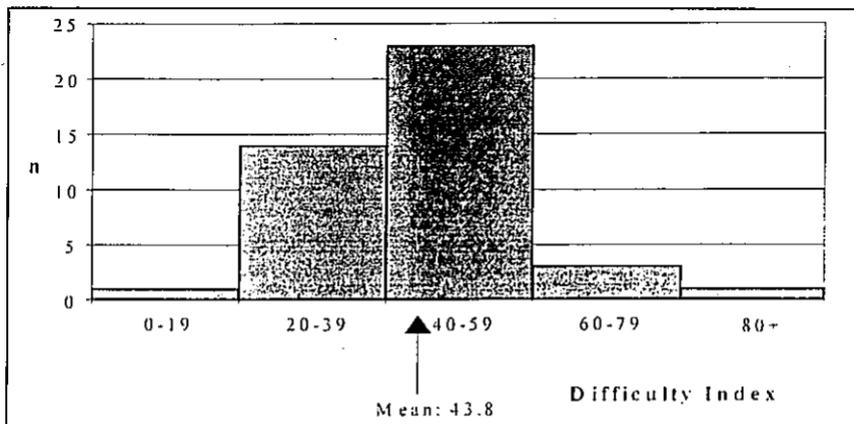
CONCEPTS	DIFFICULTY LEVELS				
	VERY EASY 80+	EASY 60-79	INTERMEDIATE 40-59	DIFFICULT 20-39	VERY DIFFICULT 0-19
amphitheatre				21.5	
Arabic raids				38.1	
Arabs			56.8		
architectural style			56.4		
Byzantine Empire		61.6			
campaign				26.5	
castle				30.6	
charity			48.7		
church				34.7	
civilisation			51.1		
civil war			42.2		
country church	82.0				
crusades			54.4		
Decree of Religious Tolerance		75.0			
Demi			48.2		
democracy			40.1		
economy			53.1		
emperor				22.9	
enclaved persons			40.2		
fall			42.9		
Fine Arts				21.2	
fresco		74.6			
general				23.4	
gladiator			46.2		
hippodrome			48.2		
holy relics				33.1	
hymnography			48.9		
invasion					19.5
Lam			43.4		
legislation			50.8		
monument			40.6		
national anthem				37.7	
orator			46.2		
patriarch			45.6		
refugees				25.2	
relief				33.4	
revolution			58.4		
Roman Empire			55.8		
Roman Law				24.7	
Senate				25.5	
State organisation			59.8		
Temple			50.4		

Thus, as shown in Table 1:

- a) The pupils failed to master the prespecified concepts given that only four concepts out of forty-two (9.5%) seem to be easy or very easy for them.
- b) One concept is very easy, three concepts are easy, twenty-three concepts are of intermediate difficulty, fourteen concepts are difficult and one concept is very difficult.
- c) The concepts, which fall into the difficult level, are not similar in nature. They differ as regards their depth (total number of attributes), breadth (degree of generality), degree of abstractness and preciseness. For example, concepts such as 'castle' and 'amphitheatre' are more concrete in nature than the concepts 'Senate' and 'national anthem', which fall into the same level.

A much better picture of the concepts' difficulty levels is afforded by Figure 1, which presents the frequency histogram. As illustrated in Figure 1, thirty-seven concepts, that is, the great majority (approximately 88%) have a difficulty index which ranges from 20 to 60. It is clearly shown that only four concepts seem to be easy and very easy for the fifth graders (their difficulty index is over 60). As shown in Figure 1, the mean value of the concepts' difficulty indices is 43.8 out of 100 and falls within the level, which includes the more frequent cases.

FIGURE 1: The Frequency Histogram of Concepts' Difficulty Levels



A careful study and analysis of the pupils' item responses revealed their difficulty in realising concept meaning in a conscious way. A proportionally high number of pupils were attracted by the concrete referents (examples or results) of an activity/idea or by one isolated aspect of the overall interrelationships and thus failed to select the generalised correct definition of the idea/concept.

TABLE 2: Analysis of Variance of Age, Gender and Parents' Educational Status by Groups of Pupils' (10-11) Performance

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	SUM OF SQUARES	DEGREES OF FREEDOM	MEAN SQUARE	F	P
A. Age	117.345	1	117.345	2.292	0.131
B. Gender	182.957	1	182.957	3.574	0.059
C. Parents' Educational Status	1457.649	1	1457.649	28.473	0.000
AXB	70.457	1	70.457	1.376	0.241
AXC	7.911	1	7.911	0.155	0.694
BXC	24.534	1	24.534	0.479	0.489
AXBXC	35.552	1	35.552	0.694	0.405
Explained	1899.205	7	271.315	5.300	0.000
Residual	27951.648	546	51.193		
Total	29850.854	553	53.980		

p < 0.05

The independent variables' effect on pupils' performance

Table 2 presents the results of three-way analysis of variance with age, gender and parents' educational status being the independent variables and pupils' performance the dependent measure. The statistical significance level 0.05 was set out. As shown in the table, fifth graders' performance is significantly affected at the 0.05 level by parents' educational status. The comparison between the means of scores obtained by the two groups of pupils representing the two levels of the variable reveal that the pupils whose parents are of high educational status (X:19.64 out of 42) performed better than the pupils whose parents are of low educational status (X:16.45 out of 42). It should be pointed out that the difference between boys' and girls' performance approaches the significance level of 0.05.

Discussion

The present research aimed at examining whether fifth graders have mastered the concepts prespecified for their educational level and finding out how many concepts fall into each difficulty level. The research also aimed at identifying the

nature of the concepts that proved to be difficult or very difficult and examining whether pupils' age, pupils' gender and parents' educational status have significant main or/and interaction effect on pupils' ability to develop and understand the concepts. The descriptive and inferential statistical analysis gave the following answers to the research questions:

- a) The pupils have not mastered the concepts; while only four concepts out of 42 (9.5%) seem to be easy or very easy for the pupils, thirty-one concepts (75%) did not meet the prespecified mastership criterion.
- b) One concept, that is, 'country church' proved to be very easy for the pupils and three concepts, that is, 'Decree of Religious Tolerance', 'fresco' and 'Byzantine Empire' proved to be easy. A group of twenty-three concepts proved to be intermediate in difficulty and a group of fourteen concepts difficult (see Table 1). One concept, that is, 'invasion' seems to be very difficult.
- c) The concepts, which seem to be difficult for the sample of pupils, such as 'castle', 'national anthem' 'Senate', 'Fine Arts', 'holy relics', etc. differ as regards their degree of depth, breadth, abstractness, preciseness.
- d) Pupils' understanding and development of the prespecified concepts are significantly affected by the parents' educational status.

The most important outcome of the study is that fifth graders failed to master the prespecified historical concepts whose significant role for the achievement of the aims in history teaching is unquestionable. It should be noted that pupils failed to master concepts which are considered concrete and simple, such as 'castle' or 'amphitheatre' or concepts, such as 'invasion' and 'refugees', used by Cypriot pupils and teachers in the classroom very often and which are associated with the recent history of the island.

In the light of the outcomes of the research certain important issues are raised that need to be considered and discussed. First, pupils' failure to master the concepts in general and the concepts which are considered concrete and simple in particular should be interpreted with reference to previous research findings and relevant theories and attributed to the influence of certain factors. Similarly, the influence of parents' educational status on pupils' understanding and development of concepts should be explained. Finally, the identification of the possible factors (e.g. the effectiveness of teachers' approaches and the availability and use of the suitable teaching aids), which influence pupils' conceptual performance, leads to and necessitates the formulation of certain practical recommendations for promoting pupils' conceptual thinking in history.

Pupils' failure to master the prespecified concepts is consistent with previous research findings discussed above (Charlton, 1952; Coltham, 1960; De Silva,

1972; Furth, 1980; Hess and Torney, 1967; Wood, 1964), which revealed directly or indirectly primary pupils' difficulty in understanding and developing narrative historical concepts. In particular, the present research study has affirmed the findings of the previous research that primary pupils face difficulty in realising the meaning of historical concepts in a conscious way and that the domination of specific and particular referent of a general idea constitutes the main idea for its misunderstanding.

Pupils' failure to master the concepts contained in the test could be interpreted and explained with reference to the following theories and factors mentioned above:

- a) Pupils (10-11) go through their concrete stage of cognitive development and, therefore, they have not yet developed their conceptual thinking (Piaget, 1950, 1977; Vygotsky, 1962).
- b) Fifth graders' limited linguistic skills, historical knowledge and life experience make difficult for them to understand and develop historical concepts, such as 'civilisation' and 'democracy', characterised by vague, categorical and abstract nature (Bernbaum, 1972; Burston, 1972; Coltham, 1960; Edwards, 1978; Steele, 1976).
- c) The common words of ordinary and everyday language, which are used in history very often, such as 'church' and 'trade' and which may have referents that vary according to the historical period, contexts and situations, impose particular problems to immature pupils (Bernbaum, 1972; Burston, 1972; Edwards, 1978; ILEA, History and Social Sciences Inspectorate, 1994). Pupils' failure to master the concepts might also be attributed to teachers' possible failure to teach these concepts effectively, systematically and appropriately. Recent research studies revealed that primary pupils can develop narrative historical concepts at a quite sophisticated level through visual aids (Rogers, 1984), inductive approach (Booth, 1987) and open-ended discussion (Booth, 1987; Cooper, 1992).

Pupils' (10-11) failure to develop both sophisticated concepts and concepts considered at first sight simple and concrete can be explained as follows:

- a) A particular concept may have both a concrete and an abstract connotation and fall into various categories, e.g. the concept 'holy relics' is concrete, quite general, vague and conjunctive (Oliver, 1985).
- b) The teachers involved possibly failed to clarify all the basic attributes of the concepts to pupils.

The influence of parents' educational status on pupils' performance can be attributed to the fact that this factor determines, to a great extent, their social class

which in turn constitutes an influencing factor of pupils' linguistic experience and development. Working-class pupils learn fewer linguistic strategies than middle-class pupils and lack the social experience, which would make them sensitive to the symbolic orders of the school and competent in thinking and using language (Bernstein, 1971, 1973, 1975; C. Chomsky, 1969; Deutsch, 1961). Interaction explanations relate educational failure of working-class pupils to a mutual failure in communication between teacher and pupil (Barnes, 1976; Burston, 1972; Mercer and Maybin, 1981; Robinson, 1981). Parents' social class determines also their high or low expectations of their children's progress in school and the degree of their support and help, which influence their children's interest, motivation and attitude towards schooling accordingly (Douglas, 1964; Himmelweit, 1951; Musgrave, 1979).

The findings of the present research have certain practical implications and lead to the formulation of certain reasonable recommendations and proposals for the improvement of pupils' (10-11) ability to develop and understand narrative historical concepts. These recommendations concern: a) teachers' training for the effective teaching of the prespecified concepts; b) the development of curriculum material; c) parents' support, help and interest in their children progress in history, and d) further research studies.

It is recommended that both the University of Cyprus as well as the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus, which have the responsibility for basic and in-service training of teachers, should run courses/seminars on the teaching of narrative historical concepts. In the framework of these courses and seminars the following aspects could be analysed and discussed: a) the educational importance of narrative historical concepts; b) principles guiding the teaching of the narrative historical concepts, and c) effective child-centred methodological approaches.

It is suggested that suitable teacher manuals, curriculum material and pupil's textbooks be produced which will contribute to effective teaching of narrative historical concepts. Teacher manual book should include adequate information about the content of the prespecified concepts and educationally accepted and effective ways for their development. Packages of relevant audio-visual aids should be prepared and sent to schools to be used by teachers and/or the pupils themselves.

The authors of the history textbooks to be written in the future for the top primary grades should take into account, among other things, the linguistic drawbacks of the existing textbooks (Couloubaritsis, 1994; Skouros, 1990). They are advised to use more analytic and descriptive language that is comprehensible by pupils of this age and introduce in a systematic and effective way the new concepts. It is specifically suggested that: a) the degree of textbooks' language sophistication should be of ascending order, that is, the language of the first

chapters should be more concrete and simple than the subsequent chapters, and b) the meaning of each new basic narrative concept which is introduced should be analysed and exemplified both verbally and visually.

Parents can be persuaded to encourage their children to acquire a more positive attitude towards history by having higher expectations towards their children's progress in this particular subject, showing more interest and offering more support and help to them so as to cope effectively with it.

It is also recommended that the method effect on pupils' (10-11) performance be investigated through experimental research. Pupils' mastery of the prespecified concepts can also be investigated through interviews conducted by the researcher with the pupils individually. The use of the interview instrument for collecting data is expected to provide more information and details regarding pupils' difficulty in developing these concepts.

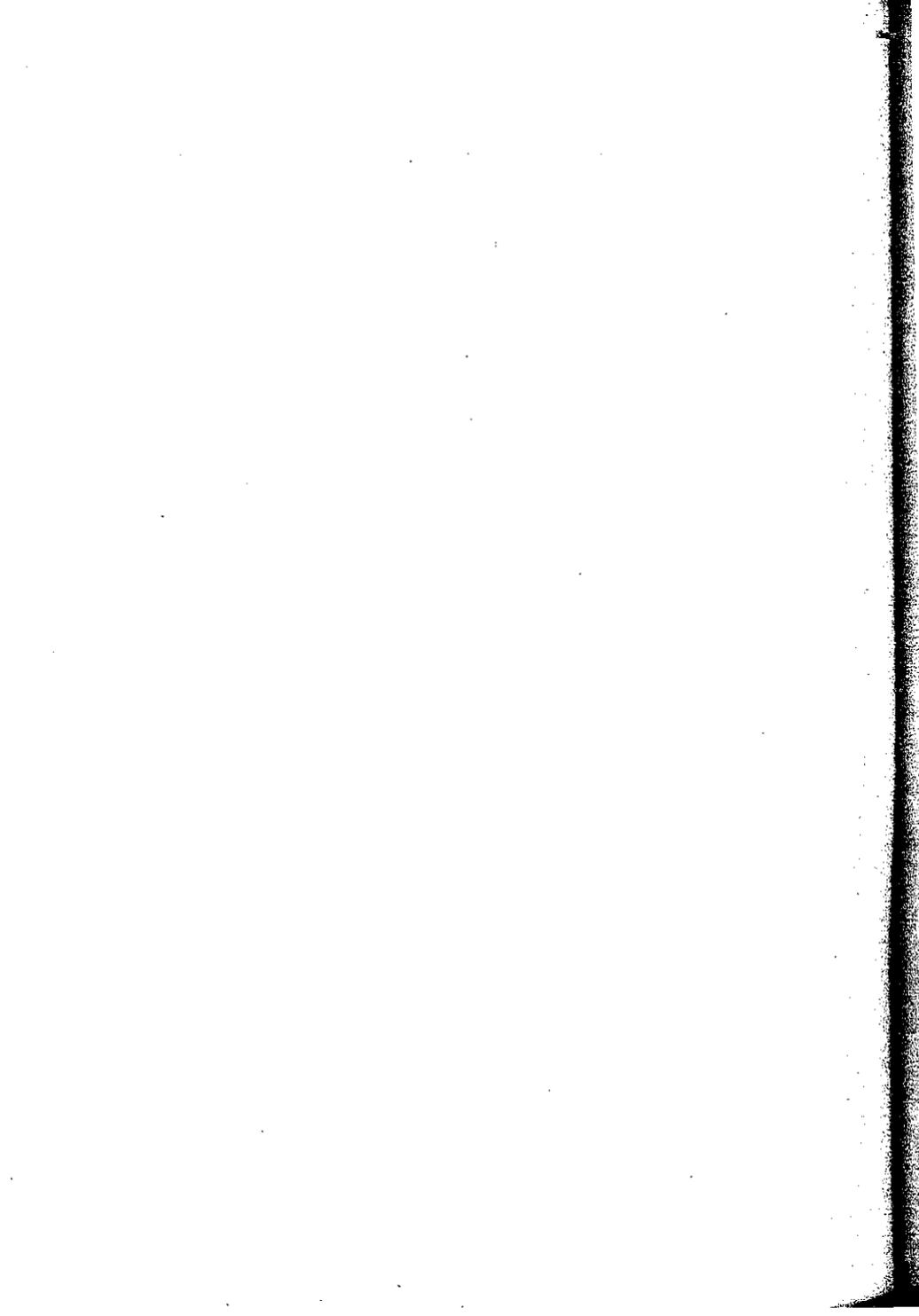
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CULTURAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY, COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND THE TEACHER'S ROLE

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SERVANDO PÉREZ-DOMÍNGUEZ

Abstract – No one could deny the evidence that we all live in an increasingly diverse and interdependent society. This diversity affects all fields of society. Education is certainly not an exception. To attain the best in their teaching (and, probably, also in their lives in general), teachers, and educators in general, have to be prepared to better understand this diversity, which can be displayed in a range of different languages or dialects, religious or ethical beliefs, ethnic groups, cultures, and so on. If teaching is a challenge, teaching for an intercultural understanding is even a greater one. The purpose of the paper is to show the utility of using cooperative (or collaborative) learning techniques in teaching. Within the paper we refer to a number of research projects and experiences which show that cooperative learning methods in multicultural settings are a highly recommendable tool for educators.

Introduction

A number of scholars (among them Foyle, Lyman and Thies 1991; Lyman, Foyle and Azwell 1993) have indicated that by no means is peer collaboration a new concept. In fact, most of the investigation on cooperative (or collaborative) learning (CL) has been conducted since the early 1970s.¹ The different studies conducted lead us to believe in the benefits of CL. However, there is a need for implementing CL progressively, step-by-step.

Furthermore, broad research has demonstrated that CL groups promote high achievement and positive interpersonal outcomes, but only under certain conditions (see, for example, Johnson and Johnson 1987b, 1989; Slavin 1995a, 1995b; Santos-Rego, 1994). In addition, relatively recent research has found that CL is 'a natural vehicle for promoting multicultural understandings (...), finding that all members of collaborative groups became more accepting of racially and culturally different classmates' (Davidson and Worsham, 1992; quoted in Adams and Hamm 1994: 47-48). Unfortunately, the numerous potential benefits of CL are not always apprehended in our classrooms, due to poor, partial implementation or infrequent use (Joyce 1992; Santos-Rego, 1990, 1991). In general, educators are not aware of what the essential conditions are for CL to lead to positive outcomes.

The job cannot be done by simply placing students in groups and asking them to cooperate.

It is the purpose of this paper, to make reference to the benefits of using CL techniques in heterogeneous classrooms, and to reflect on the new role teachers have to play (see Nieto, 1998; Nieto and Santos-Rego, 1998; Santos-Rego and Pérez-Domínguez, 1998; Pérez-Domínguez, 1997, 1998).

Despite the widespread use of this technique in the USA, and the recognition of its convenient methods in the classroom to promote multicultural harmony (Davidson and Worsham, 1992; Costa, 1991), teacher preparation in CL methods is still far from being adequately implemented (Abi-Nader, 1993; Alexander, 1991; Bowers and Finders 1990; Brophy and Good, 1986; Burton, 1987; Adams and Hamm, 1986; Davidson and Worsham, 1992; Good and Brophy, 1994; Wlodkowski and Jayne, 1990).

The writers would like to encourage the idea of paying particular attention to current and prospective teachers' preparation in CL methods. We are convinced that the study and employment of CL methods, in conjunction with other instructional strategies, is most appropriate (see Dana and Floyd 1993; Montgomery *et al.* 1993; Sparks and Verner 1993; Sudzina 1993). Putnam (1993: 16) has addressed similar concerns by pointing out that: 'Problems are likely to arise when teachers have not been adequately exposed to cooperative learning in their teacher preparation programs or through inservice training. Additionally, teachers sometimes face barriers such as organisational constraints or a lack of support in their schools'.

Teaching in heterogeneous classrooms: can cooperative learning help?

As the literature has shown, CL is normally best accomplished in heterogeneous student groups. 'Ethnic, racial, religious, gender, academic achievement, skill ability, and other factors may be used to group students. Mixed groups have the greatest potential for success in cooperative learning because student differences make for greater student interaction within the groups' (Lyman, Foyle, and Azwell 1993: 31). As Sonia Nieto (1996) has signalled, CL is an approach compatible with diverse cultural groups. It animates children to respect and value one another.

Perhaps, one of the most important responsibilities of educators is responding to the needs, not only of academically diverse students, but also of ethnic/racial, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity (Fradd and Weismantel 1990; Sleeter and Grant 1987). Traditionally, schools have responded to student diversity with

pull out or alternative programmes, many of which have included an over-representation of minorities (Oakes, 1985). However, a surge of interest has emerged in inclusive instrumental practices such as CL (Johnson, Johnson and Holubec, 1990; Slavin, 1995a, 1995b) and multicultural education to address the historical neglect of non-Eurocentric viewpoints in the curriculum (Banks, 1995). In this sense, Banks (1991: 114) pointed out that:

'Teachers must play an active role in getting students to undertake personal and social action to improve race relations in their personal lives and in the institutions in which they function. To improve race relations in the classroom, you can structure interracial work and study groups. Research has indicated that when students from different races and social classes have equal status within interracial work and study groups, these groups can improve interracial attitudes and help students of color to increase their academic achievement.'

Johnson and Johnson (1993) acknowledge the compatibility of CL and diversity because, when using CL in heterogeneous classrooms, students in general do better and develop themselves as persons by considering others' ideas and perspectives. They also say:

'The key to the success of heterogeneous cooperative groups may well be the *persistence of teachers* who are determined to build a cooperative umbrella over a diverse group of students by teaching them the skills that they need to make inclusion work' (p. xiii; Foreword to *Cooperative Learning and Strategies for Inclusion*).

It can then be said that the importance of teachers/educators implementing CL techniques and transmitting them effectively to students is paramount. Johnson and Johnson, in their foreword to JoAnne W. Putnam's book, *Cooperative Learning and Strategies for Inclusion* (1993: xiii) indicated that persistence is indeed necessary to obtain good results. Things cannot be achieved over night. But when teachers persist in changing classrooms into cooperative settings, a number of positive effects come out, such as:

1. The achievement levels of all students increase. Although the largest gains usually occur among students at the struggling, undermotivated end of the spectrum, there are clear achievement benefits for all students. For example, at the University of Minnesota, where Johnson and Johnson teach, Dr. Pat Heller has found that the most accomplished physics students achieve higher on problem solving when they work cooperatively with others who are less able than themselves than they do when working alone.

2. Students tend to feel more positive about themselves and to be better psychologically adjusted when they are part of a group in a cooperative setting.
3. Students also accept differences more readily, both in and outside of the classroom. Cooperative efforts can help them outgrow their initial narrow stereotypes of one another and find out who each member of the team really is as they work toward a common goal and celebrate team efforts together.

Villa and Thousand (1993) remarked the importance of the observation of behaviours manifested by role models. A critical duty of the teacher, then, in preparing students for the cooperative workplace and for the society of the 21st century, is to model cooperative teaching; thus students learn through observation how two or more people coordinate instructional, behaviour management, and student-evaluation activities (see also Abraham and Campbell, 1984).

This demand of modelling has incisively been pointed out by Harris (1987: 1) by saying that 'The integration of professionals within a school system is a prerequisite to the successful integration of students. We cannot ask our students to do those things which we as professionals are unwilling to do'.

