

Abstracts

What Do You Do in the Morning When You Rise? Predicaments and Challenges in Conceptualizing the Missions and Practices of Teachers and Educators

Nimrod Aloni

“It happens that the stage sets collapse,” writes Albert Camus, and we find ourselves submerged in mechanical life, lacking a sense of direction, meaning and purpose – experiencing the anxiety of the absurd. It so happens that in most cases it is followed by an awakening of thought, manifested in a demand for regaining logic, justification and orientation. In this paper I seek to explore the anxiety of the absurd as experienced by idealist teachers and educators. It focuses not so much on the personal experience but rather on the sense of meaninglessness, relativism, or even nihilism that characterizes the personal and public predicaments regarding the true mission of education and its most desirable practices. I offer in the paper an "updating" for five key concepts in the educational discourse, conceiving them as having edifying and empowering effects on present day teachers and educators. I begin with treating the notions of education and culture and then move to another three: morality, measure, and good taste.

Knowledge Biases and Learning Processes In the Educational System

Adiv Gal, Yoav Gal

The article addresses knowledge biases which inherently are flawed decision-making processes within institutions of knowledge, such as high schools and undergraduate colleges. This is a qualitative research which claims that although the core task of the educational institutions is to facilitate learning processes and knowledge, these are substantially and significantly biased. The knowledge biases cause misjudgment of the products of knowledge and an incorrect assessment of the goals and objectives required of the educational systems. The article came to reveal inherent problems in the process of learning and argues that the amendments of the existing system would not help. The conclusion we reached is that a different management approach is required to cope with the changing environmental conditions. The importance of knowledge biases in institutions of knowledge is to understand the mechanisms of the knowledge biases which may help the next stage in the development of learning processes tailored to the changing environment.

How Do Teachers Perceive “Ofek Chadash” Courses for the Second Year of Teaching?

Tsafi Timor

The study explored the satisfaction rate of teachers who participated in “Ofek Chadash” courses designated for the second year of teaching. In addition, it tested the correlations between four measures used to evaluate the courses: course design and quality of teaching; classroom climate; student-teacher relationship; generic versus subject-oriented courses. The study also focused on the differences perceived between second-year courses and the courses that teachers took in their first year of teaching (internship). The study followed a conceptual change in the courses’ syllabi which was initiated by the course coordinator, via a collaborative online site for the lecturers. The number of teachers who participated in the study was 187 and the number of courses was 13, part of which were generic and dwelled on educational and pedagogical themes, and part of which were subject-oriented (English, Physical Education, Special Education, Kindergarten Teachers). The questionnaires contained 20 multiple-choice questions on the Likert Scale that were processed statistically, and four open-ended questions that were subject to content analysis.

The findings suggest overall satisfaction from the courses and from the lecturers. The first 3 measures were found to be correlated with overall satisfaction, whereas the fourth measure was found not to be correlated with teachers’ satisfaction. Most teachers perceived OFEK Courses and the Internship Courses as essentially different (the former as professional learning groups and the latter as support groups).

The conclusions are that efforts should continue in the process of upgrading the syllabi and improving the courses so that novice teachers can benefit from them.

Teaching Civics and Instilling Democratic Values in Israeli High School Students: The Duality of National and Universal Aspects

Nitza Davidovitch, Dan Soen

Civic studies in Israel and elsewhere are unlike any other school subject. This course of study has a higher purpose – to transform students into good citizens. In contrast to other core subjects, civics in essence strives to realize ethical goals. While other subjects perceive the instilling of values as a secondary outcome, in civics the ultimate goal is to teach values. In Israel, civic studies are currently a compulsory subject for high school students, and they are required to learn, know, and understand essential values, principles, and characteristics of Jewish Israeli democracy (since Israel is officially

defined as a Jewish and Democratic State). The operational objective of this process is to teach good citizenship and wise involvement in public life in a democratic Jewish state. In the current study the authors examined to what degree students assimilate these values in practice. For this purpose, the authors administered a questionnaire measuring views on values. It consisted 16 items on the significance of various values, ranging from the national to the universal. The questionnaire was administered at two points in time to over 1,600 students in public high schools. In addition, the authors also administered the questionnaire to 300 teenagers active in youth movements, with the aim of comparing the value mix of the two populations. Sampling was performed at two points in time – in the eleventh and twelfth grades, in order to examine the effect of the matriculation exam in civics. Research findings indicated that for both groups and both points in time the hierarchy of values placed universal values highest, followed by values of self-realization, Zionism, and religiosity, respectively. Research conclusions show compatibility between the significance accorded these values in the curriculum and the significance attributed by students.