An exemplary role model teacher using cooperative learning techniques: Ms. Penrose's case

Ms. Penrose is a White² urban inner-city middle school teacher in the United States. Her class of 30 teenagers included a cultural, ethnic/racial, linguistic, and religious mix of African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asians (Cambodian, Vietnamese, East-Indian, and Malaysian). Language and ethnic/racial differences were noticeable among the students, but there were also academic differences that were not so evident. Although many of her students were classified as needing remediation, Ms. Penrose had arranged with the school administrators that none of her students would be removed for special classes. A majority of the students were of low socioeconomic status and many came from families that had been described as dysfunctional. The school itself was located in a neighbourhood with violence and drug dealing problems.

Ms. Penrose, had ten years of experience teaching adolescents. She had tested CL five years earlier and became 'hooked on it'. Ms. Penrose was known within the school for her adoption of the Johnson and Johnson model of CL (Johnson, Johnson and Holubec, 1990), and her teaching was distinguished by much enthusiasm and strength as she herself demonstrated a disposition of care and interest for her students. Indeed, her challenge was not only to motivate the students academically, but also to support them to learn to tackle diversity and

racism, as well as to establish and maintain their 'chain of friendship', the fitting metaphor used by one of her students, Mouny Nguyen (see Williams, 1993).

The writers venture that the reader would agree that Ms. Penrose, in her academically and culturally diverse classroom, was certainly a role model and an inspiration for others. She utilised the subject of CL itself as an assignment in her language arts classes. Following teaching the students how to write cogent essays, she invited them to write an essay on: (1) *how* they experienced CL and, (2) *why* they experienced it as they did. The various benefits of CL named by students in Ms. Penrose's class, associated to both academic tasks and social interaction, can be classified as follows:

a) *Opportunities to experience different approaches to learning and a variety of answers:* CL come into view by many students as supplying chances for them to learn in 'many different ways'. One student wrote: 'In groups we can have more than one answer or opinion on questions; when we don't understand the teacher, and a peer explains in different words, it helps a lot'. Other students stated their feelings as follows: 'We learn new things from other student's ideas', and 'Kids in my group might have different opinions than others. Some might agree and some might disagree; but they can tell *why* to help others understand'.

b) *Peer/Social interaction and sharing:* One could deduce that a majority of essays rotated around the opportunity for peer interaction, which is fundamental for adolescents. Some of the assertions favourable to CL were:

'You get to talk to kids; there's a lot of eye contact, which shows that students really care...'

'I am for group work because kids can help each other gain confidence in themselves. Other students help praise one another, also helping each other when it's needed and don't put each other down as much. So I really think group work is very important.'

Those that liked CL felt that they could share ideas in groups; that they sometimes learned to 'compromise' in the process if someone else was more convincing; and that big projects got done best when tasks were discussed and problems were solved together.

c) *More fun during learning:* A number of students discovered in CL the opportunity to talk with peers and put their heads to work simultaneously to resolve problems to be 'more fun' than traditional classroom activities.

d) *Free ride, goofing off, time-on-task concerns:* These problems were mentioned more often by those students who disliked CL, as well as by those who liked it but with reservations. Some kids 'just goof off' – talk, disrupt the group

process, or do not contribute anything, yet still enjoy their benefits of the group. 'Free ride' was an issue across performance levels, not just for the high-achieving students. Those who favoured to work by themselves expressed disagreement:

'I don't enjoy working in groups because I don't get as much done as when I work by myself. Some students start to play and talk and we don't get it [the work] done.'

e) *Quality of work*: Many students mentioned that they liked CL because the work was finished not only faster, but also, better, because of the benefit of debates with other group members. 'I have the benefit of four brains, instead of only one, when I work in groups', was a characteristic reply.

f) *Future benefits/disadvantages*: The benefits/advantages debated were the following: 'There are hardly any jobs in the world where you work alone; and working in groups make kids grow to like working and helps them develop a positive attitude and outlook on group work'. Although, 'we can get better grades', was another benefit/advantage proclaimed by most students, a few supposed that their grades were influenced negatively by CL. Amid other disadvantages was the sensation that the usage of CL at the middle school level did not make adolescents ready for high school or college. This critique mirrored a semblance of high school and college atmosphere in which competition is the agreeable model. In like manner, one student wrote:

'I enjoy working in both groups and alone. I think we should keep working in groups because that would help the children get used to working with other children. Children need to feel good working with other children, they need to feel like they can trust other children. [But] it would be healthy also to let children work alone... [since they] need to know how to depend on themselves also. They need to have a chance to make it happen on their own.'

Let us now consider the results of Ms. Penrose's CL techniques, by listening to the voices of two of her students, who, after an academic year with her, manifested not only understanding but also approval of cultural diversity:

'Diversity means how you are different from one another. Well, everybody is different in some ways. My grandmother always used to tell me, no one's ugly. She's always telling, God did not make nobody ugly. 'Cuz what's in you is not someone else and that's your unique. And now, Ms. Penrose made me realised that cooperative learning teaches you to see strength [in that] which is unique in each one of us.'

Temekia Johnson, African American

'Students stereotype one another. People I thought were different – with different skin color and not like me, wearing certain kinds of clothing, talking on a different way or sometimes different language, I didn't know how to approach. But now, a year later, those same students are my friends. Working in group and learning to cooperate helped me to understand that I had stereotyped those same students who are my friends now. You kinda have to know how to approach others, learn to deal with differences, instead of making fun of them.'

John Parker, Caucasian

(See Williams 1993).

The misuse of cooperative learning

Pieter Batelaan (1992: 9-10) discusses some educators' misuse of CL, by pointing out that:

'In most of the works of specialists in cooperative learning such as Slavin and Johnson and Johnson there is no explicit reference to the consequences of diversity within the classroom. Both aim at better results for those who are the low achievers in the traditional teaching-learning situation, but in their work there is no attention for the essence of inequality which exists within the classroom as a result of differences in societal, academic and peer status.'

Batelaan, however, recognises Cohen's work as it is '...so important for multicultural or intercultural education, because it deals explicitly with inequality on a classroom level' (*ibid.*: 10). In fact, Elizabeth G. Cohen (1986: 13), had stated that 'If status characteristics are allowed to operate unchecked in the classroom, the interaction of children will only reinforce the prejudices they entered school with' (see also her works of 1990 and 1994).

Some years later, Slavin (1995b) claimed that, at least in theory, CL methods fulfil Allport's *contact theory* (1954: 629) for its worthy effects on desegregation on race relations, that is to say: 'cooperation across racial lines, equal-status roles for students of different races, contact across racial lines that permits students to learn about one another as individuals and communication of unequivocal teacher support for interracial contact'. In, maybe, an attempt for additional elucidation, Slavin (*ibid.*: 629) has also argued that:

'The cooperative-learning methods are designed to be true changes in classroom organisation, not time-limited 'treatments.' They provide daily opportunities for intense interpersonal contact among students of different

racés. When the teacher assigns students of different races or ethnicities to work together, this communicates unequivocal support on the teacher's part for the idea that interracial or interethnic interaction is officially sanctioned. Even though race or race relations *per se* need not be mentioned (and rarely are) in the course of cooperative-learning experiences, it is difficult for a student to believe the teacher supports racial separation when the teacher has assigned the class to multiethnic teams.'

Slavin postulates that the results of the studies which relate cooperative learning and intergroup relations certainly show that if students work in ethnically mixed CL groups, they increase cross-ethnic friendships. However, he also recognises that supplementary research is required, particularly outside school. Additionally, long-term follow-up data are needed to determine how long the effects of cooperative learning last. Despite the fact that some studies have already been conducted (see Oishi, 1983; Oishi, Slavin and Madden, 1983; Ziegler, 1981) 'much more work is needed to discover the critical components of cooperative learning and to inform a model of how these methods affect intergroup relations' (Slavin, 1995b: 633).

Cooperative learning and intercultural education in Spain

Despite the abundance of research into intercultural or multicultural education in Spain (being a country particularly characterised by its territorial and linguistic diversity),³ very little research has been undertaken regarding the empirical potential of CL techniques in culturally and ethnically diverse contexts (both in and out of schools).

There is still a noticeable lack of attention paid to the possible beneficial effects of CL on academic achievement in areas with a growing immigrant population⁴ – without forgetting the Roma (or Gypsy) population, present in Spain since 1425 (see Díaz-Aguado 1996; Liégeois 1987).

Until 1990, with the New Education Reform Act (called *Ley Orgánica de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo* or LOGSE), one could say that no legal academic documents existed which made a connection between ethnic and cultural diversity and its influence on schools' educational goals. Since the introduction of the LOGSE, collaborative strategies in the teaching-learning process have begun to be taken into account. The Reform promotes an innovative collaborative philosophy among teachers, with the introduction of cross-curricular teaching. This means that areas such as education for peace, education for development, education for human rights, or intercultural

education, all have as a common denominator an interdisciplinary and global focus.

Bearing this in mind, it is not surprising that new theoretical models have emerged in the pedagogical approach to ethnic and cultural diversity in the Spanish society. Mainly since 1990 a number of educators have adopted teaching methods based on the paradigm of CL (Ortega *et al.*, 1996; Ovejero, 1990; Santos-Rego, 1990, 1991, 1994). Our work and collaboration at the Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, USA) with professor Robert E. Slavin, along with other members of his team, has been a significant stimulus for us in the field of CL.

Finally, certain empirical research programmes deserve to be mentioned, since they relate cooperative learning with ethnic and cultural diversity. In this sense, we would like to highlight two significant lines of investigation.

It is important in this context to refer to the research undertaken at the University of Madrid (Complutense) by Díaz-Aguado and her team (see Díaz-Aguado, 1996, 1997). Briefly, this research was based on the construction and adaptation of different useful instruments for CL, devised for fundamental, but not exclusive, application in ethnic and culturally heterogeneous school contexts (in primary and secondary education). Some of the most relevant conclusions are:

- The need to educate the whole population, organising specific activities related to the prevention of racism and intolerance.
- The importance of collaboration as an educational objective in heterogeneous contexts.
- The positive correlation between the use of CL techniques and the students' academic achievement.
- The important value of CL as a strategy which reduces prejudice, as well as helping students' moral development.

It is also important to mention the research undertaken at the University of Valencia by Sales-Ciges and García-López (1997, 1998). These scholars have adopted a line of research and pedagogical intervention using CL techniques, and they are inspired by the work undertaken by Escámez-Sánchez and Ortega-Ruiz (1988). Their research has, as its main objective, the development of intervention and attitude changing programmes in teachers and in the teaching-learning process in multicultural contexts. Based on the Fishbein and Ajzen's Reasoned Action Approach, it aims to improve the attitudes of teachers and educators towards the differences and similarities that all their students bring to class in an ever increasing multicultural and multiethnic Spanish society.

Conclusions

It has been argued that cooperative group learning models are the most carefully researched educational approaches for promoting heterogeneous student grouping (Johnson and Johnson, 1987a; Slavin, 1984, 1987a, 1989a, 1989b). These models are reaching greater notoriety and recognition as school staff admit the requirement to cultivate students' social and interpersonal ability development, and to modernise mixed school communities which ought to reflect and equip students for the 'real world' of the 21st century 'an ever-changing global community in which diversity (e.g., cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic, economic, and ability) will be the norm' (Villa and Thousand 1993: 57). Furthermore, CL techniques, as they help students to increase their academic achievement and to develop better attitudes around the dissimilar, have been categorised as both 'equity pedagogy' and 'prejudice reduction strategies' (Aronson and Bridgeman, 1979; Slavin, 1985).

We shall sum up by reiterating four thoughts that we envision as essential in current and future developments of CL, both for mainstream and diverse teaching environments:

1) CL has known positive effects for students and teachers, both in mainstream and heterogeneous classes (see, among others, Abraham and Campbell, 1984; Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1988; Johnson, 1990; Johnson *et al.*, 1981; Kagan, 1986, Levine and Trachman, 1988; Ovejero, 1990; Sharon, 1980; Slavin, 1983, 1989a, 1995b):

- motivates students,
- increases academic performance,
- encourages active learning,
- helps students to assume academic responsibilities,
- raises respect for diversity and heterogeneity,
- promotes literacy and language skills,
- prepares students for today's society,
- contributes to education for democracy,
- improves teacher effectiveness.

2) It seems that educators tend to agree that in today's heterogeneous classrooms and schools, the goals of public education are most likely to be attained by teaching children to work and to learn together (for an interesting reflection on Freinet ideas and how he relates learning and work, see Clandfield and Sivell, 1990), that is, by adopting CL techniques in classrooms and encouraging the cooperation and teaming of teachers, parents and others (Johnson and Johnson, 1989; Slavin, 1995a).

3) It is important to keep in mind that there is a huge difference between simply putting students into groups and actually teaching them to care about one another's learning. The first has to do with seating arrangements, the second with real interaction. (...) There are five basic elements that must be functioning adequately in order to foster a cooperative relationship: *positive independence, individual accountability, small-group skills, face-to-face interaction, and analysis of results*. In order for teachers to successfully structure cooperative learning groups among students they must devote themselves to a serious study of what cooperation is and of what strategies are most effective for making it work. Johnson and Johnson (1993; xiii) presume that it takes about 2 years of practice (2 or 3 years, in the opinion of Putnam, 1993) to harmonise cooperative teaching and learning procedures into one's repertoire in order to transform them to be natural and serviceable.

4) As we have seen through the literature, the process of accomplishing and implementing CL, both in mainstream and diverse classrooms, requires variation (sometimes it is necessary to make a total change) in the way teachers prepare and conduct their classrooms. The transition from conventional whole-class schooling to a cooperative model is not precisely easy; however, it can be seen as an excellent investment in the future of a diverse culture of students and teachers. Therefore, appropriate changes and modifications in teaching techniques are paramount.

We would like to end these reflections with a quotation by JoAnne W. Putnam (1993: 12), as she best captures the writers' belief regarding CL, by stating:

'Cooperative learning, to be used most effectively, should be applied to all levels of the educational ecosystem; including cooperative groups of learners, cooperation and teaming among teachers, and cooperation with families and the broader community. (...) There are other useful highly compatible forms of instruction. Cooperative learning should not be seen as a panacea for solving all the problems of our schools, but it is a sound technique for structuring a responsive education community.'

As we approach the 21st century, and move towards an increasingly diverse society, the challenges for teaching with appropriate methodologies that address this diversity also increase. CL is called to be one of the methodologies for the diversity of the years to come, in which collaborative dialogue should be seen as a first step for addressing the challenges and satisfaction of teaching and learning within that diversity. In like manner, the process of collaborative dialogue is a widespread triumph in itself.

Notes

¹ However, in Europe, French Pedagogue Célestin Freinet (1896-1966) spent his whole life teaching in small rural elementary schools in the south of France. Freinet pioneered an international movement for radical educational reform through cooperative learning. Freinet's 'Modern School Movement' has provided the network through which a broad community of teachers have come to know his remarkable variety of innovative classroom techniques, derived first and foremost from his own work as a teacher in the 1920s and 1930s. Much of his pedagogy seems every bit as fresh and relevant today as it was in his own time: the importance of creative and useful work for children's learning and close observation of how they do it; a direct appreciation for the natural world; a commitment to developing appropriate technologies for the how they learn; and strong emphasis on linking school and community with the wider issues of social justice and political action (see, e.g., Clandfield and Sivell, 1990).

² James A. Banks (likewise Sonia Nieto and others) prefer writing the word 'white' with capital letters (as well as Black, Latino, etc.). The writers will observe this pattern in the paper. However, we will use small letters when done so by other scholars.

³ Spain has 17 autonomous regions (or Autonomous Communities). Each of them is ruled by Statutory Law and has its own Parliament and Government. Among these autonomous regions are Galicia, Catalonia (or Catalunya), and the so-called Basque Country (or Euskadi), and each has a special treatment in law. Therefore, the co-official languages with Spanish (or Castillian) are: Galician (Galego), Catalan (Catalá), and Basque (Euskera), respectively. These co-official languages are taught as first languages in Galician, Catalan and Basque schools.

⁴ Gonzalo and Villanueva (1996) estimated the number of foreigners living in Spain to be 800,000 (about 2% of the total population); half from the Developing World (especially from African countries, mainly Morocco), and half from European countries or North America, mainly retired people living in the south and south east coasts of Spain. Official statistics from December 1996 confirm this estimate. The writers believe that in December 1998 around 1,000,000 foreigners will be living in Spain, including those who enter Spain 'illegally' or 'irregularly' too (about 2,5% of the total population).

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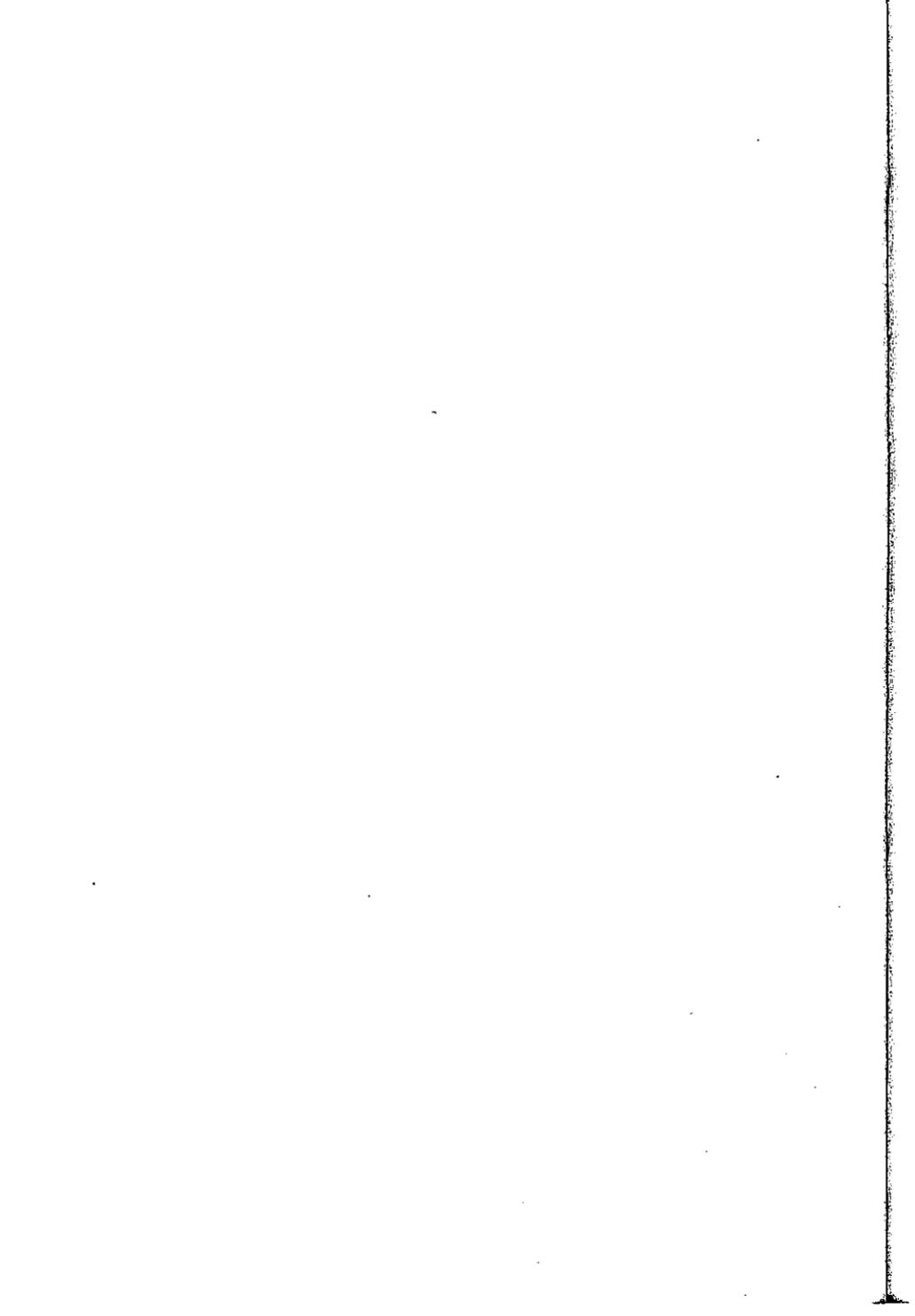
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TEACHERS AND THEIR COLLECTIVE MISSION

DEVORAH KALEKIN-FISHMAN

Abstract – *This paper reports on research carried out in 1994, when teachers had to deal with the Ministry-defined theme of 'Israel in an era of peace'. Participants included 83 teachers employed in state schools – 31 men and 46 women; 48 (Jews) in schools where Hebrew is the language of instruction and 35 (Palestinians) from state schools in which Arabic is the language of instruction. In teachers' responses to queries on historical events there are indications of how teachers relate to the reality created outside of school. In all the interviews teachers present themselves as people who avoid confrontation, with a keen awareness that there are right and wrong ways to deflect clashes. In general, interpretations by Jewish teachers do not combine easily with a policy of educating students for peace. For many of them, reality means serving the goals of a state which cannot avoid conflict, and negating this definition threatens the perception of what constitutes adequate professional performance. Teachers in Arabic-speaking schools, on the other hand, while adopting a similar outlook on professional action viewed the changes in state policy as the promise of comprehensive academic achievement and of overall progress for education in the Arabic-speaking sector.*

Introduction

This paper explores teachers' approaches to collective events under conditions of radical change in the biography of the State of Israel. As key figures in the praxis of schooling, teachers are incumbents of a fairly consensual role. They are responsible for a cluster of tasks devised to ensure the maintenance of agreed upon elements in patterned culture (Kalekin-Fishman, 1996). These elements are incorporated in subjects of study. No matter what the field of pedagogy with which they are associated, however, all teachers employed in an educational system are deputised to transmit norms through modeling and discourse. Like their emphases on aspects of knowledge, teachers' choices of terminology and turns of phrase converge to describe their perceptions of the collective, their presentations of self and surroundings, and acceptable social reality. Similarly, they prescribe the configuration of the collective and of the parts individuals play in its formation. Thus, teachers' articulation of professional action is a key to understanding controlling elements in the establishment and transmission of a discursive tradition, which cloaks the hegemonic ideology. When the discourse of hegemony

undergoes a radical change, as was the case in Israel from 1992-1996, there is an opportunity to assess teachers' responsiveness to revised social conditions.

This study was initiated when there was a blatant discontinuity in the recent history of the State of Israel. For most of the 50 years of its existence as a state, the banner of Israel's relations with the world has been one of conflict and hostility. The accompanying ideology was a conceptualisation of the need for Israel to struggle for survival against all odds. Substantiation of this conviction is seen in the widespread idea that the United Nations supported a Jewish state not least because of world-wide remorse at the outcomes of the Holocaust, the systematic murder of six million Jews carried out by Nazi Germany during the Second World War. But UN recognition of Israel's right to exist in November, 1947, led to the first of the Israeli wars in 1948. And Israel has been involved in at least nine wars since then (Morris, 1990). The experience of war and the consciousness of struggle have necessarily had a significant impact on the way Israelis learn to think of themselves, their work, and their social location.

The Madrid Conference in 1991 marked a turning point. The practical significance of the agreements reached during the 90s with Jordan and with the Palestinians signalled an about-face in Israel's relationships with countries in the region and with states in other regions of the world. They signalled new accomplishments in mobilising investments and markets, as well as a different basis for politics (*Ha'Aretz*, 1996). In psychological terms, what was called for was a thorough revision of the collective identity. This is a challenge to education. In view of the far-reaching implications of the issue, the mechanisms bear detailed examination. In the following I will relate the topic at hand to a general view of the task of education. I will then outline historical developments and changes in the educational mission over time, and present results of research done in a setting of teacher education.