How Waldorf School Graduates Cope With the Challenges They Face During Military Service: A Ten-Year Overview

Gilad Goldschmidt

This article reviews part of a study that addressed the subject of how Waldorf School graduates integrate into Israeli society on completing high school, as seen from their perspective. The purpose of the study was to explore how, and to examine the nature and quality of life readiness that the Waldorf educational method provides its students. Three main areas of life were reviewed in the study: graduates in the one-year volunteer framework, in the regular military framework, and in academic studies. Of these, the current study reviews only the military service framework. The study applied qualitative methodology, including semi-structured interviews with 46 graduates of the Waldorf School in Harduf, Israel, following twelve full years of study. This is the first study of Waldorf-educated graduates ever conducted worldwide relying solely on qualitative methodology, and the only study conducted in Israel thus far. The study's main conclusion is that the Waldorf School, as an education system emphasizing artistic and creative manifestation, hands-on work, a connection with nature, warm personal relationships, and an absence of exams and grades, can produce graduates who successfully cope with the challenges they face following completion of school, and in this particular case, the challenges of coping with military service in the IDF. One of the questions surfacing from the study is whether it is also possible to implement Waldorf School methods and approaches fully or partially in the framework of other governmental education systems.

The Place of Intuition in Education

Yossef Abinun

In this article we consider the following issues:

1. Definitions and characteristics of intuition.
2. What are the interpretations and the implications of these characteristics.
3. Suggestions for cultivating and encouraging intuition in education.
4. Reflections on possible distinction between real intuitions and pseudo or imaginative intuitions.

Environmental Education in a Liberal Democracy

Itai Eliav

The examines the conceptual – philosophical space of environmental education within the conceptual framework of a liberal democratic state, in light of one of the major philosophical theories of political morality in our days – the liberal theory of the philosopher John Rawls. The main questions that the article deals with are: (1) whether, given the importance of the environmental issue nowadays, the liberal state must include environmental education as part of the contents of compulsory education. If so, (2) what environmental contents should be included, and what is the educational status of all the other environmental contents? These questions arise from one of the major liberal ideas, according to which the state should refrain from promoting a particular conception of the “good life”, and must maintain neutrality regarding this matter. That is, the state must respect the freedom of the individual to shape his own life even if his way of life is non-environmental. It seems apparent that this liberal characteristic requires the state to refrain from preaching through the education system to promote a good attitude for green values. The article will show that the liberal theory of Rawls brings the liberal state to include to a certain extent environmental education as part of obligatory citizenship studies. The article will describe the characteristics of this environmental education, which I will call ‘thin sustainability’. Then the status of other environmental contents which is not included in the thin sustainability will be discussed. Showing that although there is no obligation to include it as part of the compulsory education, there is no prevention to add it as permissible contents. Additionally, there is no preventing schools which promote green values and ideologies to go beyond the curricular of the thin sustainability.

Summer Learning: A Big Headache?

Avikam Gazit

Education Minister Shay Piron announced in late November 2013 that the summer vacation will be shortened and three weeks of school activities will be added in the summer and will not be conducted by teachers. This post has not caused widespread public furor because the teachers realized that this will not harm their employment conditions, the students realized that this will not add hours of study and the parents realized that this will remove them three weeks of “ecstasy”. Studies show that during the summer holidays students from lower socio-economic levels lose part of the knowledge gained in school. For these poorer levels students an extended vacation sums up to boredom and inactivity since these families have no budget for summer camps with pleasure activities and other outings. This article aims to present different attitudes towards the shortcut of the summer holidays of scholars as well as of parents, teachers and students in Israel and Turkey.

The Way to Educational Leadership: The Missing Link in Evaluating Teachers

Koby Gutterman

Improving student achievement and strengthening learning depends on improving teaching. That in turn, largely depends on observations of teaching and unmediated discourse on the observed lesson. However, teachers’ evaluation processes using the “Teacher Performance Evaluation in Israel” performed since 2010 does not contribute to the advancement of teaching and serves mostly as a tool for summative evaluation and not as a formative process for the improvement of teaching, as much as a thermometer does not lower fever but rather measures it. Even though evaluation tools contribute to a common language as summative evaluation, it support to the advancement of teaching is highly questionable (Berliner, 2005). The missing link in teacher assessment is the understanding that promoting teaching is made possible primarily through classroom observations as a tool for enhancement rather than evaluation. This paper tries to point out the advantages of classroom observations and pedagogical discourse to cultivate and improve teaching.

**Pedagogical Guidance:
Can the Personal and the Professional Walk Together?**

Dafna Hammer-Budnaro

This paper aims to present the tension between the personal and the professional within the professional identity of pedagogical consultants /guides through Life Story narratives. The study aims to show implications regarding pedagogical guidance, the role of the guide in constructing the professional identity of teacher trainees and the use of Life Story narratives as a tool for observation and empowerment for both the guide and the guiding process. The writer wishes to share her own personal journey and process, as well as share the personal, professional and cultural insight she has gained.

First Generation - Third Generation: A Bridge Above the Abyss

Nilly Keren, Nava Semel

The article deals with the development of the intergenerational dialogue between Holocaust survivors (First Generation) and their grandchildren (Third Generation) The article focuses on the special aspects of this dialogue through the writings of Nava Semel – a Second Generation novelist, and especially through her novel “And the Rat Laughed”.

The Carmel Market

Liora Gvion

The gentrification of the area of the Carmel market in Tel-Aviv provided me with the opportunity to study how space is produced, reproduced, and transformed through social practices of privileged and marginalized populations and groups that benefit from the rejuvenation of area. In their spatial routines, users of space create and negotiate a variety of meanings. The Carmel market was chosen as a case study because the gentrification of the area has forced vendors to adjust to the needs of a growing number of professional, middle-class clients who have moved into the neighborhood over the past ten years. The merchants interpret their interactions with these clients as an opportunity to transform the Carmel market into a vibrant and important public space in the city and to compensate for their lack of social upward mobility.

President and Pedagogue: Lázaro Cárdenas del Rio

Eitan Ginzberg

The present article will analyze the thinking and work of one of the most prominent statesmen of modern Mexico, who served as President from 1934 to 1940 - Lázaro Cárdenas del Rio. While serving as an officer and later a General in the Mexican Revolutionary Army during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917), Cárdenas, still a very young man, conceived a prophetic vision of a perfect Mexican society, to which he dedicated all his life thereupon. His vision, based on ideals of democracy, collaboration, national agreement and modernism, as engraved in the Constitution which signified the end of the bloody military struggle of the Revolution, was implemented in an unprecedented subtlety, quietness, peacefulness and respect, although it meant fundamental changes in power relations in Mexico. To this special nation formation, we wish to call pedagogical, we dedicate the article. Its objective is to examine the question whether – so it seems – two contradictory concepts – Politics and Pedagogy – could be appeased while being employed by a dedicated politician and a notable state and society building project, avoiding the former to take over the latter, and using it as an axe to grind.

“Fire Time”: Rejection or Inclusion of Ethiopian Students in a Boarding School

Dan Soen

Since the 1990's two groups of immigrants entered Israel. They were very different in their historical background, their cultural context and their size. Both these groups – the new-comers from the former USSR and from Ethiopia– experienced absorption difficulties. This paper focuses on the integration of Ethiopian boarding school students against their ethnic salience (their black color) and their sense of discrimination and deprivation.

The analysis of their integration and adaptation is based on a survey carried out among 70 Ethiopian boarders, using a questionnaire focusing on 5 domains of integration and adaptation, viz. support/acceptance/ absorption or social adoption; size and depth of social nets; cultural tolerance towards the original culture of the Ethiopian students; their sense of socio-cultural integration in Israel; their absorption of the Israeli culture components.

On the whole the research indicated median integration and adaptation, with one exception – a very high acceptance of the Israeli culture components.

The Triangle of Conflict:

A Viewpoint of Working and Learning Families on the Conflict: Family, Career and Higher Education - A Gender Analysis

Rina Shachar, Maayan Nitzan-Kravzov, Avital Torem

The aim of the study was to conduct through gender analysis the causes and implications of the triangle of conflict on working parents when they choose to add higher education into the equation. The issue of lifelong learning has recently become essential for the working individual who must continually develop new abilities and skills to cope with career insecurity, to advance and to succeed. The viewpoint of the social surroundings as well as the viewpoints of these parents challenged with their daily life, having to cope with the situation in which one or both spouses raise children, are employed and study at an academic institute were investigated. Very few studies have dealt with this subject to date and most if not all relate to women and are studies on women.

The research population included 82 men and women equally divided, ages 25 to 55. All of the participants were parents of small or adolescent children who had to cope with raising a family, advancing their career and studying in higher education frameworks all at the same time. The main findings of the study revealed that: (a) the first and foremost factor for parents in delaying their higher education studies, is the economic factor; (b) The second factor influencing the decision to study is lack of leisure time; (c) the social surroundings seemingly support parents who study, but an uncompromising threshold is placed on the mother in relation to caring for the children and maintaining the home; (d) a slight tendency and preference was revealed for the father to study rather than the mother, whereby losing family quality time is a consideration; (e) there is a consensus concerning the assumption that it is better to study before having children than concurrent to raising them. And actually there is more consideration on the part of the surroundings to the difficulties of men than women in this regard; (f) a positive strong correlation was found between the success of studying and the support of the spouse and the family. Namely, the support of the spouse is critical in the success and encouragement to study. Support from parents was also found to have a positive correlation, yet secondary in its significance; (g) there is consensus that within the family nucleus (the spouse's attitude), in which spouses experience the "triangle of conflict," gender difficulty exists in regards to studying. Namely, the couples jointly or separately admit that it is very difficult for them to study despite their joint effort, cooperation and the mutual support they bestow one another.