Collective consciousness and traditions of discourse

In a democracy, where the citizenry is entitled not only to make its sentiments known but also to disclose those sentiments in partisan action, there is good reason to postulate that a re-formation of foreign policy will only prove viable if it can be translated into a shared consciousness and ideology (Durkheim, 1964). The question of how people view changes and how they project collective affairs in light of their perceptions can be assessed roughly through public opinion surveys. It is important, however, to explore what responses are likely to imply for action. Collective consciousness is disclosed in the shaping of the 'national discursive tradition,' a complex of terminology and phraseology in variable

(re)combinations, which are incorporated in diverse realms of community concerns. In the course of history, social processes impact the discourse and effect changes to accord with evolving situations (Easthope, 1996). At any given time, the 'national discursive tradition' is on display, therefore, in all the media of communication; it is demonstrated through their interplay in all strata of society. Quite simply, daily usage serves as a practical test of affiliation. To belong is to know how to make efficient use of the collective discourse in writing and in face to face contact.

Conveying knowledge of discursive functions is the task of schools. On the one hand, schools are likely to be rather lumbering bureaucratic organisations which hinder change. On the other, schools accomplish their offices through the kaleidoscope of flexible interaction between teachers and pupils where teachers' communications are a dominant factor. Teachers' representations of salient events are covert elements of the curriculum embedded as they are in a fabric of objectivity – languaging. It is, therefore, through teacher talk that the impact of collective events on education can be assessed.

The general question that we confront is that of how teachers wield discourse and convey factors of the collective consciousness. Specifically, we are interested in examining how, through their understanding of their professional obligations, teachers in the state system of education confront a demand to revise education for citizenship. The focus will be on teachers' responses to questions about historical events and about the extent to which dealing with current events can be attuned to basics of teaching. These responses have to be assessed in light of the educational tradition which serves as a backdrop to what goes on in classrooms. In the next section, I will present a brief sketch of how the Israeli school system has evolved.

Evolution of the school system in Israel¹

Pre-state educational systems

Schools in pre-state Palestine belonged to a multiplicity of systems each with a distinct charge. For a long time, most of the schools were run by religious institutions (Christian, Moslem, Jewish) and provided an education for clerical callings, or minimally, for carrying out the obligations of the devout. Under Ottoman rule, foreign consulates were allowed to establish educational institutions to serve their own nationals, and schools under the auspices of the United States, Germany, or France, prepared students for studies in universities of the 'home' countries. Government schooling (pre-World War I, Turkish;

post-World War I, British) was designed to prepare students for civil service careers. In addition, the World Zionist Movement instituted schools in which Hebrew was the language of instruction as part of its program to educate citizens for the future Jewish state. In these schools, Hebrew, the language of the holy texts, was adopted as the language of instruction. Different educational streams were sponsored by political parties and each stream employed teachers who professed a suitable political orientation.² Since stipends were available, most of the Jewish children did indeed get at least a basic education; while secondary education was readily available only to a select few.

All schooling was a luxury for most of the Arab population in Palestine. Boys in the villages were often recruited for help on the farms. Girls were regularly kept at home to help their mothers, learning how to run a household and how to raise a family. In urban areas, however, boys were sent to school in significant numbers; and among wealthy families, children were assured an education of high standard, with many sent abroad for tertiary education and professional training.

State systematisation of education

After its foundation in 1948, the State of Israel took charge of education for all Israeli children, Jewish and Arab.³ Legislation was enacted in 1949 (Law for Compulsory Education) and in 1953 (Law for State Education) to institute free education for all and to set up a centralised educational system. The network encompasses the secular State-System and the State-Religious System. Apart from the State system there are private schools with explicit religious commitments in both the Hebrew-speaking and the Arabic-speaking sectors. Today, with compulsory education in place from kindergarten until the ninth grade (ages 5- 15), almost 100% of the Jewish children and about 96% of the non-Jewish (Moslem, Christian, and Druse) children attend primary schools; while between 60% and 85% of the pupils go on to institutions of secondary education (Israel, 1996). Success in statewide matriculation examinations is a condition for admittance to institutions of tertiary education, so that examinations formulated for the state system actually impose standards on private schools as well.

Teaching is systematised centrally as well. Throughout the country, teachers are required to have achieved certification at recognised institutions. Courses of study in teachers colleges and in the universities are all structured similarly. Once employed, teachers who work in schools sponsored by the state have considerable job security. But the price is constant contact with the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport, whose policy is inevitably that of the reigning government. Thus, centralisation is a mechanism which ensures that political developments and

economic ideologies are transmuted into educational directives which require 'administrative adjustments' and/or the 'revision' of pedagogy.

The Ministry of Education funds, organises, and sanctions different forms of in-service teacher training. A monthly newsletter distributed by the Director-General updates teachers on acceptable practice. Teachers are instructed in regard to the curriculum/a of the subjects of study which concern them. They are also provided with information about the techniques of teaching which are currently acceptable as well as about the realm of extra-curricular activities. A subdivision of the Ministry is responsible for writing curricula, providing suitable textbooks, and approving materials prepared by independent authors. The 'Hour of the Educator' or the 'Hour for Social Issues' is a standard space allocated in the school schedule for dealing with focal issues. Every year, the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport, promulgates an educational theme which is inserted into the school programme daily throughout the school year. Materials are furnished to help the school staffs decide on how to present the theme and its variants to the pupils.

It is clear, then, that teaching in Israel is a profession closely allied with the regime. Teachers are messengers of the state and responsible for carrying out a determinate mission. That mission has been redefined at various points of time in the course of the last half century.

Shifting definitions of the mission of education

In the law which instituted the state system of education, Paragraph 2 presents the overall aim of the system,⁴ with an emphasis on knowledge of science and Jewish [sic!] culture, on the merit of work, and on recognising the importance of universalistic social values such as equality and tolerance. It is asserted as well that schools must cultivate love of country and loyalty to the state.

The strategies for ensuring the accomplishment of the above aims have shifted over time. There have been changes in the contents of courses, the ranking of subjects, and the organisation of schools and classes.

Between 1948 and 1977 the educational mission was formulated by a series of governments committed to socialism and the ideological stand was that of promoting egalitarianism in education. Successive ministers of education defended the centralised system claiming that direction from the center was necessary to ensure equal opportunities for pupils from every milieu to attain high academic achievements. At the same time the project of nation-building was interpreted as obliging the promotion of nationalism grounded in religious traditions, which would provide the 'glue' necessary in a society comprised of groups of diverse geographic and ethnic origins.

There were inevitable tensions which undermined the proclamations. The Law of State Education (1953) which installed the liberal stream of Jewish education as the official system and provided for a State-Religious system, actually eliminated the socialist educational system altogether (Lamm, 1973). With the mass immigration of the early 50s, successive waves of immigrants took their place on the bottom rung of the economic ladder, effectively institutionalising a hierarchy of class (Bernstein and Swirski, 1980). Not surprisingly, despite the insistence on a totally centralised organisation of educational institutions, gaps widened constantly between schools in well-established middle class communities and schools in communities where immigrants were in the majority (Swirski, 1981). These relatively covert processes were translated into increased attention to 'excellence' and 'individualised instruction' - euphemisms for schools differentiated according to the standards of achievement, and, consequently, according to the career openings to which their graduates would have access. Under the right wing governments which have ruled the country since 1977 the institutionalisation of conservative exclusionist pedagogies has been facilitated (Swirski, 1990).

Education for values

What was not open to change until the '90s were the rallying principles, 'love of country,' 'tolerance,' 'love for human beings,' cited in the Law for State Education (see Note 4). Taken for granted as universalistic values, the ideology was not subjected to close examination. In practice, the unquestioned meanings were shaped in an institution which is not under the direct authority of the Ministry of Education, the armed services. By law, military service follows immediately upon secondary education for most students. Compulsory army service organised according to cohorts, for Jewish men and women and for Druse men (although not for Druse women, or for Moslems and Christians, except in special instances), has repeatedly been hailed as a springboard for developing love of one's fellows, and has circumscribed the meaning of tolerance. 'Love of country' has consistently been operationalised as useful service in the armed forces, and thus has often entailed useful participation in combat. Thus, the obligation of army service effectively defines social locations, and legitimates the apportioning of civil rights. In their function as educators, therefore, teachers in state schools have consistently been involved in explicating connections between the educational system and the values conveyed by the armed forces, values based on the perceived threats of war.

Following the Oslo Accord, the strategy for moral education formulated by the Ministry of Education for the school year of 1994-1995 instructed teachers to

underplay connections between schooling and the military. To promote awareness of the possibility of peaceful relations with the neighboring states, the Ministry of Education obliged all the state schools to deal with the general theme of 'Israel in an Era of Peace.' In November, 1994, the publications department of the Ministry distributed a 92 page pamphlet on 'The Peace Process in the Near East [Overview]' (Ofaz, 1994). This pamphlet covered material on the Madrid Conference of October, 1991, and surveyed the meetings that had taken place since then between Israel and the Palestinians, Israel and Jordan, as well as meetings of Israelis with representatives of Syria and Lebanon. Appendixes include the Peace Treaty signed with Jordan and speeches made when the Treaty was signed. To ensure that teachers would use the material, the Ministry sponsored in-service courses on the topic with both lectures and interactive workshops.

The change of policy placed majority/minority (Jewish-Arab) relations in the country on a new footing. It also influenced the general approach to the educational system as a whole. A committee of Jewish and Arab educators was appointed to revise the official goals of state education so as to specify a pluralistic focus. This signalled a shift in 'traditional' school messages, on the one hand, and a call to revise identities, on the other. The extent of that alteration can be assessed from Ministry publications. The significance of the shift in the minds of the teachers, however, is quite another matter.

It is important to emphasise that in this research we are not looking into the teachers' store of information on the history of the State or into the trustworthiness of their interpretations of collective events. Since the messages of the Ministry to pupils have to be filtered through the discourse generated by teachers, we may assume that what teachers understand and how they express their understandings will be conveyed in classrooms. We contend, moreover, that teachers' reflections on their mission are intimately related to the fashioning of change in the national cognizance. By probing perceptions found among teachers, we can gather tokens of how the 'discursive tradition' operates in the national educational system. The focus of our interest is the relevance of these tokens to positions on war and peace in the teachers' consciousness. The research design is a relatively simple one. From analyses of responses to general questions, we abstracted relevant structures of meaning.

The research

As noted, we are interested in tracing how policies of the Ministry of Education are connected with teachers' conceptions of what they had to do. In this paper, we will present data from the first stage of an on-going research project. In this stage, semi-structured interviews were carried out with teachers currently employed in the school system who serve as tutors of students in pre-service

training. The specific goals were to gauge what kinds of events in the history of the State of Israel were notable in the eyes of educators, to explore teachers' understandings of how current events should be linked with school learning; and to see what is implied by their responses about approaches to professionalism. The research was carried out in 1994, when the Ministry of Education had defined the theme of moral education for the year as 'Israel in an era of peace.'

Research population

The research population consisted of 96 tutors of student teachers -- all of them teachers employed in non-religious schools of the state system of education in both the Arab and the Jewish sector. For technical reasons, 13 protocols were omitted from the analysis. The protocols analysed include those of 83 teachers employed in state schools -- 31 men and 46 women; 48 (Jews) in schools where Hebrew is the language of instruction constituted 58% of the research population; and 35 (Palestinians) from state schools in which Arabic is the language of instruction, constituting 42% of the population. Among the latter, there were 29 Moslems, 4 Druse, and 2 Christians.

Instrument

A semi-structured interview schedule was related to the theme of the year prescribed by the Ministry of Education: 'Israel in an era of peace.' Questions touched on the teachers' perceptions of the biography of the state, and the perceived effects on teaching of the collective events prompted by the obligatory theme:

FIGURE 1: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

The Ministry of Education and Culture has decided that the theme of the year is 'Israel in an era of peace'.

- How is your school dealing with this theme?
- In general, how do you think this topic fits in with a teacher's tasks?
- How does it fit in with the subject you teach?
- Can you point out some specific experiences in this connection?
- Looking back on the history of Israel since 1948, what events do you think are the most important ones? Why (for each event mentioned)?
- What impact did these events have on what happened in the schools?
- Did these events affect the ways of teaching in your subject area?
- Can you point out some specific experiences in this connection?
- Background: gender, age, subject taught, classes taught, education and professional training, marital status.

Procedures

Data were collected by student teachers who interviewed tutors in the schools where they were doing their practice teaching. Interviews were generally conducted in the teachers' lounge or on the school grounds. Teachers' responses were content analysed to elicit the categories prominent in the data, and classified according to background variables. We classified answers according to the number of historical events teachers cited and according to whether or not they provided details and/or explanations for the events cited (*Particularisation*). Emergent categories for the historical events cited were: *events connected with wars, events connected with the peace process, progress and development in the state*. The distribution of responses among the various topics and the avoidance of particularisation in connection with each of the categories was also tracked. Effects of the events on teaching were traced to see whether the teacher perceived the need for modifying the material taught, or considered that current events had to be isolated from the subject matter. We paid special attention to teachers' observations about what constitutes professionalism.

Findings

Background variables

In the analysis of responses to the interviews, we found that the research sample of master teachers was relatively homogeneous. Except for two teachers who had been working in schools for more than 20 years, the range of experience among all the respondents was eight to fifteen years. All the interviewees had completed a course in tertiary education with certification for teaching. A preliminary survey of the data showed that gender was not associated with variation in the responses. Despite the promise of anonymity, many of the respondents did not agree to being identified by the subjects they teach or by the specific tasks they carry out in school for fear of being identified by people in the system who are acquainted with them. The only background variable that could therefore be used in the analysis was the language of instruction in the tutors' schools and we will center the report on similarities and differences revealed in responses of teachers in the Arab and Jewish sectors of the State school system.

First, we will present the numbers of events teachers cited and the thematic distribution of those events. Then we will present an analysis of comments which reveal respondents' understandings of how teaching is implicated in the perceptions of history in the making.

TABLE 1a: Citations of Events according to Language of Instruction

No of events	Hebrew Instruction		Arabic Instruction		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	8	17	7	19	15	18
2-3	27	57	8	22	35	42
4+	12	26	21	59	33	40
	47	57	36	43	(N=83) 100	

TABLE 1b: Particularization of Events according to Language of Instruction

No of events	Hebrew Instruction		Arabic Instruction		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	2	9	5	22	7	15
2-3	11	48	5	22	16	35
4+	10	43	13	56	23	50
	23	50	23	50	46	100

Perceptions of events in the history of the state

Overall 18% of the interviewees cited a single historical event, 42% cited two or three events and 40% cited four or more events. It is interesting, however, to note the differences in the distributions among teachers from each sector. Among teachers in schools where Hebrew is the language of instruction, more than half (57%) mentioned two or three events, but about a quarter mentioned as many as four. Among teachers in schools where Arabic is the language of instruction, 59% cited four events or more.

From Table 1b, we learn that in general, the more events cited, the more interviewees tended to provide details about events mentioned. While only 15%

of those who cited a single event provided details, 35% of those who cited two or three events did so, and 50% of those who cited four or more events provided amplification. Here, too, however, there are meaningful differences between Jews and Palestinians.

First of all; despite the difference in the proportions of Jews and Arabs in the population interviewed, the same number of respondents (n=23) from each sector elaborated on their responses.

Secondly, while only two of the Jewish tutors who cited a single event (9%) provided some explanation, 5 of the Palestinians who cited a single event (22%) did so.

Third, of those who did elaborate, more than half of those from schools where Arabic is the language of instruction enlarged on four events or more, while less than half (43%) of those from schools where Hebrew is the language of instruction enlarged on four events or more.

TABLE 2: *Distribution of Topics by Respondents, Number of Mentions and Generalisations, according to Language of Instruction*

	Hebrew Instruction		Arabic Instruction		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
HOSTILITIES						
Respondents	40	64	22	36	62	75 (83)
Mentions	120	71	48	29	168	56 (301)
Generalisations	19	83	4	17	23	61 (38)
PEACE						
Respondents	38	66	21	35	59	71 (83)
Mentions	61	55	50	45	111	37 (301)
Generalisations	12	80	3	20	15	39 (38)
DEVELOPMENT						
Respondents	10	59	7	41	17	20 (83)
Mentions	15	68	7	32	22	7 (301)
Generalisations	—	—	—	—	—	— (38)

Distribution of references to different types of events

In Table 2, we present the distribution of salient themes among the events cited. For each type of topic, the table shows the number of respondents who referred to that type of event, the number of times the type of event was commented on, and the number of citations which had *no* particulars – the generalisations. All told the protocols disclosed three categories: events connected with hostilities, events connected with peace, and events connected with the development of the State since its foundation in 1948. Of the population of 83 teachers, 75% mentioned wars, 71% mentioned events related to peace, and 20% referred to outstanding internal state developments. Of the three hundred and one comments tabulated, 56% were references to hostilities, 37% references to peace, and 7% cited landmarks in the development of the state of Israel since its founding. Among these, 23 of the 38 generalised statements (61%) referred to hostilities, 15 (39%) referred to peace, and none were made in connection with the country's development. Let us see how the distributions vary according to educational sector.

Hostilities: Hostilities of different kinds – wars, terrorist attacks, individual clashes – were mentioned 168 times in the responses of 62 interviewees. Although the Jewish interviewees constituted 58% of the research sample, those referring to hostilities constituted 64% of the respondents who mentioned clashes. Moreover, since many respondents made more than one comment, the Jews turn out to have made 71% of the total number of comments on hostilities by contrast with the Arab interviewees whose references to hostilities combine into only 29% of the relevant responses. There were substantive differences between the sectors as well. Among those who cited one war, there was complete accord among teachers of the each nationality. The Jews mentioned the Six Day War of 1967. The prevailing explanation was that this was the war which marked the beginning of a lengthy period of prosperity. When, on the other hand, Arab interviewees mentioned a single war, they referred to the Yom Kippur War of 1973. They pointed to the surprise attacks of Syria and Jordan on the Israeli army, and claimed that Arab victories in the Yom Kippur War made the drift toward peace possible. While most of the respondents mentioned a war or wars by name, nineteen Jews and four Arabs used a generalised shorthand. Most of these resorted to recognised terminology, such as, for example, 'the Wars of Israel,' a biblical phrase which connotes the never-ending struggle which is the lot of the Jewish people.

Peace: Fifty-nine of the interviewees alluded to peace in one hundred eleven comments. Most of the respondents made specific reference to events that have taken place within the last fifteen years. There are several mentions of Sadat's visit to Israel, the agreements with Egypt and Jordan, and the Oslo agreement with the Palestinian authority. Where there are citations of a single item, Jews (n=14) cited

the 'peace process' in general. The four single-item responses by Arabs referred specifically to the peace accord with Jordan which was termed the most important event in the peace process to date.

Landmarks of the State's Development were characterised in different ways. It is interesting to note that 22 responses alluded specifically to the state's development and progress in the economic, scientific, technological, social, and political spheres as the most significant events in Israeli history. Two people – both Jewish teachers – defined progress in terms of the democratisation of politics. In this connection, they cited the changes in government (1977 – from the Alignment to the Likud; 1992 – back to the Alignment). In a different key, six respondents specified successive waves of immigration and the absorption of Jewish immigrants as the most significant development. Of these, five Jewish teachers lauded the state's success in nationalist projects ideologised as the *in-gathering of the exiles, national unification, nation-building*. The Arab teacher who mentioned this topic indicated the mass immigration from the former Soviet Union during the 1990's specifically, and complained that the immigrants 'come and take all the jobs.' As a rule, detailed knowledge about political and economic trends was evident in responses of the Arab teachers who tended to elaborate a critique of political, social, and economic reality.

Effects on teaching

In exploring the connections between the theme of peace and different aspects of teaching, we looked at whether or not the theme could find a place in the schedule – and if so, in what context.

Inserting current events into the schedule: Teachers were not of one mind about how to find room in a busy schedule for dealing with current events. Almost universally, the interviewees agreed that it was suitable (albeit not always feasible) to devote the 'Hour of the Educator' (see above) to discussions of current events, and, among them, to the peace accords. When there was a 'drastic' event – such as a terrorist attack, all the Jewish teachers asserted that they had to allow children time to express their feelings and their fears even in lessons assigned to subject matter. Arab teachers, on the other hand, expressed reservations about allowing a free exploration of feelings with excitable adolescents.

Integration of current events with subject matter: Among the interviewees who did permit the interviewers to mention their subject matter, there were teachers of English, Arabic, and Hebrew language and literature, as well as

teachers of history and civics, art and mathematics. From responses of teachers who disclosed the subjects they teach, we found no significant differences in the ways in which the insertion of talk about peace (or war) into lessons on subject matter are viewed. Moreover, in these matters, there was agreement across the two sectors.

Teachers of mathematics were unanimous in asserting that the theme of peace had no effect whatsoever on the 'material'; although they acknowledged that there might be 'some effect' in the future. This 'separatist' approach prevailed as well among teachers of subjects in the humanities. Five teachers of history insisted that the subject matter had to be kept separate from current events. As one put it, 'There is material to be taught and discussions of politics have no place in the history class!' Three teachers of history, on the other hand, agreed that since there might be parallels between past and current events, the teacher 'could' point them out in class. Similar differences of opinion were found among teachers of language and literature. While one teacher of English said that she conducted discussions on current events in class as practice in conversation, another insisted that the syllabus was prescribed, and there was no room for 'improvisations.' Teachers of Hebrew literature responded in a similar way, maintaining that the material to be learned was extensive and the teacher had no leeway for introducing topics outside the syllabus. Only one of the literature teachers said that she regularly pointed out connections between the stories she read with her pupils and events that were at the center of popular interest.

Interpretations of the professional approach

Teacher respondents rationalised their pedagogic decisions by appealing to what they characterised as a 'professional approach'. It is important to underline similarities. The guiding principle in responses of the teachers from both sectors was the aspiration to do what is 'right.' In the disclosures of the interviewees, 'doing the right thing' meant not upsetting the school schedule, following the syllabus, keeping order in class, and not allowing themselves to reveal personal inclinations in the classroom. The professional stance of all of the interviewees was that the Ministry might decide on changes in curricula at any time; but since there was a standard syllabus, teachers were obliged to teach the required material even though the theme of moral education is related to political issues. The teachers all affirmed that this kind of caution is part and parcel of pedagogical professionalism. They justified the orientation in terms of the requirements of education, the needs of the school, and of the pupils.

To ensure that their performance would indeed accord with 'the right thing',

all the teachers proclaimed their commitment to neutrality. The teachers from the schools where Hebrew is the language of instruction expressed faith in their ability to take up a non-partisan position; they had full confidence in their own impartial professional behavior. Without exception, the Jewish teachers emphasised that whenever political events are discussed in class, the teacher must remain neutral, and should never express an opinion of her own. They showed little enthusiasm, however, for exploring the implications of the on-going peace process. Some said openly that they were uncertain about how to conduct discussions so as to avoid hostility among groups of children who would bring the biases of their homes into the classroom.