Tradition: The Unwritten Letter

Hanoch Ben-Pazi

This article seeks to offer a philosophical examination, using tools from Jacques Derrida, and the concept of “tradition” as a conjunction of processes that comprise various acts of reception, processing, and delivery. The phenomenon we propose to examine is textual tradition, including different traditions of reading and interpretation, along with understanding the horizon opened for a text by its many and various interpretations. The attention paid to the actions of individuals grant importance to the interpersonal realm and to ethical thought.

Derrida was frequently occupied with the subject of “tradition,” or the question of “heritage,” both in its philosophical and cultural sense and in the particular sense of the Jewish tradition. The first and last question, which may be the central question of the choice imposed on the individual in relation to his heritage and his personal choices regarding it.

At the center of attention in this article stands the paradigm of the “letter” or “epistle,” or more precisely “tradition as letter.” Thinking by means of the phenomenon of the letter will prove to reveal important aspects of the discussion, because it is a text, because it is delivered, and because of its exoteric and esoteric dimensions. A letter or postcard is almost open even when it is closed: “What I like about postcards is that even under an envelope it is supposed to move like a letter that is open but not legible/readable.” (Derrida, *La carte postale*, p. 69). The perspective proposed for examining tradition through the letter includes a transition from the personal to the public – from thought about the letter as personal missive between one person and another to thought about an open letter, available to everyone, or to the letter as a public call. Thinking about tradition as a letter also presents us with some surprising new observations, since in the case of a cultural tradition, it is not clear who is the addresser and who is the addressee, nor what the message of the letter is, if such a thing exists, and how it can and should be read. Was this letter ever written, has it ever been read before, and what is the status of those who will be the letter’s keepers.

Modern in Her Own Way: Observant Women in Secular Fitness Clubs

Ifaa Getzlik

Beaches, shopping malls and gyms are mostly identified as public places that are frequented by secular Jews. However, the numbers of Haredim (Observant Jews) who use these sites and adjust them to their particular needs are constantly growing. This article focuses on one public location: the gym and the meaning young Haredi women assign to their visits to the site. It argues that Haredi young women gain two major rewards from working out in the gym alongside secular women. Their trained body entitles them to set their own requirements regarding “the shiduchim” (matchmakings) and insist their future husbands respect their life style. Simultaneously, working out in company of secular peers equips the Haredi women with a “tool kit” that facilitates their interactions with secular Israelis and allows them to move easily between what they see as secular spaces to religious spaces. They become acquainted with the secular culture and consume it while adjusting it so it accords with their life style.

“And I Had Golden Hair and Blue Eyes” – On the New Literature Curriculum

Esther Adivi-Shushan

Literature has the potential to change reality. Along with this, the literature program which is taught in high school has a great effect on the Israeli students’ consciousness and on their “book selves”. This curriculum is taught and assimilated by the young Israeli generation shaping the Israeli “imagined community”. This program is based on four subjects: “identity”, “what is love”, “living in Israel” and “poems about the Holocaust”. In each subject ten poems are chosen. Reading the poems while examining the connection between the poem and its subject reflects a basically wrong “story” and disrupts the characteristics of the “imagined community”. The story comes about by reviewing the poems in the four subjects. It can be understood by the stories told that most of the Israeli authors and poets are men. Women rarely write about two subjects which are love and poems about the Holocaust. The writers (men and women), citizens of the “imagined community” were born in the twenties, thirties and forties of the previous century. There are almost no young writers whose voices are heard in the last few decades. The identity of the male poet in this “imagined community” is shaped by family, genealogical and historical factors. In addition, their identity is the local Israeli identity which has been entwined with the Israeli locality, views, communities

and people. On the other hand, the female identity is completely cut off from family, genealogical and historical characteristics as well as the distinctiveness of the Israeli site. The female identity is represented as a poor victim who has no connection with the Israeli location.

**The Place and The Distance:
Religious Feelings and Yearning for the
Inspirational in Yona Wallach's Poetry**

Tamar Lazar

Religious and mystical aspects accompany Yona Wallach's poetry from beginning to end. However, there is no single concept to it, but a dynamic and evolving one. The religious references in Wallach's poetry can be divided into three major groups, which are not equal to one another but are subjected to an inner hierarchy of intimacy and detachment from God. In the first group stand poems which criticize religion and find themselves looking from afar on the ceremonial and religious experience. The second group contains many expressions of longing for the transcendent experience, with the inability to fulfill it. The third group includes poems that contain actual symbiosis with God, along with deep mystical knowledge. Those poems were written in the midst of Wallach's illness, and they seem to convey an expression of spiritual coping with the trauma of the illness and fear of impending death. It was those horrid thoughts that allowed Wallach to become one with divinity in her poems, which could not have happened in her earlier work.