Teachers in schools where Arabic is the language of instruction had a similar view of teaching as a profession. Defining neutrality and disinterest as the cornerstone of professional values, Arab teachers said they 'had to be especially cautious' in steering class discussions. They pointed out that debates were risky because secondary school students in the Arabic-speaking sector were likely to give free rein to 'extremist' reactions which would be an unfair test of teachers' watch to keep themselves safe from partisanship. This was risky in their opinion because of the surveillance customary in the State Schools where Arabic is the language of instruction. To get jobs, teachers in the Arab sector have generally had to have security clearance in addition to certification by an approved institution of teacher training. Interviewees cited validated stories of university graduates who were not able to obtain employment because they had engaged in political activity while they were students. For teachers distressed by these conditions, the changes in the guidelines of the Ministry, i.e., the emphatic directive to discuss 'Israel in an era of peace,' heralded a welcome relief and actual liberation. This was a theme in all the interviews in Arab schools. To the teachers' minds, there was at long last an opportunity to deal with the issues that were important to pupils and to their parents – issues of collective identity and civil rights as well as the duties of citizenship in a democracy.

Various teachers in the Arab sector viewed this new position as likely to have far-reaching effects on the essentials of education. They forecast that now schools would be calmer, more relaxed places. The reduction of limitations on political expression would provide a basis for better relations among teachers on the school staff, and between teachers and pupils. One teacher went so far as to anticipate that there would be fewer altercations among the pupils themselves now that peace was on the public agenda. Another was convinced that because of the improved atmosphere, student achievements would improve. In an instrumental mode, eight teachers said they expected that 'now' (in an era of peace) more resources of the state would be invested in education, and the Arab schools were indeed sadly in need of such a turn of events.

Discussion and conclusions

The teachers who participated in this stage of the research were sampled by 'convenience.' Clearly, the mode of sampling does not enable us to generalise about the entire population of teachers in Israel in 1994. There was, however, substantive justification for this kind of sampling. The interviewees had been chosen by the university in consultation with their school principals as successful and masterful teachers, capable of tutoring students and inducting them into the profession. In their double role as teachers and tutors, they were having an impact on both pupils in schools and on people new to the profession. Moreover, the interviewees, student teachers, had a practical interest in the research. In the wake of class discussions and reading, they were keen to discover how an educator actually-functions in the state school system. when the moral grounds of education are embodied in themes determined by the Ministry of Education and augmented with the monthly notes in the Newsletter of the Director-General. Thus, the responses are important on several grounds. The respondents were experienced teachers, appointed as tutors by the university, and they were sharing their views about a topic of realistic concern. For the (student) interviewees, these answers were part of their learning in the course of the stint of practice teaching. The responses are also valuable as a basis for guidelines in future research in which variance in teachers' perceptions of the history of the state and of the performance of the profession can be elicited. With a large randomised sample, we will probably be able to distinguish profiles of consciousness not only according to the sector of the educational system, but also according to age, gender, subject specialty, and religious orientation.

From the qualitative data presented above, we can draw some interesting conclusions. It seems that teachers in the state school system (both in the schools where Hebrew is the language of instruction and in those in which Arabic is the language of instruction) perceive hostilities in the history of the state more concretely than they perceive events related to peace. Respondents not only mentioned hostilities more than events that have to do with peace; they also cited them in greater detail. Confirmation of the perception is the special importance assigned to hostilities defined as 'terrorist attacks,' which are unassailably adequate reasons for postponing the teaching of subject matter, and even for allowing an 'Hour of the Educator' to take precedence over 'actual' teaching.

In relating to the effects of current events on teaching, and at the time of the interviews that meant the impact of the peace process, there were interesting parallels as well as distinct differences between the teachers in the Jewish sector and those in the Arab sector. A conspicuous difference between the Jewish-Israeli

teachers and the Palestinian-Israeli teachers is shown in their analysis of what the peace process can contribute to schooling. While for the most part Jewish-Israelis related to the future effects of peace on isolated details of the educational effort, the possibility of peace is translated by Arab teachers into a far-reaching change in atmosphere, in classroom interaction, and even into effects on the instrumental heart of schooling, scholastic achievement.

At this point, we can point out three features which mark the discourse of tutor-teachers in the Arabic-speaking and the Hebrew-speaking sectors. These are the sensitivity to collective events, the conceptualisation of pedagogy, and approaches to professionalism.

Sensitivity to collective events: Responses of the research population of teachers to the query on outstanding events in the history of the state disclosed sensitivity to different kinds of episodes (hostilities, peace accords, internal developments). Responses were differentiated in their manifestations of partisanship or criticism of political action in the context of these events.

Conceptualisation of pedagogy: Teachers demonstrated various levels of flexibility in the interpretation of 'subject matter' and the potential of the syllabus for 'fixating' the tasks of teaching. There are also differences among teachers as to the necessity or the possibility of meshing knowledge and moral education.

Approaches to professionalism: Teachers differed only slightly in their understanding of the degree to which orderliness, efficiency, and neutrality define teaching as a professional position. This relative unanimity is evidence of how firmly their approach to the profession is aligned with the hegemonic ideological discourse.

By bracketing a set of attitudes and defining them as professional qualifications, teachers manage to meet the demands of the regime for legitimating political moves and at the same time, performing their mission in terms that mark a continuation of the accepted discursive tradition. Adaptation is signaled by verbal formulations, but also by non-verbal, positional and discursive maneuvers which are the mainsprings of institutionalised power (Bernstein, 1971-1975; Bourdieu, 1993; Lyotard, 1991). Self-legitimation for this line is a working theory of what constitutes good pedagogy, on the one hand, and felt personal convictions about what constitutes a satisfactory performance of the job of teaching, on the other. Thus, for example, teachers all exercise self-censorship willingly in order to ensure the operation of what they define as a central pedagogical value, 'neutrality.' Interviewees presented themselves, furthermore, as people who avoid confrontation, with a keen awareness that there are right and wrong ways to deflect clashes.

In sum, interpretations of the state's biography (and of their own insertion into that biography) by Jewish teachers confirm the difficulty of effecting a political about-face through mechanisms of centralisation. For many of the teachers, reality means serving the goals of a state sunk in conflict. A negation of this definition is not a mere shift in vocabulary; it endangers the teachers' perception that they have been carrying out their professional mission in the 'right' way – the cornerstone of pedagogical performance. Even teachers in the Arab sector of the state educational system, who revel in the promised change, resort to an articulation of traditional organisational values – orderliness, collegiality, and achievement – in order to justify it.

There is good reason to hypothesise that the massive mooring of war in the discourse inserted into the school system via the teachers' interpretations of how good pedagogy must govern their performances, is a force for undermining the acceptability of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The political demand for a discourse of peace channeled by the Ministry of Education in 1994-1995 was an attempt at discontinuity and at imposing a fluidity which had to overcome the coherent form of life teachers had constructed as agents in the schools.

The psychological mechanisms are well-known. The national discursive tradition embedded in the operation of the educational system contributes to the formation and re-formation of a consciousness in which the construal of risks and the construction of talk and action to ensure their coming into being are perpetuated. The election of a right-wing government in May, 1996, would seem to have constituted a decisive 'no' to the summons to change. Although the consecration of hostilities is not celebrated, hostilities are accepted as inevitable by many of the interviewees. In the words of Bateson (1990), 'We hold on to the continuity we have, however profoundly it is flawed. If change were less frightening, if the risks did not seem so great, far more could be lived.'

There is a painful irony in this perception when we note how difficult it is for a post-socialist and increasingly capitalist society such as Israel, to confront peace, optimistically and productively.

Notes

¹ The material presented in the following section relies on historical accounts in Bentwich, 1965; Israel, 1996; Kleinberger, 1969; Nardi, 1945; Tibawi, 1956; and Zucker, 1985.

² These included the schools of the liberal General Zionist Party (founded in 1913), schools of the religious-nationalist Mizrahi Party (founded in 1920), and schools affiliated with the General Union of Workers – the socialist stream (founded in the years, 1923-1925).

³ Setting up a state system of education in the Arabic-speaking sector was an especially difficult undertaking because during the war of 1948, Arab intellectuals and teachers had left the country or been banished.

⁴ *Law for State Education*, Paragraph 2: 'The goal of State Education is to base education in the State of Israel on the values of Jewish culture and the achievements of science, on love of the homeland and loyalty to the state and to the people of Israel, on training in agricultural work and in crafts, on training for pioneering, and on the aspiration toward a society built on freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual aid, and love for one's fellows' (Book of Laws, 23/6/53, p. 242 -- my translation, D. K.-F.). In the speech of the then Minister of Education and historian (B.Z. Dinur) who brought the 1953 law to the floor of the Knesseth (Parliament), there was a great emphasis on the 'gathering in of the (Jewish) exiles,' and on the need to turn a collection of people from different corners of the globe into a single consolidated nation, the means to cultivate solidarity and stability in the new State. He insisted that education is the means for raising the general level of 'civilization,' a euphemism for Europeanising immigrants from the various Arab states (Zucker, 1985).

⁵ In researches, Arab teachers have consistently defined themselves as Arab (in culture), Palestinian (by nationality), citizens of Israel (see Bar and Bargal, 1995; Kalekin-Fishman, 1992; Swirski, 1990).

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RESEARCH REPORT

TEACHERS AS TRAINERS: THE CASE OF TEACHING REPATRIATED ADULTS IN GREECE

ZOI PAPANAOUM

Abstract – This article examines the teaching profession in the context of the learning society where learning is considered as a lifelong process and is supported by various educational provisions. In the first part it is argued that the role of the teacher has to be redefined in order to be aligned with the principles of lifelong learning and encompass the role of adult trainer as well. In the second part, empirical data on the profile and training needs of teachers teaching repatriated adults are presented and discussed in terms of the implications their new role raises regarding their training and certification.

Towards a learning society

In a fast changing world, the learning society is a visible reality, while strategies to support it involve many factors and require re-examination of roles and responsibilities. Today, lifelong education and continuous training appear as the corner stone of economic and social prosperity. Astronomical sums are spent to organise adult education programmes of any kind, while contemporary technology inundates persons with knowledge and information everywhere. The idea that prevailed until the 60s, namely that with the completion of formal education one has enough knowledge and skills for the rest of his/her life, has little purchase today.

The classic ideal of lifelong education was born in ancient times, and was developed at the beginning of our century. The starting-point in lifelong education is the understanding that learning occurs during the life span. A person gets information about the world – natural, historical, artificial – as well as the skills which make participation effective in the environment. One also forms views on oneself and on his/her relationship with the society. Gradually, persons form their self-image and define their relationships with others, and – at the same time – they become familiar with the values and the culture of society. The main idea is the principle that a person should not remain without help during this learning process, but should instead be supported by the development of the necessary

attitudes and skills during the school years, and also by the offer of educational opportunities all over his/her life span.

Today, the ideal of lifelong learning is not only a wish for those who dream of a better and more fair society, but has also become a pressing need. Indeed, the educational policies of several countries recognise this need and international organisations take the initiative to realise lifelong education for all, with the purpose to improve the quality of life of individuals and of social groups as well (OECD 1992, 1996).

The main characteristic of lifelong education is time continuity: lifelong education has a life-time range. The school, then, is no longer the only educational institution, but a part of a complex educational network, that works either next to the other sources of learning, or following educational activities that come after the school years. Everyone lives in an educational continuum, more or less structured, more or less standardised, inside and outside school, before or after school.

Continuous education is expanding today at a quick pace to respond to this pressing need, and includes all those educational opportunities that follow initial education, and which are placed among a wide spectrum of topics, from general education to specific professional training subjects. Regarding its organisation, continuous education includes a number of educational activities, from the more non-formal forms, such as 'self-directed learning' or incidental learning, to the more systematically organised ones.

Therefore continuous education does not appear as a set of new aims for education, but, on the contrary, as an all-embracing conception of educational procedures, a conception which poses the problem of the strategy that has to be followed to achieve these aims.

A critical question is whether it is sufficient to organise some forms of continuous education, so that people are better able to profit from them. Wide discussion and research on the discipline of adult education supports the idea that a person should have some core dispositions and skills to be able to exploit the educational possibilities that are being offered (Cropley and Dave, 1978; Cross, 1981). Firstly one needs to have psychological readiness for – and openness to – learning, one also needs to be disposed to get satisfaction out of knowledge achievement, and to be motivated by an intrinsic drive to learn. A person also needs to have a self-image as a 'lifelong student' with imagination, flexibility and self-confidence in his/her abilities.

But willingness to learn should be supported by the ability to do so. One needs to have the essential general intellectual skills, and the ability to conceive the structure of knowledge, to pose questions and take the steps that lead to answers. 'Knowing to know' is a basic aptitude, a precondition for the development of the

educational potential of the individual. In addition, familiarity with using learning means, such as libraries, files and the means that modern technology provides, is a precondition for profiting from the educational provisions that are available.

Such a broad range of skills, dispositions and aptitudes have to be sown throughout childhood and adolescence. Schools therefore share a large part of the responsibility for people to profit from the educational provisions they are offered throughout their lives. In practice, such a principle leads logically to the need for the re-examination of the educational philosophy that informs schooling, and to the way the latter is organised.

Re-defining the role of the teacher

What, then, is the role of the teacher, given this new situation? Obviously the teacher cannot be held solely responsible for the re-orientation of schooling in line with the needs of a learning society. Teachers, however, have much to contribute. Firstly, they need to adopt the principle of lifelong learning themselves and to adjust their pedagogical action according to the new demands, being supported by the appropriate training. It could be said that lifelong education – as an ideal and as practice – is a challenge to teachers, who have to broaden their views about schooling in the direction of lifelong learning for the benefit both of the students and of their own professional development.

Moreover, beyond this evolution of the teaching profession in the context of the new role that school education plays in a learning society, the development of various forms of continuous education offers teachers new opportunities for professional employment. Traditionally, such fields of employment are literacy programmes and language courses addressed to special groups of adults, such as immigrants, refugees and so on. These programmes are relevant to specific groups of teachers, and their range is limited. A real challenge for the teaching profession is the extending demand in adult and continuing education for trainers who have received training in education.

The question of 'adult educator' as a discrete professional role is often posed in the discussion about the presuppositions and the training adult educators need in order to accomplish their role effectively. One of the primary issues that confront adult and continuing education practitioners is their lack of a common identity. It is a confused role, diverse and fragmented, reflecting the diffuse nature of adult Education as a field of study and practice (Papanaoou, 1994). In many countries the educators of adults may be members of other occupations and professions and act as educators within the framework of those other professions, or they may be part-time tutors who are members of other occupations (Jarvis,

1991). Adult and continuing education provisions generates a 'self-employment sector', offering new professional opportunities to unemployed higher education graduates.

Many writers, however, argue about the need for professionalising the adult educator's role as a mean for upgrading the field. Besides, they consider that the acquisition of core competencies is a necessary prerequisites for anyone working in this field (Monasta, 1989; Galbraith and Zelenak, 1989; Duke, 1989; Papanoum, 1989). Few Universities or colleges offer pre-service or in-service training for teachers of adults.

As to those that do offer such training, questions and controversies abound regarding the content that should be offered, and the extent to which teacher education for adult education should be integrated with general teacher education (Duke, 1989). Those who argue that adult education is a distinct discipline, representing as it does a broader conception of education than that of schooling, seem both to overlook the central principles of lifelong learning and to restrict the function of educating to its technical dimension.

In this account, the ideal of lifelong learning stresses the continuous character of education and the need for cohesion between different educational opportunities and providers. Thus, an analysis of the whole educational system from a perspective of lifelong education suggests that its fundamental objectives have to be served throughout the whole educational process, starting from the early years. On the other hand it is generally accepted that there are specific teaching strategies suitable to the learning needs of adults, a view that is supported and documented by the development of the field of andragogy. A crucial question at this point is whether or not there is a separate 'adult' version of education or, to put it in another way, the degree to which the 'education of adults' is an extension of more generalised concepts of education.

Education, considered in its core dimensions, is a single human process which serves fundamental ideals, irrespective of age and specific contexts. One can therefore agree with Lawson that 'underlying the various manifestations or forms there is some fundamental set of notions and values which make up a concept of education that goes behind or underlies the specific aim and content.' (Lawson, 1979). Formal and non-formal educational provisions as well as initial and continuing education, irrespective of content, are therefore encompassed in the broad concept of 'education'. Continuous education does not introduce a new philosophy of education, but serves the ideal of lifelong learning, being an all embracing conception of education, a conception that poses the problem of the strategies that one has to follow to fulfil this ideal.

Not only is education a broad and complex process in a technical sense, but it is also one which has crucial ethical and socio-political dimensions. Every

educational activity is imbued with an ideological orientation based on political, social and ethical values. Our adult education views then derive, as do our general views on education, from political, moral and philosophical views. That means that even a short educational activity, which transmits knowledge, has an ethical dimension as it influences the whole person. Besides, it has a sociopolitical effect as it serves latent interests. If one were to follow this line of thought, it would seem obvious that every person who exercises an educational function has to be aware of the transformative role the education can play in society (Collins, 1991).

The analysis so far may suggest that every person involved in teaching has to be trained in educational theory and its relationship to the practice of teaching. Such a training contributes to the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes in general, to cultural and educational areas, and to a recognition of the civic and social responsibilities of teaching (Frank, 1989). Such a view encourages closer interaction between school-oriented and adult teacher education in the near future. This tendency it is likely to be reinforced by demographic changes which are evident in many countries and which lead to a shift in the demand for appointing teachers in adult education settings rather than in the primary or secondary school sectors.

Teachers training repatriated adults

The new role the teachers can play in contemporary learning societies was the starting point of the research which is described shortly in this part of the paper. Firstly, it is generally accepted that the quality of adult education provision depends largely on the systematic training of adult educators on education. On the other hand, there are today new opportunities for teachers in many countries to work in educational settings other than formal schooling. However, while the tendency for merging the basic training of adult educators with that of school teachers seems a reasonable development, the relationship that should be fostered between the training of adult educators and that of school teachers still remains unclear.

The main objectives of this small-scale research endeavour were (a) to describe the professional profile of teachers working as adult educators in the Hellenic context, (b) to investigate the problems they were facing during the courses and (c) to document their views on their training needs. It was expected also that there would be differences between the views of those who had been trained in education and the views of those who had not received such training.

Traditionally in Greece, the school teachers have been working as adult educators in literacy seminars addressed to adults who never attained or who failed to complete their basic education. During the past decade, following the events of 1989, impressively large numbers of people of Hellenic origin left Eastern European countries in order to be repatriated in Greece.

Despite their Hellenic roots and a strong national identity and consciousness, these migrants had not received a Hellenic education, and were thus alienated from Hellenic culture and mentality. The majority of them have had to overcome the problems of settling down, integrating themselves in a new community, and finding employment. In all this, it is obviously crucial to have a fluent command of the language of the host country. As can easily be imagined, the process of integration of repatriated people is a complex one, sharing common challenges faced by such groups as immigrants and refugees, but with additional issues as well.

Confronted with such large numbers of repatriated families, the State has had to accord their integration and education a top priority. There is indeed an increasing demand for teachers qualified to teach the Hellenic language, and the main provider of such courses is the Popular Education Secretariat, which belongs to the Ministry of Education and has branches all over Greece at prefectural level (N.E.L.E.).

The post-1989 situation led to the need for a major research project aiming to (a) provide research data on the problems teachers are facing during the teaching of repatriated adults, both with reference to the teaching methodology as well as to the social integration of these categories, and to (b) develop a training programme for teachers who work in this field, to implement it experimentally on a small scale, and to evaluate the service with the aim of improving it. The underlying principle is that professional training is the main vehicle for the empowerment of teachers, without underestimating, of course, other constraining factors. Particularly in the case of teaching repatriated adults, the role of teachers is considered very important, as they 'represent' the Hellenic society.

The present report addresses an aspect of that larger research project, and focuses on teachers who work or have worked as trainers in Hellenic language courses for repatriated adults, provided by the General Popular Secretariat during the last four years, in four Prefectures of Northern Greece (Macedonia and Thrace). 35 out of 53 teachers – i.e. 68% of the total number of teachers working in the selected Prefectures since 1995 – filled in a written questionnaire which included three groups of questions. These questions were developed on the basis of interviews carried out with three teachers who were not included in the research sample, and on a thorough perusal of the relevant literature. The questions investigated:

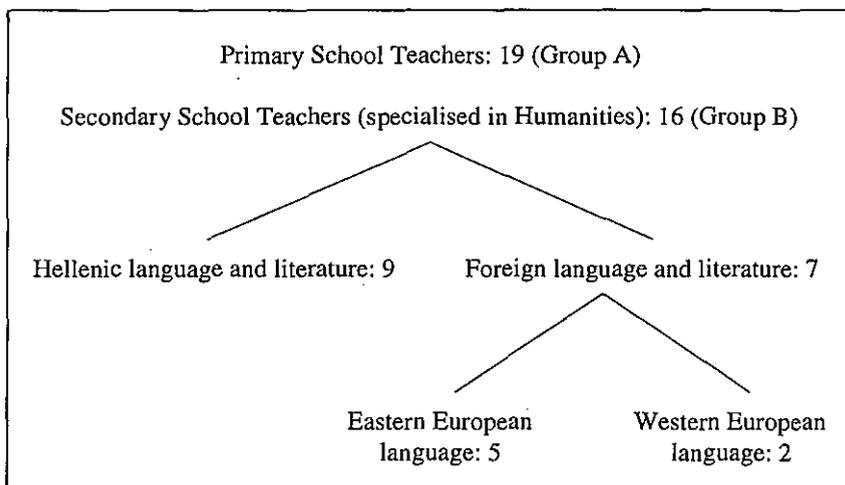
- a) the adult teachers' professional profile (training, employment, working situation, etc)
- b) the courses for repatriated adults they delivered as trainers (regarding the content, methodology, teaching material and their views on the problems they faced),
- c) their views on the training needs of teachers who teach repatriated adults (presuppositions of effectiveness and training needs).

An overview of the findings

Professional profile

The sample investigated tended to be qualified either as primary school teachers or as secondary school teachers with a specialisation in the Humanities. Table 1 demonstrates the different sub-categories of the latter group.

TABLE 1



It is interesting to note that only the primary school teachers (group A) have been trained in educational theory and practice, as a certificate on education training is not a prerequisite for someone to be appointed as teacher in Humanities in secondary schools. The majority of all teachers followed a varied range of training courses after their graduation.

TABLE 2

Title	F	%	Total
Second diploma	2	5.71	35
Postgraduate Studies	9	25.71	35
Seminars*	21	60	35

* Additional to the short seminars offered by NELE to all of the teachers before starting teaching

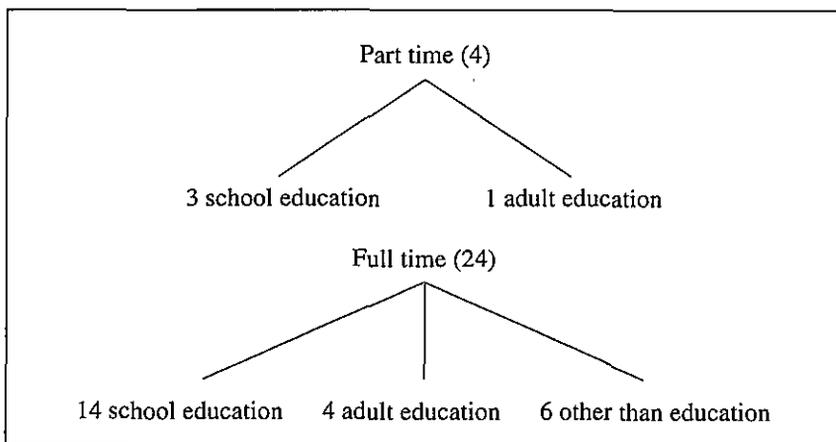
Employment situation and teaching experience

A few of the sampled teachers were unemployed at the moment the research was carried out. The majority were employed on a part or full-time basis (Table 3).

TABLE 3

	F	%
Unemployed	5	15.15
employed	28	84.85

TABLE 4



The picture of their professional profile is enriched by the finding that the majority have worked or are working with children or adolescents (85.71%) (Table 4). Five persons work in adult education programmes but only two of them exclusively teach repatriated adults.

A remark deriving from the above data is that the teaching personnel in language courses for repatriated adults seem to neither have a clear professional profile nor permanent status as adult educators.

The teachers' views on their competency in teaching repatriated adults

Teachers' views on the three broad areas of competencies, namely knowledge, skills (personal and social) and attitudes, are varied. According to a general estimation of the findings, they have a global and multifaceted view of the competencies needed to act effectively in this specific educational setting. They conceptualise their role more as a social service than simply in terms of teaching a language. Regarding the teachers' attitudes, the majority (80%) consider respect towards these people and their culture, as well as having an open and positive attitude toward their problems, as very important aspects of their work. They also stress the willingness to help them in their social integration.

TABLE 5

	F	%
on the subject	24	68.57
on education and psychology	14	40.00
on repatriated people, culture, history and mentality	13	37.14
on hellenic history and culture	7	20.00
on adult learning	5	14.29

The finding that they emphasise the teachers' personality more than his/her subject knowledge does not mean, however, that they do not also stress the importance of training and experience in helping them to be effective in their work. They consider as very helpful: (a) their various training activities and (b) their knowledge in broader areas (Table 5).

Concluding comments

The examination of the teaching profession in adult educational settings, such as in teaching repatriated adults, leads me to make two critically important

reflections. The first concerns the initial and in-service education of adult educators. It seems to me important that, given my arguments about lifelong learning and the development of a learning society, and given the challenges that are currently being faced by mobile communities in a number of countries, the core curriculum for the training of the teachers in general should offer opportunities for training in adult learning and teaching strategies. In this way, prospective teachers graduate with competencies that address lifelong education in an effective manner. Over and above this, it seems imperative to me that accreditation and licensing systems are developed in order to guarantee the professional profile of teachers who work in educational settings other than, and beyond formal schooling. It is only when the lifelong learning ideal has a real impact on systems of teacher education and training that we can be sure that educators will be well equipped with the knowledge, skills, dispositions and aptitudes to respond effectively to the challenges of the learning society.

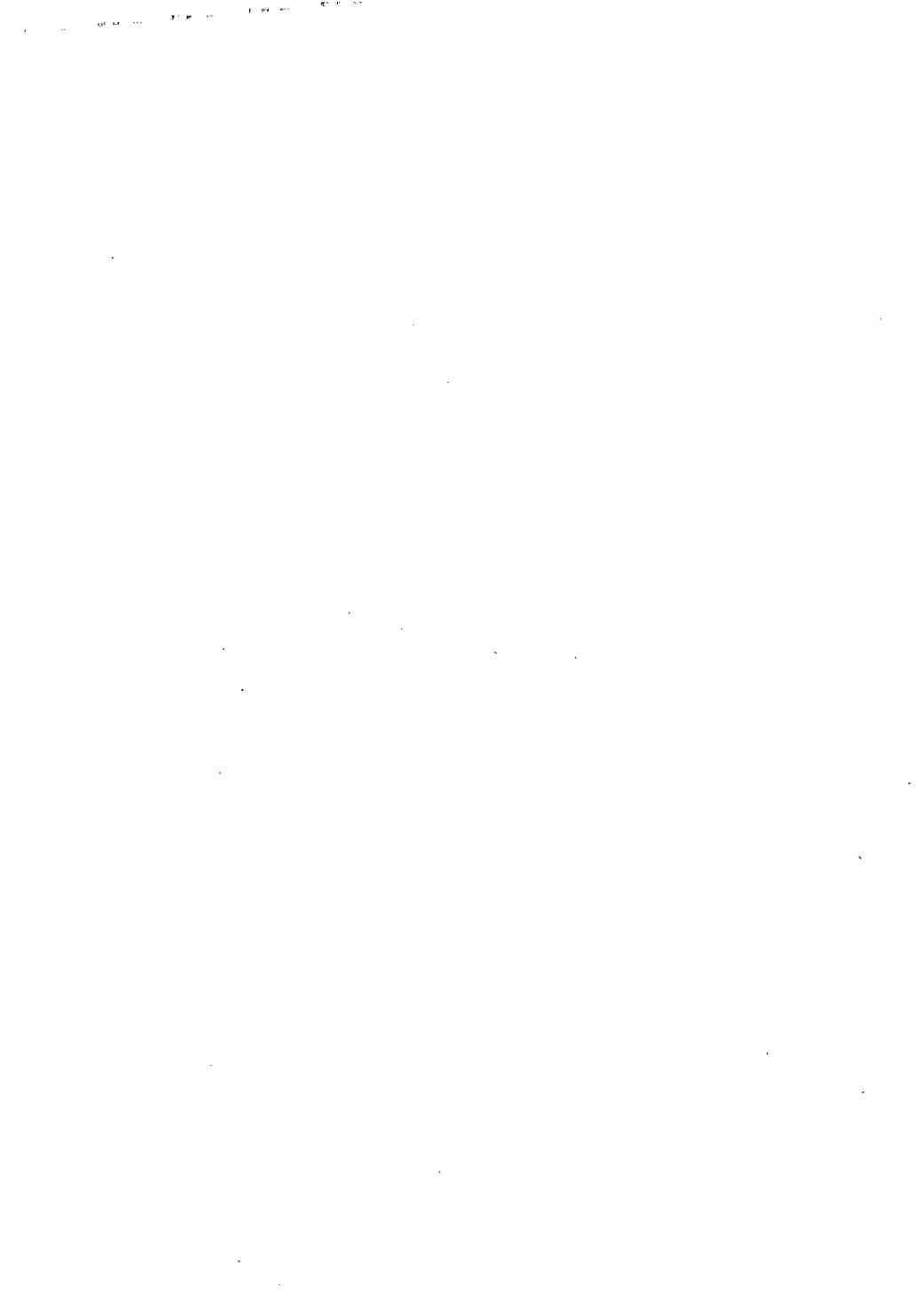
Note: This article is based on a paper presented on the ECER 97 conference, 24-27 September 1997 in Frankfurt.

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EUROMED INITIATIVE

EUROMED AUDIOVISUAL: Euro-Mediterranean Programme for Audio-visual Co-operation: CALL FOR PROPOSALS

1. Introduction: the Thessaloniki Conference

This call for proposals is based on the Conclusions of the intergovernmental Conference on Euro-Mediterranean Audio-visual Co-operation held in Thessaloniki on 15 November 1997. During the Conference, participants agreed on the general framework of Euro-Mediterranean Audio-visual Co-operation to be implemented under the social, cultural and human chapter of the Barcelona Declaration.

This call for proposals reflects, in operational terms, the Conclusions of the Thessaloniki Conference.

2. General and specific objectives

Under the terms of the Conclusions of the Thessaloniki Conference, the launching of Euro-Mediterranean co-operation in the audio-visual sector has as its general objectives:

- Promoting the increasing emergence of a Euro-Mediterranean « vision » by increasing programmes on the region and the volume of Euro-Mediterranean information, by using all possible means and instruments;
- Promoting common values and the richness of cultural diversity, as a statement of the region's identity, and creating an awareness of its contribution to material and spiritual progress on an international level (fight against racism and xenophobia, intolerance and mistrust, stereotypes and prejudices; activities for the protection of minors and of human dignity).

Similarly, in terms of specific objectives, Euro-Mediterranean Audio-visual Co-operation must be aimed at:

- Promoting a regular and pluralist development of the audio-visual sector among the Mediterranean Partners, in particular through co-operation between European and Mediterranean practitioners;

- Further encouraging the transfer of technology, vocational training, co-operation among television and radio networks and among producers, and stimulating a balanced distribution of programmes;
- Facilitating investment so as to contribute towards the creation of wealth and employment in the sector;
- Promoting the optimal use of the audio-visual and film heritage of the Euro-Mediterranean region;
- Encouraging the promotion of the distribution of films originating in the Mediterranean Partners and the European Union.

3. Participating countries and territories

The countries and territories concerned with this call for proposals are the Member States of the European Union and the 12 Mediterranean Partners in accordance with the Barcelona Declaration (Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and the Palestinian Authority).

The European Commission will ensure the application of the principle of non-discrimination with regard to the Mediterranean partners wishing to take part in one or more projects within the framework of this call for proposals.

4. Financial support

The amount of financial support granted by the European Commission to each recipient under MEDA, will not be higher than 80% of the total cost of the proposed activity. The recipient will have to guarantee the remaining funding.

Financial support granted under MEDA will have to benefit the 12 Mediterranean Partners or a majority of them.

The amount of the MEDA subsidy requested will have to be between 1 and 4 million ECU.

Between 6 and 10 projects and pilot projects (10 maximum) will be financed within the framework of this call for proposals.

Any organisation will neither be able to benefit from financial support above 4 million ECU within the framework of an individual project nor take part in a number of different projects (whatever the amount covered by the grant).

The volume of the financial support granted to a project under MEDA will be determined according to the project's nature, duration, total financial volume and amount covered by other funding sources.

5. Eligibility criteria for the projects

Projects submitted within the framework of this call for proposals have to meet the following criteria:

- Projects of a regional nature, including at least 2 entities from two Member States of the EU and 2 entities from two Mediterranean Partners;
- Multi-annual projects, of a minimum duration of 3 years and a maximum duration of 5 years;
- Projects benefiting from other Community financing cannot benefit from this call for proposals;
- Audio-visual productions of an advertising, pornographic, or racist nature or defending violence are excluded from Community support envisaged within the framework of this call for proposals;
- Projects complying with European audio-visual legislation.

6. Selection criteria for the projects

Projects submitted within the framework of this call for proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Projects meeting the specific needs of the region, in particular, the needs of professionals of the region and the expectations of the Euro-Mediterranean general public;
- Priority will be given to projects presenting a comprehensive character and structure (*e.g.* creation of support funds);
- Where projects are deemed equal in quality, priority will be given to projects involving the largest number of entities of the 27 Euro-Mediterranean partners and benefiting from the largest number of broadcasting/distribution agreements;
- Projects making use of new technologies will be treated favourably;
- Projects benefiting youth in the broadest manner possible and highlighting the richness of the common heritage between the two shores of the Mediterranean, will receive special attention;
- Moreover, significant attention will be given to the following: quality of the proposals, cost-effectiveness of the project, nature and reliability of co-sponsorships listed in the budget, tenderer's experience and expertise in the field.

7. Definitions

For the purposes of this call for proposals, the following definitions will be applied:

- Under the terms of the MEDA Regulation, the ‘entities’ referred to in paragraph 5 have to originate from the 27 Euro-Mediterranean partners. These can be: radio stations and television channels, film, audio-visual or multimedia production and distribution companies, cinema owners, training centres in the audio-visual field, or associations and organisations active in the audio-visual sector;
- In accordance with the Conclusions of the Thessaloniki Conference, the ‘audio-visual sector’ includes the following fields: radio, television, and cinema.

8. Types of actions envisaged

8.1 Television

- Conservation and development of the use of archives for the distribution and promotion of the Mediterranean television heritage (data banks, archives, digitalisation, electronic means, CD Rom systems, etc);
- Co-production¹ of television programmes on Euro-Mediterranean topical subjects, Euro-Mediterranean economic and social matters, or Euro-Mediterranean culture and society, encouraging the development of a common cultural heritage, of mutual understanding among the people of the region as well as stimulating a cultural debate among them; a training component² and/or expertise-development aid features of the project (notably, script writing, technical and financial arrangements, search for partners) can be associated with it;
- Aid for the circulation, within the European Union, of television programmes originating from the Mediterranean Partners and concerning economic, social, cultural and political issues in the Mediterranean (notably, dubbing/subtitling, production reformatting, editing on video or multimedia support);
- Aid for the circulation, in the Mediterranean Partners, of existing European and Mediterranean television programmes, bringing together and encouraging understanding between people on either side of the Mediterranean (notably, dubbing/subtitling, production reformatting, editing on video or multimedia support).

8.2 Radio

- Conservation and development of the use of archives for the distribution and promotion of a Mediterranean radio heritage (data banks, archive systems, electronic means, CD-ROMs, etc);
- Co-production and distribution¹ of radio programmes on Euro-Mediterranean topical subjects, Euro-Mediterranean economic and social matters, or cultural and social issues, encouraging the development of a common Euro-Mediterranean cultural heritage, of mutual understanding among the people of the region as well as stimulating a cultural debate among them; a training component² and/or expertise-development aid features of the project (notably, technical and financial arrangements, search for partners) can be associated with it;

8.3 Cinema

- Conservation and development of the use of archives for the distribution and promotion of a Mediterranean film heritage (data banks, archive systems, copying costs, electronic means, CD-ROMs, etc);
- Aid for film production in the Mediterranean Partners, as well as coproductions;³ a training component² (especially if it concerns script writing, the making of short and long productions, the use of new technologies) and/or expertise-development aid features of the project (notably, technical and financial arrangements, search for partners) can be associated with it;
- Aid for the distribution and use, within the European Union, of films emanating within the Mediterranean Partners⁴ and concerning economic, social cultural and political aspects of the Mediterranean, (editing on video or multimedia support, film data banks, CD-ROMs, dubbing/film subtitling, marketing and promotion,⁵ cinema networks distributing a significant number of films concerning the Mediterranean);
- Aid for the distribution and use, in the Mediterranean Partners, of existing European and Mediterranean films (in particular, aid for the purchase of rights of distribution of European high-quality films, dubbing/subtitling, cinema networks distributing European films).

9. Terms of selection

Offers fulfilling the conditions listed in paragraphs 2 to 8 above, will be processed as follows:

- Two copies of the offer to be sent before 31 October 1998 (date of postmark), to the following address:

European Commission
Directorate-General for External Relations –Unit IB/A/4
Mr Marc Pierini
200 rue de la Loi (CHAR 5/141), 1049 Brussels

The envelope must be clearly marked: «EUROMED AUDIOVISUAL».

Tenderers sending their offers during the week prior to the deadline, are requested to communicate their intention to submit a proposal before the deadline, at fax number (+32-2) 299 02 04.

- Offers must be submitted by the project leader (co-ordinator), who, in the event of selection, will assume sole responsibility vis-à-vis the Commission (cf. Item 10);
- Proposals must be submitted in English or French;
- Specifications for the presentation of offers are detailed in Annexes 1 and 2 (information and documents to complete application, specimen budget, guidelines for eligible expenditure, presentation of correspondence);
- A jury, chaired by the European Commission, Directorate-General for External Relations (DG IB), assisted by the Directorate-General for Information, Communication, Culture, and the Audio-visual (DG X), and consisting of 6 experts in audio-visual matters (internationally recognised experts not taking part in the call for proposals nor having any direct or indirect link with the tenderers), will be responsible for the selection of the offers;
- This jury will present a justified proposal to the European Commission (Directorate-General for External Relations IB)

10. Financing terms

Under the terms of the MEDA Regulation, the financing decision falls exclusively within the competence of the European Commission following a favourable opinion of the relevant Management Committee (MED-Committee).

11. Contractual terms

The European Commission will offer a subsidy contract to those projects and activities fulfilling the following conditions:

- A single contract per project or activity, concluded between the European Commission and the co-ordinator, sole person responsible for the project, who alone will assume the entirety of the contractual, financial and accounting obligations towards the European Commission;
- The contractor will abide by the usual financial procedures of the European Commission: special bank account, preliminary audit, bank guarantee, and sufficient resources as regards specialised management personnel;
- An internal agreement is required regulating contractual relations (legal and financial obligations) between members of a project or network.

**INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS TO
COMPLETE APPLICATION**

- Information regarding the coordinating body of the project: a copy of its constituent documents (statute), its financial position at the end of the last financial year certified by an independent auditor, presentation of its organisation and activities (activity report), reference to any financial support it may have received from the European Union in the past;
- letters of interest from all project partners (expressions of interest)
- letters of intent from the broadcasters for any co-production project;
- a provisional work plan
- the summary budget form annexed herewith duly completed (Annex 2);
- a detailed breakdown of the budget, signed by the director of the tendering body, giving a clear indication of all expenses and revenues relating to the project, divided into categories according to the different costs reproduced in the summary budget form.

ANNEX 2:

BUDGET FORM (SPECIMEN BUDGET)

PART A: EXPENSES (all amounts in ECUs)

Cost categories	Unit	Number	Cost/Unit	TOTAL
1. STAFF				
1.1 ON LONG-TERM MISSION				
TOTAL				
1.2 ON SHORT-TERM MISSION				
TOTAL				
1.3 LOCAL				
TOTAL				
SUB-TOTAL 1				
2. TRAVEL EXPENSES				
<i>International transport</i>				
<i>National transport</i>				
<i>Other (to be specified)</i>				
SUB-TOTAL 2				
3. GENERAL EXPENSES				
3.1 PREMISES AND RELATED EXPENSES				
3.2 OFFICE EXPENSES				
3.3 MISCELLANEOUS				
<i>Bank guarantee or insurance covering the amount of the MEDA grant</i>				
SUB-TOTAL 3				
4. EQUIPMENT AND LOGISTICS				
4.1 COMPUTER SUPPORT & DATA BASE				
4.2 SPECIAL EQUIPMENT <i>(to be specified)</i>				
SUB-TOTAL 4				

5. TRAINING COSTS

Seminars, courses, workshops

SUB-TOTAL 5

6. PRODUCTION/POST-PRODUCTION COSTS

6.1 Dubbing

6.2 Sub-titling

6.3 Editing

6.4 Post-production

6.5 Others (*to be specified*)

SUB-TOTAL 6

7. ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

7.1 ADVERTISING

*Advertising material, advertising space
(to be specified)*

7.2 PROMOTION

*Promotional material, promotional
ventures
(to be specified)*

SUB-TOTAL 7

8. OTHER EXPENSES

(to be specified)

TOTAL = SUB-TOTALS 1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8

PART B: SOURCES OF FUNDING

ECUS

Own investment (tendering entity)

MEDA grant (maximum 80% of the total)

Private funding (*to be specified*)

Public funding other than the Community grant (*to be specified*)

TOTAL (in ECUs)

Notes on the budget

1. The budget will have to be presented in ECUs (the grant is paid in ECUs and the recipient assumes sole responsibility for any potential risks caused by exchange rate fluctuations).

2. CO-FUNDING FOR THE PROJECT

As far as co-funding for the project is concerned, all sources of revenue listed in the financial estimates of the project including the tenderer's own investment must be quantified in accounting terms and justified with supporting documents. Please include all copies of contracts, letters of intent and other suitable documents establishing different sources of revenue.

In the event that the procedure for securing co-funding is not finalised at the time the project tender is submitted, the tenderer must be in a position to provide a guarantee through either his own funds or those of a third party.

Contributions in kind may, provided that they are quantifiable in accountable terms and duly justified, be listed in the financial estimate as a source of revenue.

3. EXPENSES

The tenderer must present in a clear, detailed and precise manner all expenses relating to the project broken down per cost category.

All eligible expenses are refundable upon presentation of original invoices and proofs of payment.

Only incremental costs related to the preparation, implementation and follow-up of the project are eligible as expenses.

All costs related to other projects may not be credited to the budget. In the event that the tenderer has submitted various financial estimates in response to the call for proposals, it is strictly forbidden to double charge any costs related to different projects *e.g.* staff-related expenses.

The Commission reserves the right to refuse certain costs deemed excessive or ineligible within the framework of the call for proposals.

A breakdown must be given of all categories of expenditure exceeding more than 10,000 ECU in terms of sub-categories, units, number of units, as indicated in the specimen budget.

All costs exceeding the scale determined by the Commission, especially where staff-related expenses are concerned (cf. point 4) may not be taken into account.

4. STAFF-RELATED EXPENSES

All staff-related expenses must be calculated according to the time actually spent on the project using the real gross salary as a basis including all other costs and expenses directly related to employment (National Insurance contributions, etc.). If the tenderer has submitted several requests for subsidy within the framework of the present call for proposals, any staff assigned to more than one of these projects must be identified as such.

All time spent by staff on the project must be broken down into staff categories allocated to the project (management, co-ordination, supervisory, administrative or secretarial), according to the length of his/her assignment and to the cost per capita.

Staff-related expenses must include the costs for hiring a full-time accountant.

For the purposes of calculating staff-related expenses, the following scale drawn up by the Commission must be observed:

a) Expatriate staff (EU or Mediterranean partners) on long-term missions per month:

– academic staff	3,800 ECU
– assistant	3,000 ECU
– unqualified	2,500 ECU

Exceptionally and upon presentation of appropriate supporting documents and upon approval by the Commission, the threshold may be raised for staff having special responsibilities up to 6,000 ECU per month on the basis of a proven professional experience of no less than 20 years and up to 4,500 ECU per month for professional experience between 10 and 20 years.

- b) As far as expenses related to local staff are concerned, reference will be made to local standards duly justified.
- c) With regard to staff engaged on short-term assignments, outside the country of origin, the following *per diems* fixed by the European Commission will be applied:

170 ECU for EU countries
130 ECU for Mediterranean Partners

These amounts include hotel expenses, transport and other unspecified expenses.

5. TRAVEL EXPENSES

Travel expenses are deemed acceptable if not excessive in relation to the total costs.

Acceptable administrative expenses are the following:

- Air travel in economy class on the basis of the most economic fare (particularly APEX). Expenses must be justified by provision of the original ticket counterfoil and embarcation cards on each flight.
- For all other means of transport (private vehicle, car hire, taxis, etc.) expenses are deemed acceptable in so far as necessary for the smooth running of the project.

The breakdown for travel expenses is given according to the number of trips made and the unit cost of each one.

6. GENERAL EXPENSES

Acceptable general expenses are additional structural costs rendered necessary by the project. They may not exceed 6% of the total of the other cost categories referred to in the specimen budget.

A breakdown of general expenses is given in three categories:

- a) premises and related expenses: rent, insurance, management and administrative costs, etc.
- b) office expenses: telephone, postage, photocopies, bank charges, etc.

- c) miscellaneous: cost of a bank guarantee or insurance up to the value of the requested MEDA grant. The existence of this bank guarantee is a pre-requisite for the granting of a MEDA subsidy.

These general expenses are calculated in accordance with standard accounting agreements and principles (e.g. for rent, on the basis of the cost per m² for the duration of the project).

7. COMPUTER SUPPORT AND DATA BASE

- a) Computer support: internal costs including equipment; costs related to the connection of on-line services necessary for the effective implementation of the project.
- b) Data base: expenses related to the design, production and maintenance of software and of data bases necessary for the effective implementation of the project.

8. TRAINING COSTS

Acceptable expenses cover *per diems* for participants (Cf. Point 4c), teaching aids, rental of rooms, interpreters' fees, etc.

9. PRODUCTION/POST-PRODUCTION COSTS

Acceptable expenses cover technical equipment and the necessary professional services as well as rent-related expenses.

10. ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

a) Advertising costs: production, translation and publication of brochures and catalogues (in printed or electronic format), CD-ROMs, web-sites, design and publication of posters, purchase of advertising space, organisation of press campaigns during the implementation of the project;

b) Promotion; press conferences, professional meetings to promote the project, promotional material (banners for example).

11. OTHER EXPENSES

Any other expense the tenderer may wish to include in the budget and which does not fall under any of the above-mentioned categories must be presented in a clear and detailed manner.

References

¹ All co-production projects will have to be accompanied by distribution agreements (signed commitments) of distributors from several of the 27 Euro-Mediterranean partners, at least of distributors established and operating in the 4 partners required in point 5.

² Projects and activities exclusively dedicated to training are eligible under the Med Media Programme, relaunched by a Commission decision of 22/04/1998, and are therefore excluded from this call for proposals.

³ Any project providing aid for the production of films in the Mediterranean or for co-production will have to be accompanied by distribution and cinema agreements (signed commitments) of film distributors and cinema owners from several of the 27 Euro-Mediterranean partners, at least of distributors and cinema owners established and operating in the 4 partners required in point 5.

⁴ A 'film emanating from the Mediterranean Partners' is understood to mean any work produced mainly by one or more entities originating in the Mediterranean Partners, and to the production of which professionals from the Mediterranean Partners have contributed significantly.

⁵ Production of advertising films and material, purchase of advertising space, organisation of promotional events, participation in European film trade shows, etc.



BOOK REVIEWS

Mark Bray and Lucy Steward (eds.), *Examination Systems in Small States: Comparative Perspectives on Policies, Models and Operations* (Part of the Educational Development in the Small States of the Commonwealth book series), London, Commonwealth Secretariat, 292 pp., 1998, ISBN 0-85092-529-0 (paperback).

The majority of the Commonwealth members, regardless of the unit (and rigidity) of smallness used (e.g., population, area or Gross National Product), classify as small countries. In the introduction to the book Mark Bray refers to a Commonwealth Secretariat publication which stresses the uniqueness of small states (in this publication statehood is taken to include independent sovereign countries as well as semi-autonomous dependencies). The Secretariat recognises that small states have an ecology of their own. In other words they are not simply a down-scale version of larger countries. Consequently the Commonwealth Secretariat pays special attention to the multiple concerns of small states, among which is education. This concern on the implications of size in relation to educational issues is evidenced by the Educational Development in the Small States of the Commonwealth book series being published by the Human Resource Development Division of the Secretariat. And this book on examination systems in small states (meant for ministries of education, institutions, researchers and international organisations) is the series' latest addition.

Examination Systems in Small States is a follow-up of the 1996 pan-Commonwealth workshop held in Barbados that was also attended by a substantial number of small states representatives with particular interest in examination systems. The papers discussed during the workshop (in addition to other papers specifically commissioned afterwards to provide a more comprehensive view) form the basis of this book. The field of examinations, as can be readily appreciated, is indeed extensive. This fact and the desire to give the book a stamp of its own necessitated the editors to adopt a more focused approach to the project. In particular a 'universally applicable material non-inclusive policy' was adopted. The end result is that generally speaking the contributors have concentrated on broad policy choices, sidelining technicalities (generally not size-dependent) except for some issues directed affected by the size of the system concerned. The examinations directly under consideration are the external ones at the end-of-secondary level (even if primary and pre-university examinations are also included). This particular focus was chosen because 'it is at this level that tensions

between national, regional and international forces, which are the major theme of this book, are most clear' (Bray, p. 4).

The book is structured in five distinct sections. In section one Mark Bray lays down the analytical framework of the book which should help the reader focus on the more important parameters developed in later sections when particular realities (national, regional or international) are discussed. Section two tackles a number of national perspectives. The examination systems of ten countries from four geographical areas (Africa [Botswana, Mauritius, and Namibia], Asia & Pacific [Bhutan, Maldives, and Samoa], Caribbean [Bahamas, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago] and Europe [Malta]) are explored by native authors. Three regional examination bodies are the focus of section three. These are the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA), and the West African Examinations Council (WAEC). Then, in section four, is the turn of metropolitan examination boards, namely the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) and the New Zealand's examining bodies. Finally, in section five Bray's concluding comments and analysis (what he terms as 'lessons for conceptual understanding, policy and practice') based on the contributions in sections two to four bring the collection of papers to an end.

While each paper in sections two to four can stand on its own, I feel that Bray's introductory and concluding sections in reality give this publication that extra edge. For it is mostly through Bray's writings that the reader can rise from the particular and mostly descriptive dimension to the more generic and comparative one. Furthermore readers who are venturing for the first time in this field (i.e., examination systems and small states) stand to gain a lot of from Bray's concise though comprehensive review and analysis of the main underlying issues. I am however less convinced with Bray as the co-editor. Suffice to mention that Bray (p.6) salutes the book's country-contributions by native authors as a guarantee of 'authenticity.' But while all these authors surely have an excellent understanding of the underlying national policies, models and operations, they may not have been as free in their writings as one would have preferred. The question of possible vested interests and the understandable uneasiness of reporting on meet-daily-basis colleagues and structures cannot be underestimated. As a result the reader can never really be sure about the real 'authenticity' of these reports. Another disturbing feature is that the level of the national contributions is rather uneven. Papers vary along an extensive continuum from the highly comprehensive and analytical pieces on Botswana and Malta to the brief and largely descriptive pieces on Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. This discrepancy is, I feel, one the weaknesses of the book. And had the editors ensured a better overall standard, the more academically oriented reader would have surely found this recent publication more rewarding.

The book has a special appeal to those intrigued by comparative studies, particularly if keen on the examination systems of small states with an anglophile educational background. More than just the small Commonwealth states, the countries actually targeted in this Commonwealth Secretariat publication are those small ones (arbitrarily taken here to imply a population of two million and less) with an educational system modeled on the British one. The chapter on Bhutan (not a Commonwealth country, but with an educational system biased towards the British model due to its strong education ties with Commonwealth member India) amply demonstrates this point. The book's two million population size cut off point has permitted the inclusion of countries (e.g., Namibia, population 1.6 million) which in comparison to the very small of the small countries (e.g., Tuvalu, population 9000) are relatively large. The resulting diversity in sizes has provided some interesting contrasts. For instance the numerical strength of Namibia has made it relatively easy for the UCLES, because of the economy of scales, to prepare special syllabi and papers for Namibian students. On the other hand Tuvalu, even though member of the SPBEA which primarily seeks to help member countries run national examinations, is too small to localise its examination system. Consequently Tuvalu has to buy ready prepared examination papers from another SPBEA member, neighbouring Samoa, in order to retain some relevance to its cultural heritage.

One striking feature that emerges from this collection of papers (pointed out by Bray, p. 237) is that 'the education systems of the majority of countries covered in this book, particularly at the senior secondary level, remain dominated by formal examinations'. This is against the growing international trend of moving towards giving real weighting to continuous and school based assessment. One may consider this 'traditional approach' as one of the unifying features of the examination systems considered in this book. By and large three basic models of operations of examinations in small states emerge: Examinations are held through national (e.g., Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate [MATSEC] in Malta), regional (e.g., the SPBEA in the South Pacific region) and metropolitan bodies (e.g., the UCLES). These three models are however not mutually exclusive. Instead they may all operate side by side as is evidenced by the Trinidad & Tobago reality. Again parallel bodies operate differently from one country to the other. In spite of its many problems, including negligible staff, MATSEC in Malta is responsible for all external examinations at 16+ and 18+ levels. On the other hand the relatively over-staffed Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES) only operates primary level examinations moderated by the University of London Examinations & Assessment Council (ULEAC). At the secondary level Mauritius adheres to an examination system operated by the UCLES.

Some small states move away from metropolitan agencies (usually in ex-colonial powers) towards national or regional bodies in order, amongst other things, to enhance self-identity and ascertain control over their curriculum, but others are forced along this path by their metropolitan agency itself. In New Zealand educational authorities were so worried that the needs of the South Pacific countries (which their examinations were serving) were delaying the necessary reforms in New Zealand itself, that New Zealand actively sought to distance these countries from its national examinations by practically obliging them to set up the regional SPBEA. After postponing the inevitable for a number of years the South Pacific states had to put on a brave face to bad fortune. Consequently most of them established national examination bodies under the umbrella of the SPBEA even if moving towards a credible national system is indeed be an uphill task. The chapter on Bahamas (a country currently distancing itself very cautiously away from metropolitan dominance to local responsibility) is a good example of the multiple difficulties characterising such an endeavour.

The number of issues tackled in this collection of papers is rather comprehensive. But I still feel that there are some areas (perhaps not central enough) which fall within the parameters established by the editors which could have been further explored. The issue of control over the curriculum is one of them. Control is often cited as one of the more pressing reasons for the localisation (or regionalisation) of examination systems. It would indeed have been interesting to consider to what extent can small states truly gain control on their curricula through localisation when: (i) these states are plagued by the their self-proclaimed lack of resources and expertise; and (ii) the majority of primary sources in their schools (i.e., books, teaching aids, media programmes, curricular models etc.) are still being imported from their ex-colonial masters or neo-colonial powers (e.g., the USA). Under such circumstances can national (or to a lesser extent regional) bodies ever think of becoming truly independent and in control? It may well be that it is the knowledge that this can hardly ever materialise that keeps metropolitan agencies rather hopeful about future prospects (see chapter 15 on the UCLES) in spite of the growing desire amongst small states to go national or regional. In reality localisation can actually mean new clients for the traditional examination bodies.

Metropolitan bodies may now have acquired another prospective role – perhaps more ‘supportive’ than ‘administrative.’ Already a number of national bodies have some form of contact with metropolitan counterparts and some national examinations are also underwritten by these. But while this emerging role of the metropolitan bodies is evident enough in this publication, in my opinion it has not been properly dealt with. The chapters specifically dedicated to metropolitan bodies could have been more illuminating in this respect. On a

different level Bray, when discussing the characteristics of small states, may have neglected one important aspect, namely the states' level of educational preparation and tradition. Malta, just to give one example, with a centuries-old university, strong educational services and traditions, and compulsory education up to 16 years long established is a completely different reality in comparison to other small states which are still struggling to implement universal primary education. And what about costs? The question of losing out on precious foreign currency is frequently listed as one of the reasons for localisation. The issue of what this money saving really implies in terms of examinations' 'quality' as opposed to 'recognition' could have been better addressed in the book. Because while such a decision can be economically correct and desirable its possibly harmful educational implications call for thorough evaluation.

My less positive comments should not detract from the multiple merits which mark this book that has to a large extent lived up to its promises. It is an extremely readable, informative and fairly comprehensive and analytical text within the realm of comparative literature on examinations. This recent publication by the Commonwealth Secretariat contributes towards an increased awareness and better understanding of the diversities and commonalities characterising examination systems in small states. Because while most of these examination systems do share some over-riding features (such as the urge to protect national identity, stingy educational budgets, lack of expertise and resources, and worries about international recognition), at the same time they form part of distinct realities. The book is a clear signal against unyielding over-simplifications, and the interdisciplinary approach adopted throughout reflects the often complex and multifaceted realities underlining the pertinent issues. Finally, I have no hesitation to recommend this book to anyone interested in the political, sociological and economical aspects of examinations. This book should help readers from small states to view their examination system within wider international perspectives, while readers from larger countries have here an opportunity to start coming to terms with some of the real issues facing small states.

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Samir Amin, *Capitalism in the Age of Globalization*, Zed Books, London & New Jersey, 158 pp, 1997, ISBN 1-85649-468-3 (pbk); 1-85649-467-5 (hbk).

The collapsing of the welfare state in Europe; the debunking of Marxism-Leninism after the collapse of the Soviet bloc; the failure of alternative, often state-led, third world development leading to fiscal crises and necessitating interventionist 'structural adjustment programmes' by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund ... today the triumph of neo-liberalism appears well nigh secured. The ideology of 'freedom to' has gripped political discourse and has become synonymous with socio-economic development. Its economic handmaiden is free trade. The correspondent and supportive ideological stance to this regime is a rational vision of the world: the problems of poverty and stagnation are only transitional or marginal; wealth and progress will trickle down later if not sooner; and any residual difficulties will be overwhelmed by effective managerialist solutions. Fukuyama (1992) represents the textbook of this contemporary bravado. Democracy begets liberal capitalism which begets progress and modernity. There is, simply, no other way. In Fukuyama's own captivating metaphor, motley and different though they may be; all the wagon trains labouring along the trail in the search for progress will ultimately converge to this ultimate safe haven.

Captivating but disconcerting. Amin's study comes across as an anti-capitalist manifesto, an anti-Fukuyama. Even at this time, when there appears to be a wilderness of alternative conceptualisations of progress, Amin draws a complex and multi-faceted picture which challenges the capitalist project to its very foundations. If anything, Amin challenges the notion – bred out of an acute pessimism of the contemporary intellect, numbed by the strident discourse of current hegemony? – that any debate about the demise of capitalism is sterile and futile.

The message is radical, incisive, provocative, woven throughout the years in a series of impressive volumes, most notably Amin (1974). It calls itself socialist, even at the risk of being misunderstood as a recipe which has well nigh gone sour; but it is socialist to the extent of presenting an alternative, human project; an agenda which promotes the development of peripheries; the well being of the 'have-nots'; the restoration of some sense of regional balance; the eclipse of global hegemony; notions of a 'planned market' which resurrect the ideas of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) which foundered at the United Nations in 1975 (see Krasner, 1985).

Amin's thesis is radical because it is premised on structural conflict; a conflict which modern 'late capitalism' is struggling hard to cope with, not via effective

solutions but by exporting the problem elsewhere. It is a problem of economics without politics; of ambivalent attitudes to competition; of monopoly power over the critical resource areas of research, technology, capital markets, media, natural resources and military capacity.

Capitalism may have generated economic progress under certain bounded, historical conditions; but these circumstances have well nigh changed over the last half century. Indeed, the very antithesis of those conditions appears now to be in force. The legacy of structural adjustment in developing countries has been harsh and painful: 'Sharp increases in unemployment; a fall in the remuneration of work; an increase in food dependency; a grave deterioration of the environment; a deterioration of health care systems; a fall in admissions to educational institutions; a decline in the productive capacity of many nations; the sabotage of democratic systems; the continued growth of external debt' (p.13). Global players make a mockery of non-global regulatory mechanisms which are totally incapable of enforcing any redistributive measures. A deflationary spiral obliges financiers to maximise the interest, rather than the investment, potential of their money. The outcome is structural unemployment, a reality now even of the developed world. Statist remedies are unpopular and have been discredited, the state been now looked upon as the problem and no longer as the sole agent for its solution. Resulting privatisation reduces returns to the most needy and reduces still further the capacity to contest and negotiate, if only in a token manner, the unbridled forces of private capital.

The crisis of capitalism has spawned a number of disparate reactions, but these, according to Amin, do not challenge the basic premises on which the global capitalist system is based. Liberalism without borders would increase still further the levels of social and economic inequality, building in added strains into the system and obliging it still further to pass on its costs to the least powerful players, both at the core and the periphery. Nationalism is a short-term, knee-jerk response which fails to have any impact on the global architecture of power at play. Ethnicity, like nationalism, is an artificial reactionary stance which builds up a mythical frame of reference and resistance. All along, Amin contends, the real locus of power, and therefore the necessary location for any contestation, is supra-national, supra-ethnic.

The solution? Amin himself is wary in introducing the concept of 'Planning (dare I use the term?)' (p.105). He dares, knowing that the likelihood of building a convincing argument are slim. Nor is the recipe advanced an original one, as he himself is aware. The response, he declares, cannot be national because the issues at stake are of a structurally global character and would not be addressed except euphemistically at a level of political action which has been rendered virtually redundant. It cannot be at the level of existing trans- or pan- national institutions

(NAFTA, EU, ASEAN, GATT-WTO...) because these are all fabrications of a particular hegemonic order, intent on ensuring its survival. Instead, a new polycentric organisation is to be developed, bringing together specific regional groupings within a new alignment which has the potential to 'plan the market'. This is an extended nationalism, a 'market plus state' apparatus to regulate the operation, and the ideology, of free trade; to challenge the monopolistic supremacy of the status quo. Amin mentions Latin America, Africa, The Arab World, South-East Asia, India and China (the last two being the only continental developing nations). The Mediterranean is not mentioned. A slip? A reflection of a pitiful chasm of cultures which has no hope of being bridged, even in the face of glaringly common challenges?

The project may have a sustained academic argument in its defence; whether the potential exists for its praxis is a different story. How to you transform a class-in-itself to a class-for-itself? Especially if the unit of identity is not a social class? Sustained criticism of 'high capitalism' is an established tradition dating at least from Marx; through Baran and Sweezy; dependency theory, which Amin himself pioneered, along with the likes of Andre Gunder Frank and Raul Prebisch, is an important strand of this critique. The analysis of the forces of social change form a basic undercurrent within this rich literature. Amin grapples responsibly with these difficulties of operationalisation. His is at least a search which dismisses the false promises of 'capitalism without capitalists' which coloured the Soviet Revolution.

Real history is not a sequence of peaceful and predictable evolution. Nor is it a dependent epi-phenomenon of economic events. The latter is not a deterministic *deus ex machina*. The economics professors who uncritically uphold this view are wrong and alienated, misleading others in turn. Amin reminds us of an important cardinal rule, so often camouflaged by those whose interest it may be to conceal its powerful and disturbing truth: 'History is not infallibly directed by the laws of 'pure economics' It is produced by social reactions to the tendencies implied by those laws.' (p. xii & also p.103). There is therefore no economics but only political economy. It is when conceptualising economics as devoid of its crucial political component that results in the current state of global disorder. No economic system can survive for long without a stabilizing political framework of some sort (Hettne, 1995). John Maynard Keynes (1936) and Karl Polanyi (1957), most unlikely bedfellows, join Marx in Amin's tryptych of illuminaries. They are the three visionaries who share in inspiring this profound understanding of modern economics as essentially political.

It cannot be otherwise. Amin analysis the European Union and finds it wanting precisely in having failed to advance its social and political projects at the same pace of its economic one. While economic liberalisation proceeds, with a

European single currency next on the horizon, the EU has been bogged down in its capacity to boost the social conditions of its citizens and workers. Significantly to blame here is the absence of any political instrument within the EU (what is the EU anyway?) which can counter any member-state's claim to its sovereignty. The political machinery of the EU remains the Council of Ministers, which is none other than the assembly of national decision making bodies. Other organs seeking to vie for European-level power – the European Parliament? The Commission? – are still relegated to the second division of the Euro-power league. Will this political vacuum last in confrontation with the continuing globalisation of capital? If this happens, then there is a terrible future in store, predicts Amin, as Europe will be riddled by the enemy within, the product of its own rampant and soulless rationality. Perhaps a German Empire is the most realistic political prospect to avoid the social catastrophe.

These considerations have important reverberations for the Mediterranean Region. The EU may have offered a fig leaf to the Mediterranean, inviting it within its orbit with its Euro-Med programme. The non-EU member states in particular are thus finding themselves operating on the fringe of a mammoth supra-national structure whose economics transcends its political clout. Are we witnessing the 'latinamericanisation' of the Mediterranean by Europe? Is the future of EU-Med co-operation a veiled attempt at a 'compradorisation' of the region, fine-tuning it to serve even better as a dump and cushion for the economic excesses of the capitalist heartland? And if the German Fourth Reich were indeed to impose its political mechanism on the European project, what are the implications for the Mediterranean basin, where Germany has never shown much concern?

Economics is not without politics; but macro-considerations do not go without micro-ones. Amin does not fail to discuss the grass roots because the mechanisms for his socialist, regionalist internationalism must start with a local initiative. Here, he builds bridges with Touraine and Gramsci; the former in his belief in social movements with populist agendas, the latter in his belief in the power of organic intellectuals. Somehow, these individual and collective efforts will foster a wave of emancipation; somehow, this sentiment will revolutionise identities, de-link with the established world order and construct alliances across borders; somehow, these alliances will usher in a revamped socio-political regime, that which the United Nations might have been. Development agendas may thus be yet set up by people for themselves. This is a project which is elaborated in more detail in Amin (1990).

This brings me to consider education. Clearly, it is the relative autonomy of teachers in their educational environments which holds the promise of transformative change. It is they who will invite their students to approach the

economy and society and their study, either as politically neutral social facts and as the subject of social sciences (which would in turn beget only a 'livestock management' (p.134) or a social engineering approach to the field) or instead as a politically charged field of enquiry, where there is no one, correct answer, where painful and responsible choices which impact upon human liberty and equity will have to be made. Education, like capitalism, must hold true to its essentially contradictory character of socialisation and demystification: teaching its students how the system works; but not stopping there. We must teach them about the system; and, from that, how to work the system and perhaps replace it. All forms of management are essentially contestable.

What remains unclear in Amin's treatise is the relationship that globalization itself has with the forces of intended emancipatory change. Are we to assume that global capital carries the seeds of its own destruction and will spawn a new world order based on reconstituted politico-economic relations almost naturally? Would rather globalization proceed uninhibitedly along the economic route, co-opting intelligentsia on the way, rendering the new regionalization project even less likely? Or will global capitalism present an inherent dialectic, akin to Polanyi's 'double movement', eroding differences and promoting sameness of thought and action on one hand while promoting difference and indigenous responses on the other? Would the onus of transforming the potential into actual counter-hegemony be bestowed onto our scattered organic, individual and collective organic intellectuals? As a firm believer in human agency (albeit historically textured), I would concur in favour of the third, 'glocal' explanation.

'It is, after all, perfectly possible to answer the question: Can capitalism develop the Third World? with the reply: No; but all the other alternatives are even worse' (Sklair, 1994). The plan may have been an even worse scourge than the market. Amin's counter-world order may have the trappings of an unworkable utopia. But it is an alternative. History is not dead. To echo Max Weber: If we do not believe in, and pursue, the impossible, the possible will never become true.

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Ettore Gelpi, *Education des Adultes: Inclusion et Exclusion. Manifeste pour une Democratie Internationale*, ('The Education of Adults: Inclusion and Exclusion. A Manifesto for an International Democracy'). Rennes, ATOPIES, Documents pédagogiques du DESS COGEF – No. 4, Conduite et Gestion de projets en Éducation et Formation. 189 pp., 1997.

In my workshops for adult educators, I sometimes ask participants to tell me 'something that they *know* is true'. The question raises the issue of how we construct knowledge, and of the mechanisms that we use to validate that knowledge. What causes me to 'know', for example, that today is Tuesday and not Wednesday? Are my beliefs based on perceptible evidence, on social convention, or some edifice of reasoned deduction? Is there a difference between these various types of knowledge, and if so, what is the nature of that difference?

Of course, an important characteristic of 'knowing' is that not everyone agrees so readily about most things as they do about naming the day of the week. The world is too complex to be reduced to a single set of interpretations, and we must rely on our individual subjective understanding in order to negotiate the complexities of everyday life. Similarly, the act of learning is dependent on our ability to make sense of the infinite variety of stimuli that make up the realm of our perception. To achieve this remarkable feat, we need to engage in the collective act of knowledge-building, for there is nothing of value that we can know alone.

Unlike schoolchildren, adults have the capacity to collectively define the issues that they investigate, the science they wish to construct. Thus, any reflection on the subject of adult learning must address the issue of what it is that is being learned, in other words ask, 'What is the knowledge being created or shared?'

Ettore Gelpi's book, subtitled *Manifesto for an International Democracy* is both an analysis of the current ideological trappings of knowledge construction in Europe and the developing world, and an appeal to justice and equity via the powerful medium of adult education and training. For Gelpi, there is no act more laden with political authority than that of knowing. Populations whose basic needs are most wanting often find their identity distorted or threatened by knowledge propelled in the wake of so-called developmental determinism. In this manner, education can become an 'instrument of violence' in our post-colonial times. However, that observation runs with a corollary: adult education also represents a powerful tool for emancipation, and it needs not be confined to dominant paradigms. This is exemplified by recent initiatives within the labour movement, where paradoxically much of the attention has focused on unemployment – the semantic opposite of 'labour'.

The value of knowledge is largely tributary to the interests that it serves. In this

sense, the only 'true' knowledge is such that provides the knower with instruments of self-fulfilment. Gelpi observes that adult education may result in people making political choices that run contrary to their own interests. Similarly, the exportation of educational programs from rich to poor countries tends to marginalise local culture and reflect a hegemonic, rather than a democratic agenda.

Part I of Gelpi's book is devoted to issues of marginality and culture, culminating in an analysis of the relationship between Western Europe and Mediterranean Africa in chapter 6. Here we recognise the author's ability to consider both features and defects, advantages and inconveniences, conflicts and compromises as part of a larger, fecund dialectic between historical forces. We could have been presented with the usual assortment of post-colonial recrimination and resentment, but rather, Gelpi balances the 'conflict and richness' of Euro-Arab relations, and the historical interchangeability of the roles of victor and vanquished. He also points out that the traditional meeting places of Judaism, Christianity and Islam are now enriched with a growing culture of agnosticism both in Africa and Europe. He calls for a review of the relations between the two continents, and proposes a thoughtful realignment of economic, political and cultural exchanges. In chapter 7, Gelpi calls for the increased independence of international administrators in order to avoid the commodification of multilateral co-operation.

In Part II, Gelpi exposes professional/vocational training as an inadequate response to global de-structuring. He distinguishes between the notions of work, employment and citizenship, three areas where adult education can make a difference, but only if it addresses the collective dimension of human experience. By individualising education and training, we become reliant on the false notion of 'competence', which Gelpi equates with 'competition'. In the context of globalisation, much of what passes as vocational education becomes an 'alibi to persuade workers in the North and South to reduce the cost of labour by increasing its intensity.' This, warns Gelpi, is a political agenda. Therefore, adult education must respond to the larger political/economic/cultural issues of production and work, rather than be contained within the ideological enclosure of individualistic, competency-based training.

Ettore Gelpi's book, *Education des Adultes: Inclusion et Exclusion* raises fundamental issues that challenge our current thinking in the areas of adult education and training. It offers a global perspective on the politics of exclusion and the role of adult education both as a potential accessory to the exclusion process, or as a valuable opposing force. While carefully avoiding a sanctimonious or moralising tone, Gelpi succeeds in depicting the urgency of action in the face of fundamental world issues which inform and are informed by the adult education experience.

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Ronald G. Sultana (1997) (ed.), *Inside/Outside Schools: Towards a Critical Sociology of Education in Malta*. Malta, PEG, pp. 477 pages. ISBN: 99909-0-083-3.

I would like to share my reactions to this collection of readings by referring to my experience of schools and education in Malta. In recent years, I have made three visits to the islands as an external examiner, going to about 50 classrooms in 30 state and non-state schools to observe student-teachers in action. What has struck me during these visits is the warmth, generosity and vitality of the Maltese people, the richness of Malta's cultural heritage reflected in its language, buildings, towns and villages, customs, and traditions. Despite the obvious changes the islands are going through, there is a stable Catholicism which permeates many aspects of people's lives. For some it underpins faith and beliefs; for others it may simply be a taken for granted part of the culture.

With regards to the world of Maltese schools, what is immediately striking is the practice of differentiation. There is differentiation between sectors (state, church, independent), and between schools within the same sector (streaming in primary schools, and between different types of secondary schools, such as junior lyciums, area secondaries, schools for under-achievers, trade schools, schools for students with special needs). Differentiation is also practiced in the post-16 sector, with the junior college, vocational institutes and establishments, and apprenticeship schemes having the status of separate tracks, with little connection between them. Such differentiation is clearly and intimately linked to life-chances, both in terms of educational and occupational futures. This is one of the key themes that Sultana's collection of readings addresses head-on: the role that differentiated schooling plays in social reproduction, that is in the allocation of futures to children, apparently on the basis of 'ability', but in fact on the basis of social and gender backgrounds.

Another feature of Maltese schools that immediately comes to mind is the dominance of transmission models of teaching and learning. This comes across in all areas, including curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. The National Minimum Curriculum, for instance, seems to focus rather more on coverage and on provision, rather than on mastery and attainment. There is much control of the teaching process by teachers. I have often noticed high levels of didactic skills which, however, are particularly inappropriate for young children. Pupils seem to be predominantly assessed by exams and tests. Children learn to be passive: they have procedural knowledge, in the sense that they have learned their assigned roles and know how to conform to the rules, and to please teachers. But they seem to be poorly motivated for *depth* of knowledge. Both teachers and students are

therefore often 'caught up in a 'comfort zone', where routines (for questions and answers, for exercises, for behaviour) are negotiated and known. There is a definite 'routinisation' of teaching, and a sense of 'drifting' on the part of pupils. This does not reflect the vitality that is apparent in many aspects of Maltese culture. The key question therefore seems to be: How does one get to higher order cognitive challenges, where imaginative, creative problem-solving pushes teacher and taught out of the 'comfort zone'? This is not to say that many of Malta's teachers and teachers-to-be are not working at high standards: indeed, the best I've seen are as good as any of the top teachers I have observed and evaluated elsewhere. What I am reacting to is rather more a systemic feature, one that permeates Maltese schooling so effectively that even promising, innovative teachers seem to get caught up by the overall emphasis on transmission, thus excluding those learners who do not respond well to such a model. Does this seemingly endemic feature of Maltese education really draw out the full potential of Maltese children?

What does Sultana's book offer to the development of a deeper understanding of some of the challenges that education in Malta has to face, including those that I have briefly outlined above?

Sultana's project falls within a set of sociological orientations and traditions in educational research. He is internationally recognised for his work, and well-networked with a particular group of educational sociologists that use critical theoretical perspectives in their analysis of schooling in modern times. His book aspires to fulfil what C. Wright Mills calls 'the sociological imagination': it engages with 'reality' as it is, in order to problematise it, to make appear 'strange' what must be so familiar to the Maltese, and to ask questions that oblige the reader to make choices about the meaning and value of education in a democratic society. While the book aims to provide 'a method of analysis', it in fact does more than that: because of the value commitments of the author and his team of writers, and due to the theoretical frameworks that are adopted, there is also a sense in which the project is prescriptive. There is thus an underlying formula in which: Empirical research + values + theory = prescription. Let us consider each aspect of this formula in turn.

First, there is *empirical research*. Much of this is qualitative and ethnographic in nature, with in-depth classroom and school observations clocking hundreds of hours of presence on the part of the research team. There is also quantitative data, the result of questionnaire surveys, as well as of a critical perusal of official statistics. Much of the information presented in the first and last part of the book is contextualised within an historical framework, so that practices and policies are linked to struggles and contests of various social groups, as they sought to define education over time. Policy analysis is another feature of the book, with an attempt being made to tease out the significance of particular decisions that have been taken by political and other interest groups. These different research tools cause

and support reflection about aims, processes and consequences in the field of education. They represent classic and well-respected forms of sociological analyses, and have been carefully executed and coherently argued in the book. They yield much important data on social difference in Malta, on structures of power, on school processes and how these are directly linked to life-chances of students. Part Two of the book, in particular, throws light on a variety of themes which are – or ought to be – of critical concern to Maltese citizens, including: streaming, examinations, rurality, private schooling, gender, educational and occupational choice, preparation for work, the socialisation of élites, absenteeism, and strategies for effective schooling for all, including those social groups that tend to under-achieve.

The second key element is *values*. The book is permeated with social democratic and humanistic commitments which promote 'emancipation', 'equality', 'empowerment'. The authors in Sultana's book want to see all children, irrespective of social, gender or 'ability' backgrounds, fulfil their potential. They want all of these children to enjoy a decent quality of life, in and beyond schools. The society that is implicitly held up as a model is a liberal, participatory (western) democracy, where solidarity between groups is promoted by educational practices. This is the dream of the Enlightenment, and clearly Sultana associates himself with the project of modernity rather than that of post-modernity. He and his team believe that the concept of community is possible, and if they expose the (often unintended) violence that goes on in schools, it is to ensure that all pupils are equally included and cared for.

Third, there is *theory*. Here the framework that is used is social reproduction theory, an approach which draws mainly on Marxist and neo-Marxist conceptual tools in order to show how education ends up becoming rather more an instrument of repression than emancipation, particularly for those groups in society that have little voice or power. This is a view of education and of society which presumes conflict between different interest groups. This is expressed particularly clearly in the second chapter of the book, where Sultana documents struggles related to access (to free education for all), to pedagogy (in Malta's case, the choice of the language of instruction), to curriculum (in the definition of what counts as legitimate knowledge), and to educational structures (in the option for differentiated rather than inclusive forms of schooling). The work is clearly inspired by such well-known authors as Apple, Bourdieu, Bowles and Gintis, Freire, Willis, Giroux, McLaren, to whom Sultana obviously owes a great debt. Indeed, one sometimes wonders about the extent to which the ethnographic studies are illustrative of these theories, rather than inductively grounded. All, with the exception of the chapter by Charles Grima, significantly entitled 'Why some working class children *succeed* at school' (my emphasis), tend to reflect the structuralist, often deterministic accounts that one finds in the parent theories, perhaps giving insufficient importance to the way pupils (and

teachers) contest, resist, and create meaning. Nevertheless, all the readings are very thought provoking, raising important, policy-related issues that educational leaders in Malta would do well to heed.

The final key element of the book is *prescription*. Having provided a framework, and having 'exposed' processes that take place in Maltese schools and classrooms, Sultana and his team argue that such understanding should lead to *action*. Indeed, teachers are expected to participate in the struggle for democracy, and to do so at two levels. At one level, a critical pedagogy of classroom practice is suggested. Teachers are invited to describe what they are doing, to understand its significance by informing it with theoretical reflection, to confront the implications of their action, and to reconstruct their practice in the light of such reflection. The set of questions that teachers are invited to address in the Appendix to Chapter 15 ('Teachers and the struggle for democracy: educators as political actors') is invaluable in challenging teachers to become the 'reflective practitioners' that is the hallmark of the true professional. But there is a second level at which the book encourages teachers to participate, and that is direct activism in the public sphere. Here, teachers are considered to be 'transformative intellectuals' whose influence extends beyond the classroom or the school to the community, where they are expected to help fellow citizens read not only the 'word', to quote Freire, but also the 'world'.

This is powerful stuff. It is optimistic and principled, and of great importance to the future of Maltese education. Two questions come to mind. The first one concerns the strategy that Sultana is proposing, a sort of radical, bottom-up, teacher-led model where the professional activity of dedicated teachers is expected to make a positive difference to structures, curriculum, pedagogy – in short, to the development of inclusive and democratic forms of schooling in Malta. This might be a good strategy, but I would argue that it probably needs to be complemented by a set of more gradualist and planned changes. Over the three years I have come to Malta, I have seen a number of very promising developments which, in the long run, seem bound to have a beneficial effect. I am referring here to the commitment to school development planning; to the continuous professional development of teachers and educational leaders, to curriculum reform, pedagogic innovation, and alternative assessment practices, and to the promotion of a partnership model with alliances being forged between politicians, Division, Faculty and Union. I know that Sultana, as Dean of the Faculty of Education, has worked hard to promote such alliances, and that he has been instrumental in bringing parents into the equation through the setting up of an association of school councils.

A second question that I would pose is this: is social reproduction within schools the most important question to be asked by a sociology of education in

Malta? Clearly this is of great importance, for we are here talking about a structural analysis of some of the more damaging aspects of schooling, namely inequality, differentiation, and the narrowing of options and the impairment of life-chances for so many children. But I can think of other issues that a sociology of Maltese education could also concern itself with, which are no less significant in the implications they have for the provision of a quality education. I am here thinking particularly of the influence of Maltese culture. The strengths of stability, identity and self-confidence which it offers are real. However, there could also be dangers were these strengths to over-balance into inertia, insularity or complacency. A visitor must be careful, but it is undoubtedly the case that Malta is exposed to international competition and long-term economic success can only be achieved by a single-minded concern with educational quality. If this is accepted, then some present practices may need to be reviewed. For instance, one might question the number of educational leaders who have great responsibilities, but who owe their position to seniority rather than merit; the decisions that are taken on the basis of convention or convenience rather than on the basis of a concern for quality; and the emphasis that is placed on control and authority that leads to conformity rather than to creativity. There are other major challenges to be faced: how can one develop citizens and workers dedicated to life-long learning, when what we offer in schools frequently puts children off learning? How can one value Maltese as a language of instruction, without leading to a further erosion of English and risk undermining an economic advantage and condemning children to relative isolation in our global village? How are the expectations and aspirations of Maltese teachers and parents to be met?

Sultana's book connects with these themes and many others, and fulfills the 'sociological imagination' admirably. I know it will be well received internationally. Sultana and his team raise some major issues, reminding us that it is worth struggling over the purposes of education, about what it is and what it might be if we really cared in bringing about a 'good society'. It is a book that has been published at a propitious and promising moment, when I sense a strengthening of relationships between educational partners on the island, and a strong, principled commitment to making a positive difference to students' lives inside/outside schools. The readings that Sultana proposes lead to precisely the debate that is needed, and together with the other contributors, the editor is to be warmly congratulated for the very professional and constructive way in which issues have been raised, and discussion initiated. For little is more important, at the dawn of the new millennium, than to ask: What is? And what might be?

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Peter McLaren, Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture: Oppositional Politics in a Postmodern Era, London and New York, Routledge, 1995, ISBN 0-415-11756-9 (pbk).

This book demystifies the predatory elements of an education process that claims to be neutral. It also disturbs the educator who considers his/her role within the education process as a transmitter of knowledge and moulder of values and attitudes. This is a book that will disappoint the *how-to* freak. On the other hand, it should excite those educators who are refusing to be deskilled by education systems that are becoming increasingly keen on pushing competency-based curricula.

By writing simultaneously about the hegemonic and liberatory potential of curricula, McLaren constantly challenges the reader to position him/herself politically. Readers are asked to choose from, on one hand, participation in an educational process that is oblivious to the fact that curricula select, privilege, support, and reproduce hegemonic forms of knowledge, visions and experiences, and, on the other hand, an educational experience that centres around the notion of curriculum as a site of contestation. The latter scenario provides educators and students with the possibility of questioning, problematising, countering and transforming predatory culture.

In his characteristically explosive and impassioned style, McLaren invites educators to 'dare conspire' to create a critical pedagogy that is able to provide a context for students to reject what they experience as given, normal and legitimate. For this pedagogical dream to materialise, the author argues that curriculum ought to be understood within a theory of 'interest and experience'. This means that curriculum is to be considered as a site of production and organisation of student experiences. These experiences unfold within historically-informed social forms such as language, organisation of knowledge and methodologies.

In diametric opposition to the hegemonic practice of silent and passive reception of official knowledge, McLaren considers the concept of voice as central to a critical pedagogy that is entrenched in experience. In keeping with Freire, who authored the preface, McLaren argues that student voice must be integral to a pedagogy that allows students to embrace and engage in the emancipatory politics of difference, described by McLaren as a 'fundamental condition for critical dialogue and the development of forms of solidarity rooted in the principles of trust, sharing, and a commitment to improving the quality of human freedom' (p. 45). An educational experience which is far superior to democratic tolerance.

While the concept of difference and voice guard against a melting-pot scenario, McLaren argues that the notion of border identity provides the framework for student-teacher-student exchanges. The concept of border identity addresses the problem of binary systems of thought. Border identity provides a more fluid interpretation of difference as opposed to the binary experience that is rooted in 'fixed difference'. Border identity invites students to mediate their own stories and assume 'narrative authority'.

A fundamental pedagogical dilemma associated with critical pedagogy is the educator's reconciliation of his/her authority with student's right to occupy space. In other words, how can an educator guard against unintentional devaluing of students' experience without turning the pedagogical process into a celebration of anything-goes pluralism? In keeping with Freire, who suggests that 'I don't hide my options from the students. But I also respect their choices' (in Schugurensky, 1998, p.23), McLaren consistently confronts this pedagogical dilemma by stressing that while educators cannot impose their subjectivity on their students, they should refuse to remain neutral or hide their agenda from them.

The importance of an ongoing research agenda to sustain critical pedagogy is highlighted in McLaren's dialogue with Kris Gutierrez. Gutierrez argues that critical pedagogy ought to be sustained by action-research that identifies how knowledge is constructed and legitimated in classrooms. While a better understanding of the social construction of classroom represents a selective, albeit very important, selection from the vast research agenda associated with critical pedagogy, the issue here is how schools could be transformed from 'the bottom up'? McLaren and Gutierrez rightly argue that direct participation of teachers in the research agenda of critical pedagogy should help them overcome the 'fear of theory'. Unless this hurdle is overcome, I will continue to agree with both authors that privileging of personal experience, combined with 'fear of theory', tends to degenerate into a space for sharing anecdotes or stories. In addition, 'fear of theory' cannot sustain a sophisticated analysis since it bars teachers from sharpening the language of critique.

Finally, McLaren's book constitutes a persistent attempt at answering the question often asked by students of critical pedagogy – 'empowerment for what?' While describing some of the most humiliating moment of predatory culture, the author suggests that critical pedagogy should transform and redirect the counterproductive manifestation of resistance evident in, for example, the lads in Paul Willis's case study. Unlike the resistance manifested by the lads, which is counter-productive and hegemonic, productive resistance, a by-product of the process of critical pedagogy, leads to self- and social empowerment. The ultimate goal is the formation of 'communities of resistance' with the specific aim of

'de-othering subjugated groups' and strengthening the project of democracy and social justice.

Peter McLaren's confluent contribution to educators engaged in transformative action is wide-ranging, stimulating and engaging. Unfortunately, however, the uninitiated may struggle to access the transdisciplinary language in which his ideas are couched.

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CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

'International Education: Interactions with the Wider Community'

Tenth Annual EAIE (European Association for International Education) Conference, 22-24 November 1998, Stockholm, Sweden. Further information from: EAIE Secretariat, PO Box 11189, 1001 GD Amsterdam, The Netherlands. E-mail: eaie@eaie.nl

'Impact of Virtual Environment and Cyber-societies on Learning and Teaching'

A CAL99 conference, 28-31 March 1999, at the Institute of Education, London. E-mail: p.orme@dial.pipex.com

'Voices in Gender Education'

2nd International Conference on Gender and Education, 29-31 March 1999, University of Warwick. Further information from Jane McKie, e-mail: voices@warwick.ac.uk

'Changing Education in a Changing Society'

ATEE (Association for Teacher Education in Europe) Spring University, 6-9 May 1999, University of Klaipeda, Lithuania. More information from: ATEE Spring University, Klaipeda University, H. Manto 84, 5808 Klaipeda, Lithuania. Tel.: +370.6.212294; +370.6.256526; E-mail: Elvyrag@hgf.ku.lt

'Adult Learning: Empowering People for the Next Millennium'

International conference on adult education, May 18-20 1999, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, at the Jamaica Grande Hotel, as part of the ICAE (International Council for Adult Education) Sixth World Assembly, May 16-24, 1999. Further information from: ICAE, 720 Bathurst Street, Suite 500, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2R4, Canada. Tel. 416 588-1211; Fax.: 416 588-5725; E-mail: icae@web.net

'Almost 2000: Crises and Challenges in Teacher Education'

The Third International Conference on Teacher Education, Beit Berl College, Israel, June 27 to July 1, 1999, organised by the MOFET Institute. Further

information from: Conference Secretariat, Beit Berl College, Beit Berl 44905, Israel. Tel.: +972.9.7476269; Fax: +972.9.7478751; E-mail: barkan@beitberl.ac.il Web-site: <http://www.congress/macam98.ac.il/english>

'Researching alienation in the light of globalization'

Interim seminar in Conjunction with the 34th World Congress of the *International Institute of Sociology*, in Tel Aviv, Israel, July 11-15, 1999. Deadline for submission of Abstracts: November 15, 1998. The conceptualization of alienation has undergone interesting changes in the last decade. While philosophers continue to investigate the inner significance of the construct of alienation, many researchers have focused on explorations of Marxist theory, attempting to draw conclusions about how to describe conditions of alienation in contrast to conditions of de-alienation, or liberation. Others have followed the lead of empiricists, formulating and adapting measures for locating alienation in responses to pen and pencil tests, in discourse, and in behavior. The development of globalization sets new challenges for social scientists. In a world linked by presumably irrevocable economic ties and political interests, which stretch across continents and oceans, the appropriateness of thinking in terms of alienation has to be re-examined. Variations in objective alienation as a function of different kinds of social order is one pole of interest. At the other pole, there is the variability of the social psychological and psycho-analytic evidence of alienation. A sociological understanding of the ways in which theories of alienation help us to grasp structure and process necessarily has implications for political action on every level of analysis. Further details from the organizer: Dr. Devorah Kalekin-Fishman, President, RC36, Faculty of Education, University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel 31905, Tel: +972-4-8642032; Fax: +972-4-8240911; E-mail: dkalekin@construct.haifa.ac.il

'Advanced Learning Communities in the New Millennium'

EARLI Biennial Meeting, 25-29 August 1999, Goteborg, Sweden. Further information from web site: <http://www.ped.gu.se/biorn/earli/call1a.html>

BERA 1999 Annual Conference

British Educational Research Association annual conferences: Student conference 1-2 September 1999; Main conference 2-5 September 1999, at the University of Sussex, Brighton, U.K.

**'Teachers' Professional Knowledge and Reference Disciplines of
Teacher Education'**

Twenty fourth annual ATEE (Association for Teacher Education in Europe) Conference, 30 August - 5 September 1999, Leipzig, Germany. Please address all correspondence to: Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Hörner, Universität Leipzig, Erziehungswissenschaftliche Fakultät, Vergleichende Pädagogik, Karl-Heine-Str. 22b, D-04229, Leipzig, Germany. Tel. +49.341.9731431; Fax.: +49.341.9731439; E-mail: hoerner@rz.uni-leipzig.de



ABSTRACTS

SOCIAL RELATIONS AND SCHOOL CHOICE IN SPAIN

XAVIER RAMBLA

L'article présente le résultat d'une analyse des raisonnements quotidiens des parents (surtout des mères) et des professeurs sur le choix de l'école en Espagne. La structure de l'analyse est une réflexion générale sur le choix de l'école, ainsi qu'une hypothèse spécifique sur son institutionnalisation en Espagne. La typologie de Windisch (1992) du raisonnement du chaque jour déchiffre comment les deux parties de la relation sociale, à savoir les professeurs et les parents, justifient cela. La conclusion indique que la classe et le sexe sont des facteurs marquants pour expliquer le choix d'école dans divers contextes institutionnels.

L'article presenta el resultat d'una anàlisi dels raonaments quotidians de les mares i del professorat sobre la tria d'escola a Espanya. El marc de l'anàlisi és una reflexió general sobre la tria d'escola, i també una hipòtesi específica sobre la seva institucionalització a Espanya. Gràcies a la tipologia de Windisch (1992), és possible distingir quina mena de raonaments fan servir les dues bandes de la relació social establerta en triar centre educatiu, és a dir, les famílies i el professorat. La conclusió indica que la classe i el gènere són factors rellevants per a explicar la tria d'escola en diversos contextos institucionals.

تقدم الدراسة نتائج التحليل الموضوعي حول تفكير الوالدين (وخاصة الامهات) والمعلمين حول الاختيار المدرسي في اسبانيا. ويتركز اطار التحليل على مناقشة عامة حول اختيار الوالدين ومناقشة محددة حول ترسيخ هذا الاختيار في اسبانيا بشكل تأسيسي. ويشير نموذج "وينديش" (1992) للتفكير اليومي الى أن طرفي العلاقة الاجتماعية، أي المعلمين والوالدين يبررون هذا الاختيار. وتستخلص الدراسة أن الطبقة الاجتماعية والجنس هما عاملان هامان في عملية تفسير الاختيار المدرسي في مختلف الخلفيات التأسيسية.

'IT'S THEIR JOB, NOT OURS!': HOME-SCHOOL RELATIONS IN CYPRUS

HELEN PHTIAKA

Dans un article précédant (Phtiaka, 1996), j'ai examiné la relation entre la maison et l'école à Chypre du point de vue de l'école. Cet article est un complément qui explore les vues des parents sur les relations maison-école. Il examine les motivations et les prises de décision des parents, et se demande de ce qui se cache derrière l'absence parentale de l'école. Pour finir, il cherche à enrichir notre compréhension des relations maison-école en identifiant ce que différents groupes de parents veulent et ce dont ils ont besoin de l'école. L'article est basé sur neuf études de cas de familles dont les enfants sont en deuxième année d'école primaire et il se développe à partir d'une recherche effectuée pendant la première année des enfants à l'école. Les résultats indiquent que toutes les familles sans exception se préoccupent de l'éducation de leurs enfants et en acceptent la responsabilité. Ils sont très positifs dans leur évaluation de l'école et des enseignants, et acceptent l'autorité des enseignants en ce qui concerne l'éducation. Pour finir, tous les parents sont d'accord sur le fait que la coopération entre la maison et l'école est positive pour les enfants. Les familles sont néanmoins divisées quant à leur approche vis à vis de l'école car elles ont des expériences variées de l'école. Ils expriment différents besoins et attentes de l'école selon le groupe auquel ils appartiennent: le surengagé, le groupe du milieu, ou le marginalisé. L'article tire la conclusion que, vue la bonne volonté parentale, c'est la responsabilité de l'école d'initier le contact avec les familles selon leurs propres termes et d'éviter d'interpréter leur attitude à travers un modèle de déficit, demandant à la vaste majorité des parents ce que seule une petite minorité peut procurer.

Σε ένα προηγούμενο άρθρο (Phtiaka 1996) ασχολήθηκα με τη σχέση ανάμεσα στο σχολείο και το σπίτι στην Κύπρο, ιδωμένη από την οπτική γωνία του σχολείου. Αυτό το άρθρο ολοκληρώνει την εικόνα, μελετώντας την άποψη των γονιών στις σχέσεις Σχολείου-Σπιτιού. Εξετάζει τα κίνητρα και τις αποφάσεις των γονιών, και ρωτά τι κρύβεται πίσω από τη γονεϊκή απουσία από το σχολείο. Τέλος προσπαθεί να εμπλουτίσει την γνώση μας σχετικά με τις σχέσεις σχολείου-σπιτιού, εντοπίζοντας τι είναι εκείνο που διαφορετικές ομάδες γονιών θέλουν και ζητούν από το σχολείο. Το άρθρο βασίζεται σε εννέα μελέτες περίπτωσης οικογενειών παιδιών που πηγαίνουν στη δεύτερα τάξη του "Δημοτικού Σχολείου Εξοχής" και χτίζει πάνω σε έρευνα που έγινε στον πρώτο χρόνο της φοίτησης των παιδιών στο σχολείο. Τα αποτελέσματα δείχνουν ότι όλες οι οικογένειες χωρίς εξαίρεση νοιάζονται για την εκπαίδευση των παιδιών τους και αναλαμβάνουν την ευθύνη γι' αυτήν. Είναι πολύ θετικές στις αξιολογήσεις του σχολείου και των δασκάλων, και παραδέχονται την αυθεντία των δασκάλων σε όλα τα εκπαιδευτικά θέματα. Τέλος,

THE GAP BETWEEN INTENTION AND ATTAINMENT IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: A SYNDROME REVISITED. THE CASE OF THE REFORM IN TECHNOLOGICAL STUDIES IN ISRAEL

IRIS GEVA-MAY
ISAAC LEVIN

Cette étude analyse le syndrome inhérent à la différence existant entre l'établissement et l'application d'une politique, comme par exemple, dans le cas d'une réforme du système secondaire proposée par le Département Technologique du Ministère de l'Education Israélien. La politique de réforme dans le domaine technologique inspirée par les grands progrès réalisés ces dernières années sera au centre de cette recherche mais il sera également étudié le degré d'application versus de facto attendu. L'outil destiné à mesurer le niveau d'application sera une comparaison des conditions requises des examens du baccalauréat avant et après le début de la réforme. Cette analyse se concentre sur le domaine de l'électronique et l'électricité. Elle s'interroge sur la validité de l'application de la réforme proposée et remet en question la validité des examens du bac en tant qu'outil destiné à évaluer l'application de la réforme. La différence entre l'intention initiale et l'actuelle application de la politique sera analysée et discutée.

הפעד בין כוונות להשגת יעדים ביישום מדיניות: דיון בסינדרום.
המקרה של הרפורמה בלמודים הטכנולוגיים בישראל

תקציר

מחקר זה מנתח את הסינדרום הקיים בפער שבין קביעת ויישום מדיניות, כפי שהדבר בא לידי ביטוי במקרה של הרפורמה בבתי-הספר התיכוניים שביתמת משרד החינוך והתורבות, אגף הטכנולוגיה, בישראל. מדיניות הרפורמה בנתיב הטכנולוגי קיבל תאוצה עקב ההתקדמות האדירה בתחום זה בשנים האחרונות. רמת היישום המצופה של רפורמה זו לעומת מידת היישום בפועל – נדונה בעבודה זו.

כלי ההערכה של רמת היישום הוא הדרישות במבחני הבגרות לפני ואחרי הרפורמה. הניתוח מתמקד במסלול האלקטרוניקה והחשמל.

ניתוח זה קורא תגר למהימנות תהליך היישום של הרפורמה המוצעת, ושל מבחני הבגרות ככלי שיכול למדוד יישום. מאמר זה דיון גם בפער שבין הכוונות המקוריות של מקבלי ההחלטות ויישום מדיניות הרפורמה הלכה למעשה.

מילות מפתח:

טבירות, טכנולוגיה, חשמל, בחינות בגרות, תוכנית למחים, מדידה, מהמנות, סקטוריות PST, רוטינה, אסטטסינה, יצירתיות, דיאגנוזה, אלקטרוניקה, רפורמה, מדיניות, יישום, פער, שחקנים, מיקום קבלת ההחלטות, מוטיבציה, אינטרסים.

ملخص:

هذا البحث يهدف إلى فهم الملامح المتفاوتة بين وضع سياسته وبين تطبيقها، كما يتناول في قضية الإصلاح في المدارس الثانوية التي وضعت من قبل وزارة المعارف والثقافة - قسم التكنولوجيا - في سرتيل. سياسة الإصلاح في المجال التكنولوجي حققت تقدماً ملموساً بسبب لتصور الكبير في هذا المجال في الآونة الأخيرة، مستوى التطبيق المتوقع لهذا الإصلاح مقابل مدى للتطبيق الفعلي يتم دراستها. في هذا البحث، أداة التقييم للقدرة الإنجاز هي متطلبات امتحانات البجروت قبل وبعد الإصلاح. تركز هذه الدراسة في مجال الإلكترونيكا والكهرباء. هذا التحليل يتسكك في مصداقية هذا الإصلاح المقترح وفي مصداقية امتحانات البجروت كأداة لقياس التطبيق والإنجاز. في هذا البحث يتم أيضاً دراسة التفاوت بين المقصد الأولي لصانعي السياسه وبين تطبيقها الفعلي.

كلمات أساسية:

اصلاح، سياسه، تنفيذ، تفاوت، مكان اتخاذ القرارات، حافز، ملامحه، تكنولوجيا، الكهرونيكا، كهرباء، دراسات، امتحانات بجروت، تقدير، شرعيه، مدرسه، ثانويه، معدل PST، روتيني، استراتيجيه، تفسير، ابداع، تخصيص، متفاج.

GREEK-CYPRIO T PUPILS' UNDERSTANDING OF NARRATIVE HISTORICAL CONCEPTS

TRYFON SKOUROS

Cet article rend compte d'un travail de recherche effectué à Chypre en Mai 1996 auprès d'élèves de 10-11 ans (5^{ème} année) de l'école primaire. La recherche se proposait de répondre à la question si oui ou non les élèves de cet âge maîtrisaient les concepts de narration historique contenus dans les programmes officiels d'histoire. La recherche avait également pour but d'étudier l'influence de certains facteurs comme l'âge, le sexe de l'élève et le niveau d'instruction de ses parents sur le développement et la compréhension de ces concepts chez les élèves de cet âge scolaire. A l'origine de cette recherche se trouve un souci pédagogique face aux difficultés supposées chez les élèves à comprendre ces concepts qui ont, à notre avis, une grande valeur éducative. Les résultats de l'enquête mettent en évidence l'existence du problème. En effet le niveau d'instruction des parents semble avoir un impact sur les performances des élèves.

Τό παρόν άρθρο αναφέρεται σε μια έρευνα που διεξήχθη στην Κύπρο το Μάη του 1996 και η οποία είχε ως βασικό στόχο να διακριβώσει κατά πόσο οι μαθητές της πέμπτης τάξης (10-11) που φοιτούν στα ελληνοκυπριακά δημοτικά σχολεία έχουν κατακτήσει τις «αφηγηματικές ιστορικές έννοιες» που περιέχονται στο αναλυτικό πρόγραμμα της ιστορίας. Η έρευνα είχε επίσης ως στόχο να εξετάσει κατά πόσο οι ακόλουθες ανεξάρτητες μεταβλητές επηρεάζουν μεμονωμένα ή και αλληλεπιδρώντας την ικανότητα των μαθητών της πέμπτης τάξης του δημοτικού σχολείου να κατανοούν τις προκαθορισμένες έννοιες: α) η ηλικία του μαθητή, β) το φύλο του μαθητή και γ) το μορφωτικό επίπεδο των γονιών. Η διεξαγωγή της έρευνας υπαγορεύτηκε βασικά από την υποτιθέμενη δυσκολία των μαθητών αυτής της ηλικίας να αναπτύσουν και να κατανοούν τις αφηγηματικές ιστορικές έννοιες των οποίων η εκπαιδευτική αξία είναι πολύ μεγάλη. Η έρευνα αποκάλυψε ότι οι μαθητές δεν είχαν κατακτήσει τις προκαθορισμένες έννοιες και επομένως επιβεβαίωσε την ύπαρξη του προβλήματος. Η έρευνα έδειξε ακόμα ότι το μορφωτικό επίπεδο των γονιών επηρεάζει σημαντικά την επίδοση των μαθητών.

تتطرق الدراسة الى بحث أُجري في قبرص في شهر ايار \ مايو ١٩٩٦ والذي كان موجها بشكل خاص الى تلاميذ السنة الخامسة (١٠ - ١١ سنة) في المدارس اليونانية - القبرصية الابتدائية. والهدف وراء البحث التأكد من أن هؤلاء التلاميذ كانوا قد استوعبوا المبادئ التاريخية الروائية الواردة في المنهج التاريخي الرسمي. كما استهدفت الدراسة بحث تأثير بعض العوامل والمتغيرات، مثل عمر التلاميذ وجنسهم ومستوى الوالدين التعليمي على تنمية واستيعاب هذه المبادئ من قبل تلاميذ السنة الخامسة الابتدائية. ومبرر الدراسة يتمثل في الصعوبة المزعومة التي تواجه التلاميذ (١٠-١١ سنة) في تفهم مبادئ تاريخية روائية ذات قيمة تعليمية كبيرة. وتشير نتائج الدراسة الى أن التلاميذ فشلوا في استيعاب المبادئ المحدد ولذا أكدت الدراسة وجود المشكلة. كما اتضح أن مستوى الوالدين التعليمي تأثيره الملحوظ في أداء التلاميذ.

CULTURAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY, COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND THE TEACHER'S ROLE

MIGUEL A. SANTOS-REGO
SERVANDO PÉREZ-DOMÍNGUEZ

Personne peut nier l'évidence que nous vivons tous dans une société de plus en plus diverse et interdépendante. Cette diversité affecte tous les secteurs de la société. L'éducation n'est certainement pas une exception. Pour obtenir les meilleurs résultats dans leur enseignement (et probablement aussi dans leur vie en général), les professeurs, et les éducateurs en général, doivent être préparés à mieux comprendre cette diversité, qui peut se manifester par une variété de langues et de dialectes différents, de croyances religieuses out éthiques, de groupes ethniques, de cultures, etc. Si l'enseignement est un défi, l'enseignement pour une compréhension interculturelle en est un encore plus grand. Le but de cet article est de montrer l'utilité de l'utilisation des techniques d'apprentissage coopératif dans l'enseignement. Dans l'article, nous faisons référence à une série de projets de recherche et d'expériences qui montrent que, quand les choses sont bien faites, l'utilisation de méthodes d'apprentissage coopératif dans des contextes multiculturels devient un outil très recommandable pour les éducateurs.

Nadie puede negar la evidencia de que todos/as nosotros/as vivimos (nos guste o no) en una sociedad cada vez más diversa e interdependiente. Esta diversidad afecta a todos los ámbitos de la sociedad. La educación, ciertamente, no es una excepción. Para obtener los mejores resultados en su enseñanza (y, probablemente, también en su vida en general), el profesorado, y los educadores en general, han de estar preparados para entender mejor esta diversidad, la cual puede manifestarse en una variedad de lenguas o dialectos diferentes, creencias éticas o religiosas, grupos étnicos, culturas, etc. Si la enseñanza es un reto, la enseñanza para un entendimiento intercultural es un desafío todavía mayor. El propósito de este artículo es mostrar la utilidad de la utilización de las técnicas de aprendizaje cooperativo (o colaborativo) en la enseñanza. En el artículo nos referimos a una serie de proyectos de investigación y experiencias que muestran que, cuando las cosas se hacen bien, el uso de métodos de aprendizaje cooperativo en contextos multiculturales llega a ser una herramienta muy recomendable para los educadores.

لا أحد ينكر أننا نعيش في مجتمع أصبح متنوعاً ومتوافقاً بشكل متزايد. ويؤثر هذا التنوع كافة مجالات المجتمع. ولا شك أن التعليم ليس غريباً عن هذا التنوع. وحصولاً على أفضل النتائج التعليمية (ورعاً أفضل النتائج الحياتية أيضاً) يتعين على المدرسين والمسؤولين عن التعليم بشكل عام أن يكونوا مستعدين لتفهم هذا التنوع بطريقة أفضل. وقد يشمل التنوع اللغات واللهجات والمعتقدات الدينية والأخلاقية والمجموعات العرقية والثقافية المختلفة. وإذا كان التعليم تحدياً، فالتعليم للمادف إلى فهم متعدد الثقافات هو تحدي أكبر. والمدف وراء الدراسة أن تؤكد جدوى استخدام الطرق التعليمية التعاونية في التعليم. وتتم الإشارة إلى عدد من مشاريع البحث والتجارب التي تؤكد أن تبني الطرق التعليمية التعاونية بشكل دقيق في ظروف التعددية الثقافية يجعل من هذه الطرق أداة مجدية جداً للمعلمين.

TEACHERS AND THEIR COLLECTIVE MISSION

DEVORAH KALEKIN-FISHMAN

Cet article est un rapport sur une recherche faite en 1994, quand les professeurs devaient traiter le thème défini par le Ministère, 'Israël dans une ère de paix'. Les participants comprenaient 83 enseignants employés dans les écoles d'état - 31 hommes et 46 femmes; 48 (juifs) dans des écoles où l'hebreux est la langue d'enseignement et 35 (palestiniens) d'écoles d'état dans lesquelles l'arabe est la langue d'enseignement. Dans les réponses des enseignants aux interrogations sur

des événements historiques, on trouve des indications sur la façon dont les professeurs se positionnent par rapport à la réalité créée en dehors de l'école. Dans tous les interviews les professeurs se présentent comme des gens qui évitent la confrontation, avec une conscience aigüe qu'il y a des bons et des mauvais moyens pour dévier les conflits. En général, les interprétations des professeurs juifs ne se combinent pas facilement avec une politique d'éducation des élèves pour la paix. Pour beaucoup d'entre eux, la réalité veut dire servir les desseins d'un état qui ne peut pas éviter le conflit, et nier cette définition ne change la perception de ce qui constitue une performance professionnelle adéquate. Les enseignants dans les écoles de langue arabe, d'un autre côté, tout en adoptant une perspective similaire sur l'action professionnelle, ont vu dans les changements de la politique de l'état une promesse d'un accomplissement académique d'ensemble et d'un progrès général pour l'éducation dans le secteur de langue arabe.

מורים ותפיסתם את שליחותם הקולקטיבית

עבודה זאת מדווחת על מחקר, אשר בוצע ב- 1994, כאשר משרד החינוך, התרבות והספורט בישראל הטיל על מורים לטפל בנושא השנתי: "ישראל בעידן של שלום". משתתפים כללו 83 מורים המועסקים בבתי ספר ממלכתיים - 37 גברים ו- 46 נשים; 48 יהודים בבתי ספר בהם עברית היא שפת ההוראה ו- 35 פלסטינאים מבתי ספר בהם ערבית היא שפת ההוראה. תשובותיהם של מורים לשאלות על אירועים היסטוריים, מצביעות על האופן בו הם מתייחסים למציאות הנרקמת מחוץ לכותלי בית הספר. בכל הראיונות המורים מציגים עצמם כאנשים הנמנעים מעימותים, אנשים בעלי מודעות עמוקה לדרכי העבודה ה'נכונות' ולדרכי העבודה ה'לא-נכונות' העומדות לרשותם כדי למנוע קונפליקטים בתוך בית הספר. באופן כללי, תפיסותיהם של המורים היהודיים אינן משתלבות בקל עם מדיניות הדוגלת בחינוכם של תלמידים לעידן של שלום. עבורם, המציאות דורשת שירות למדינה, הנתונה בהתנגשות אלימה מתמשכת. שלילת הגדרה זאת משמעה איום על תפיסתם של מה מהווה התנהגות פרופסיונלית מספקת. אם כי מורים בבתי ספר בהם ערבית היא שפת ההוראה, תופסים את התפקוד הפרופסיונלי של המורה באופן רומה, הם רואים בשינויי מדיניות החוץ של ישראל (ובהשפעתה על מדיניות החינוך) הזדמנות לתגבר הישגים עיוניים אצל התלמידים והבטחה של התקדמות משמעותית כללית עבור החינוך הערבי במדינה.

في هذه الورقة تقرير عن بحث أجري سنة ١٩٩٤ عندما كان على المعلمين أن يعالجوا موضوعاً حددته الوزارة هو "إسرائيل في عهد السلام". اشترك في هذا الموضوع ٨٣ معلماً ومعلمة من الذين يعملون في المدارس الرسمية مقسمين كالتالي: ٣٧ معلماً و٤٦ معلمة، ٤٨ معلماً ومعلمة من اليهود الذين يعملون في مدارس عبرية و٣٥ معلماً ومعلمة من العرب الإسرائيليين الذين يعملون في مدارس عربية. في اجابات المعلمين عن تساؤلات طرحته حول أحداث تاريخية معينة ظهرت اشارات تدل على كيفية استجابة هؤلاء المعلمين لأحداث الواقع التي نشأت خارج المدرسة. في كل المقابلات التي أجريت قدم هؤلاء المعلمون أنفسهم كأشخاص يتجنبون المواجهة واعين بشكل واضح لوجود طرق صحيحة وطرق أخرى خاطئة لتجنب هذه المواجهة. بشكل عام، نجد أن التفسيرات التي قدمها المعلمون اليهود لا تتكلم بسهولة مع سياسة تنقيف الطلاب للسلام. لكثيرين منهم يعني الواقع خدمة أهداف دولة لا تستطيع أن تتجنب الصراع، وانكار هذا الأمر يهدد الفهم الصحيح لمعنى هذا العمل المهني السليم. من جهة أخرى فإن المعلمين العرب الذين يتبنون وجهة نظر ذات اهتمام مشابه بالعمل المهني السليم يرون التغيرات في سياسة الدولة وعدا لإنجازات أكاديمية شاملة وتقدماً عاماً في التعليم في الوسط العربي.

TEACHERS AS TRAINERS: THE CASE OF TEACHING REPATRIATED ADULTS IN GREECE

ZOI PAPANAOUM

Cet article examine la profession enseignante dans le contexte de la société apprenante où l'instruction est un processus qui s'étale sur toute la vie et qui est soutenu par diverses dispositions éducatives. La première partie développe l'idée que le rôle du professeur doit être rédéfini afin d'être aligné pour les principes d'apprentissage tout au long de la vie et inclure le rôle de formateur adulte. Dans la deuxième partie, des données empiriques sur le profil et les besoins de formation des professeurs enseignant aux adultes rapatriés sont présentés et discutés en fonction des implications que leur nouveau rôle cause en ce qui concerne leur formation.

Στο άρθρο αυτό εξετάζεται το επάγγελμα του εκπαιδευτικού στα πλαίσια της κοινωνίας της μάθησης, όπου η μάθηση θεωρείται ως μία δια βίου διαδικασία και υποστηρίζεται από ποικίλες εκπαιδευτικές παροχές. Στο πρώτο μέρος υποστηρίζεται ότι πρέπει να επαναπροσδιοριστεί ο ρόλος του εκπαιδευτικού, έτσι ώστε να εναρμονιστεί με τις αρχές της δια βίου μάθησης και να συμπεριλάβει το ρόλο του εκπαιδευτή ενηλίκων. Στο δεύτερο μέρος, παρουσιάζονται εμπειρικά δεδομένα για το προφίλ και τις εκπαιδευτικές ανάγκες εκπαιδευτών παλινοστούτων ενηλίκων και συζητούνται οι επιπτώσεις της διεύρυνσης του ρόλου τους για την εκπαίδευσή τους.

تبحث الدراسة المهنة التعليمية في إطار المجتمع المتعلم حيث يُنظر إلى التعليم بصفته عملية طويلة مدى الحياة ومدعومة بمختلف الشروط التعليمية. وتؤكد الدراسة في جزئها الأول أنه ينبغي إعادة تحديد دور المعلم ليصبح منسجما مع مبادئ التعليم مدى الحياة ويشمل كذلك دور المدرب البالغ. وفي جزئها الثاني تقدم الدراسة المستجدات التجريبية حول التفاصيل المهنية والحاجات التعليمية للمعلمين المسؤولين عن تعليم البالغين الذين اعيدوا إلى أرض الوطن مع مناقشة تلك المستجدات من وجهة نظر ما يتضمنه دور هؤلاء المعلمين الجديد فيما يخص تدريبهم وإصدار شهاداتهم.

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Antoine Houlde's

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est-ce que
l'éducation*

puf

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